

INFO FLASH 2/04

EU INSTITUTIONS

European Commission

(20/03) EU budget for 2021-2027: Commission welcomes provisional agreement on Horizon Europe, the future EU research and innovation programme. The EU institutions have reached a partial political agreement, subject to formal approval by the European Parliament and Council, on Horizon Europe. Investing in research and innovation is investing in Europe's future, in knowledge and new solutions to maintain and improve the European way of life. That is why the Juncker Commission has set [a new level of ambition](#) to deepen Europe's innovation capability, provide lasting prosperity and preserve our global competitiveness. Horizon Europe, [proposed by the Commission in June 2018](#) as part of the [EU-long-term-budget](#) for the years 2021-2027, is the most ambitious research and innovation programme ever and will keep the EU at the forefront of global research and innovation. Full press release [here](#).

(20/03) Afghanistan: EU releases €27 million in humanitarian assistance. €2 million will assist the most vulnerable families affected by devastating floods in early March which continue to affect large parts of the country. The new funding will provide emergency assistance for the most vulnerable families across the country affected by the conflict and by the drought, with a particular focus on those internally displaced, and returning Afghan refugees. This includes providing food, emergency shelter, water and sanitation, protection, and medical care for the victims of war. The EU will also continue to provide education for children who have had to leave their schools. The funding for flood victims will provide food, shelter, water and sanitation, and essential household items, which are right now the priority needs for those whose houses were destroyed. Full press release [here](#).

(14/03) Syria crisis: EU mobilises renewed international support, record overall pledge of €8.3 billion for 2019 and beyond. From 12-14 March 2019 the European Union and the United Nations co-chaired the Brussels III Conference. As well as renewing support to a lasting political solution to end the Syria crisis, in line with UN Security Council Resolution 2254, the Conference addressed the most critical humanitarian and resilience issues affecting Syrians inside their country and refugees and their host communities in particular in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. The [Conference](#) succeeded in mobilising pledges totalling €8.3 billion for 2019-20 and beyond, out of which €6.2 billion is for 2019 and multiyear pledges close to €2.1 billion. Of the overall pledge, around two thirds come from the European Union which has contributed a total of €6.79 billion: €2.57 billion from the EU budget managed by the European Commission and €4.22 billion from EU Member States. Out of the €2.57 billion from EU budget, €2.01 billion is committed for 2019 while €560 million has already been committed for 2020 for people in need inside Syria and in the region. Full press release [here](#).

(7/03) Africa-Europe Alliance: European Commission committed to a sustainable African agri-food sector. According to the recommendations of this group of African and European experts, Africa and the EU should develop a partnership operating at three levels: people to people, business to business, and government to government. It would institute a

multi-stakeholder dialogue at all levels, starting locally, and enable a closer connection between African and European societies, business communities and governments. Launched in May 2018 by the European Commission, the Task Force was set up to provide advice on strengthening the Africa-Europe partnership in food and farming. The European Commission will ensure follow-up and implementation of several actions recommended by this group of experts to support the development of African agri-food sector and rural economy. Full press release [here](#).

(6/03) The European Agenda on Migration: EU needs to sustain progress made over the past 4 years. Ahead of the March European Council, the Commission is today taking stock of progress made over the past 4 years and setting out the measures still required to address immediate and future migration challenges. Faced with the most severe refugee crisis the world has seen since the Second World War, the EU managed to bring about a step change in migration management and border protection. The EU has offered protection and support to millions, saved lives, dismantled smuggling networks and brought irregular arrivals to Europe down to the lowest level recorded in 5 years. Nevertheless, more work is needed to make the EU's migration policy truly future-proof in view of a constantly evolving geopolitical context and a steady rise in migratory pressure on a global scale (see [Factsheet](#)). Full press release [here](#).

(5/03) EU Budget for 2021-2027: European Commission welcomes provisional agreement reached on the financial programme to support justice area. EU Budget for 2021-2027: European Commission welcomes provisional agreement reached on the financial programme to support justice area. Today the European Parliament and the Council reached a provisional agreement on the 2021-2027 Justice programme proposed by the European Commission [in May 2018](#). This new programme will support developing an integrated European justice area based on the rule of law, mutual recognition and mutual trust. Full press release [here](#).

European Parliament

(27/03) External action: more funds for human rights, development and peace. EU external action funding should support development, climate and environmental goals, and promote democracy, rule of law and human rights, say MEPs. On Wednesday, the European Parliament adopted its position on the proposed [Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument \(NDICI\)](#). The new financial instrument would, once agreed by both Parliament and EU ministers, be used to distribute a large part of EU external action funding, with a proposed budget of € 93.154 billion in current prices for the 2021-2027 period, an increase of almost EUR 4 billion compared to the EU Commission's proposal. Full press release [here](#).

(26/03) End racist discrimination against Afro-European people in the EU. MEPs call on the EU and its member states to take measures to tackle the structural racism people of African descent face in Europe. In a resolution adopted on Tuesday with 535 in favour to 80 votes against, and 44 abstentions, Parliament urges EU and national authorities to develop anti-racism policies and stop discrimination; in the fields of education, housing, health, criminal justice, political participation and migration. In light of increasing afrophobic attacks, MEPs call on the European Commission and EU member states to acknowledge the racist, discriminatory and xenophobic suffering of Afro-Europeans, and offer proper protection against these inequalities to ensure that hate crimes are suitably investigated, prosecuted and

sanctioned. Additionally, people of African descent should be taken into account more in current funding programmes and in the next multiannual financial framework (2021-2027). Full press release [here](#).

(21/03) ACP-EU Parliamentary Assembly: strengthening the partnership. MEPs and African, Caribbean and Pacific MPs discussed the future of the partnership and agreed to enhance support for education and the fight against climate change. During the [37th session of the Joint Parliamentary Assembly \(JPA\)](#), which took place from 18 to 20 March in Bucharest, Members of the European Parliament and their counterparts from 78 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries debated and adopted a series of resolutions. They intensified the discussion on the post-Cotonou framework, called for the ACP-EU parliamentary dimension to be maintained and agreed to an ambitious partnership. They also strongly supported the Global Compact for Migration and agreed to support initiatives in a number of fields, from climate change to education to the challenges linked to the rule of law. Full press release [here](#).

(19/03) Fairer and clearer rules on social benefits for EU mobile workers agreed. New rules aim to ensure access to social security for EU workers who have moved to a different EU country, while fairly distributing obligations among member states. An agreement on modernised rules to coordinate national social security systems was reached by Employment Committee negotiators and EU ministers on Tuesday. The new rules focus on facilitating labour mobility within the EU, while safeguarding workers' social rights in cross-border situations, by determining under which country's system a person is insured (i.e. paying contributions and receiving benefits). Additionally, new provisions foster cooperation between member states, so that the necessary information is promptly shared to protect workers' access to social security and identify errors or fraud. Full press release [here](#).

(18/03) NGOs saving lives in the Mediterranean: MEPs take stock of the situation. 2018 Sakharov Prize finalist NGOs, which carried out rescue operations in the Mediterranean and are now prevented from operating, discussed their work with MEPs on Monday. MEPs of the Civil Liberties committee and Human Rights Subcommittee debated the legal framework of search and rescue operations as well as the challenges faced by people working in the field with representatives of the NGOs. Members of Sea Watch, Solidarity at Sea, Sea Eye, Seebrücke Germany, Open Arms, Médecins sans Frontières and Migrant Offshore Aid Station objected to MEPs that their activities are being unjustly criminalised. They regret that the media and authorities are focussing their attention now on NGOs carrying out these rescue operations, and not on the humanitarian crisis taking place in the Mediterranean. Full press release [here](#).

(12/03) Fighting crime: faster EU-wide exchange of non-EU nationals' criminal records. A new EU database, approved today by MEPs, will enable EU countries to exchange the criminal records of non-EU citizens' more quickly. MEPs agreed in a vote on Tuesday to create a new database on the past convictions of third country nationals (ECRIS-TCN), to complement the existing European Criminal Records Information System (ECRIS) that is used to exchange information on the previous convictions of EU citizens. The new centralised database will improve the exchange of information in regard to criminal records of non-EU nationals, throughout the EU, contributing to the EU's fight against cross-border crime and terrorism. Full press release [here](#).

European Council / Council of the EU

(1/04) European Border and Coast Guard: Council confirms agreement on stronger mandate. The EU is working to improve the protection of its external borders as part of its comprehensive approach to migration. EU ambassadors today confirmed on behalf of the Council the informal agreement reached between representatives of the European Parliament and the Romanian Presidency of the Council on a regulation on the European Border and Coast Guard. The new rules now need to be formally adopted by the European Parliament and the Council. Full press release [here](#).

(19/03) Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA III): Council agrees its position. The EU will continue to provide assistance to help prepare partners for future membership of the European Union and support their accession process. The Council today agreed its position (partial general approach) on the draft Regulation establishing the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA III) for the period 2021–2027. The agreed text does not cover financial and horizontal issues, which will depend on the overall agreement on the next multiannual financial framework. Pre-accession assistance supports the beneficiaries in adopting and implementing key political, institutional, social and economic reforms to comply with EU values and to progressively align to the EU's rules, standards and policies. Full press release [here](#).

(18/03) Human rights: Council approves the EU human rights guidelines on non-discrimination in external action. Full press release [here](#).

(8/03) "Supporting the future of Syria and the region": financial tracking report. At the last Brussels conference on "Supporting the future of Syria and the region" on 24-25 April 2018, hosted by the European Union and co-chaired with the United Nations, the international community and the governments of refugee hosting countries came together to reaffirm their commitments to help millions of affected civilians in Syria as well as Syrian refugees and the communities generously hosting them. Full press release [here](#).

Others

(27/03) EESC - Europe must become a global leader in sustainable development. The European Union must get closer to its citizens and become the global leader in sustainable development, argues the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) in a bold [opinion on the future of the EU](#), which was adopted at its plenary session in March. In this opinion, the Committee calls for a new EU strategy which takes a holistic and cross-sector policy approach centred around Europeans' needs and sustainability, and puts forward policy recommendations touching on eleven priorities. Full press release [here](#).

(27/03) FRA - Despite falling migration numbers problems remain. A look at the migration situation over 2018 points to hardship entering the EU, anti-migrant feelings and tougher asylum laws and policies, as the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights reports. However, it also acknowledges EU and Member State efforts to improve the situation of migrants and asylum seekers. The ['Beyond the peak: challenges remain, but migration numbers drop'](#) report looks into the fundamental rights of people seeking international protection throughout 2018. It draws on the agency's regular [migration updates in selected EU Member States](#). Full press release [here](#).

(25/03) New EIB - Bank of Kigali cooperation to support RWF 60 billion private sector investment in Rwanda. On the margins of the Africa CEO conference, the European Investment Bank, the long-term lending institution of the European Union, and Bank of Kigali today agreed their largest ever cooperation to support new business investment across Rwanda. Under the agreement, the European Investment Bank will provide RWF 30 billion to support investment by Rwandan firms engaged in a range of productive sectors. This credit line will address the need for longer-term business funding, essential to accelerate economic growth, creating skilled jobs, increasing export revenues and improving tax revenues for national socio-economic development. Full press release [here](#).

(22/03) EESC - "No Education, No Vote", a mandatory syllabus on EU affairs for European students was the most voted proposal at YEYS 2019. A mandatory syllabus on European politics to increase knowledge of citizens before casting their ballots was the most voted proposal in the 2019 edition of Your Europe, Your Say (YEYS), the youth event organised by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) on 21-22 March 2019. This initiative and three other selected proposals, focused on the use of new technologies and social media to increase participation in EU elections, will be sent to the European Parliament for their consideration. Full press release [here](#).

(20/03) FRA - FRA presents its statistical methods on hard-to-reach populations. The agency has developed and refined the methodology on hard-to-reach populations in its EU wide survey on minorities and discrimination (EU-MIDIS II). It presented the survey methodology and its implications during the annual spring meeting of the German Statistical Society ([DAGStat\(link is external\)](#)) in Munich on 20 March. DAGStat is a forum for statisticians and provide an opportunity to discuss different approaches to surveying immigrants and minority groups. Full press release [here](#).

(19/03) FRA - Pressing need to work together to tackle widespread hatred against Muslims. Following the terror attacks at two mosques in Christchurch on 15 March, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights calls for joint efforts to tackle the hatred Muslims face in their daily lives. Full press release [here](#).

(14/03) Eurostat - Asylum in the EU Member States - 580 800 first-time asylum seekers registered in 2018, down by 11% compared with 2017 - Syrians, Afghans and Iraqis continued to be the top citizenships. In 2018, 580 800 first-time asylum seekers applied for international protection in the Member States of the European Union (EU), down by 11% compared with 2017 (654 600) and less than half of the number recorded in the peak year 2015 when 1 256 600 first-time asylum applicants were registered. The number of asylum applicants in 2018 is comparable to the level recorded in 2014, before the peaks of 2015 and 2016. Full press release [here](#).

(12/03) EASO - Asylum applications in EU+ remain broadly stable despite spike in January. Despite a higher-than-average number of monthly applications and stock of cases awaiting a first-instance decisions registered in the first month of 2019, figures remain in-line with lower recent trends and fluctuations. In the first month of 2019, some 58 600 applications for international protection were lodged in the EU+, the second highest number in the past year. While this figure was 21 % higher than that recorded the previous month, it is in-line with annual fluctuations since Decembers are characterised by fewer applications due to festivities. The figure remains broadly aligned to the number of

applications in recent months. In February 2019, [EASO reported](#) a 10 % decrease in applications for international protection in 2018 over the previous year, returning to 2014 level. In January, Syrians, Afghans and Iraqis continued to lodge the most applications. These three nationalities together accounted for 23 % of all applicants in the EU+. Applicants from Pakistan and Venezuela represented an additional 9 %. Full press release [here](#).

(11/03) FRA - FRA issues Opinion on fundamental rights in the migration hotspots. In response to a request of the European Parliament of 22 February 2019, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights has issued an update of its 2016 Opinion on fundamental rights in the 'hotspots' set up in Greece and Italy – February 2019. Full press release [here](#).

(8/03) FRA - Ethnic and migrant minority definitions and its implications. The agency discussed ethnic and migrant minority definitions and its implications during a policy dialogue conference on 8 March 2019 in Palermo. The event was organised by the EU-funded COST Action on ethnic and immigrant minorities survey data. Full press release [here](#).

(7/03) EASO - EASO publishes a COI report: Iraq – Targeting of individuals. Today, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) published a Country of Origin Information (COI) Report titled Iraq: Targeting of individuals. This report is part of a series of Iraq reports produced in 2018-2019. These reports cover actors of protection, internal mobility, and targeting of individuals. A security situation report will also be published in March 2019. The reports provide information relevant for international protection status determination for Iraqi asylum seekers, and will be used in the development of a country guidance note on Iraq. Full press release [here](#).

(6/03) Eurostat - Acquisition of citizenship in the EU - EU Member States granted citizenship to over 800 thousand persons in 2017 - Moroccans, Albanians and Indians were the main recipients. In 2017, around 825 000 persons acquired citizenship of a Member State of the European Union (EU), down from 995 000 in 2016 and 841 000 in 2015. Of the total number of persons obtaining the citizenship of one of the EU Member States in 2017, 17% were former citizens of another EU Member State, while the majority were non-EU citizens or stateless. Full press release [here](#).

(1/03) Frontex - Frontex Consultative Forum publishes annual report. Full press release [here](#).

(28/02) Social Platform - Social Europe at a crossroads – will the European Pillar of Social Rights survive the European elections? As the European Union enters the final stages of its preparations for the European Parliament elections, many of us are beginning to take stock of what progress has been made so far on Social Europe – and what still needs to be done. The current Commission is counting on the European Pillar of Social Rights to be its social legacy. As we prepare to welcome an influx of new decision- and policy-makers, what is the state-of-play of this important initiative? Full article [here](#).

(27/02) EASO - EASO publishes 'Country Guidance: Nigeria'. The EASO Management Board endorsed the guidance note on Nigeria in its 31st meeting on 18-19 February 2019. This is the second country guidance published by EASO, after the pilot '[Country Guidance: Afghanistan](#)'. It represents an important step in consolidating the efforts of Member States to develop common analysis and guidance on main countries of origin, in a process which is coordinated and facilitated by EASO. The guidance reflects the assessment of a network of

senior-level policy officials from Member States and associated countries, the EASO Country Guidance Network, and takes into account the input of the European Commission and UNHCR. The '[Country Guidance: Nigeria](#)' is a non-binding document. It is intended as a tool for policy-makers and decision-makers in the context of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and aims to assist in the examination of applications for international protection, and, ultimately, to foster convergence in the decision practices of Member States. Full press release [here](#).

(20/02) Frontex - Frontex publishes Risk Analysis for 2019. Full press release [here](#).

(19/02) UNHCR - Not enough resettlement solutions for refugees worldwide. Resettlement, which involves the relocation of refugees from a country of asylum to a country that has agreed to admit them and grant them permanent settlement, is available only to a fraction of the world's refugees. Typically, less than one per cent of the 20 million refugees under UNHCR's mandate worldwide are ever resettled. The data covers specifically UNHCR-facilitated resettlements and shows that the highest numbers of resettlement departures originated in major refugee-hosting countries, including Lebanon (9,800), Turkey (9,000), Jordan (5,100) and Uganda (4,000). Out of 81,310 requests for resettlement made by UNHCR in 2018, the largest number were for people from Syria (28,200), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (21,800), Eritrea (4,300) and Afghanistan (4,000). More than two thirds of requests for resettlement were for survivors of violence and torture, people with legal and physical protection needs, and women and girls at risk. More than half of all resettlement submissions in 2018 were for children. Full press release [here](#).

(18/02) Eurodiaconia - Eurodiaconia signed a statement on the Asylum and Migration Funds and European Social Fund+ proposals. Together with UNHCR and partner NGOs, Eurodiaconia has co-signed a statement that urges legislators to ensure the objectives of the Asylum and Migration Funds (AMF) and European Social Fund+ (ESF+), including more humane, transparent and effective asylum, migration and integration policies. The signatories welcome the general orientation of the European Commission's proposed Asylum and Migration Funds, which emphasizes the role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) as well as local and regional authorities in the field of integration. Considering their direct involvement in integration and reception actions, the statement suggests enhancing their capacities by e.g. earmarking 10 percent of the financial envelope of the AMF's Thematic Facility to CSOs and local and regional authorities. Secondly, the statement addresses the division of integration competencies between AMF and the European Social Fund+. In the Commission's current proposal, the AMF would only cover early integration measures, while long-term integration is to fall under the ESF+. For this division to work, the signatories point to the need for synergies between the two funding tools. Funding gaps for the integration of migrants and refugees are particularly concerning, as there is no minimum allocation requirement for the legal migration/integration objective for the Member States in the AMF proposal and no earmarking for third-country nationals within the social inclusion component of the ESF+ either. Full press release [here](#).

(13/02) Red Cross EU Office - Using AMF to support transparent and effective migration policies. The undersigned organisations call on the co-legislators to consider a number of key asks to make sure that the Asylum and Migration Fund (AMF) plays a considerable role in supporting its stated objectives, including more humane, transparent and effective asylum and migration policies. In June 2018, the European Commission published a set of proposals to establish the new European Union's (EU) Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for the

period 2021-2027. As part of these proposals, the AMF, which will succeed to the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), is currently being negotiated by the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission. The AMF should aim to support fair and efficient asylum systems in Europe, to guarantee safe and dignified returns of third-country nationals, as well as to harmonise high standards in the field of asylum, reception, and integration. Full press release [here](#).

[COUNCIL OF EUROPE](#)

[CIVIL SOCIETY](#)

(1/04) Missing Children Europe - "Hear our voices" urge young migrants: meaningful participation is essential for effective child protection. [Missing Children Europe](#) and the (Maltese) [President's Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society](#) have just concluded the third edition of the [Lost in Migration conference](#) on the basis of which several concrete recommendations have been put together for the protection of children in migration. According to the [European Migration Network's report](#) published in July 2018, more than 30,000 unaccompanied children went missing between 2014 and 2017. These children go missing because of poor conditions in some reception centres, lack of information on their rights and options, slow and complex procedures for protection, lack of training of professionals who work with or support children, and lack of coordination at national and cross-border level. Full press release [here](#).

[PUBLICATIONS](#)

UNHCR - [Remove child migrants from detention centres](#) (via Newsbook)

EASO - [Practical Guide on the best interests of the child in asylum procedures](#).

Eurochild - [Child Guarantee: An EU that helps fight child poverty](#)

Council of the EU General Secretariat – [Think Tank Review](#) (February)

Council of the EU General Secretariat – [Think Tank Review](#) (March)

European Commission - [Legal Migration](#) (Fitness Check)

European Commission - [Family Reunification](#) (Implementation report)

European Commission - [Single Permit](#) (Implementation report)

European Commission - [Long Term Residents](#) (Implementation report)

EAPN - [Combatting In-Work Poverty](#) (Compendium of promising practices)

MPI - [Global Governance of International Migration 2.0: What Lies Ahead?](#)

Bruegel/OPC - [Towards EU-MENA shared prosperity](#)

EPRS - [State Of The Union: Spring 2019](#) (Think Tank Review)

EPRS - [The EU And Middle East And North Africa](#) (Think Tank Review)

EPRS - [Delivering For Citizens: The Migration Issue](#) (Podcast)

EPRS - [The Cost Of Non-Europe In The Area Of Legal Migration](#)

EPRS - [Legal Migration To The EU](#)