

INFO FLASH 4/07

While the EU stepped up financial support to Uganda as the country faces the [world's fastest growing refugee crisis](#), EU institutions reached a broad political agreement on [a common EU Agency for Asylum](#). FRA launched a report on [immigration detention of children](#) and organized two meetings on the [establishment of an EU guardianship network, balancing the migration narrative](#).

The [WHO](#) reaffirmed its dedication to broadening collaboration and knowledge transfer on migration and health, while the Council of Europe issued several press releases on migration and integration.

Among civil society, ECRE issued both Op-Eds and press-releases on recent legal development in the field of asylum at national and EU level. Key publications include two think tank review on migration by the [European Parliament Research Service](#) and the [Council of the EU General Secretariat](#).

EU INSTITUTIONS

European Commission

(3/07) Migration: Joint declaration by Commissioner Avramopoulos and the Ministers of Interior of France, Germany and Italy. The Ministers of Interior of France, Germany and Italy and the European Commissioner for Migration and Home Affairs met in Paris on 2 July 2017 to discuss the challenges posed by the increasing migratory flow on the Central Mediterranean route. They expressed strong solidarity with Italy, which faces rising numbers of arrivals. In order to provide increased support to Italy and contribute to stem the migratory flow, they agreed on a number of measures. In order to allow swift progress in support of Italy, the Ministers of Interior of France, Germany and Italy and the European Commissioner for Migration and Home Affairs call on all EU partners to consider these action points at the next EU informal Council meeting in Tallinn on 6 July. Full list of measures available [here](#).

(29/06) Commission launches a new pan-European personal pensions label to help consumers save for retirement. European consumers will soon benefit from more choice when saving for retirement, thanks to Commission plans to create a new class of pension products. Today's proposal will provide pension providers with the tools to offer a simple and innovative pan-European personal pension product (PEPP). This new type of voluntary personal pension is designed to give savers more choice when they are putting money aside for old age and provide them with more competitive products. PEPPs will have the same standard features wherever they are sold in the EU and can be offered by a broad range of providers, such as insurance companies, banks, occupational pension funds, investment firms and asset managers. They will complement existing state-based, occupational and national personal pensions, but not replace or harmonise national personal pension regimes. The Commission is also today recommending that Member States grant the same tax treatment to this product as to similar existing national products to ensure that the PEPP gets off to a flying start. The new products will also ultimately bolster the Commission's plan for a Capital

Markets Union by helping to channel more savings to long-term investments in the EU. Full press release [here](#).

(28/06) An EU budget fit for tomorrow: Commission opens debate on future of EU finances. As Europe decides on its future, the EU needs a budget that is fit for purpose and makes every euro work for its citizens. Published today, the Commission's reflection paper on the future of EU finances looks at the options to make that a reality. The issues raised in this fifth and final paper in the series are central to the debate started on 1 March with the Commission's White Paper on the Future of Europe. The reflection paper maps out possible budgetary implications of the choices we can make. Full press release [here](#).

(22/06) EU announces €85 million as Uganda faces world's fastest growing refugee crisis. The EU funding will help meet the needs of the rapidly surging number of South Sudanese fleeing to Uganda. Uganda is now facing the world's fastest growing refugee crisis, due to a continuous and unprecedented influx of people fleeing conflict in neighbouring South Sudan among others. The country is now hosting over 1.27 million refugees and asylum seekers. "To help Uganda deal with this unprecedented situation and support the most vulnerable refugees, the European Commission [has today announced](#) €85 million in humanitarian aid and longer term development assistance. Many refugees have fled conflict in South Sudan, seeking sanctuary from violence, hatred and hunger. Uganda's example of helping vulnerable people cope with displacement is an example for the whole region and the world. However, no country can deal with such a high number of refugees on its own. The EU funding announced today will help our humanitarian partners working in Uganda bring some relief to those who have lost everything," said Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos Stylianides. The announcement comes as Commissioner Stylianides is attending the Uganda Solidarity Summit on refugees taking place in Kampala on 22 and 23 June, on behalf of the European Commission.

European Parliament

European Council / Council of the EU

(29/06) EU Agency for Asylum: Presidency and European Parliament reach a broad political agreement. On 28 June 2017, the Maltese Presidency of the Council and the European Parliament representatives reached a broad political agreement ad referendum on all twelve chapters of the regulation on the European Union Agency for Asylum on the basis of the mandate given by Coreper on 20 December 2016. The agreement is subject to endorsement by Coreper in the near future following further work on the recitals. Furthermore, the agreement excludes some parts of the text which are related to other legislative proposals in the package on the revision of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) which have not yet been finalised. An overall agreement will only be possible once the linkages with the other legislative proposals in the CEAS package have been resolved. The proposal for a European Union Agency for Asylum aims to improve the implementation and functioning of the CEAS by building on the work of the current European Asylum Support Office (EASO). Full press release [here](#).

(28/06) Simpler rules for users of EU funds. The Council wants to simplify life for both beneficiaries and administrators of EU funds. On 28 June 2017, the Council mandated its presidency to start talks with the European Parliament on a Commission proposal to make EU

financial rules simpler and more focused on results. The so-called draft omnibus regulation will amend the financial regulation governing the implementation of the EU budget as well as 15 sectorial legislative acts, including in the field of agriculture and cohesion policy. More information available [here](#).

(26/06) Strengthened EU rules to tackle money laundering, tax avoidance and terrorism financing enter into force. Today, the Fourth Anti-Money Laundering Directive enters into force. It strengthens the existing rules and will make the fight against money laundering and terrorism financing more effective. It also improves transparency to prevent tax avoidance. This entry into force comes as discussions with the European Parliament and the Council on extra measures further reinforcing the Directive are already at an advanced stage. Today the Commission also publishes a report which will support Member State authorities in better addressing money laundering risks in practice. As required by the new directive, the Commission assessed the money laundering and terrorist financing risks of different sectors and financial products. The report published today identifies the areas most at risk and the most widespread techniques used by criminals to launder illicit funds. Full press release [here](#).

Others

(29/06) FRA - Children lend their voices to call for Europe to strengthen fundamental rights protection. Children from nine EU Member States [expressed concern](#) about the challenge of protecting human rights across the EU today. They joined experts in making practical suggestions on how to tackle this issue, particularly when it comes to migration and poverty, during a high-level symposium in Brussels on 28 June that questioned whether Europe is doing enough to protect fundamental rights.

(29/06) Eurojust - Eurojust's fourth Foreign Terrorist Fighters report presented at LIBE Committee. Today, Michèle Coninsx, President of Eurojust, [presented a summary of the main findings](#) of Eurojust's most recent report on foreign terrorist fighters (FTF) before the LIBE Committee of the European Parliament. The report, Foreign Terrorist Fighters: Eurojust's Views on the Phenomenon and the Criminal Justice Response, issued in December 2016, is the fourth of a series initiated in 2013 to annually update EU stakeholders and practitioners on Eurojust's views on the criminal justice response to the FTF phenomenon, provide an overview of legislative developments in the Member States in the field of counter-terrorism, and make recommendations to reinforce the effectiveness of investigations, prosecutions and judicial cooperation with support from Eurojust. Eurojust's FTF reports have limited distribution, and their primary intended recipients are practitioners specialised in countering terrorism.

(28/06) Frontex - 5 vessels deployed by Frontex engaged in rescue operations in Central Mediterranean. Five vessels taking part in Frontex operation Triton helped save 2 700 people in the Central Mediterranean since Sunday. These vessels included Swedish KBV 002, Spanish Rio Segura and Maltese P62, as well as two Italian vessels co-financed by Frontex. In total, some 10 000 migrants have been rescued in Central Mediterranean in the past three days and search and rescue operations are ongoing. This is the largest number of people rescued within such a brief span so far this year. Full press release [here](#).

(28/06) FRA - Is Europe doing enough to protect fundamental rights? Challenges to human rights are multiplying in the European Union, despite the strength of the legal framework we have built since the Second World War. To discuss the magnitude and nature of the challenges and develop solutions, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) [is hosting a high-level symposium](#) in cooperation with the Maltese Presidency of the Council of the EU.

(23/06) Frontex - Arrival of migrants in May: Numbers in Italy and Greece higher than month ago. There were around 27 000 detections of illegal border crossings on the four main migratory routes into the EU in May. The total number of detections in the first five months of 2017 fell 75% from the same period of last year to 84 000, although the number of migrants arriving in Italy remained above the figures from a year ago. Full press release [here](#).

(23/06) FRA - Conference explores balancing the migration narrative. The failure to effectively communicate human rights, specifically when it comes to migration, was explored during a conference in Malta on 14 June. The joint [ICMPD/EUROMED event](#) focused on the role of the media and policy-makers in balancing the narrative on migration. The need to reach out to three interrelated and interdependent target groups was examined. These are politicians, the general public and media, including new media. Full press release [here](#).

(23/06) FRA - First meeting to establish an EU guardianship network. The Agency spoke about the challenges of guardianship systems for unaccompanied children in EU Member States and the added value of establishing a European guardianship network [during a preparatory meeting on 16 June](#). The establishment of a European network on guardianship was announced in the European Commission's Communication on the protection of children in migration. This first preparatory meeting in Brussels was organised by the European Commission. It was attended by representatives of 20 EU Member States, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland. The mandate and modus operandi of such a network was discussed and will be finalised in a meeting in September. The network is expected to be up and running starting in 2018.

(23/06) FRA - Community policing to help combat migrant fear. Community policing can help bridge the mistrust and fear among and towards newly-arrived migrants and local communities. This [was one of the observations from the latest summary report](#) of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) on migration-related fundamental rights concerns in selected EU Member States which assesses how the police work with local communities including migrants and asylum seekers.

(22/06) FRA - Help end migrant detention of children. A third of migrants arriving to the EU are children. They may be detained in prison-like conditions and their mental health put at risk. Such practices may defy human rights law as a new report from the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) [reveals](#). It examines existing practices and shows how measures such as alternative housing, restrictions of movement or stronger guardianship systems can avoid the need for detention.

(22/06) Committee of the Regions - EU needs to offer mayors 'answers' to migration. Leaders of the European Union need to step up their support for cities and regions dealing with the large numbers of refugees and migrants and to recognise that European cities and regions contribute to the management of migration beyond the EU's borders, the President of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) on 21 June told a high-level conference on

migration hosted by Antonio Tajani, President of the European Parliament. Full press release [here](#).

(20/06) WHO - World Refugee Day: WHO/Europe reaffirms its dedication to broadening collaboration and knowledge transfer on migration and health. On World Refugee Day, the WHO European Region is reminded of the importance of addressing the health needs of refugees and migrants as they arrive in Europe. WHO/Europe's Programme on Health and Migration is dedicated to promoting public health access and developing evidence-informed practices to assist countries in receiving large numbers of people. Critical to meeting the needs of large arrivals of migrants is enhanced platforms for cross-cutting collaboration, knowledge transfer and gathering good practices. WHO/Europe has launched a broad-sweeping project to pioneer the way Europe and the world receive migrants, called the Knowledge Hub on Health and Migration. This hub will focus on 5 key activities to holistically inform every aspect of the health-care challenge as it pertains to refugees and migrants. Full press release [here](#).

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

(29/06) Immigration is both instrumental for modernisation of societies and for Europe's survival. European states should acknowledge that immigration into Europe is both instrumental for "renewed dynamic and modernisation of societies" and for Europe's survival of the 'demographic winter' which the continent is entering, PACE declared today. [According to the parliamentarians](#), no comprehensive humanitarian and political response has yet been given to the challenges raised by the large-scale migratory and refugee flows into Europe. The crisis is more a political issue of migration management policy than of lack of resources or capacity. The parliamentarians adopted a resolution, based on the report prepared by Duarte Marques (Portugal, PPE/DC), which underlines that a comprehensive humanitarian and political response to the challenges raised by large-scale migratory and refugee flows into Europe should be based on the principles of human dignity and solidarity and aim at improving co-operation and harmonising human rights protection.

(28/06) European cities can play a central role in implementing integration policies. "More than ever, European cities and local governments can play a crucial role in the protection of the rights of refugees and migrants, and their integration," today [said](#) the Mayor of Athens Georgios Kaminis, addressing the Assembly at the opening of a joint debate on migration. Mr Kaminis reviewed the measures taken by his Municipality these latest years in order to tackle the refugee crisis. "We currently provide housing in 300 apartments rented by the Municipality, to secure decent living conditions for the refugees. Using European funds and donations we have created a Coordination Center for our city to provide a variety of services addressed to the people in need, gradually focusing on integration," he explained. "The migration issue is here to stay and is far from being solved," Mr Kaminis warned. "Experience has shown that every delay or refusal to face this reality turns into a structural problem that is much harder to solve," he said, adding that it was a concern for all countries, equally. "The countries of entry cannot carry this heavy burden by themselves," he stated.

(28/06) Morgan Johansson: "Migration will be a top global challenge for decades to come". "Migration will be a top global challenge for decades to come. We must face it with more solidarity, more co-operation and more commitment than we have had before," today [said](#) Morgan Johansson, Minister for Justice and Migration of Sweden, addressing the Assembly in the context of a joint debate on migration. He considers that Europe could do

much more on resettlement. “Sweden is increasing resettlement up to 5 000 next year, more than doubling our programme in two years,” he said, suggesting that the EU should start a joint European resettlement programme for its member States. He also called on European countries to increase their support to UNHCR, UNICEF and other organisations, “who were keeping millions of refugees alive everyday”.

CIVIL SOCIETY

(30/06) ECRE - Uganda: Solidarity Summit on Refugees 2017. On 23 June 2017, the Uganda Solidarity Summit on Refugees [took place](#) in Kampala in an effort to mobilize support from the international community. Uganda has one of the most inclusive and welcoming asylum systems in the world but overpopulation and droughts have exhausted local resources and left the refugee population [dependent](#) on humanitarian aid. Full press release [here](#).

(30/06) ECRE - It's the quality that matters. On the representation of refugees in the media - Op-ed by Francesca Pierigh, from refugeesreporting.eu, a project by WACC Europe and CCME. Over the past two years, with higher numbers of people arriving on the coasts of Italy and Greece, European media attention suddenly turned to the issue of refugees and migrants. We witnessed a spike in the number of articles, reportages and multimedia material covering the topic. While the importance of focusing the attention on this cannot be overstated, the quality of the reporting itself has been at best mixed, and at worst downright harmful. As increasing numbers of outlets steered their focus towards forced displacement, everybody started to talk about refugees. Few however talked to refugees, and fewer still talked with refugees. The absence of refugees voices, compensated in some instances by [specialist reporting](#), has made it easy to manipulate the topic of asylum, through the use of [inappropriate, inaccurate or non-factual information](#). Media has also in some cases contributed to the [dehumanisation](#) of people who have been grouped together even though they have nothing in common with each other apart from having being forced to flee their homes, and even that for a thousand different reasons. Full article [here](#).

(30/06) ECRE - Weekly Editorial: When institutions and governments fail, populations and civil society step up. The Danish government is threatening to cut funding to the Danish branch of Save the Children in reaction to the Search and Rescue operations (SAR) in the Mediterranean carried out by Save the Children International. It is just the latest attempt to punish civil society for humanitarian action. The argument is made that saving migrants in the Mediterranean creates incentives for others to attempt the crossing. The heated debate about SAR, international refugee and maritime law, and the duty to rescue continues. But the current of Danish government in this case remains unpersuasive so long as the only alternative offered (at least in the short-term) is to let people drown, supposedly to deter others. Full article [here](#).

(23/06) ECRE - Fourth report on the operationalisation of the European Border and Coast Guard: Towards deployment of Frontex in third countries and more returns. On June 13 the European Commission released its fourth [report](#) to the EU Parliament on the operationalisation of the European Border and Coast Guard. The progress described in the report includes operational cooperation with priority third countries and deployment of European Border and Coast Guard Agency ([Frontex](#)) officers as well as an increase of return operations from Member States supported by the Agency. Full press release [here](#).

(23/06) ECRE - AIDA Briefing: The expansion of detention of asylum seekers. An AIDA legal briefing [published today](#) tracks the expansion of detention policies and practices across Europe. Despite the entry into force of common standards relating to detention such as those prescribed in the recast Reception Conditions Directive, the deprivation of liberty of asylum seekers as a migration control instrument varies significantly from one country to another. In 2016, detention was applied to a substantial part of the asylum-seeking population in countries such as Bulgaria, while its use remained low in Poland or even minimal in Malta. At the same time, the briefing documents a visible trend of increase in detention infrastructure across Europe, with notable examples of rising detention capacity in the Mediterranean region. Countries such as Turkey, Italy, Spain and Greece, that have some of the most sizeable detention infrastructures in the continent, are in the course of establishing additional spaces for confining refugees and migrants.

(23/06) ECRE - Commission praises progress under EU Partnership Framework—human rights organisations raise concern. The Commission [report](#) published last Tuesday congratulates the progress achieved within the first year of the EU Partnership Framework on Migration. Meanwhile, a number of human rights organizations have raised strong concern. The Commission [states](#) that cooperation in the field of migration between EU and its Member States with third countries has improved overall. One year on, EU migration liaison officers are now present in 12 partner countries (Ethiopia, Jordan, Lebanon, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Serbia, Tunisia and Turkey) and the first European Border and Coast Guard Agency liaison office in Africa is set to open in July in Niamey, Niger. Under the newly established EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, 118 projects have been approved, while the resources available to the fund have been extended to a total €2.8 billion. Formal negotiations on readmission agreements have been opened with Nigeria, Tunisia and Jordan, in addition to those ongoing with Morocco. The report stresses that progress has been made in the five priority countries, Niger, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and Ethiopia, which will be extended by three additional states, Ivory Coast, Ghana and Guinea. It further stresses that cooperation with Libya is going to be continued and developed, including through a permanent EU Border Assistance Mission, the promotion of cooperation between Libya and its southern neighbours and the continuous training of the Libyan coastguard. Full press release [here](#).

(23/06) ECRE - Global displacement crisis seen from Europe: Interview with ECRE Secretary General, Catherine Woollard. UNHCR's Global Trends report for 2016 reveals a record number of 65.6 million people forcibly displaced. How does that affect Europe? First it is important to keep the proportions in perspective. The number of first time asylum applicants in Europe was 1.2 million last year representing a small fraction of the forcibly displaced. The vast majority are in their region or country of origin – in many cases the most unstable and poorest countries in the world. Despite the comparatively small number of arrivals and its comparative wealth, Europe turned a manageable situation into a full-blown political crisis which may have a long-lasting damaging impact on the protection of human rights in member states, on internal European cohesion, and on the EU's role in international affairs. Who would have imagined that Europe would leave migrants at the mercy of random Libyan militias acting as coast guards or that it would allow its development assistance to be hijacked by a migrant control agenda, or that systematic detention, deportation and push-backs of people in need of protection would become the norm? These are truly disturbing developments and the worst is yet to come unless we continue to resist and propose alternatives. Full article [here](#).

(21/06) PICUM - Towards a migration policy that works. PICUM together with other organisations has released a statement ahead of the European Council meeting which takes place in Brussels from 22 to 23 June 2017. In the last few years, migration has become a central part of the EU's foreign and development policy. In November 2015 the EU and several African states agreed on the Valletta Action Plan, which looks at ways to cooperate in the field of migration. In June 2016 the EU announced its new partnership approach with third countries, a framework that uses positive and negative incentives across policy domains to encourage partner countries to better cooperate in the field of migration. The five priority countries identified for this approach were Niger, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Senegal and Mali, among 16 other identified partnership countries. Civil society met this approach with a lot of concern. Full proposal [here](#).

(20/06) European Youth Forum - Time to be welcome: youth work and integration of young refugees. Today, the European Youth Forum and the World Organisation of the Scout Movement, with support from the partnership in the field of youth between the European Union and the Council of Europe mark the vital role of youth work and youth organisations in integration of young refugees with a dedicated conference. Every refugee deserves to be equipped with the knowledge, qualifications and competences that allow them to be fully included in society. Young people and youth organisations have often been at the forefront of welcoming refugees in Europe, who are mostly young people, promoting active citizenship and human rights education as well as fostering intercultural dialogue. This event brings together key stakeholders including the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) and Voices of Young Refugees (VYRE), to share good practices from the ground and give visibility to successful initiatives such as 'Time to be Welcome'. Full press release [here](#).

PUBLICATIONS

MPI - [The International Migration System: Reflections on the Challenges and Opportunities Ahead](#) (Event)

MPI - [In Search of Common Values amid Large-Scale Immigrant Integration Pressures](#)

EUVisions - [Why is there no right-wing populism in Spain?](#)

Council of the EU General Secretariat - [Think Tank Review](#) (Special Issue on Migration)

Council of the EU General Secretariat - [Think Tank Review](#) (June 2017)

EPRS - [Priority dossiers under the Estonian EU Council Presidency](#)

EPRS - [Promoting development in the outermost regions](#) (Podcast)

EPRS - [Creating opportunities: The EU and students](#) (Podcast)

EPRS - [Migration into the EU](#) (Think Tank Review)