

INFO FLASH 22/05

EU INSTITUTIONS

European Commission

(20/05) EU launches global diaspora engagement mapping and platform. The EU launched the first results of a global mapping of diaspora engagement on the newly created website www.diasporafordevelopment.eu - This mapping is part of the EU Global Diaspora Facility (EUDiF). 272 million people live outside of their country of origin, with more than half in Europe and Northern America (IOM World Migration Report 2020). Whilst not all these people are actively maintaining links with their countries of origin, a significant proportion is active in supporting the development of their country of origin (or heritage for descendants of migrants). Maximising the potential of this 'global diaspora' is the focus of the EU Global Diaspora Facility (EUDiF). The project runs from June 2019 to the end of 2022 and is implemented by the [International Centre for Migration Policy Development \(ICMPD\)](#). Full press release [here](#).

(20/05) 2020 European Semester: Country Specific Recommendations / Commission Recommendations. All specific recommendations [here](#).

(14/05) Coronavirus: EU provides support in Horn of Africa region. The EU is providing an additional €105.5 million to countries in the Horn of Africa as the coronavirus pandemic risks worsening the humanitarian situation across the region where many continue to suffer from armed conflict, displacement, and recurrent droughts and floods. Furthermore, a large-scale infestation of locusts threatens food security and livelihoods of many vulnerable people in the region. Full press release [here](#).

(12/05) Commission publishes guidance on coronavirus-related humanitarian aid to Syria despite sanctions. The European Commission has published detailed guidance on how coronavirus-related humanitarian aid can be sent to countries and areas around the world that are subject to EU sanctions. This guidance note on Syria is the first in a series of comprehensive Q&As, which aims to give practical guidance on how to comply with EU sanctions when providing humanitarian aid, in particular medical assistance, to fight the coronavirus pandemic. By clarifying the responsibilities and processes for the provision of this aid, this note should facilitate the task of humanitarian operators in Syria. It should speed up the channelling of equipment and assistance to fight the coronavirus pandemic in Syria. It is addressed to all actors involved in the supply of humanitarian aid, such as the competent authorities of EU Member States, which manage the implementation of EU sanctions, and public and private operators (donors, NGOs, banks and other actors involved in humanitarian activities), which must comply with EU sanctions when providing assistance. Full press release [here](#).

(28/04) EU announces €194 million additional support to the Sahel. The President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission Josep Borrell participated in the EU-G5 Sahel videoconference. The videoconference provided an opportunity to reaffirm the EU's support to the region, including in facing the coronavirus

pandemic and its impact. On this occasion, the European Commission announced an additional €194 million to support the security, stability and resilience in the Sahel. Full press release [here](#).

European Parliament

(19/05) Border controls in Schengen due to coronavirus: what can the EU do? Travelling freely in the EU was until two months ago a given for most Europeans, but restrictions introduced to halt the spread of the coronavirus meant the closing of internal borders in most parts of Europe. As the epidemiological situation improves and with the summer holidays in sight, countries are gradually restoring freedom of movement. MEPs demand that the passport-free Schengen zone returns to its full functioning as soon as possible. Full press release [here](#).

(30/04) Asylum and Migration Pact: MEPs push for legal and safe avenues. The New Pact on Asylum and Migration that the Commission is set to present soon is an “opportunity to give fresh and much-needed impetus to legal and safe migration”. In a letter to Commission Vice-President Margaritis Schinas and Commissioner Ylva Johansson sent by Juan Fernando López Aguilar (S&D, ES), Chair of the Civil Liberties Committee, on behalf of the committee, MEPs call for a balanced approach covering all pillars of the EU policy on asylum and migration, also addressing safe and legal migration. Full press release [here](#).

(27/04) Stop cooperation with and funding to the Libyan coastguard, MEPs ask. The EU should stop channeling funds to Libya to manage migration and to train its coastguard, as the violation of human rights of migrants and asylum-seekers continues. In a debate in the Civil Liberties Committee with representatives of the Commission, Frontex, UNHCR, the Council of Europe and NGOs, a majority of MEPs insisted that Libya is not a “safe country” for disembarkation of people rescued at sea and demanded that the cooperation with the Libyan coastguard stops. Full press release [here](#).

European Council / Council of the EU

(20/05) COVID-19: Council adopts €3 billion assistance package to support neighbouring partners. The Council today adopted a decision to provide up to 3 billion euros of macro-financial assistance to ten enlargement and neighbourhood partners to help them cope with the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic. Full press release [here](#).

Others

(13/05) EASO - EASO facilitating relocation of Unaccompanied Minors from Greece. The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) will immediately begin supporting the relocation of 1,600 Unaccompanied Minors (UAMs) from Greece to EU+ Member States. On 12 May 2020, EASO and the Greek Government agreed to an amendment to the Greek Operating Plan which allows for the Agency to facilitate the relocation of 1,600 UAMs from Greece to participating EU+ Member States in the scheme. Full press release [here](#).

(12/05) EASO - EASO cautions that COVID-19 could result in increased asylum-related migration. A new European Asylum Support Office (EASO) Special Report highlights that the

risk of COVID-19 taking hold in lower income countries, as well as leading to more insecurity, could result in increases in asylum applications in the medium term.

The Special Report examines the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on current and potential future asylum trends. The information therein is valid as of 7 May 2020 and follows data published on 30 April 2020 which shows a dramatic 43% decline in asylum applications in the EU+ in March. The report finds that, following the outbreak of COVID-19, which is disproportionately concentrated in the developed world, travel bans and other emergency measures have almost completely eliminated the number of asylum applications being lodged in the EU+. Full press release [here](#).

(8/05) EESC - Demographic challenges: Europe should combine a plethora of labour market and social measures to stop its depopulation and growing inequalities. With its share in the global population at an all-time low and another baby boom unlikely, Europe will need to take a holistic approach if it is to reverse its demographic decline, stimulating employment and embracing strong economic and social policies that can restore the confidence of its citizens in the future, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) said on 7 May. In the opinion Demographic challenges in the EU in light of economic and development inequalities, the EESC said that such an approach should prioritise active labour market policies that combat unemployment and help create quality jobs, especially for young people, whose unemployment rate remains about twice the average in every Member State. Full press release [here](#).

(7/05) EU Court of Auditors - EU Auditors' 2019 figures and findings - at a glance: checking how EU policies and spending deliver added value on the ground. The European Court of Auditors (ECA) is focusing increasingly on assessing the performance and added value of EU spending and regulatory action, according to its new activity report. In 2019, the EU's external auditors published 67 reports, reviews and opinions addressing many of the challenges the Union is facing, such as cross-border healthcare, renewable energy, cybersecurity, migration and fiscal governance. With Member States now facing an unprecedented challenge to public health and the economy due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all European institutions must build on past efforts to further improve the EU's financial management and ensure the Union delivers, said ECA President Klaus-Heiner Lehne. Full press release [here](#).

(5/05) EASO - EASO publishes the COI report "Syria - Security situation". Today, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) published the 2020 update to the Country of Origin Information (COI) report "Syria - Security situation". 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 applicants for international protection, and will be used in the development of a country guidance note on Syria. Full press release [here](#).

(30/04) FRA -Protecting workers' fundamental rights in tackling impact of COVID-19. COVID-19 is disrupting the lives and livelihoods of billions of workers across the globe. Ahead of International Workers' Day, the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) underlines the need for governments, workers and employers to continue their concerted efforts to combat the outbreak, ensure public health, and safeguard workers' fundamental rights now and in the future. Full press release [here](#).

(30/04) EASO - COVID-19: Asylum applications down by 43% in March. Applications for asylum in the EU+ dropped by almost half in March as COVID-19 containment measures took effect, following persistently high levels of applications in the first two months of the year. Figures released by the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) show that in March, just 34 737 applications were lodged in the EU+, dropping by 43% from February. Asylum authorities were affected to different extents across the EU+ by the COVID-19 outbreak, both with regard to the activities of asylum systems themselves, as well as due to border restrictions. Just before the COVID-19 outbreak in Europe, applications had increased compared to the same period in 2019 (+16% over January-February 2019), with 65 300 applications lodged in January and 61 100 in February. Thus, March figures are not truly indicative of asylum-related migration trends towards the EU+, but are rather the result of COVID-19 containment measures. Full press release [here](#).

[COUNCIL OF EUROPE](#)

[CIVIL SOCIETY](#)

(15/05) ECRE - CJEU Classifies Accommodation of Asylum Seekers in Hungarian Transit Zone as Detention. On 14 May 2020, the Court of Justice of the European Union published its judgment in the joined cases C-924/19 and 925/19 concerning, inter alia, the accommodation of asylum seekers in the Röszke transit zone at the Hungarian-Serbian border and the grounds of inadmissibility for asylum applications. Full press release [here](#).

(14/05) ILGA Europe - ILGA-Europe Rainbow Map Points To Make-or-Break Moment for LGBTI Rights in Europe. Published today, May 14, 2020, the ILGA-Europe Rainbow Map and Index reveals that once-leading countries in Europe are falling behind in their commitments to equality for LGBTI people. Combined with the COVID-19 pandemic, which disproportionately affects the most vulnerable and is being used by some governments as an excuse to advance their agendas to curtail human rights, the Map's findings identify a make-or-break moment for LGBTI equality in Europe. Press release [here](#).

(8/05) ECRE - Expert Council on NGO Law: Guidelines on Protecting NGO Work in Support of Refugees and Other Migrants. On 4 May 2020, the Expert Council on NGO Law published updated guidelines to ensure that laws, policies and practices in relation to human trafficking and the treatment of refugees do not encroach on the legitimate activities of NGOs. The updated guidelines follow the Expert Council's study 'Using criminal law to restrict the work of NGOs supporting refugees and other migrants in council of Europe member states'. The guidelines state that laws, policies, and practices should not prohibit or prevent NGOs from helping refugees or other migrants in distress at sea or on land; monitoring the treatment of refugees at border crossings or reception centres; providing food, shelter, medical treatment or legal advice to those in need. Moreover, NGOs should not be prevented from submitting or initiating proceedings under national or international mechanisms with respect to the rights and treatment of refugees. Full press release [here](#).

(30/05) ECRE - Report: Number of IDPs Worldwide at All Time High Due to Conflict and Disasters. According to the 2020 Global Report of the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), in 2019 the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) across the globe reached a total of 50.8 million. 45.7 million as a result of conflict and violence the highest

number on record, and according to the first ever global estimate 5.1 million as a result of disasters. Conflict and violence sparked displacements in Syria, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Ethiopia as well as Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. With a total of 45.7 million people, 2019 saw the highest ever recorded level of displacement due to violence and conflict. Full press release [here](#).

(27/04) EUObserver - Undocumented workers are Covid-19 'elephant in room'

(17/04) Caritas Europa - EU countries must urgently follow the lead of Luxembourg and Germany to relocate refugee children from Greece. Caritas Europa has repeatedly denounced the unbearable conditions reigning on the overcrowded Greek islands and [called for the immediate relocation of unaccompanied children](#). This is even more urgent today due to the COVID-19 pandemic. EU Member States must now do their utmost to put the European Commission coordinated relocation scheme into practice and transfer the promised 1,600 vulnerable children to a safe place. We welcome the relocation efforts made by the Luxembourgish and German governments and call on other EU Member States to follow their example. On Wednesday 15 April, [Luxembourg received 12 unaccompanied minors](#) between the ages of 11 and 16. Caritas Luxembourg is supporting the government with the reception of these children. Full press release [here](#).

PUBLICATIONS

CEPS - [The Coronavirus and Border Restrictions in the EU: Schengen and the right to asylum at risk?](#) (Webinar)

CEPS - [Why the EU should take the global lead in cancelling Africa's debt](#)

ECRE - [COVID-19 measures related to asylum and migration across Europe](#)

EPRS - [Recent Migration Flows To The EU](#)

EPRS - [Tackling The Coronavirus Outbreak: Impact On Asylum-Seekers In The EU](#)

EPRS - [Coronavirus And The World Of Work](#)

Eurofound - [Living, working and COVID-19: First findings – April 2020](#)

FRA - [Facial recognition technology: fundamental rights considerations in law enforcement](#)

FRA - [Relocating unaccompanied children: applying good practices to future schemes](#)

JRC - [Foreign Degrees, Region of Birth and Under-utilisation of Tertiary Education in the EU](#)

JRC - [Immigrant Key Workers: Their Contribution to Europe's COVID-19 Response](#)

MEDAM - [European and African perspectives on asylum and migration policy: Seeking common ground](#)

MPI - [As COVID-19 Slows Human Mobility, Can the Global Compact for Migration Meet the Test for a Changed Era?](#)

MPI - [The Rocky Road to a Mobile World after COVID-19](#)