

INFO FLASH 6/02

EU INSTITUTIONS

European Commission

(31/01) New assistance package for Palestine : EU strongly committed to support socio-economic revival of East-Jerusalem. The EU will fund projects to increase the resilience of locals and support the Palestinian presence in the city, through targeted measures benefiting young people and the private sector. The European Commission has adopted a new €42.5 million assistance package benefiting Palestinians, including substantial support in East Jerusalem. Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Johannes Hahn, said: "With this new assistance package the EU continues to support the Palestinians on their way towards the establishment of their own state as part of the two-state solution, with Jerusalem as capital of both Israel and Palestine. The European Union is, and will remain, Palestine's most reliable and important donor, investing in businesses, youth and schooling, helping to provide access to clean water in Gaza, strengthening civil society and investing on education and health." Full press release [here](#).

(31/01) Young people put forward their ideas for the future of Europe. Today, 100 young people from across Europe are presenting their concrete ideas on how to give Europe a bright future, following discussions in the context of the [New Narrative for Europe initiative](#). These [recommendations](#) come alongside the results of a [new Eurobarometer survey](#), which shows that youth participation in voluntary activities, organisations and elections has increased over the past years. The closing event of the New Narrative for Europe initiative, taking place in Brussels today, brings together the results of discussions young people held over the last two years. The project reached as many as 62,000 young people through a series of debates taking place Europe-wide. As a result, young people put forward twelve concrete ideas for Europe's future. Full press release [here](#).

(30/01) Humanitarian aid: €37.5 million for Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran. The European Commission has announced today humanitarian assistance of €37.5 million to help people affected by conflict and natural disasters in Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. "The assistance we are announcing today will reach those affected by the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan, both within the country and across the region, many of whom face of extremely dire conditions. The EU's commitment to the Afghan people remains unwavering. Incidents such as last week's attack on a humanitarian organisation take innocent lives and threaten lifesaving support to those most in need. It's fundamental that international humanitarian law is respected." said Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Christos Stylianides. The European Commission will provide €27 million for lifesaving supplies to the most vulnerable populations in Afghanistan who are bearing the consequences of the conflict. The assistance will cover areas such as emergency trauma care, food, water and sanitation, shelter and protection to newly displaced people. Vulnerable Afghans in Pakistan will benefit from funding of €5.5 million, which will primarily help Afghan refugees and those affected by food insecurity and malnutrition as a result of natural disasters. A further €5 million will support Afghan refugees in Iran and provide food assistance, shelter, health, protection, as well as education for vulnerable Afghan children. Full press release [here](#).

(26/01) Data protection rules fit for a digital and globalised age: Joint Statement by First Vice-President Timmermans, Vice-President Ansip, Commissioners Jourová and Gabriel ahead of the 2018 Data Protection Day. Data is everywhere. When using your smartphone, data could be collected on your whereabouts, your tastes, your friends, your health... In Europe, data protection is a fundamental right, we need to protect it. 2018 is going to be a landmark year for data protection in Europe. Modernised EU data protection rules will become a reality in May 2018. These rules respond to the challenges our digital world poses to our right to data protection. With just over 100 days left before the deadline of 25 May, the Commission adopted last week a guidance to help national data protection authorities, national administrations and businesses to be prepared for the direct application of the new EU-wide data protection rules. The Commission will also launch a communication campaign in Member States to make sure that Europeans are fully aware of their rights. Europeans will now benefit from new rights. The right to clear and understandable information will prevent companies from hiding behind complicated legal language to get our consent. Portability, the right to transfer your data from one service to another, is another new right which allows for switching services easily. Existing rights, such as the right to be forgotten, are now clarified. Better data protection rules also mean better security online. Half of European internet users are worried about the misuse of their personal information. If your personal data held by a company is exposed due to a cyber-attack, the company will have to inform authorities and its users within 72 hours. Full press release [here](#).

(25/01) Investing in Africa: the EU and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation commit a further €100 million. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation today announced their commitment to contribute to the EU's External Investment Plan. The Gates Foundation will contribute \$50 million (€40.9 million) in financing, as well as an additional \$12.5 million (€10.2 million) in technical assistance, to investment projects in the health sector in Africa through the EU's framework to improve sustainable investments in Africa. This pooling of resources is designed to encourage additional private investment towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and will allow successful projects to be scaled up more rapidly. The European Commission welcomes this strong support to its efforts towards sustainable development in Africa, and will match this contribution with another €50 million. Full press release [here](#).

(24/01) Commission to host first ever Education Summit: laying the foundations for a European Education Area. The first European Education Summit will take place tomorrow in Brussels, hosted by Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor Navracsics. This Summit follows the [Gothenburg Summit](#) in November 2017 where the Commission set out its vision to create a European Education Area by 2025, and the [December European Council](#) where Member States expressed a willingness to do more in the area of education. It is an important opportunity for 18 EU Education Ministers, education professionals and representatives from all over Europe to come together and discuss the future of education in Europe. This European Education Summit is the start of a series, with the second one to follow in autumn 2019. Full press release [here](#).

(24/01) Integration of migrants: Commission presents toolkit to help Member States make the best use of EU funds. Today the Commission is publishing a toolkit to help national and regional authorities design strategies and projects to integrate migrants and identify available EU resources. The purpose of the [toolkit](#) is to help set up local integration strategies supported by EU resources used in synergy, still in the current 2014-2020 budget

period. Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, Dimitris Avramopoulos said: "Investing in integration policies today is key to making sure Europe stays a prosperous, cohesive, and inclusive society in the future. This will be our priority for the coming years. It is only through successful integration that we can make migration a real opportunity for all, for our citizens, for migrants and refugees, and for our societies overall." Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne Thyssen, added: "The optimal use of EU funds, like the European Social Fund, plays an important role in supporting the integration of people with a migrant background, while further continuing to invest in the EU's existing work force. In addition, we have set up a Skills Profile Tool that helps third-country nationals present their skills on the European labour market." Commissioner for Regional policy Corina Crețu commented: "The EU's ambition is to turn the migration challenge into opportunities for our societies and economies. This toolkit is a brick in that wall; it will contribute to a successful integration of migrants at local level, supported by the EU and its resources. Full press release [here](#).

(24/01) Security Union: Commission follows up on terrorist radicalisation. Today, the European Commission reports on progress made towards an effective and genuine Security Union, including priorities like countering radicalisation, enhancing cybersecurity and protecting public spaces. As security is identified as a key priority in the [Joint Declaration on the EU's legislative priorities for 2018-19](#), the Commission is also setting out a number of measures to be taken over the coming months to strengthen support to Member States and speed up EU work. The Commission will continue to drive progress ahead of the September informal leaders' meeting on security, announced in the [Leaders' Agenda](#). Commissioner for Home Affairs, Migration and Citizenship Dimitris Avramopoulos said: "Security remains a key challenge for Europe and a number one priority for the EU, as reflected in the EU Institutions' Joint Declaration for 2018-19. We must continue to make use of this strong momentum and deliver concrete results for our security, collectively. We need to do more to keep European citizens safe both offline and online. Fighting terrorist propaganda online remains an area where there is a clear urgency to act. The Commission will act if needed and all options remain on the table." Full press release [here](#).

(1/02) EU leads international efforts to ensure education for all. Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven Mimica, attends today the Global Partnership for Education Conference in Dakar, Senegal and calls on global leaders to step up their investment in education. Leaders from donor and developing countries are expected to commit to substantially increase their financing to accelerate progress towards achieving quality education for all. Commissioner Mimica calls on the international community to reverse the current trend of declining financing for education: "I am pleased to see so many political, corporate, philanthropic and civil society leaders here in Dakar to make the Global Partnership for Education stronger. Investing in quality education is key for addressing various sustainable development challenges, including health, sustainable growth, job creation and long-term peace and stability. I proudly recall the European Union's early commitment to the GPE replenishment and invite all leaders to join us in shaping a better future while leaving no one behind." The EU's announcement in December 2017 to replenish the Global Partnership for Education with an [additional €100 million](#) is a clear sign of EU's determination to help ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, thus contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals achievement. This announcement came on top of €375 million already committed in 2014. Full press release [here](#).

European Parliament

(25/01) Bulgarian Presidency priorities discussed in committees. The priorities of the Bulgarian Presidency of the EU Council of Ministers are being outlined to parliamentary committees by ministers in a series of meetings. Bulgaria is holding the Presidency of the Council for the first time. It will last until end of June 2018. Full press release with thematic discussions [here](#).

European Council / Council of the EU

Others

(6/02) FRA - FRA delivers high quality fundamental rights support, finds external evaluators. Ten years after its creation, the Agency has matured into a unique, independent and trusted centre of excellence on fundamental rights, according to the findings of FRA's second independent external evaluation. This enables it to offer practical hands-on support drawn from its set of robust evidence-based advice. Full press release [here](#).

(5/02) FRA - Top 5 migration issues that need urgent action. Pressing migration concerns persist despite a drop in asylum seekers in parts of the EU. This is according to the Agency's latest report on migration-related fundamental rights issues. While reviewing the situation over the past two years, it points to difficulties in border crossings and gaining asylum, inadequate reception conditions, protection gaps for unaccompanied children and immigration detention concerns. Report [here](#). Full press release [here](#).

(5/02) EIB - Investing in Gender Equality: EU Bank and women's rights campaigners join forces. Today advocates for gender equality and experts from the banking and finance sectors have been meeting senior representatives from the European Investment Bank in Luxembourg on how the EIB Group's newly approved Gender Action Plan can best serve the promotion of gender equality in all its activities. Last year the EIB Group supported hundreds of projects worldwide with more than 87 EUR billion of financing. As the world's largest Multilateral Financier – the EIB Group has now committed to promoting gender equality in all of its activities through Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment, which came into force last year. The Gender Action Plan – informed through consultation with key partners and civil society organizations to implement it – was approved last month. Full press release [here](#).

(2/02) EIGE - Tough laws discourage female genital mutilation. Strong laws and prosecution are powerful deterrent factors when it comes to female genital mutilation (FGM) in the EU. Family members fear the consequences of the law more than the consequences of not having it done. However, in order for the laws to work, police and justice must enforce them and prosecute those responsible for their crime. These are some preliminary findings from an upcoming study by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). Full press release [here](#).

(1/02) EU Committee of the Regions - EU regional policy: Committee of the Regions considers issuing "Subsidiarity Red Card". Following an initiative by all five of its political groups, the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) has raised serious concerns about a recent European Commission's [proposal](#) to change rules governing EU regional funds for

2014-2020 which would divert resources from the EU's cohesion policy to support structural reforms in the Member States. This is first time in the past five years the CoR – the EU's assembly for local and regional governments - has considered using its right to bring a case before the EU Court of Justice when it believes a proposed EU law does not comply with the principle of subsidiarity. Full press release [here](#).

(1/02) FRA - What about legal avenues and integration? An Interparliamentary Committee Meeting on the European Agenda on Migration took place on 24 January in Brussels that discussed legal avenues and integration issues. The event was organised by the European Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) and was attended by MEPs and representatives from national parliaments. The Agency presented key findings and opinions from its recent work on integration and discrimination. The findings reveal a strong sense of belonging and sharing of core EU values among immigrants despite shortcomings in integration policies. This contradicts current negative stereotypes. They also reveal a window of opportunity to build on the positive potential of migrants and their descendants promoting their integration through participation, and tackling marginalisation as well as radicalisation. Full press release [here](#).

(1/02) FRA - Experts discuss protecting children with disabilities from sexual abuse. Workshop on the implementation of the child sexual abuse directive with regards to children with disabilities. FRA drew on findings from its reports on [violence against children with disabilities](#) as well as on [child-friendly justice](#) – both now also available in easy read formats - in which children with disabilities and child victims of sexual abuse were interviewed. Full press release [here](#).

(1/02) FRA - Local social cohesion for migrant children and young people. The Agency emphasised the need to integrate young refugees and migrants into society during a panel debate at the 5th Act.Now International Mayors' Conference in Vienna. The event, entitled 'Shaping the future – Social cohesion in our cities' ran from 29 to 30 January. Based on FRA's forthcoming report on the impact of migration on local communities, the Agency spoke about the role of local communities in helping integration, underlining the need for coordination among those responsible for child protection. Promising practices were highlighted at the event, and some young asylum seekers presented their experiences. Full press release [here](#).

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

(2/02) Invest in education and language acquisition to build a cohesive society, says Commissioner Muižnieks in Skopje. "The Macedonian authorities should implement policies that encourage interaction and understanding between ethnic communities and promote social cohesion while protecting diversity," said the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Nils Muižnieks, after a five-day follow-up visit to "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" between 29 January and 2 February. The peace agreement that ended an inter-ethnic conflict in 2001 has led to changes, for example, in the fields of equitable representation of communities in public institutions, decentralisation and the use of languages. However, social cohesion has not been achieved. "Macedonian society remains deeply divided along ethnic and linguistic lines and it is high time for political leaders to devise an integration strategy to overcome these divisions," said Commissioner Muižnieks. Full press release [here](#).

(2/02) Training on integration of refugee and migrant children in mainstream education. On 2-3 February 2018, the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Migration and Refugees ([SRSG](#)), together with the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance ([ECRI](#)) and the [municipality of Athens](#), is organising a training session on one of the most challenging questions in the field of migration - the integration of refugee and migrant children in mainstream education. Teachers from 80 schools hosting refugee children in Athens, psychologists, education specialists and other stakeholders will focus on non-discrimination, tolerance, and good practices in the integration process. The training is composed of two different modules. The first one is based on the [ECRI General Policy Recommendation no. 10](#), which has been adapted to the needs of schools in Athens. It is developed and delivered by ECRI's Chair, Prof. Jean-Paul Lehnens, and ECRI's 1st Vice-Chair, Ms Maria Daniella Marouda. The second module is developed and delivered by Ms Claudia Koehler, a researcher with the [European Forum for Migration Studies, Institute at the University of Bamberg](#), Germany, and member of the [SIRIUS Policy Network on Migrant Education](#). Full press release [here](#).

(24/01) European Committee of Social Rights: annual conclusions for 2017. The European Committee of Social Rights ([ECSR](#)) today published its annual conclusions for 2017 in respect of 33 States Parties ([European Social Charter](#) (1961) and [European Social Charter \(revised\)](#) (1996)) showing 175 violations (36%), 228 situations of conformity (47%) and 83 cases (17%) where the Committee was unable to assess the situation due to lack of information, known as "deferrals". Full conclusions [here](#).

CIVIL SOCIETY

(2/02) ECRE - The Afghan paradox - chaos and violence but safe for returns from Europe. A [series of new attacks](#) in the capital, Kabul, illustrates the volatile situation in Afghanistan, a BBC [report](#) reveals that the Taliban controls or operates openly in 70% of the country and the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations [Factsheet](#) describes the intensifying conflict. Yet, EU Member States continue to [deport](#) Afghan nationals. Full press release [here](#).

(2/02) ECRE - Solidarity among Member States - a numbers game. Four months after the expiry of the 2015 relocation scheme organising transfers of applicants for international protection from Italy and Greece to other Member States, Germany's Interior Ministry announced that relocations from Greece are at the final stage as almost all applicants eligible under the scheme have been transferred. A misleading statement, as the pool of eligible applicants has been [artificially reduced](#) after the EU-Turkey deal. Full article [here](#).

(2/02) ECRE - Important decision in the alpine northern border region of Italy: Minors not to be left in the cold. A new report by INTERSOS and Open Society Foundations [reveals](#) systematic violation of legal guarantees and international standards for foreign minors along Italy's northern border. In a [recent decision](#) concerning a 12 year-old asylum applicant who was denied access to France, the Administrative Tribunal of Nice found the denial of entry unlawful and a serious violation of the best interest of the child. Full press release [here](#).

(2/02) ECRE - Broad Humanitarian response in Libya - return operations for vulnerable migrants running resettlement efforts remain modest. Broad [Humanitarian Response Plan](#) (HRP) launched to address the deteriorating human rights and humanitarian

situation in Libya. As recent [footage](#) of tortured Sudanese nationals illustrate, refugees and migrants are especially vulnerable and exposed to [abuse](#). Return [operations](#) for vulnerable migrants are running while resettlement efforts to Europe remain modest. Full press release [here](#).

(26/01) ECRE - ECtHR ruling gives legitimacy to conditions in hotspot and detention under EU Turkey Statement – NGOs concerned. The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) ruled that conditions in VIAL hotspot were not inhuman and that detention to enforce the EU-Turkey Statement was not arbitrary despite human rights concerns by organisations. On 25 January 2018, the ECtHR [ruled](#) in case J.R. and others v. Greece, which concerned the [complaints](#) brought by three Afghan nationals who were detained in the VIAL hotspot on Chios Island a day after the entry into force of the EU-Turkey Statement. They complained before the ECtHR that their detention was arbitrary, that they had not been informed about the reasons for their detention and that the conditions in the hotspot constituted inhumane or degrading treatment. Full press release [here](#).

(26/01) ECRE - CJEU ruling: psychological test to determine asylum seekers' sexual orientation amounts to disproportionate interference of private life. A [ruling](#) of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) on January 25 establishes that the use of psychological tests to determine sexual orientation “amounts to a disproportionate interference in the private life of the asylum seeker”. The Hungarian Helsinki Committee welcomed the ruling in a [press release](#) calling it an “end to the humiliating and stigmatizing psychological testing of asylum-seekers' sexual-emotional orientation in asylum procedures”. Full press release [here](#).

(26/01) ECRE - Follow the Money – a critical analysis of the implementation of the EU Asylum, Migration & Integration Fund (AMIF). The [research paper](#) ‘Follow the Money: Assessing the use of AMIF funding at the national level’ by ECRE and UNHCR, provides a thorough and critical analysis of the €3.1 billion Asylum, Migration & Integration Fund (AMIF) established by the EC for the period of 2014-20. The AMIF aims to contribute to the efficient management of migration flows and to the implementation and development of a common European approach to asylum and migration. Full press release [here](#).

(24/01) RadioPoland - EU aims to link funds to rule of law. Europe's Justice Commissioner said on Wednesday that Brussels is working on a way of making payouts of all EU funds conditional on member states having an efficient judicial system and upholding the rule of law. Full press release [here](#).

PUBLICATIONS

ILO/OECD - [How Immigrants Contribute to Developing Countries' Economies](#)

UNHCR - [Comments on the European Commission Proposal for a Qualification Regulation](#)

CoE Intercultural Cities - [Compilation of Good Practices from ICC Cities](#)

MPI - [Life After Trauma: The Mental-Health Needs of Asylum Seekers in Europe](#)

MPI - [Designing Civic Education for Diverse Societies: Models, Tradeoffs, and Outcomes](#)

MPI - [Can New Digital and Pedagogical Innovations Help Bridge Education Gaps for Migrant Children?](#)

MPI - [Welcome to Work? Legal Migration Pathways for Low-Skilled Workers](#)

Eurochild - [Investing in children in the era of social rights](#)

European Commission - [Mapping and overcoming integration challenges for migrant children](#) (Call for proposals)

Opening Doors Campaign - [Child protection 2017 Review](#)

Euronantes - [New solutions for Dublin in a deadlock?](#) (Podcast in French)

Council of the EU General Secretariat - [Think Tank Review](#) (January)

Euronantes - [Development policies, a silver bullet?](#) (Podcast in French)