

# INFO FLASH 28/12

## EU INSTITUTIONS

### European Commission

**(18/12) Coronavirus Global Response: EU mobilises €84 million for four African countries.** The European Commission today announced the mobilisation of €84.26 million in support of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic in four African countries: Benin, Central African Republic, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. Full press release [here](#).

**(15/12) EU Citizenship Report: empowering citizens and protecting their rights.** Today, the Commission published the 2020 EU Citizenship Report, which takes stock of the progress made on EU citizenship since the last report in 2017. The report also sets out new priorities and actions to empower EU citizens, such as an update of the EU guidelines on free movement, taking into account the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic. Full press release [here](#).

**(10/12) Commission welcomes political agreement on Horizon Europe, the next EU research and innovation programme.** The Commission welcomes the political agreement between the European Parliament and the Council on Horizon Europe, the largest transnational programme ever supporting research and innovation. The new EU research and innovation programme will have a budget of around €95.5 billion for 2021-2027 (current prices). This includes €5.4 billion (current prices) from NextGenerationEU to boost our recovery and make the EU more resilient for the future, as well as an additional reinforcement of €4.5 billion (current prices). This represents a 30% increase vis-à-vis the current research and innovation programme, Horizon 2020 (comparing Horizon Europe against Horizon 2020 for EU27, in constant prices) and makes it the most ambitious research and innovation programme in the world. Full press release [here](#).

**(10/12) Migration: New EU financial assistance to address the situation on the Canary Islands.** Today, the Commission announced new funding of €43.2 million to Spain to address the needs on the Canary Islands arising from high numbers of people arriving irregularly - some 20,000 people this year. The funding will go towards increasing temporary shelter capacity and improving reception conditions, including access to health assistance, food and sanitation. Full press release [here](#).

**(8/12) European Union and African Union join forces to empower a new generation of African research talents.** Today, the European Union has announced the launch of the "African Research Initiative for Scientific Excellence" (ARISE) Pilot Programme with a contribution of €25 million. ARISE will enable early career African scientists in delivering cutting-edge research across Africa. The programme will be implemented by the African Academy of Sciences with the strategic direction of the European Union and the African Union. Full press release [here](#).

**(3/12) Migration: Commission and Greece agree joint plan for a new reception centre in Lesbos.** Today, the Commission agreed a detailed plan with Greek authorities and EU agencies to establish a new, up-to-standard reception centre on the island of Lesbos by early

September 2021. This is a key step towards resolving the situation after the fires that destroyed the Moria camp in September. It is the result of the work of the European Taskforce set up at that time. The memorandum signed today sets out the respective responsibilities and areas of cooperation between the Commission, the Greek authorities and EU agencies. Today's agreement comes in addition to €121 million in EU funding granted to Greece last month for the construction of 3 smaller reception centres on the islands of Samos, Kos, and Leros, also to be completed by September 2021. Full press release [here](#).

**(3/12) Post-Cotonou: Negotiators reach a political deal on a new EU/Africa-Caribbean-Pacific Partnership Agreement.** Today, the chief negotiators from the EU and the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), formerly known as the ACP Group of States, reached a political deal on the text for a new Partnership Agreement that will succeed the Cotonou Agreement. The Agreement, which will have to be approved, signed and ratified by the parties, will cover a large number of areas, ranging from sustainable development and growth, to human rights and peace and security and will be geared to empower each region. Once in effect, the Agreement will serve as the new legal framework and guide political, economic and cooperation relations between the EU and 79 members of the OACPS for the next twenty years. Full press release [here](#).

**(3/12) European Democracy Action Plan: making EU democracies stronger.** The European Commission is presenting today its European Democracy Action Plan to empower citizens and build more resilient democracies across the EU. Standing up to challenges to our democratic systems from rising extremism and perceived distance between people and politicians, the Action Plan sets out measures to promote free and fair elections, strengthen media freedom and counter disinformation. More concretely, the Commission will propose legal action on political advertising that will address the sponsors of paid content and production and distribution channels, including online platforms, advertisers and political consultancies, clarifying their respective responsibilities. The Commission will also recommend measures to tackle safety of journalist and present an initiative to protect them from strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs). Finally, the Commission will steer efforts to overhaul the existing Code of Practice on Disinformation, strengthening requirements for online platforms and introducing vigorous monitoring and oversight. Full press release [here](#).

**(2/12) New Africa-Europe Foundation and five Strategy Groups launched to enhance a common vision for a strengthened partnership.** Today, the Africa-Europe Foundation was established by Friends of Europe and the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, in partnership with ONE and the Africa Climate Foundation. The opening ceremony was attended by various personalities from both continents, including the President of the Republic of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, and Commissioner for International Partnerships, Jutta Urpilainen. The Foundation is an independent forum, driving fresh policy thinking and strategic foresight across inter-connected sectors of cooperation. Full press release [here](#).

**(2/12) Sudan: EU steps up aid following humanitarian visit.** As refugees from Ethiopia cross into Sudan following the recent outbreak of conflict in the Tigray region, Commissioner for Crisis Management, Janez Lenarčič, is visiting the border areas in Sudan and the capital Khartoum to re-emphasise EU humanitarian support as well as underline the EU's continued commitment to supporting Sudan's political transition. Full press release [here](#).

## European Parliament

**(17/12) “Minority SafePack”:** Parliament supports proposals for diversity across EU. On Thursday, MEPs called on the Commission to act on the European Citizens’ Initiative proposals that aim to enhance cultural and linguistic diversity in the EU. Full press release [here](#).

**(17/12) Migration: EU return policy must be better implemented.** MEPs want future EU policies on returning migrants to safeguard fundamental rights and give priority to voluntary returns. There are gaps and shortcomings in the EU’s policy on returning migrants, MEPs say in a resolution on the implementation of the Return Directive, which sets out common rules for the return of non-EU nationals who do not have the right to stay in the European Union. The resolution was adopted on 16 December. Full press release [here](#).

**(17/12) Asylum: more solidarity among EU member states and funds for frontline countries.** Current asylum legislation neither ensures fair responsibility sharing among member states nor gives swift access to asylum procedures, to the frustration of MEPs. According to MEPs, the 2013 Dublin III Regulation puts a “disproportionate responsibility on a minority of member states, in particular when high numbers of arrivals occur”. Full press release [here](#).

**(10/12) Fighting terrorism and radicalisation: deal on budget, priorities for 2021-2027.** EP and Council reached a political deal on Thursday on the main EU tool to support member states in combating terrorism, radicalisation and serious crime. Ensuring that the European Union has a high level of security is the main aim of the strengthened Internal Security Fund (ISF). Its €1.931 billion budget for 2021-2027 should serve to prevent and combat terrorism and radicalisation, serious and organised crime, and cybercrime, as well as to assist and protect victims. Co-legislators agreed that it should also contribute to preparing for and managing “security incidents, risks and crises”. Full press release [here](#).

**(2/12) EU agreement with African, Caribbean and Pacific countries at risk.** Ahead of a meeting to conclude negotiations on the new EU partnership agreement (Post-Cotonou) with African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP), the Chair of the Committee on Development, Tomas Tobé (EPP, SE) and Carlos Zorrinho (S&D, PT), Chair of Parliament’s ACP Delegation, told the Commission that the current negotiation draft is not acceptable. The two Chairs warned that Parliament would not give its consent to the new Post-Cotonou agreement if greater parliamentary scrutiny and democratic control were not included. Full press release [here](#).

**(1/12) Asylum: MEPs call for more solidarity among EU member states.** The Dublin Regulation does not share responsibility fairly among member states nor secure swift access to asylum procedures, say Civil Liberties Committee MEPs. In a draft resolution to assess the functioning of the law that determines the member state which has to deal with an asylum application, the committee notes that the 2013 Dublin III Regulation puts a “disproportionate responsibility on a minority of member states, in particular when high numbers of arrivals occur”. MEPs call for a solidarity-based mechanism to ensure the fundamental right to asylum in the EU and the equal distribution of responsibility among member states. The inappropriate application of the hierarchy of criteria – in particular the excessive use of the first country of entry criterion – and the ineffective implementation of transfers increase

pressure on certain countries, namely Greece, Italy, Malta, Cyprus, and Spain, according to the committee, which asks for fairer rules. Full press release here.

## European Council / Council of the EU

**(17/12) Multiannual financial framework for 2021-2027 adopted.** Following the European Parliament's consent yesterday, the Council has adopted the regulation laying down the EU's multiannual financial framework for 2021-2027. The regulation provides for a long-term budget of €1 074.3 billion for the EU27 in 2018 prices, including the integration of the European Development Fund. Together with the Next Generation EU recovery instrument of €750 billion, it will allow the EU to provide an unprecedented €1.8 trillion of funding over the coming years to support recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the EU's long-term priorities across different policy areas. Full press release here.

**(16/12) Home affairs funds: Council supports provisional agreements on the main elements for funding migration, border and security policies.** The EU is increasing the scope of its funding for measures in the fields of migration, border management and security, so as to address growing challenges in these areas. EU ambassadors today supported the provisional agreements reached between the Council Presidency and the European Parliament on the main political elements of three sectoral proposals for the funding of home affairs policies, in the context of the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework (MFF). Full press release here.

**(16/12) InvestEU: Council greenlights provisional agreement reached with the Parliament.** EU ambassadors today confirmed a provisional agreement reached between the Council presidency and the Parliament on InvestEU, a new programme supporting investment and job creation in the EU. The aim of InvestEU is to encourage public and private investor participation in financing and investment operations by providing guarantees from the EU budget to address failures and sub-optimal investment situations. It builds on the success of the European fund for strategic investments (EFSI) which was launched in 2015 to close the investment gap in the EU in the aftermath of the financial and economic crisis. The new programme will bring together 14 different financial instruments currently available to support investment in the EU. Full press release here.

**(1/12) Human rights and decent work in global supply chains: the Council approves conclusions.** The Council approved conclusions calling on member states and the Commission to promote human rights in global supply chains and decent work worldwide. For the first time, the Council asks the Commission to launch an EU Action Plan that is focusing on shaping global supply chains sustainably, promoting human rights, social and environmental due diligence standards and transparency by 2021. This includes a call for a proposal from the Commission for an EU legal framework on sustainable corporate governance, including cross-sector corporate due diligence obligations along global supply chains. Full press release here.

## Others

**(18/12) FRA - December 2020 update - NGO ships involved in search and rescue in the Mediterranean and legal proceedings against them.** In 2020 (until 15 December), the International Organization for Migration estimated that about 1,054 people have died or gone missing while crossing the Mediterranean Sea to reach Europe to escape war or persecution or to pursue a better life. This is an average of almost three people per day. In the past years, a significant number of migrants in distress at sea have been rescued by civil society vessels deployed with a humanitarian mandate to reduce fatalities and bring rescued migrants to safety. Since 2018, however, national authorities initiated some 50 administrative and criminal proceedings against crew members or vessels, also seizing the latter. In some cases, rescue vessels were blocked in harbours due to flag issues or the inability to meet maritime safety-related and other technical requirements. Full press release [here](#).

**(18/12) FRA - Towards a 'new normal' for migration?** The coronavirus pandemic tearing through society exposes the vulnerability migrants often face. On International Migrants Day on 18 December, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights calls on the EU and its Member States, when addressing the societal impact, to leave no one behind by also supporting migrants. Full press release [here](#).

**(17/12) EASO - Reduced mobility of asylum seekers continues to limit the number of asylum applications, but unaccompanied minors lodged more applications in October.** Analysis released by the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) shows that the number of applications for international protection lodged in the EU+ remained stable but still at two thirds of pre-COVID-19 levels. National asylum authorities have adapted their practices and made an effort to ensure the lodging of applications can proceed as smoothly as possible,<sup>1</sup> but fewer illegal border-crossings<sup>2</sup> and fewer opportunities for legal entry to the EU+ continue to curb the number of applications being lodged. Full press release [here](#).

**(11/12) EU CoR - COVID-19 pandemic makes citizens participation in policy making even more pertinent.** CoR members Karl-Heinz Lambertz (BE/PES) and Declan McDonnell (IE/AE), as well as Gisela Erler from the State Ministry of Baden-Württemberg in Germany and Bassem Asseh, Deputy Mayor of Nantes in France, debated in a panel 'Citizens' engagement in times of COVID-19: lessons from EU cities and regions' in the framework of the European Citizen Engagement and Deliberative Democracy Festival and presented the citizen engagement initiatives that they are conducting in their cities or regions. They expressed unanimously that COVID-19 pandemic with its uncertainties and shared responsibilities makes it even more pertinent to mobilise citizens to share with them not only relevant knowledge, but also to involve them on the governance of political agenda and crisis. Against this background, they call for a launch the Conference on the Future of Europe as soon as possible. Full press release [here](#).

**(7/10) European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control.** The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) is today launching a new four-year partnership initiative in order to enhance mutual engagement and contribute to durably strengthening Africa CDC capacities in preparedness and response to health threats. Entitled 'EU for health security in Africa: ECDC for Africa CDC', this four-year partnership project aims to contribute to strengthening Africa CDC capacities in preparedness and response to health threats, contribute to facilitating harmonised surveillance and disease intelligence of prioritised outbreak-prone

communicable diseases at continental level, and support the implementation of Africa CDC's public health workforce development strategy. Full press release [here](#).

**(3/12) EIB - EIB and Global Development Network strengthen global private sector impact investment best-practice.** Maximizing the social, economic and public health impact of billions of Euros private and public investment is crucial to meet sustainable development goals around the world. The European Investment Bank and Global Development Network today published analysis of impact investment best practice from across Africa, alongside hosting their largest ever development impact virtual conference. Full press release [here](#).

## [COUNCIL OF EUROPE](#)

**(17/12) Reggio Emilia and Novellara (Italy) release handbook on interreligious dialogue actions.** The handbook "Valuing religious communities as key actors of social cohesion", edited by Fondazione Mondinsieme in collaboration with the Municipalities of Reggio Emilia and Novellara, thanks to an inter-city ICC grant, is already available in English, French, Italian and Arabic. Full press release [here](#).

## [CIVIL SOCIETY](#)

**(18/12) ECRE - Editorial: Progress on the Pact: Not in our Name.** This week ECRE launches its detailed analysis of the legislative proposals accompanying the Pact on Migration and Asylum, while discussions in the Justice and Home Affairs Council lead one to question whether the proposals are going anywhere at all. The German Presidency concluded with a Presidency Progress Report which shows that even its limited ambitions were not reached. To be fair, the Presidency had one or two other issues to manage: as well as the COVID19 crisis, there was the row over the EU budget and the rule of law to sort out. Nonetheless, the scaled back ambition to reach a political agreement on the way forward on the Pact was set at the start of the Presidency, when these other challenges were well known. Its other objective was to make progress on at least one of the pending legislative files, starting with the proposal to transform EASO into the EU Asylum Agency. Full article [here](#).

**(17/12) Eurodiaconia - Eurodiaconia and Partners Release Policy Brief "Private Sponsorship for Integration: Building a European Model".** Eurodiaconia, together with its members Diaconia Valdese (Italy), the Fédération de l'Entraide Protestante (France) and our other project partners – the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy, Oxfam Italia, Confronti, Idos, Piedmont Region, and Safe Passage are launching a policy brief titled "Private Sponsorship for Integration: Building a European Model." The publication, which focuses on humanitarian corridors, seeks to raise awareness about the benefits of community/private sponsorship programs (PSPs) for social cohesion and the integration of persons in need of protection and to encourage and inform the development and growth of sponsorship programs across Europe. Full press release [here](#).

**(17/12) Caritas Europa - COVID-19 shows that migrants' integration is key.** Migrants, especially from outside of the EU, have played a vital role in keeping supermarkets, public transport, homecare and healthcare services working during the pandemic – all sectors that already faced labour shortages before the pandemic, often because of low pay and poor working conditions. Migration is key to keeping our economies and societies working. Nevertheless, migrants typically experience serious challenges to socio-economic inclusion,

partly because they may be new to the host country labour market, but also because of structural hurdles, such as discrimination and administrative obstacles. Full press release [here](#).

**(11/12) ECRE - Op-ed: The new Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion: Promising Elements, Rising Expectations.** On the 24 November 2020, Commissioner Ylva Johansson and vice president Margaritis Schinas released the new Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion, preceded by an open consultation with stakeholders. The document replaces the 2016 Action Plan for Integration of third country nationals, and extends the duration of the instrument to 7 years, with a mid-term review to be conducted at the end of 2024, aligning the framework with the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) of the EU, and the programming of EU funds. Recognising migrants' contribution to the society, also with regards to the role of migrant workers in the COVID-19 pandemic, the document defines integration at the core of the 'European way of life', and puts inclusion at the core of a well-functioning asylum and migration management. Despite a generally positive narrative on asylum and migration, which contrasts with the approach put forward by the new pact on migration and asylum, the Action Plan undermines this by repeatedly linking integration and prevention of radicalisation, building on the wrong, simplistic assumption that migrant youth gets more easily attracted by violent extremist ideologies. Full press release [here](#).

**(8/12) Eurochild - In the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, children are more than a footnote.** Eurochild co-signs the joint messages on the impact of the Pact on Migration and Asylum on children. Children have been consistently one of the largest groups of persons seeking for protection in Europe, and in 2019 they represented almost one third of the total number of first-time asylum applicants. Whilst in 2015 children were only contemplated in a footnote of the Agenda in Migration, the 2020 Pact on Migration and Asylum includes various welcome safeguards for (mainly unaccompanied) children. However, we still have serious concerns in relation to certain procedures proposed. Full press release [here](#).

**(7/12) The New Humanitarian - What's driving the deadly migrant surge from Senegal to the Canary Islands?** Like many compatriots, Abdou Diakaté didn't feel he had much choice when he boarded a long, wooden boat on the Senegalese coast in October with around 100 others and set off into the Atlantic Ocean. The boat was heading for the Canary Islands, a Spanish archipelago off West Africa that has seen a surge in migration this year. Full article [here](#).

**(2/12) EUROCITIES - Cities and migrants - what's happening at local level? When migrants move, it is overwhelmingly to cities that they come.** Migrant integration happens in cities, and it is overseen by local governments. This fourth Integrating Cities Report gives a direct insight into how cities are integrating migrants today. It is now available to read in full [here](#). Full press release [here](#).

**(1/12) Caritas Europa - The role of local communities in the EU-Africa partnership.** Caritas Europa co-organised an online dialogue on 15 October with the Africa-Europe Faith & Justice Network, COMECE, Don Bosco International, the Jesuit Refugee Service, Sant'Egidio and CIDSE. The event gathered 150 people and focused on the role of local communities in fostering human security and resilience in the future EU-Africa partnership. It counted with speakers from the European Commission (EC), the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the European Parliament, as well as and from civil society from different African

countries, including Fr. McDonald Nah, National Director at Catholic Justice, Peace and Caritas Liberia. Full press release here.

## [PUBLICATIONS](#)

Caritas Europa - [Caritas Europa's analysis and recommendations on the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum](#)

Caritas Europa - [Partnering with Public Authorities Institutional Advocacy Handbook](#)

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

ECRE - [ECRE Comments on the Commission Proposal for a Screening Regulation COM \(2020\) 612](#)

ECRE - [ECRE Comments: on the Commission Amended Proposal for an Asylum Procedures Regulation COM \(2020\) 611 Border Asylum Procedures and Border Return Procedures](#)

ECRE - [ECRE Policy Note: Relying on a Fiction: New Amendments to the Asylum Procedures Regulation](#)

ECRE - [ECRE Policy Note: Screening out rights? Delays, Detention, Data concerns and the EU's Proposal for a Pre-entry Screening process](#)

ECRE et al. - [Turning rhetoric into reality: New monitoring mechanism at European borders should ensure fundamental rights and accountability](#)

EDRI - [Technological Testing Grounds: Migration Management Experiments and Reflections from the Ground Up](#)

EuroMed Rights - [How the EU Migration Pact disadvantages both Italy and asylum seekers](#)

European Commission - [European equality law review](#)

FRA - [Integration of young refugees in the EU: good practices and challenges](#)

IFRI - [How the French understand immigrant integration and citizenship](#)

JRC - [Covid-19 and Remittances in Africa](#)

JRC - [How is the coronavirus reshaping migration worldwide?](#)

MPI - [New Approaches to Climate Change and Migration: Building the Adaptive Capacity of Mobile Populations](#)

MPI - [The Divergent Trajectories of the Global Migration and Refugee Compacts](#)

PICUM - [An inclusive gender-responsive approach to migration](#)

Rabat Process - [Urban mixed migration case studies: Bamako and Tunis](#)

