

INFO FLASH 30/06

EU INSTITUTIONS

European Commission

(26/06) Emergency Trust Fund for Africa: EU mobilises almost €100 million to support the most vulnerable in the Horn of Africa. The European Union is mobilising €97.2 million of additional funding for programmes in the Horn of Africa to support the creation of job opportunities, public finance management, and access to education for vulnerable groups, in particular refugees and displaced persons, under the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF). Full press release [here](#).

(26/06) EU mobilises international donors to support Venezuelan refugees and migrants and countries in the region. Today, the European Union and the Spanish Government convened the International Donors' Conference in solidarity with Venezuelan refugees and migrants and countries in the region, with the support of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). Full press release [here](#).

(24/06) Victims' Rights: New Strategy to empower victims. The European Commission presented today its first ever EU Strategy on victims' rights to ensure that all victims of crime can fully rely on their rights, no matter where in the EU the crime took place. The strategy sets a number of actions for the next five years, focusing on two objectives: first, to empower victims to report crime, claim compensation and ultimately recover from consequences of crime; second, to work together with all relevant actors for victims' rights. In view of the recent outbreak of COVID-19 and subsequent lockdown measures, which had an impact on a rise in domestic violence, child sexual abuse, cybercrime and racist and xenophobic hate crime, it is particularly important that the framework for support and protection of victims is also resilient in crisis situations. Full press release [here](#).

(24/06) Emergency Trust Fund for Africa: the EU mobilises €52.5 million to support resilience, jobs and stability in the Sahel and Lake Chad region. The European Union is mobilising an additional €52.5 million to support new and ongoing programmes in the Sahel and Lake Chad region under the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF). Full press release [here](#).

(22/06) Commission publishes EU Code of Conduct on countering illegal hate speech online continues to deliver results. Today the European Commission released the [results of its fifth evaluation](#) of the 2016 Code of Conduct on countering illegal hate speech online. The results are overall positive with IT companies assessing 90% of flagged content within 24 hours and removing 71% of the content deemed to be illegal hate speech. However, the platforms need to further improve transparency and feedback to users. They also have to ensure that flagged content is evaluated consistently over time; separate and comparable evaluations carried out over different time periods showed divergences in performance. Full press release [here](#).

(18/06) European Commission launches a public consultation on a new Digital Education Action Plan. Today, the Commission is launching an EU-wide open public consultation to ensure that its forthcoming new Digital Education Action Plan will reflect the EU's education and training experience during the Coronavirus crisis. The pandemic saw the widespread closure of schools and universities with a switch to distance and online learning and the use of digital technologies on a massive and unprecedented scale. The consultation will help draw lessons from the experiences and inform the proposals of the Action Plan, which will be of key importance in the COVID-19 recovery period. Full press release [here](#).

(17/06) European Commission adopted Report on the Impact of Demographic Change in Europe. The European Commission has today adopted its first-ever Report on the Impact of Demographic Change. It presents the drivers of this long-term change and the impact it is having across Europe. It also highlights the links between demographic structures and the impact and recovery potential from the crisis. Full press release [here](#).

(12/06) Future Africa-Caribbean-Pacific States/EU Partnership: "Post-Cotonou" negotiations resume at ministerial level. The EU and the Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), formerly named the ACP Group of States, resumed today talks at the highest political level, a first since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, with the objective to advance talks towards the finishing line on the new 'Post Cotonou' agreement. The meeting has provided an important opportunity for the chief negotiators, Commissioner for International Partnerships, Jutta Urpilainen, and for the OACPS Professor Robert Dussey to build on the work, which has continued at technical level over the past weeks. Full press release [here](#).

(10/06) Understand, communicate and cooperate in getting the facts right: EU steps up action against disinformation. The European Commission and the EU High Representative presented today an assessment of response to disinformation amidst the outbreak of coronavirus and suggested steps and new actions to be quickly mobilised to protect the public health and societal resilience. Full press release [here](#).

(2/06) Questions and answers: the EU budget for external action in the next Multiannual Financial Framework. Together with the [new European Recovery Instrument](#) ('Next Generation EU'), the European Commission is proposing a targeted amendment to its initial proposal for the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) adopted in 2018. The new proposal reinforces the EU's capacity to support partners – in particular in the Western Balkans, the EU's wider Neighbourhood and Sub-Saharan Africa – in their efforts to fight and recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, in cooperation with partners such as international financial institutions, the United Nations and the World Health Organization. The External Action Guarantee and the European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus will be the key instruments in this regard. Full Q&A [here](#).

European Parliament

(24/06) MEPs approve €585 million to support refugees from Syria. Budget Committee MEPs gave their green light to top up support to refugees and host communities in Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon in response to the Syrian crisis. Full press release [here](#).

(23/06) Parliament calls for better protection of cross-border and seasonal workers. On 19 June, Parliament adopted a resolution on the situation of cross-border and seasonal workers in the context of the Covid-19-crisis and beyond, addressing mobility, precarious

working conditions and a lack of safety measures. MEPs call for a better protection and equal labour and social rights for all workers. Full press release [here](#).

(15/06) MEPs will assess the migration situation in the Central Mediterranean in the midst of the pandemic with representatives of EU institutions and international organisations. MEPs will assess the migration situation in the Central Mediterranean in the midst of the pandemic with representatives of EU institutions and international organisations. Full press release [here](#).

European Council / Council of the EU

(30/06) “On the path to a deeper and stronger partnership, living up to the European and African aspirations”: Council adopts conclusions on Africa. The Council today approved conclusions on Africa, restating the paramount importance of a stronger EU-Africa partnership. The conclusions note that Joint Communication Towards a comprehensive strategy with Africa constitutes an excellent basis on which to initiate a new ambitious partnership with Africa. The next EU-AU Summit will be a pivotal moment for renewing a comprehensive joint strategic approach that delivers on these aspirations. The conclusions underline that a prosperous, peaceful and resilient Africa is an essential EU foreign policy objective, and that the EU is determined to strengthen its relationship with the African states and the African Union, in a way that is responsive both to European and African aspirations. Full press release [here](#).

(16/06) Preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism: Council adopts conclusions on EU external action. The Council adopted conclusions reiterating its unwavering commitment to protecting EU citizens against terrorism and violent extremism in all their forms and irrespective of their origin. The conclusions highlight the threats posed by evolving forms of terrorism, and call for further strengthening of the EU’s external counter-terrorism engagement and action in certain priority geographic and thematic areas. They complement previous Council Conclusions on external counter-terrorism of 9 February 2015 and 19 June 2017. The Council recognises that terrorism is a global phenomenon and calls for enhanced cooperation with the areas most affected by terrorist advances. Key areas include the Western Balkans, North Africa and the Middle East, the Sahel region, and the Horn of Africa. Full press release [here](#).

(15/06) Human rights and democracy in the world: Council approves 2019 EU annual report. The Council today approved the 2019 EU annual report on human rights and democracy in the world. The report marks the final phase of implementation of the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2015-2019) and confirms that in 2019 the EU demonstrated once more its commitment to protect, support and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms worldwide. However, in many parts of the world, challenges remain. Human rights defenders, journalists and media workers are under threat and attack because of their daily work, civic and democratic space continues to be restricted, women’s and girls’ human rights are being violated, and vulnerable groups are often left behind and exposed to further discrimination and inequality. Full press release [here](#).

(8/06) Council approves EU development aid targets for 2020 in a report to the European Council. The Council today adopted conclusions on the EU development aid targets for 2020 in the form of the tenth annual report to the European Council. The report analyses trends with regard to commitments and delivery on the EU’s official development

assistance (ODA). The EU's development assistance continues to play a crucial role in the overall financing available to the EU to help partner countries achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Full press release [here](#).

(8/06) Employment and social affairs: the Council adopts conclusions on well-being at work, upskilling and reskilling and demographic challenges. The Council adopted by written procedure three sets of conclusions in the area of employment and social affairs. The conclusions on enhancing well-being at work acknowledge that well-being at work can lead to higher productivity and participation in the labour market and reduced public health expenditure. For companies, this ensures staff retention and reduced absenteeism. The conclusions call for the well-being perspective to be included in relevant policies at European and national level. Furthermore, the Council invites member states to enforce, with due regard to the competences of social partners, the EU legal framework and proceed with the implementation of the work-life balance directive. Full press release [here](#).

(26/05) Border management: EU concludes agreements with Montenegro and Serbia on Frontex cooperation. The Council today adopted two decisions to conclude the agreements with Montenegro and Serbia on border management cooperation between these countries and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex). Full press release [here](#).

(26/05) Raising opportunities for young people in rural and remote areas: the Council adopts conclusions. The Council adopted by written procedure conclusions on raising opportunities for young people in rural and remote areas. The conclusions recognise that the EU's population is ageing, particularly in rural and remote areas. On the other hand, urbanisation is identified as one of the current key drivers for change, with a significant impact on various EU policies. These trends lead to the need to ensure in rural and remote areas better availability and accessibility of public and commercial services, quality jobs and education, digital and physical infrastructures, public transportation, leisure time activities. Full press release [here](#).

Others

(25/06) EASO - EU receives one-third of global asylum applications in 2019. In 2019, applications for asylum in EU+ countries rose by 11% to 738 425, followed by a 16% increase recorded in the first two months of 2020. While the COVID-19 emergency has led to a recent 87% drop in applications, EASO expects the overall increasing trend to resume.

(22/06) EESC - The EESC publishes a report on national developments in the area of fundamental rights and the rule of law from a civil society perspective. The EESC says threats to the rule of law and fundamental rights and the shrinking space for civil society, as described in its report based on visits to several EU countries, may be further exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis. Full press release [here](#).

(11/06) EASO - Record low number of asylum applications lodged in EU. Only 8,730 asylum applications were registered in the EU+ in April, the lowest since at least 2008, and a massive 87% decrease from pre-COVID-19 levels in January and February. The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) has released a [special report](#) which shows that the COVID-19 related travel restrictions and national health measures which were imposed during the past

few months led to a dramatic cut in asylum applications in Europe. Despite the emergency measures, there were still almost 10 times as many applications for asylum as detected illegal border crossings (900) into the EU+ in April. The disparity indicates that despite the temporary suspension of certain asylum activities in many EU+ countries, some countries did continue lodging applications. Full press release [here](#).

(2/06) FRA - Stop racist harassment and ethnic profiling in Europe. Racist harassment, violence and discriminatory ethnic profiling are commonplace in Europe. Following the current protests that are spreading across the continent, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) calls on EU Member States to step up their efforts and effectively fight discrimination, harassment and violence against black people. Full press release [here](#).

(29/05) EASO - EASO publishes a COI report on the situation of Afghan refugees in Pakistan. Today, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) published the Country of Origin Information (COI) report "[Pakistan - Situation of Afghan refugees](#)". The report provides relevant information on the situation of registered and unregistered Afghan refugees in Pakistan. Afghanistan has a long history of protracted international displacement, and historically, there has always been movement of persons and groups across the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The developments in the recent history of Afghanistan have generated successive waves of displacement of Afghan refugees to Pakistan. According to sources interviewed for this report in February 2020, although there is no reliable data available on the population of Afghan refugees in the country, nearly three million Afghan refugees (registered and unregistered) are currently being hosted by Pakistan. The majority of Afghan refugees in Pakistan are children and adolescents who are born and raised in the country. Full press release [here](#).

(27/05) FRA - COVID-19 puts asylum seekers at a higher risk as conditions in camps deteriorate and asylum procedures are suspended. Full press release [here](#).

(27/05) EASO - EASO resuming full operational activities in Member States. The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) is gradually and safely resuming elements of its operations in Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Malta which were suspended due to COVID-19. Following the temporary suspension of certain close-contact operational activities in-line with national instructions, EASO is gradually resuming its full support activities to the asylum authorities of Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Malta, as per the respective [operating plans](#). Full press release [here](#). On 25 June 2020, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) published its annual flagship [EASO Asylum Report](#). It presents a comprehensive overview of the latest key developments in asylum data, policy, practice and legislation. Member State-specific data can be found [here](#). Full press release [here](#).

[COUNCIL OF EUROPE](#)

CIVIL SOCIETY

(26/06) ECRE - EU Agenda: Asylum Reform Falls behind Corona and Brexit. Adjustments to the EU's long-term budget in times of Corona and pressure to conclude a post-Brexit agreement with the UK are likely to cause significant delay in the announced reform of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). In the beginning of the year, the CEAS reform was predicted to be one of the priorities of the upcoming German council presidency taking over from Croatia on July 1. Yet, the programme agreed in the German parliament this week under the motto "Together for Europe's recovery" does not count asylum as one of its focus areas. These are: overcoming the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic, the Multiannual Financial Framework and negotiations on the future relationship with the UK. Full press release here.

(19/06) ECRE - ECRE Analysis of Asylum Statistics in Europe. As statistics on asylum have become a central topic of the political debate in Europe in recent years, ECRE has critically analysed the current collection and use of asylum statistics finding a need for caution. In particular, regarding statistics on protection rates or recognition rates, the percentage of people who are recognised or declared to be entitled to international protection, are often used in arguments about reasons for migration and appropriate policy responses. However, statistics as currently presented should be read with caution. While the adopted regulation does not address all these issues, ECRE recommends that Member states take them into account. Full press release here.

(19/06) ECRE - NGOs Resume Rescues amid Mounting Death Toll and Continued Pull-Backs. NGO vessels resume rescues at the Central Mediterranean after a corona-related pause. A record number of people drowned in the last two weeks and boats continue to be pulled back to Libya with EU funding. The civilian Search and Rescue (SAR) vessel Sea Watch 3 has rescued a total of 211 people in three operations in less than 48h. In the latest operation last night, the crew from the NGO Sea Watch rescued 46 people from a boat in distress after being alerted by the NGO Alarm Phone. They are calling upon the relevant authorities to assign them a safe port as soon as possible. Full press release here.

(19/06) Caritas EU - Europe must welcome people seeking protection. On the occasion of the World Refugee Day we call on European states to honour the commitment made in December 2019 at the first Global Refugee Forum to resettle 30,000 refugees in 2020, and to protect the right to asylum and to *non-refoulement* in Europe. Full press release here.

(19/06) ECRE - EU Parliament Adopts Proposal on the Reform of the Migration Statistics Regulation. On 18 June 2020 the European Parliament adopted the proposal on the reform of the Migration Statistics Regulation, governing the asylum and migration data supplied by Member States to Eurostat. The proposal for a regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 862/2007 on Community statistics on migration and international protection dates back to 2018 and aims to provide a legal basis for statistics that are currently collected voluntarily, while providing the necessary flexibility to adapt to future data needs. Full press release here.

(29/05) ECRE - Op-ed: The EU Recovery Plan for Europe – Potential for Inclusion but on a tied Deadline. On Thursday 27 May, the European Commission has presented a long-awaited financial recovery plan to address the economic crisis caused by the pandemic that

Europe is currently facing. The proposal includes “Next Generation EU”, a short-term temporary reinforcement “bazooka” of € 750 billion for the EU budget to be allocated to the member states most affected by the crisis, but also represents a new start in the negotiations for the next long term EU budget, as it was presented with an [updated proposal](#) for the multiannual financial framework (MFF) for 2021 – 2027. Full press release [here](#).

(29/05) ECRE - AIDA 2019 Update: Italy. The [updated Country Report](#) on Italy documents the main developments in the area of asylum procedures, reception conditions, detention of asylum seekers and content of international protection in 2019. Full analysis [here](#).

[PUBLICATIONS](#)

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

European Commission - [Factsheet: The impact of demographic change in Europe](#)

MPI - [Using Evidence to Improve Refugee Resettlement: A Monitoring and Evaluation Road Map](#)

IOM – [Training Refugee Youth: Pre-Departure Orientation](#)

EMN - [Comparative overview of national protection statuses in the EU and Norway](#)

ECRE - [ELENA: Legal Note on Derogations from Asylum Procedures as a Result of Emergency Measures](#)

ECRE - [ECRE Policy Note: Return as “Non-Essential Travel” in the Time of Pandemic](#)

KAICIID - [Webinar: Building Trust For A More Inclusive Europe – Dialogical Approaches](#)