

Why do migrants die in trucks?

POLICY PAPER LAUNCH:

For protection or profit? Free trade, smuggling and international border management.

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- In August 2017, 42 asylum seekers were discovered inside a freight truck that was transporting textiles in Romania.
- In July, more than 100 migrants were found on the point of suffocation in the parking lot of a Walmart in San Antonio Texas: 10 were already dead.
- On 27 August 2015, found 71 migrants dead in a truck near Parndorf, Austria.

When migrants are discovered in tragic circumstances like the examples above, American and/or European authorities are quick to cast blame on 'traffickers' and 'criminals'. These groups are held almost exclusively accountable for migrant suffering in the public's collective consciousness.

Rarely do they discuss the efficacy of the dichotomous customs and border policies that benefit multinational corporations and border-control agencies, and which have consequently become part of the smuggling and policy landscape.

This absence of investigation has enabled policies benefiting both corporate profits and border enforcement to continue unrestrained, and has perpetuated an unexamined architecture of border management that incentivizes both states and corporations to maintain exclusive privileges that unwittingly motivate smugglers and harm migrants.

This policy note, written by David Danelo, a former policy and planning director of US Customs and Border Protection, explores exactly these themes as a catalyst for discussion.