

INFO FLASH 25/02

EU INSTITUTIONS

European Commission

(19/02) Afghan refugees: €21 million in humanitarian aid for host communities and vulnerable populations in Pakistan and Iran. The European Commission is releasing an additional €21 million in humanitarian aid for Afghan refugees in neighbouring Iran and Pakistan. The announcement was made at the International Conference on 40 Years of Hosting Afghan Refugees held in Pakistan. Full press release [here](#).

(14/02) New Africa-Caribbean-Pacific/EU Partnership: moving forward towards a new partnership fit for the future. Today, new impetus was given to the post-Cotonou negotiations on a new agreement between the EU and African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP) as the two chief negotiators agreed on the way forward. Full press release [here](#).

(5/02) Joint Statement ahead of the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation. Full statement [here](#).

(31/01) A new dawn for Europe: Joint op-ed by President von der Leyen, President Michel and President Sassoli. Full article [here](#).

(29/01) European Commission 2020 Work Programme: An ambitious roadmap for a Union that strives for more. Today the European Commission adopted its 2020 Work Programme. It sets out the actions the Commission will take in 2020 to turn the Political Guidelines of President von der Leyen into tangible benefits for European citizens, businesses and society. The driving force behind this first Work Programme is to successfully grasp the opportunities that the twin ecological and digital transitions will bring. Full press release [here](#).

(28/01) European Commission and International Monetary Fund strengthen cooperation to support sustainable development - European Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen, on behalf of the European Union, and International Monetary Fund's Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva concluded a new Financial Framework Partnership Agreement that will boost their cooperation to tackle key challenges including climate change, and help countries achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The European Union is the IMF's main partner in capacity development since 2016. Press release [here](#).

(22/01) Africa-Europe Alliance: Four new financial guarantees worth €216 million signed under the EU External Investment Plan. The European Commission signed today four guarantee agreements worth €216 million that will help unlock €2 billion to invest in renewables, urban infrastructure and start-ups in Africa and the Neighbourhood. The guarantees were signed with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the European Investment Bank (EIB), the German KfW Group and the Spanish development cooperation agency, Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo (AECID), at the 4th Strategic Board meeting of the External Investment Plan (EIP). Full press release [here](#).

(16/01) Drought in southern Africa: EU releases over €22 million in humanitarian aid. The European Commission is mobilising a humanitarian aid package of €22.8 million to help address emergency food needs and support vulnerable people in Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The funding comes as large parts of southern Africa are currently in the grip of their harshest drought in decades. Full press release [here](#).

(14/01) The Just Transition Mechanism: Making Sure No One Is Left Behind. Infosheet [here](#).

(14/01) First-stage consultation of social partners on Fair Minimum Wages in the EU. Full document [here](#).

(14/01) A strong social Europe for just transitions. Infosheet [here](#).

(20/12) The EU is boosting its support to Morocco with new programmes worth €389 million. The European Commission is today adopting new cooperation programmes worth €389 million in support of the Kingdom of Morocco, in order to support reforms, inclusive development and border management and work towards developing a 'Euro-Moroccan partnership for shared prosperity'. Full press release [here](#).

(18/12) Africa-Europe Alliance: EU boosts pan-African Internet connectivity with €30 million. Today, the EU has announced additional €30 million for the project "AfricaConnect", that will provide affordable, high-capacity Internet for research and education networks across Africa. Full press release [here](#).

(18/12) Resettlement: EU Member States' pledges exceed 30,000 places for 2020. The European Commission announced financial support for Member States that collectively pledged more than 30,000 resettlement places for 2020 at the first Global Refugee Forum in Geneva. Since 2015, more than 65,000 vulnerable refugees have found protection in Europe through the EU's resettlement schemes. The collective pledge from Member States for a further 30,000 resettlement places in 2020 confirms the EU's role as a global leader on resettlement. Full press release [here](#).

European Parliament

(13/02) Female genital mutilation: where, why and consequences. More than 200 million girls and women alive today have suffered female genital mutilation. Discover where it is practised, the reasons for it and its impact. Full press release [here](#).

(19/12) Human Rights breaches in Russia, Afghanistan and Burkina Faso. The European Parliament deplores the widespread and ongoing sexual abuse of thousands of boys and young men in Afghanistan, a practice locally known as bacha bazi, which constitutes child slavery and is prevalent in several provinces in the country. The bachas, typically boys between 10 and 18 years old, are often bought or kidnapped from impoverished families by influential members of the elite in rural areas, including politicians and army officers, after which they are sexually abused by men. MEPs condemn any form of violence, intimidation and the kidnapping of civilians in Burkina Faso, in particular violence targeting specific religious communities, as well as the misuse of religion to legitimise persecution of Christians and other religious minorities. Full press release [here](#).

European Council / Council of the EU

(17/02) Human rights: EU adopts conclusions on EU priorities at United Nations Human Rights Fora in 2020. The Council today adopted conclusions on the priorities to be followed by the EU in United Nations human rights fora this year. On the occasion of the year marking the 75th anniversary of the entry into force of the UN Charter, the Council conclusions reaffirm EU's commitment to the rule-based international order – human rights protection being an important part of it. In its conclusions the Council restates its commitment to actively uphold, defend and promote the UN Human Rights system as a priority of its external action throughout 2020. In particular the EU will continue to use all available tools to fulfil its commitments to human rights, including in the framework of the UN Human Rights Council, the UN General Assembly, the UN Security Council and any other relevant fora, denouncing human rights violations and abuses globally. Full press release [here](#).

Others

(25/02) EIB - Mali: 90,000 smallholders and entrepreneurs to benefit from EIB backed expansion of leading microfinance institution. Rural smallholders and low-income entrepreneurs across Mali will benefit from improved access to finance and local currency loans essential for expanding business activity or agriculture following EUR 10 million support from the European Investment Bank, the world's largest international public bank, formally agreed in Bamako today. The new support will enable significant expansion of financial services provided by Kafo Jiginew, a leading microfinance institution in Mali. The new support is expected to enable around 60,000 microfinance loans to be provided to smallholder farmers and provide financing for more almost 15,000 people. Full press release [here](#).

(24/02) EIB - EIB confirms €3 billion of new investment across Africa in 2019. Last year, the European Investment Bank (EIB) provided €3 billion of new financing that will support €10.7 billion of transformational investment across Africa. "Africa is a key priority for the European Union and the European Investment Bank. The European Investment Bank is committed to working with African partners to accelerate and expand new investment that delivers sustainable development, tackles the climate emergency, creates jobs and improves lives across Africa. The €3 billion of new investment in Africa supported by the EU bank in 2019 builds on 57 years of engagement across 52 African countries. In recent months, the EIB has launched pioneering new initiatives to accelerate new investment essential to enabling women to fully participate in economic activity under the pioneering SheInvest programme, to ensure African innovation companies can expand and to combine our financial understanding with philanthropy to tackle malaria. said Werner Hoyer, European Investment Bank President. Full press release [here](#).

(19/02) Eurofound - EU Datathon 2020: Creating an economy that works for people – Eurofound data provides critical contribution. Eurofound's pan-European data on quality of life and economic developments at regional level is being made available as part of EU Datathon 2020. The EU Datathons are annual open data competitions organised by the Publications Office of the EU to create new value for citizens through innovation and promoting the use of open data produced by the EU institutions. Full press release [here](#).

(12/02) European Committee of the Regions - Local democracy faces increasingly "hostile environment" in enlargement countries. The European Union should do much more to support the consolidation of effective and independent public administrations in municipalities and regions in the Balkans and Turkey. This would, the European Committee of the Regions argues in an opinion adopted on 12 February, help counter the "increasingly hostile environment for civil society" in some countries, help drive economic growth and, more broadly, advance sustainable development. Full press release [here](#).

(27/01) EIB/Unicef - EIB and UNICEF partner to help improve access to quality education and protect children from climate change. The European Investment Bank (EIB) and UNICEF today announced a new partnership aimed at increasing access to quality education and reducing the impact of climate change on children. Under a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by EIB Group President Werner Hoyer and UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore, the two institutions committed to jointly investing in quality education and skills training for the most vulnerable children. EIB and UNICEF will also scale-up community-based climate adaptation initiatives in schools and health facilities. Full press release [here](#).

(20/01) European Committee of the Regions - International conference as a part of the Knowledge Exchange Platform on Social Innovation - „Quadruple Helix approach to social innovation – „a key to success”. The European Commission and the European Committee of the Regions in association with City of Zagreb, City office for social protection and persons with disabilities, is organizing, for the first time in Croatia, an international conference as a part of the Knowledge Exchange Platform on Social Innovation - „Quadruple Helix approach to social innovation – „a key to success”, that will be held on the 31st of January 2020 in Hotel International in Zagreb. Press release [here](#).

(9/01) EASO - EASO publishes a new Country of Origin Information (COI) report: Syria – Actors. The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) has published a Country of Origin Information (COI) report titled "[Syria - Actors](#)". This report is part of a series of Syria reports produced in 2019-2020. These reports cover actors of protection, internal mobility, key socio-economic indicators, and targeting of individuals. The reports provide information relevant for international protection status determination for Syrian asylum seekers and will be used in the development of a country guidance note on Syria. Full press release [here](#).

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

(23/01) The right to affordable housing: Europe’s neglected duty. “Increasingly making the headlines, the scarcity of affordable housing in Europe is a serious and growing problem that pushes an ever-larger number of people into housing insecurity and homelessness.”, says Dunja Mijatović, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, in her Human Rights Comment published today. Full press release [here](#).

(22/01) Committee of Ministers adopts new action plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion. The Committee of Ministers today adopted the [Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion 2020-2025](#) to combat anti-Gypsyism and discrimination and to support equality. The plan will also foster democratic participation, promote public trust and accountability and support access to inclusive quality education and training. Many of the 10-12 million Roma and Travellers living in Europe suffer from extreme poverty and exclusion. The existence of widespread anti-Gypsyism reinforces and aggravates their economic and

social deprivation. These inequalities persist despite ongoing efforts at national, European, and international level to tackle anti-Roma and anti-Traveller prejudice, discrimination and hate crime. The new plan reinforces progress made under the Council of Europe's Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers (2016-2019), which tackled anti-Roma and anti-Traveller prejudice, discrimination and crimes ("anti-Gypsyism") with innovative models for local-level solutions and inclusive policies. Full press release [here](#).

(18/12) Drahoslav Štefánek: new Special Representative for Migration and Refugees.

Today, on the occasion of International Migrants Day, the Secretary General Marija Pejčinović Burić announced the appointment of Ambassador Drahoslav Štefánek as her new Special Representative on migration and refugees. The Council of Europe has followed the situation of refugees and migrants over many years and has been particularly concerned with the protection of the most vulnerable, such as children on the move, including unaccompanied children. The mandate of the Special Representative is to gather information on how the fundamental rights of migrants and refugees are protected on the ground in the member states, and to develop proposals for action at national and European level, including liaising with international partners. Full press release [here](#).

CIVIL SOCIETY

(17/02) Eurochild - Eurochild: European Child Guarantee can be EU's answer to child poverty (via Euractiv).

A staggering 22.7 million children live in poverty or social exclusion across the European Union. That's one in four children in the EU. This is unacceptable for one of the most prosperous regions in the world. Due to migration, economic hardship, disability or discrimination, many families are struggling to make ends meet. Children are the first to suffer. The consequences will be felt for many years to come. Full article [here](#).

(17/02) RedCross EU - Red Cross EU Office: Protecting the liberty of migrants.

Despite the long-lasting negative impacts of detention on people's mental health and well-being, immigration detention is being used more and more. As reducing irregular entry and stay remains a top priority for the EU and Member States, increasing numbers of vulnerable migrants are being detained – especially at borders and to enforce the Common European Asylum System. Full press release [here](#).

(17/02) ICMC: The Investment of Civil Society in the Global Forum on Migration and Development.

With the conclusion of Global Forum on Migration and Development's Quito Summit, ICMC Director of Policy Stéphane Jaquemet examines what civil society has achieved and what to expect of the process as it moves forward. Full press release [here](#).

(14/02) Social Platform: Decent minimum wages for all – soon to be an EU reality?

On 5 February, Social Platform participated in a conference organised by the Socialists & Democrats (S&D) group in the European Parliament on the topic of decent minimum wages. The conference was opened by S&D Group President Iratxe García Pérez, who highlighted the importance of decent minimum wages as one of the key tools to give dignity back to workers. Full press release [here](#).

(14/02) ECRE - Joint statement: The new Pact on Asylum and Migration: An Opportunity Seized or Squandered?

After years of treating asylum and migration in crisis mode, we believe the proposed Pact on Asylum and Migration is an opportunity for the EU and its Member States to change direction. It is an opportunity to develop a rational and rights-based asylum and

migration policy. Recent cooperation among Member States signals the possibility of a fresh start, which should build on the lessons of the recently attempted and largely failed reform of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). However, there is a risk that the Pact may include or prepare the groundwork for damaging legislative proposals, in particular what has been termed the “border instrument”. Full press release [here](#).

(12/02) ECRE - Save the Date: ECRE/UNHCR Thematic Report Launch: “Follow the Money III”. ECRE/UNHCR Thematic Report Launch: “Follow the Money III” Solidarity: The use of AMIF funds to incentivise resettlement and relocation in the EU UNHCR and the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) are pleased to invite you to the launch of the “Follow the Money III” report, on the use of AMIF financial incentives (lump sums) provided to EU Member States participating in refugee resettlement and intra-EU relocation. The objectives of the report are to map and assess how the use of AMIF funds incentivises the use of safe and legal routes for those seeking international protection. Full press release [here](#).

(10/02) Politico.eu - Council President Michel tells African leaders a changed Europe wants new ties. In speech, Council president says 22 EU countries did not have colonies and new leaders ‘are not hampered by the burden of nostalgia.’ Full article [here](#).

(7/02) ECRE - Council’s Five-Year Strategic Guidelines Reinforce Focus on Return. A draft version of the strategic guidelines of the Council of the EU in the field of Justice and Home Affairs (JHA), leaked by [Stawatch](#), details how the Council plans to implement the [Strategic Agenda 2019-2024](#) to guide the EU’s work in the next five years in relation to migration and asylum. A priority is upscaling the cooperation with third countries across various policy areas to facilitate the “return of migrants”. The guidelines will be submitted for endorsement to the Council on 12-13 March 2020 in view of the European Council meeting on 26-27 March 2020. Full press release [here](#).

(7/02) ECRE - Spain: Authorities Denounced for Indirect Returns to Mali. The Spanish Refugee Support Commission (CEAR) [denounces](#) the indirect return by Spanish authorities of people of Malian origin to the conflict-torn country via Mauretania, against UNHCR guidelines. Full press release [here](#).

(31/01) ECRE - OXFAM Report: Migration Control Objectives Threaten Development Cooperation. In Oxfam’s recent [report](#) entitled “The EU Trust Fund for Africa: Trapped between aid policy and migration politics” the NGO exposes a new and worrying trajectory for development aid that is more closely linked with donors’ migration policies and the implicit aim of stopping irregular migration. They warn this trend poses a risk to development actors’ ability to contribute to poverty and inequality reduction. Full press release [here](#).

(29/01) Social Platform - European Commission releases its “first reflections” on Social Europe. “People care about the future of our children and our society, and about fairness and equality in every sense of the word,” states European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in the opening of the Commission’s communication ‘[A strong Social Europe for just transitions](#)’. The communication, published on 14 January, presents the Commission’s “first reflections” on how social policies can deliver real and lasting positive changes to people’s lives, and is intended to build upon the aims of the European Pillar of Social Rights. Full press release [here](#).

(29/01) Social Platform - It's time to invest in people – Social Platform European Parliament event on the European Pillar of Social Rights and ESF+. On 28 January 2020, Social Platform co-hosted a European Parliament conference, together with Member of the European Parliament (MEP) Brando Benifei. The event was the first in a series of Social Platform European Parliament events focused on different aspects of the European Pillar of Social Rights (Social Pillar). This conference analysed the link between the Social Pillar and the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) programme, which is the European Union's main financial instrument for improving workers' mobility and employment opportunities and strengthening social cohesion, improving social fairness and increasing competitiveness across Europe for the 2021-2027 period. Full press release [here](#).

(29/01) Social Platform - Social Platform presents its key messages on the European Semester Autumn Package to the Social Protection Committee and Employment Committee. On 27 January, Social Platform spoke at a joint meeting of the Social Protection Committee (SPC) and the Employment Committee (EMCO), giving its views as well as the views of several of its members on the 2020 Autumn Package. The Autumn Package outlines the European Commission's social and economic priorities and guidelines for the following year in the framework of the European Semester, the EU's main socio-economic governance tool. Social Platform was accompanied by a delegation of two of its members, the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) and Eurochild who presented their views as well. Full press release [here](#).

(28/01) Social Platform - Social Platform at the European Commission's strategic dialogue meeting on the European Semester. On 24 January, Social Platform participated in a strategic dialogue meeting on the European Semester, organised by the European Commission. In these meetings, the European Commission invites interested EU level civil society organisations (CSOs) active on the European Semester to update them on last steps in the process and hear their views on them. Full press release [here](#).

(23/01) ECRE - Op-Ed: Refugee Mental Health – Normal Reactions to Abnormal Situations. “Normal reactions to abnormal situations.”- It was only until I heard this characterization by a trauma specialist that I began to understand the mental health concerns of young refugees. This concept becomes even clearer when considering the reports from places like the Greek islands where adolescent asylum seekers have begun to act violently against each other. Attacks are common in an unsafe and deeply precarious camp setting and even some with fatal consequences. When you place their actions in the context of their situation, their behavior, while not excusable, becomes understandable. As described by researchers and practitioners, these reactions are normal when faced with stressors as severe as a migration journey, isolation and uncertainty. Moreover, they're exacerbated by a lack of community whether familial or cultural. Yet mental health services are not accessible for most people living at the Moria camp, and remain out of reach for many refugees across Europe. Full press release [here](#).

(23/01) ECRE - Human Rights Committee: Effects of Climate Change Can Trigger Non-Refoulement Obligations. On 7 January 2020, the Human Rights Committee (the Committee) published its views on an alleged violation of the right to life as a result of the effects of climate change. The applicant, a national of the Republic of Kiribati, was denied international protection status in New Zealand and was subsequently removed to his country of origin. He claimed that the effects of climate change and sea level rise had resulted in the contamination of fresh drinking water, and prompted increasingly violent land disputes. The Committee observed that the primary issue to determine in this case was whether the State had arbitrarily or erroneously evaluated the applicant's complaint that his return violated his right to life. Full press release [here](#).

(22/01) Social Platform - One step ahead for Social Europe. Last week the European Parliament adopted the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs ("EMPL") report on the next European Social Fund (ESF+) by a considerable majority. The adopted text can be found [here](#). The outcome of the vote is good news for a more social Europe and a welcome incentive for a more ambitious implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights. The Parliament increased the overall ESF+ budget to €120,46 billion (an 19% increase compared to the original proposal by the European Commission), by doubling the resources for youth employment and by introducing a Child Guarantee of €5.9 billion. Funds allocated for the implementation of the future Health Programme under ESF+ got a 14.5% increase. Full article [here](#).

(20/12) ECRE - Global Refugee Forum: EU MS Pledge 30,000 Resettlement for 2020, MEPs Urges More Ambition. During the Global Refugee Forum taking place in Geneva, December 16-18, EU member states have pledged a total of 30,000 resettlement places for 2020, backed with financial support from the European Commission. A delegation of MEPs called for more ambitious resettlement efforts. Full press release [here](#).

(20/12) ECRE - Refugees in Niger Protest Against Delay of Resettlement and Dire Conditions. Almost 1000 people have protested in front of the office of the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) in Agadez, Niger, against the poor conditions in the UNHCR-run facility and the delay of resettlement procedures. The systemic isolation in the centre is considered a model for "outsourcing of the asylum system outside Europe". Full press release [here](#).

(20/12) Age Platform - COFACE Families Europe & AGE Platform Europe: European political groups fail to create a pluralistic forum to discuss demographic change and intergenerational solidarity. We are disappointed that the European Parliament has not considered our joint proposal for a pluralistic intergroup on 'Demographic Change and Solidarity between Generations'. Our proposal gathered support from around 50 Members of European Parliament (MEPs) from five different political groups, and was meant to support the European Parliament in addressing Europe's demographic challenges in a progressive, pluralistic and inclusive way, reflecting the aspirations of millions of citizens of all ages and in line with EU fundamental values. Full press release [here](#).

(18/12) Caritas Europa - Fair migration policies for sustainable development. On International Migrants Day, Caritas Europa calls on the new European Commission to promote policies that enhance, foster and facilitate the potential of migration to contribute to sustainable development worldwide. This entails encouraging EU Member States to expand safe and legal migration channels to Europe and ensuring European policies do not undermine regional mobility in other parts of the world. Full press release [here](#).

(13/12) ICMC - ICMC Pledges to Support Vulnerable Refugees and Host Communities at First Global Refugee Forum. Because of their geographical proximity with conflict zones, low- and middle-income countries carry most of the burden of caring for the world's 26 million refugees. A year ago, all but two countries adopted the Global Compact for Refugees, vowing to improve international solidarity and responsibility-sharing. Now, at the first Global Refugee Forum, ICMC joins states, civil society organizations, private sector actors and other stakeholders to pledge concrete actions that support better responsibility-sharing and can improve the lives for refugees and host communities. Full press release [here](#).

(13/12) ICMC - How the Migration Diaspora Contributes to Developing Their Countries of Origin. While engaging in sometimes challenging integration processes in their new homes, migrants also care for their communities back home. Many go so far as putting in place development projects and forming diaspora associations. The work of these networks can improve the lives of migrants and communities involved. Full press release [here](#).

PUBLICATIONS

ECRE - [ECRE Policy Note: Migration Control Conditionality: A Flawed Model](#)

Social Platform – [Annual Report 2019](#)

ICMPD - [Migration Outlook 2020](#)

ICMPD - [Impact of Public Attitudes to migration on the political environment in the Euro-Mediterranean Region](#)

ICMPD – [Breaking Gridlocks: Recommendations for the next five years of EU migration policy](#)

CEPS - [Towards a new MFF: New priorities and their impact on Italy](#)

ReSOMA - [Integration outcomes of recent sponsorship and humanitarian visa arrivals - Policy Option Brief](#)

ReSOMA - [Public opinion on migrants: The effect of information and disinformation about EU policies - Policy Option Brief](#)

ReSOMA - [The increasing use of detention of asylum seekers and irregular migrants in the EU - Policy Option Brief](#)

ReSOMA - [Strategic litigation: the role of EU and international law in criminalising humanitarianism - Policy Option Brief](#)

ReSOMA - [SAR and Dublin: ad hoc responses to refusals to disembarkation - Policy Option Brief](#)

ReSOMA - [Implementation of the Global Compacts on Refugees \(GCR\) - Policy Option Brief](#)

ReSOMA - [Funding a long-term comprehensive approach to integration at the local level - Policy Option Brief](#)

ReSOMA - [Secondary movements of asylum seekers within the European Union - Policy Option Brief](#)

EPRS - [Global Trendometer 2019](#)

EPRS - [Migration And Border Management: Heading 4 Of The 2021-2027 MFF](#)

EPRS - [The European Council And The 2021-27 Multiannual Financial Framework](#)

EPRS - [Family Reunification Rights Of Refugees And Beneficiaries Of Subsidiary Protection](#)

Council of the EU General Secretariat - [Think Tank Review - February 2020](#)

Council of the EU General Secretariat - [Think Tank Review - January 2020](#)

Council of the EU General Secretariat - [Think Tank Review - December 2019](#)

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