

INFO FLASH 29/09

EU INSTITUTIONS

European Commission

(23/09) Press statement by President von der Leyen on the New Pact on Migration and Asylum. Press release [here](#). Q&A [here](#). Progress since 2016 [here](#).

(18/09) State of the Union: A new Action Plan to turn the tide in the fight against racism. In her [State of the Union Address 2020](#), President **von der Leyen** announced a new [EU anti-racism Action Plan](#) that sets out a series of measures for the next 5 years. Among others, the Commission will ensure that Member States fully implement relevant EU law and further strengthen the legal framework, if needed. This could happen in particular in the areas not yet covered by the non-discrimination legislation, such as law enforcement. The Commission also calls on Member States to maximise the use of all the tools at their disposal, in particular the funding available under the next long-term EU budget and the Next Generation EU. The Action Plan is bringing together actors at all levels to fight racism in Europe more effectively, including through adoption of national action plans against racism. Press release [here](#).

(15/09) Employment and Social Developments in Europe review: why social fairness and solidarity are more important than ever. Today, the Commission's services have published the 2020 edition of the [Employment and Social Developments in Europe \(ESDE\) review](#) dedicated to the theme of social fairness and solidarity. The review provides evidence-based analysis on how to achieve greater fairness across the EU in the face of crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic as well as structural changes due to demographic ageing, and the green and digital transitions. Press release [here](#).

(7/09) Integrating migrants and refugees into the labour market: Commission and social and economic partners relaunch cooperation. Today, the Commission, trade unions, chambers of commerce and employers' organisations are [renewing their cooperation](#) to enhance the integration of migrants and refugees into the labour market. In a [joint statement](#) released today, they highlight areas for future focus, and express interest in cooperating further in the area of labour migration under the European Partnership on Integration launched in 2017. The signatories reaffirm the importance of a multi-stakeholder approach for early integration into the labour market benefitting both refugees and the economy and society at large. Full press release [here](#).

(1/09) EU and Germany join efforts to support the African Union's response to coronavirus. The EU continues to work with Member States to tackle the coronavirus pandemic on all fronts. Today, 500.000 additional coronavirus testing kits have been provided to the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The test kits were delivered by an EU Humanitarian Air Bridge flight and are part of a €10 million immediate support package to the African Union (AU) by the German Government in response to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. In total, almost 1.4 million tests for the extraction and the detection of the virus will be made available to African Union countries. Full press release [here](#).

European Parliament

(28/09) New Migration Pact proposal gets mixed reactions from MEPs. Civil liberties committee members questioned how the new Asylum and Migration Pact proposed by the European Commission would function during a debate on 24 September. Members of Parliament's civil liberties, justice and home affairs committee discussed the new plan for an Asylum and Migration Pact a day after it has been presented by the Commission. on 24 September. The aim of the proposal, presented is to change and improve current procedures by ensuring shared responsibility and solidarity. However, committee members voiced mixed reactions, wondering if it will bring about real change. Full press release [here](#).

(17/09) Roma integration: EU must do more against social exclusion and anti-gypsyism. Structural anti-gypsyism must end, say MEPs, who demand measures to ensure Romani people have equal access to housing, education, healthcare and employment. Press release [here](#).

European Council / Council of the EU

Others

(29/09) EU Court of Auditors - EU action on child poverty needs greater focus, say auditors. It is almost impossible to assess how the EU contributes to Member States' efforts to reduce child poverty, according to a new report from the European Court of Auditors (ECA). The relevance and strength of EU instruments examined are limited because they are not legally binding – and more powerful tools, such as the European Semester or support from EU funds, rarely address child poverty specifically. It is thus difficult to determine whether EU action contributes effectively to efforts to tackle this important concern, say the auditors. Press release [here](#).

(24/09) FRA - Updating FRA's guardianship for unaccompanied children research. FRA held an inception meeting on 23 October with its research network, FRANET, to discuss updating its report on Guardianship systems for children deprived of parental care in the EU. The research will provide an overview of changes to law and practice in the assignment of [guardians for the protection of unaccompanied children](#) during the last five years. Discussions focused on the questionnaire, methodology and data collection. The research should be published in 2021. Press release [here](#).

(16/09) EIB - Morocco: EIB and Crédit Agricole du Maroc (CAM) sign €200 million financing agreement to support agricultural ecosystems. On Wednesday 16 September, in the presence of Aziz Akhannouch, the Moroccan Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries, Rural Development, Water and Forests, the European Investment Bank (EIB) and CAM, represented respectively by Emma Navarro, Vice-President, and Tariq Sijilmassi, Chairman of the Management Board, signed a €200 million loan agreement to boost support for Moroccan businesses operating in the agriculture and bioeconomy sector with a particular focus on sustainable development. Full press release [here](#).

(15/09) EASO - Lesvos: Asylum interviews to resume. Approximately 160 EASO personnel assisting in ensuring that asylum procedures are not disrupted. Agency also supporting establishment of emergency reception facility. The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) confirms that its personnel will be resuming interviews for international protection on Lesvos

in the coming days. Interviews were temporarily suspended following large fires which destroyed the Moria reception facility on 8 and 9 September 2020. Full press release [here](#).

(9/09) EASO - Applying for asylum at national borders: EASO report outlines divergences across EU Member States. The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) has published a [new report](#) outlining the different practices in EU+ Member States¹ using border procedures to process asylum applications. As part of efforts to establish fast and efficient procedures for international protection in Europe, increasing focus has been put on the external borders of the EU. One solution which has been put forward is a more extensive use of border procedures to efficiently process applicants for international protection directly upon arrival. Full press release [here](#).

(3/09) FRA - National human rights institutions: guaranteeing fundamental rights compliance during COVID-19 and beyond. National human rights institutions (NHRIs) are crucial for the protection and promotion of fundamental rights across the EU but their full potential remains untapped, finds a new report from the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA). It suggests next steps to boost NHRIs' impact and efficiency, such as providing adequate resources, strong powers and clear mandates in line with the United Nations Paris Principles. Full press release [here](#).

(31/08) EASO - EASO publishes a COI report: Afghanistan, State Structure and Security Forces. The focus of this report is on state structure, security institutions and state judiciary in Afghanistan. It is divided into three parts. The first part focuses on presenting an overview of the state structure in Afghanistan, including governance, corruption, and the latest developments on the 2019 elections. The second part focuses on the state security institutions, their mandate and structure, integrity, and the main reported cases of violations perpetrated by these security forces. The third part of the report provides a general overview of the state judiciary, focusing on its capacity, integrity, effectiveness in prosecution, as well as prison conditions. Full press release [here](#).

[COUNCIL OF EUROPE](#)

(28/09) Congress Rapporteur calls for solidarity with local authorities to urgently remedy refugee situation after Moria fires. Against the background of the devastating fires in the "Moria Reception and Identification Centre" on the Greek island of Lesbos, Yoomi Renström (Sweden, SOC/G/PD), Rapporteur of the [Congress of Local and Regional Authorities](#) of the Council of Europe deplored the lack of joint action in Europe, saying: "The current response of authorities across Europe is far from sufficient and it is nothing to be proud of. This situation is yet another worrying example of what happens when there is a lack of cooperation and solidarity. Thousands of migrants continue to be in grave danger, including many unaccompanied minors". Full press release [here](#).

(28/09) European states must no longer procrastinate on the duty to establish the truth concerning missing persons. "The lack of truth and justice for thousands of missing persons remains a serious human rights issue in Europe. So many families of missing persons in Council of Europe member states, including in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina and other countries in the Balkans, Cyprus, Georgia, Northern Ireland in the United Kingdom, the Russian Federation, Spain, Turkey and Ukraine have been demanding to know the whereabouts of their loved ones for years, sometimes even decades. Enforced disappearances are still happening at this moment on our continent", said

today Commissioner Mijatović ahead of the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances. Full press release [here](#).

(23/09) EU Pact on Migration and Asylum: a renewed opportunity to uphold human rights in migration governance. The Special Representative of the Secretary General on Migration and Refugees of the Council of Europe and the Regional Representative for Europe of the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR) have welcomed the presentation by the European Commission of its new Pact on Migration and Asylum. The launch of the Pact offers an opportunity for the EU to find common ground on achieving more effective migration governance in Europe, based on the respect and protection of human rights. Full press release [here](#).

CIVIL SOCIETY

(25/09) ECRE - Editorial: The Pact on Migration and Asylum: it's never enough, never, never. One of ECRE's predictions for the Pact was that no-one would be happy with it, and so it has come to pass. The next few weeks will witness a competition about who is most unhappy with it, but when the dust settles the detailed debates on the nearly 500 pages of proposed legislation will begin. ECRE is working collectively to prepare a joint civil society response to the Pact and detailed legal analysis of the proposals, but some preliminary comments on the politics of it all are possible. Full editorial [here](#).

(21/09) ICMC - European Civil Society Organizations: Refugee Resettlement Can't Wait. Seven major civil society organizations and networks have launched a joint statement urging the European Union to urgently revive and increase its refugee resettlement efforts, which were temporarily halted due to COVID-19. Full press release [here](#).

(18/09) ECRE - Editorial: No More Morias (Except this one that we're Building). All across Europe [campaigns](#) argue that the devastating fire at the Moria camp should serve as a catalyst to finally – *finally* – get people off the Greek islands and into humane accommodation, with access to sound asylum procedures. [Member States](#) are finally – *finally* – stepping up to accept people. As [ECRE has argued](#), the numbers are so small that any European country could individually take everyone; so collectively it is eminently feasible. Full editorial [here](#).

(16/09) Social Platform - Social Platform co-hosts study visit “Creating perspectives for disadvantaged communities. Empowerment for Roma through self-organisation and participation“. On the 15th of September 2020, Social Platform co-organised a virtual study visit with [Amaro Drom e.V.](#) and [Amaro Foro e.V.](#) in Berlin entitled “Creating perspectives for disadvantaged communities. Empowerment for Roma through self-organisation and participation“. Around 20 participants from EU and national level civil society organisations active in the field, representatives from various national ministries of social affairs and representatives from the European Commission joined the virtual visit. Full press release [here](#).

(15/09) ECRE - Joint Statement: Afghanistan is Not Safe: the Joint Way Forward Means Two Steps Back. The European Union (EU) is currently negotiating the prolongation of the Joint Way Forward (JWF) on migration issues with the government of Afghanistan. The [JWF](#), which is set to expire on 6 October 2020, was signed on the side-lines of the Brussels donor conference in 2016; as is often the case with informal agreements, it was concluded without the involvement of the European Parliament and with no transparent reporting mechanism

envisaged for its implementation. The agreement aims to facilitate the deportation to Afghanistan of Afghans who came to Europe to seek protection. It is believed that the EU used the leverage of its development aid to pressure the Afghan government to sign this informal deal. Full statement [here](#).

(11/09) Caritas Europa - Moria fires: Urgent call for relocation to EU countries. Over 12,000 people are homeless since the overcrowded camp of Moria went up in smoke. We are shocked by this humanitarian disaster, which is the direct consequence of flawed EU asylum policies that we have challenged for years. Caritas Hellas staff and other NGO are providing the best support they can on the ground, in a tense and challenging environment. Full press release [here](#).

(2/09) EUROCITIES - Vienna ready to take in 100 children from Greek refugee camps. The city of Vienna wants to take in 100 children in need of protection from the refugee camps on the Greek islands, primarily from the Moria camp on Lesbos. The resolution, backed by the Social Democrats, the Greens and the liberal NEOS, highlights the critical living conditions in the camp which are plagued by a lack of infrastructure, overcrowding and low hygiene standards. These are particularly harmful for vulnerable children that have lost their parents and are now facing the additional threat of the COVID-19 pandemic. Against this background, the cross-party paper states that Vienna has enough capacity to take in and care for the children. Full press release [here](#).

(28/08) ECRE - The implementation of the Dublin III Regulation in 2019 and During COVID-19: Different figures, Same Conclusions. ECRE's [report](#) on the implementation of the Dublin III Regulation in 2019 and the first half of 2020 demonstrates that the European Union's rules on allocation of responsibility are not functioning in practice, resulting in unnecessary, lengthy, and costly procedures both for asylum authorities and applicants for international protection who are left in a prolonged state of limbo, face reduced standards and are at risk of human rights violations. Full press release [here](#).

PUBLICATIONS

German Presidency of the EU - [African-European Youth Forum](#) (Call for interest)

EPRS - [Climate Change and Migration](#)

Eurochild - [Consultations on the EU Child Rights Strategy and Child Guarantee: Survey for children](#)

EPRS - [Mapping Threats To Peace And Democracy Worldwide: Normandy Index 2020](#)

EPRS - [The Von Der Leyen Commission's Six Priorities: State Of Play In Autumn 2020](#)

EPRS - [Hotspots At EU External Borders: State Of Play](#)

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

IOM - [Why COVID-19 does not necessarily mean that attitudes towards immigration will become more negative](#)

NIEM - [A comparative analysis of the national integration evaluation mechanism in 14 EU countries](#) (Comprehensive report)

ECRE - [Asylum statistics in Europe](#) (Factsheet)