

International call for the organisation of the European Days on the European Arrest Warrant (EAW) Inform - Question - React

How did we discover the European Arrest Warrant?

On 8 August last year, our friend Vincenzo Vecchi was arrested by the French police in a small village in Brittany, as the French justice system was responding to two European arrest warrants (EAWs) issued by the Italian judicial authorities against him. Vincenzo was sentenced in Italy to more than 13 years in prison for taking part in the demonstration against the G8 summit in Genoa in 2001 and, for taking part in a march, unauthorised by the authorities, against a fascist parade this one authorised by the authorities of Milan in 2006. A support committee was quickly set up with more than 100 members.

The vast majority of us knew almost nothing about the proponents of the EAW, the best informed had only a limited knowledge of this procedure. A group was formed to find out more.

What did we learn?

Today, finally warned, and alerted by the fact that one of the two arrest warrants issued by the Italian justice system was a mere manipulation intended to sweep away any possible reluctance on the part of the French justice system, and after carrying out some research, we note that :

- The majority of people living in Europe have little or no knowledge of the ins and outs of the EAW,
- Potential manipulations can occur from one country's judiciary (the one that issues the EAW) to another (the one that executes it),
- The EAW now mostly reduces the legal action to a simple administrative procedure and excludes the study of the charges AND their validity,
- The arrest warrant does not unify the law at EU level as a whole, but, on the contrary, extends the scope of the exception procedures and liberticidal laws, which are specific to certain Member States.
- There is an imbalance between prosecution and defense:
 - o The prosecution investigation is reduced to a mere administrative procedure without any in-depth study of the justification of the charge,
 - o The defense is restricted in its individual rights.
- Fairness in the EAW procedure is therefore not guaranteed
- Without any support, an individual is totally powerless before this simplified and expeditious procedure,
- A potential instrumentalisation of the EAW by states threatens both individual freedoms as well as the civil rights of citizens within the European Community,
- Furthermore, an EAW broken in one country is still valid in the rest of the Member States of the Union, thus violating the right to free movement of European citizens within the Schengen area.

Following the attempt to manipulate the Italian justice system with one EAW whose inadmissibility it knew, we wonder. Out of these tens of thousands of simplified procedures (more than 17,000 in 2017), how many similar successful manipulations?

Is the EAW being abused in the service of a policy of criminalisation of the right to demonstrate and, to the detriment of our individual freedoms?

Because we have become aware of the danger, and that this danger is likely to increase, we now have the will to broaden our action at the European level. We believe that it is essential to organise trans-European solidarity in order to be able to defend ourselves against the manipulative and liberticidal use of this tool known as the EAW.

How are the European Days to be organised?

We propose a collective action in several European cities during week 25, which will take place in 2 stages.

1. An information session

The EAW is very little known. We therefore propose to start the action with a public information session in the form of a conference.

2. Workshops articulated around 3 themes

- The situation on the EAW in your country (Execution/Establishment),
- Potential dangers to freedoms, risk of using EAWs as a tool of political repression,
- What practices should we implement together to assert our individual and collective rights in the face of EAWs?

This action can therefore take place in your city over 2 days, with an information evening followed by workshops the next day, or a single day with information in the morning and workshops in the afternoon. The important thing is that it is linked to a common time, during week 25, between June 15th and 21st.

Why the European Days?

Convinced of the relevance of pooling our research, our findings, and the importance of collaboration at the European level, our motivations are:

- to gain strength, for Vincenzo and for others, especially those who do not benefit from a support committee,
- to Give an extra chance of victory for future cases,
- to Increase the rights of the defense,
- to develop concrete and international solidarity against any attempt to repress our individual freedoms.

Our wish is to turn these motivations into common objectives at the European level. It is also to bring to light a European law enforcement tool designed to be expeditious and thus avoid the spotlight.

Contacts

For us, the important thing is not to fill rooms but that groups are formed in several European cities. We propose a simple action to be implemented in the hope that it will be an opportunity for European citizens to exchange and interact. If you are interested in our approach, please contact us at this address: intercom-vinc@gmail.com