

INFO FLASH 30/04

EU INSTITUTIONS

European Commission

(29/04) Eurobarometer: EU citizens strongly support cooperating with partner countries and youth to reduce poverty. The latest Eurobarometer survey on development cooperation shows that almost nine in ten EU citizens say it is important to partner with countries outside the EU to reduce poverty. The global pandemic has not shaken citizens' support for the EU's work in international development and the results confirm a solid trend over recent years, meaning cooperation with partner countries remains one of the most positively perceived EU policies. Full press release [here](#).

(27/04) Migration management: New EU Strategy on voluntary return and reintegration. Today, the Commission is adopting the first [EU Strategy on voluntary return and reintegration](#). The Strategy promotes voluntary return and reintegration as an integral part of a common EU system for returns, a key objective under the [New Pact on Migration and Asylum](#). It sets out practical measures to strengthen the legal and operational framework for voluntary returns from Europe and from transit countries, improve the quality of return and reintegration programmes, establish better links with development initiatives and strengthen cooperation with partner countries. Full press release [here](#). Q&A [here](#).

(23/04) Eurobarometer: Trust in the European Union has increased since last summer. While the coronavirus pandemic has been impacting on European daily lives for more than a year, attitudes towards the EU remain positive, according to the latest Standard Eurobarometer conducted in February-March 2021. The image of the EU and trust in the EU have increased and reached their highest levels in more than a decade. Europeans citizens identify health and the economic situation as the two top concerns both at EU and national levels. The survey also indicates an increase in concern about the current state of national economies: 69% of Europeans think that the situation is currently 'bad' and 61% of Europeans fear that their country's economy will recover from the impact of the pandemic 'in 2023 or later'. Full press release [here](#).

(23/04) Conference on the Future of Europe: preparations continue. After the successful launch of the multilingual digital platform, the Executive Board continues to fine-tune arrangements prior to the inaugural hybrid event on 9 May. At their third meeting on Thursday (22 April), the Executive Board endorsed the event's draft programme, which will take place on Europe Day. It will be broadcast live, and will feature remote citizen participation and interventions by the Presidents of the three EU institutions. Full press release [here](#).

(22/04) EU allocates over €43 million in humanitarian aid to South Sudan. Commissioner **Lenarčič**, who is currently in South Sudan, has announced today new funding of €43.5 million in humanitarian aid in the country. The funds will be used, among others, to help those most in need, including with protection and food assistance, as well as those affected by man-made and natural disasters. Full press release [here](#).

(20/04) EU launches €100 million humanitarian initiative to support COVID-19 vaccination campaigns in Africa. Today, Commissioner for Crisis Management, Janez **Lenarčič**, will visit the Africa Centres for Disease control and Prevention (Africa CDC) in Addis Ababa. This visit marks the start of the implementation of the EU's new €100 million humanitarian initiative in support of the COVID-19 vaccination campaigns in Africa. As announced by the President of the European Commission, Ursula **von der Leyen**, at the G7 meeting in February 2021, this €100 million initiative is part of the European Commission's efforts to ensure equitable and fair access to safe and effective vaccines to all. By joining forces with the Africa CDC and other international partners, the European Commission aims to support a fast and safe rollout of Covid-19 vaccines in Africa. Full press release [here](#).

(19/04) EU continues to address humanitarian needs in Ethiopia by allocating over €53 million. The EU has announced today new funding of €53.7 million in humanitarian aid for the most vulnerable people in Ethiopia, including those affected by the conflict in Ethiopia's Tigray region. The funding announced today will be dedicated to addressing the acute needs of those affected by conflict and climate shocks, including populations in displacement and the communities hosting the displaced. This comes on top of additional funding for the Tigray crisis last year, which brought the total EU funding for humanitarian partners in Ethiopia to over €63 million in 2020. Full press release [here](#).

(15/04) Post-Cotonou negotiations on new EU/Africa-Caribbean-Pacific Partnership Agreement concluded. Today's initialling of the new Partnership Agreement between the European Union and members of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS, formerly known as the ACP Group of States) by the chief negotiators, International Partnerships Commissioner Jutta Urpilainen, and Togo's Foreign Minister Robert Dussey, marks the formal conclusion of the negotiations of the Post-Cotonou Agreement, setting the political, economic and sectorial cooperation framework for the next twenty years. Full press release [here](#).

(15/04) European Solidarity Corps 2021-2027: First call for proposals to support youth volunteering activities. The Commission has today launched the first call for proposals under the new [European Solidarity Corps 2021-2027](#). The European Solidarity Corps supports young people wishing to engage in volunteering activities in a variety of areas ranging from helping people in need to supporting health and environmental action, across the EU and beyond. This year's priority will be health and will mobilise volunteers to work on projects addressing health challenges, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and recovery. With a dedicated budget of over €1 billion for 2021-2027, the new programme offers opportunities to some 275,000 young people to help address societal and humanitarian challenges through volunteering or by setting up their own solidarity projects. For the first year of action, more than €138 million are available. As of next year, the programme will also allow young people to volunteer in humanitarian aid activities worldwide, thus helping to tackle humanitarian challenges in safe third countries, supporting EU aid activities there. Full press release [here](#).

(14/04) Fighting trafficking in human beings: New strategy to prevent trafficking, break criminal business models, protect and empower victims. The Commission is presenting today a new [Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings \(2021-2025\)](#), focusing on preventing the crime, bringing traffickers to justice and protecting and empowering victims. Between 2017 and 2018, there were more than 14,000 registered

victims within the European Union. Globally, traffickers make estimated profits of €29.4 billion in a single year. With demand for exploitation expected to continue, traffickers moving their acts online and the pandemic likely to create the conditions for increased exploitation, today's strategy sets out the measures that will allow the EU and its Member States to continue strengthening their response. Full press release [here](#).

(9/04) Humanitarian aid: €24.5 million in Southern Africa and Indian Ocean region. The EU announced today new funding of €24.5 million in humanitarian aid for the Southern Africa and Indian Ocean region. EU humanitarian aid to the region seeks to provide a response to the humanitarian consequences of the conflict in northern Mozambique, where €7.86 million of EU funding will be directed. Furthermore, EU aid will support measures against the socio-economic crisis in Zimbabwe, to address food insecurity, and to support COVID-19 preparedness and response. In Madagascar, the EU will provide assistance to address the severe food and nutrition crisis. A further €6 million will be dedicated to helping children across the whole region gain access to education. Another €8 million will be provided to improve the region's disaster preparedness. Full press release [here](#).

European Parliament

European Council / Council of the EU

(19/04) Sahel: Council approves conclusions on the EU's integrated strategy in the region. The Council approved conclusions reaffirming the importance of a solid and long-term partnership between the EU and the Sahel, and of stepping up that partnership through an ambitious EU strategy setting the framework for its policies and actions in the region. Since 2012 the Sahel has faced a profound security crisis that has hampered its development and, together with other long-term trends such as climate change, demographic pressure, the access to natural resources and epidemic risks, risks wiping out the progress made in recent decades. During the period of the previous EU Sahel strategy (2011-2020), the EU has mobilised all instruments at its disposal, from humanitarian aid to security forces, to support the Sahel populations, and now intends to intensify its political efforts through a new, ambitious, inclusive and flexible strategy based on the principle of mutual accountability with Sahel partner authorities. Full press release [here](#).

(19/04) A new agenda for the Mediterranean: the Council approves conclusions on a renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood. The Council approved conclusions affirming the EU's determination to renew and strengthen its strategic partnership with its Southern Neighbourhood. The objective is to address common challenges, take advantage of shared opportunities and unlock the region's economic potential for the benefit of its people. Spurring sustainable long-term socio-economic recovery and job creation in the Southern Neighbourhood is a key shared priority and the innovative cornerstone of the new Agenda for the Mediterranean. Working together, the EU and its Southern Neighbourhood partners can turn climate and environmental challenges, and digital transformation, into major opportunities for sustainable development, contributing to a just and inclusive green transition. The EU will use all its available instruments, including the NDICI-Global Europe and the European Fund for Sustainable Development plus (EFSD+), and engage with financial institutions to achieve this objective, paying particular attention to the human dimension and opportunities for young people. Full press release [here](#).

Others

(26/04) EASO - EASO publishes a COI report, Syria – Socio-economic situation: Damascus city. Today, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) published a Country of Origin Information (COI) report titled "[Syria – Socio-economic situation: Damascus city](#)". This [report](#) is part of a series of Syria COI reports produced in 2021. The reports provide information relevant for international protection status determination for Syrian applicants, and in particular for use in updating EASO's country guidance development on Syria. Full press release [here](#).

(26/04) EASO - EASO publishes a COI report: Nigeria – Trafficking in Human Beings. Today, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) published a Country of Origin Information (COI) report titled "[Nigeria: Trafficking in Human Beings](#)". After the peak of some 47 000 applications for international protection in 2016, Nigerians have sought asylum in the EU+ less frequently: around 23 000 in 2018-2019 and just above 13 000 in 2020. So far in 2021 (January-March), Nigerians lodged over 3 600 applications in the EU+. Since 2018, there has been a gradual increase in the share of repeated applications in the same reporting country. In the first three months of 2021, more than each third Nigerian application in the EU+ was lodged repeatedly. In the last six months (October 2020 – March 2021), the number of first instance decisions increased by about a quarter compared to the preceding six months. In the same period, the EU+ recognition rate for Nigerians was 12 %, stable compared to the preceding half a year. At the end of February 2021, some 14 600 Nigerian applications were pending at first instance. More than two thirds of them were awaiting a decision for longer than six months. Full press release [here](#).

(9/04) EASO - EASO publishes a COI report: Syria – Military service. Today, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) published a Country of Origin Information (COI) report titled "[Syria: Military service](#)". This report is part of a series of Syria COI reports produced in 2021. The reports provide information relevant for international protection status determination for Syrian applicants, and in particular for use in updating EASO's country guidance development on Syria. Full press release [here](#).

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

(23/04) Online seminar “Is Disinformation threatening Freedom of Speech?”. Mr Patrick Penninckx, Head of Information Society Department at the Council of Europe addressed participants of the seminar “Is Disinformation threatening Freedom of Speech ” on April 23. His presentation focussed on information disorder and the rise of distrust in the media as well as the Council of Europe recommendations to address these issues and protect human rights online. The seminar was organised by the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the EU in response to the growing “infodemic” and its potential harm to the freedom of expression. Full press release [here](#).

CIVIL SOCIETY

(30/04) ECRE - Med: Investigations Reveal Frontex' Complicity in Interceptions and Returns to Horrors in Libya. New investigations reveal the crucial role Frontex plays in the interception and return of people fleeing Libya by the so-called Libyan coastguard. 6,000 people who attempted to flee Libya have already been intercepted and returned since the

beginning of the year. Meanwhile, civil search and rescue ships have rescued 280 people in distress on 27 and 29 April. Full press release [here](#).

(30/04) ECRE - European Commission Publishes EU Strategy on Voluntary Return and Reintegration. The European Commission has published a [strategy on voluntary return and reintegration](#). The aim of the strategy is to promote voluntary return and reintegration and to develop a more coherent and coordinated approach among Member States. “Voluntary return is far preferable to forced return. So in that sense, the strategy is welcome. Nonetheless, it is launched in a context where there is a disproportionate focus on return as part of asylum and migration policy, and the strategy continues that approach,” ECRE director [Catherine Woollard](#) said. Full press release [here](#).

(23/04) ECRE - New Partnership Agreement between the EU and the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) published. The new [Partnership Agreement between the European Union \(EU\) and members of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States \(OACPS\)](#) replacing the [Cotonou Agreement](#) has been agreed and published. The agreement defines the political and economic cooperation framework between the two parties for the next twenty years. The negotiations for the agreement have taken 2.5 years and were concluded with the chief negotiators, International Partnerships Commissioner Jutta Urpilainen, and Togo’s Foreign Minister Robert Dusse initialling the document. Full press release [here](#).

(23/04) ECRE - Search and Rescue: Italy and Libya Reaffirm Bilateral Relations as Transcripts of Controversial Italian/Libyan Communication Emerge, Crack-down on Civil Rescue Fleet and Deaths at Sea Continue. Migration was at the top of the agenda as ministers from Italy and Libya reaffirmed the importance of their bilateral relations. Leaked transcripts of communication between the countries’ officials reveal Italian knowledge of Libyan authority’s incompetence and its indifference to the lives of people trying to reach Europe by sea. Despite UNHCR head urging Italy to stop penalizing civil search and rescue operators the crackdown continues as do deaths on the Mediterranean and returns to Libya. Full press release [here](#).

(21/04) Social Platform - Social Platform develops toolkit for national level advocacy work on the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan. In April 2021, following the publication of the [European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan](#), Social Platform developed and disseminated a toolkit to support its EU level member organisations in supporting their members at national level in advocating for their national governments to endorse certain key aspects of the Action Plan. Full press release [here](#).

(8/04) PICUM - Immigration detention and returns in the EU migration pact: how we can correct course. Last September, the European Commission published the new [European Pact on Migration and Asylum](#) to reform the EU migration and asylum system. The Pact, which consists of five legislative proposals and four recommendations, heavily focuses on restricting access to Europe and on [stepping up returns](#) of people who are unable to get international protection. To achieve these goals, the proposals reduce safeguards, set unrealistic timeframes to have fair procedures, and increase detention, including for children – with little or no consideration for human rights, well-being or inclusion. We believe Europe can do better – both for our societies and for the children and adults who are migrating – and have identified key issues that need to change in the different Pact proposals. Full press release [here](#).

(8/04) Caritas EU - Does new EU-ACP deal really 'decolonise' aid? (via EUObserver). Since 2018, when the European Union (EU) and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries started negotiations on the deal that would replace the Cotonou Partnership Agreement ending in 2020, calls for "de-colonising aid" and a strong role for local actors in development have grown into a din. But are these being well heard by EU leaders? Full article [here](#).

(20/04) Red Cross EU - Red Cross EU Office: Protecting the humanitarian space to access and support migrants. The EU and Member States are increasingly relying on humanitarian actors to address the consequences of current policy choices on the vulnerability of migrants. However, the space for civil society actors to provide this support in accordance with humanitarian principles has been significantly compromised in recent years. European Red Cross Societies propose five key steps to secure a conducive environment for humanitarian actors to address migrants' vulnerabilities and needs, and to mitigate the risks they face. Full press release [here](#).

(2/04) ECRE - Syria Conference: Funds Pledged Fall Short of Humanitarian Needs – Syria is Not Safe for Returns. The fifth conference on "Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region" took place on 30 March, shortly after the 10th anniversary to the peaceful democratic uprisings in 2011. Article [here](#).

(2/04) ECRE - The European Commission has Published its Proposal for a Child Guarantee. On Wednesday 24 March, the European Commission has published its proposal for a Council recommendation on a [European Child Guarantee](#), a financial instrument outlining five objectives for children in poverty including free healthcare, free education, free childcare, decent housing and adequate nutrition. The proposal is launched as part of a European integrated plan to combat child poverty. Full press release [here](#).

[PUBLICATIONS](#)

Caritas EU - [Protecting the humanitarian space to access and support migrants](#)

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

ENSIE - [Work integration social enterprises: empowering people through social entrepreneurship for a sustainable and inclusive society](#)

EPRS - [EU Legislation And Policies To Fight Racial And Ethnic Discrimination \[Policy Podcast\]](#)

EPRS - [European Pillar Of Social Rights: Gothenburg, Porto And Beyond](#)

Eurodiaconia - [Joint Position Papers on the New Pact on Migration and Asylum](#)

European Commission - [Factsheet EU Strategy to combat Trafficking in Human Beings](#)

Integrating Cities - [Digital Toolkit](#)

OECD - [Dynamiques du développement en Afrique 2021](#)