

INFO FLASH 30/06

EU INSTITUTIONS

European Commission

(29/06) New Pact on Migration and Asylum: Agreement reached on the new European Union Agency for Asylum. The Commission welcomes the agreement that the European Parliament and the Council have just found to transform the European Asylum Support Office into a European Union Agency of Asylum. It is a key initiative under the New Pact on Migration and Asylum. The new agency will help make asylum procedures in Member States of higher quality, more uniform and faster. Its new reserve of 500 experts will also provide more effective support to national asylum systems facing a high caseload, making the overall EU migration management system more efficient and sustainable. Full press release [here](#).

(21/06) European platform to combat homelessness is launched. European institutions, EU governments and civil society have for the first time committed to working together towards combatting homelessness in the EU. At a high-level conference in Lisbon today, they launched the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness to trigger dialogue, facilitate mutual learning, improve evidence and monitoring, and strengthen cooperation among all actors that aim to combat homelessness. The platform launch is the beginning of a process to establish a common understanding and commitment and ensure concrete progress in Member States in the fight against homelessness. It offers an opportunity to engage and work with local actors, including cities and service providers. This will enable all actors to better exchange their knowledge and practices, and identify efficient and innovative approaches, to make progress on eradicating homelessness. Full press release [here](#).

(18/06) North Africa: EU mobilises €20 million in humanitarian aid for vulnerable populations. Today, the Commission announced €20 million in humanitarian funding to be provided in Algeria, Egypt and Libya. The funding will support the most vulnerable people affected by the region's political and protracted crises; the over four-decade-long Sahrawi refugee crisis in Algeria, the volatile Libyan crisis, and the refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt. Full press release [here](#).

(17/06) Venezuela: EU reaffirms support to refugees and migrants at International Donors' Conference. Today, at the International Donors' Conference in Solidarity with Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants the European Commission pledged €147 million, in addition to pledges by EU Member States, for immediate humanitarian assistance, medium and longer-term development assistance and conflict prevention interventions for Venezuelan refugees, migrants and host communities. This comes in addition to the ongoing aid package of €319 million allocated by the EU to alleviate the crisis since 2018. Full press release [here](#).

(16/06) Commission to invest €14.7 billion from Horizon Europe for a healthier, greener and more digital Europe. The Commission has adopted the main work programme of Horizon Europe for the period 2021-2022, which outlines the objectives and specific topic areas that will receive a total of €14.7 billion in funding. These investments will help accelerate the green and digital transitions and will contribute to sustainable recovery

from the coronavirus pandemic and to EU resilience against future crises. They will support European researchers through fellowships, training and exchanges, build more connected and efficient European innovation ecosystems and create world-class research infrastructures. Moreover, they will encourage participation across Europe and from around the world, while at the same time strengthening the [European Research Area](#). Full press release [here](#).

(15/06) Protecting people working through platforms: Commission launches second-stage consultation of social partners. Today, the Commission launches the second-stage consultation of European social partners on how to improve the working conditions for people working through digital labour platforms. This follows the first-stage consultation, which was open from 24 February to 7 April 2021, to which the Commission received replies from 14 EU-wide social partners. Based on the replies received, the Commission concluded that there is a need for further EU action to ensure basic labour standards and rights to people working through platforms. President **von der Leyen** announced in her Political Guidelines the need to improve working conditions in platform work. This has been further highlighted by the COVID-19 crisis and the accelerated uptake of platform business models. Full press release [here](#).

(11/06) Talent Partnerships: Commission launches new initiative to address EU skills shortages and improve migration cooperation with partner countries. Today, the Commission is launching Talent Partnerships, a key initiative under the [New Pact on Migration and Asylum](#) that will help to address skills shortages in the European Union and to strengthen mutually-beneficial partnerships on migration with third countries. Matching the skills of workers from countries outside the EU with the labour market needs inside the EU, Talent Partnerships should become a key part of the EU's relations with partner countries when it comes to managing migration together. In a conference organised by the Commission, representatives of Member States, the European Parliament, social and economic partners and other EU stakeholders will today discuss the design and use of Talent Partnerships. Full press release [here](#).

(9/06) NDICI-Global Europe: final green light for the new financial instrument to support the EU's external action. The European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, represented by the Portuguese Presidency, today signed the regulation establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument - Global Europe (NDICI-Global Europe). The regulation will enter into force on 14 June 2021. NDICI-Global Europe is the main financial instrument for the EU's external action, and is of ever greater importance in the light of the heavy economic and social impact of the COVID-19 pandemic worldwide. With an overall allocation of €79.5 billion at current prices, for 2021-2027, representing an increase of over 10% compared to the previous budgetary cycle, the new instrument will cover cooperation with all third countries. Full press release [here](#).

(4/06) Joint Communiqué on EU-Tunisia relations: 'For a renewed partnership'. Visiting Brussels on 4 June 2021, His Excellency Mr Kais Saied, the President of the Republic of Tunisia, held talks with His Excellency Mr Charles Michel, the President of the European Council, Her Excellency Ms Ursula **von der Leyen**, the President of the European Commission and His Excellency Mr David Maria Sassoli, the President of the European Parliament. These meetings provided an opportunity to underline the depth of historical ties between the European Union and Tunisia dating back almost half a century in a spirit of constantly evolving strategic partnership. This new phase of bilateral relations is based on shared values

and a mutual commitment to strengthening political, economic and cultural ties between the two shores of the Mediterranean. Full press release [here](#).

European Parliament

(24/06) EU countries should ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health. MEPs urge member states to protect and further enhance women's sexual and reproductive health and rights in a report adopted on Thursday. Parliament declares that violations of women's SRHR are a form of violence against women and girls and hinder progress towards gender equality. It thus calls on EU countries to ensure women are offered high quality, comprehensive and accessible SRHR, and to remove all barriers impeding them from using these services. MEPs stress that some member states still have highly restrictive laws prohibiting abortion except in strictly defined circumstances, forcing women to seek clandestine abortions or carry their pregnancy to term against their will, which is a violation of their human rights. They urge all member states to ensure universal access to safe and legal abortion, and guarantee that abortion on request is legal in early pregnancy, and beyond if the pregnant person's health is in danger. Full press release [here](#).

(23/06) MEPs adopt greener funds for regional development and cooperation. Parliament adopted on Wednesday three EU funds to strengthen the EU's economic, social and territorial cohesion with a total of 243 billion euro. The so-called "cohesion package" comprises the European Territorial Cooperation Goal (Interreg), the European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund, as well as the Common Provisions Regulation, a set of norms governing EU regional, cohesion and social funds over the next seven years. Full press release [here](#).

European Council / Council of the EU

(24/06) European Council conclusions on COVID-19 and migration, 24 June 2021. Conclusions [here](#).

(14/06) Middle-income countries: Council affirms the EU's commitment to establishing tailored partnerships. The Council today approved conclusions affirming the EU's commitment to engaging in policy dialogue and international partnerships with middle-income countries, in line with the new European Consensus on Development. Further engagement with middle-income countries should be done through the new Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI - Global Europe). The conclusions emphasise the role of middle-income countries as key partners in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and of the objectives of the Paris Agreement. The Council also recognises the strategic importance of these countries in the current geopolitical context, and their role in supporting the EU in promoting its interests and priorities, as well as its multilateral agenda. Full press release [here](#).

(14/06) Access to key services for children in need: Council agrees European Child Guarantee. The Council today adopted a recommendation establishing a European Child Guarantee. The aim of the recommendation is to prevent and combat social exclusion of children in need by guaranteeing access to a set of key services, thereby also helping to uphold the rights of the child by combating child poverty and fostering equal opportunities.

In particular, it is recommended that member states guarantee effective and free access to early childhood education and care, education and school-based activities, at least one healthy meal each school day and healthcare, as well as effective access to healthy nutrition and adequate housing. Full press release [here](#).

(7/06) Council approves conclusions on the protection of vulnerable adults. The Council today approved conclusions on the protection of vulnerable adults across the EU, with regard to civil and criminal law matters. A significant number of adults face or will face limitations: Eurostat expects a fifth of the EU population to have some form of disability by 2050. Many of these adults are or will become vulnerable and, due to the multiple barriers still in place for persons with a serious mental or physical disability, they are not or will not be in a position to protect their own interests without adequate support. In cross-border situations, these existing difficulties may be made worse by additional obstacles related to language, representation or access to the judicial system and public services. Full press release [here](#).

Others

(28/06) EASO - EASO Asylum Report 2021: COVID-19 exposes strengths and weaknesses of EU asylum systems. Despite the pandemic, the [EASO Asylum Report 2021](#) highlights the resilience of many EU+ countries' asylum systems in using innovative solutions for business continuity. Resources were allocated to adapt working methods, implement digital solutions and reduce pending cases. However, shortcomings were also exposed, notably in terms of reception conditions, low returns to countries of origin, resettlement and reduced Dublin transfers. Full press release [here](#).

(25/06) FRA - Police stops in Europe: everyone has a right to equal treatment. A new paper by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) reveals the differences between people's experiences with police stops. It shows that Black people, Asians and Roma are still more likely to be stopped and searched by police, which also affects their trust in policing. FRA will continue providing EU countries with data and guidance to support them in ensuring their policing practices respect people's fundamental rights. Full press release [here](#).

(25/06) EASO - EASO publishes a COI report: Afghanistan - Security situation. The newly released [report](#) provides information on the security situation in Afghanistan, which is relevant for the assessment of international protection status determination, including refugee status and subsidiary protection. Full press release [here](#).

(22/06) EESC - Cohesion policy: cities and regions warn against delays and trends towards centralisation as a result of the pandemic. The full respect of the "partnership principle" and its implementation under the new instruments financed by Next Generation EU, such as the Just Transition Fund and the Recovery and Resilience Facility, are among the main requests included in the opinion adopted today by the members of the European Committee of the Region's (CoR) Commission for Territorial Cohesion Policy and EU Budget (COTER). Members were also briefed on the progress of the European Year of Rail and exchanged views on an opinion about the gender dimension of structural and cohesion funds 2021-2027. Full press release [here](#).

(22/06) CoR - Migrant integration at the subnational level. The European Committee of the Regions (CoR) and the OECD have joined forces to collect and analyse views and experiences concerning migrant integration at the subnational level through a survey aimed

at local and regional authorities involved in the design and implementation of integration policies within their remits, for example concerning education, health, cultural links, employment, housing, commerce. The purpose of this survey is to gather views and experiences of local and regional authorities involved in integration tasks in various fields of their competences so as to inform the advisory work of the European Committee of the Regions and its members in the area of migrant integration and inclusiveness and facilitate evidence-based policies. Deadline for contributions: 31.07.2021. Full press release [here](#).

(18/06) FRA - June 2021 Update - Search and Rescue (SAR) operations in the Mediterranean and fundamental rights. The International Organization for Migration estimates that about 813 people died or went missing crossing the Mediterranean Sea to reach Europe to escape war, persecution or to pursue a better life in 2021, up to 15 June. This is an average of almost five people per day. The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) collects data on NGO ships involved in search and rescue in the Mediterranean, legal proceedings against them, as well as difficulties in disembarking migrants in safe ports. In past years, civil society vessels with a humanitarian mandate to reduce fatalities and bring rescued migrants to safety in the European Union saved a significant number of migrants in distress at sea. Since 2018, national authorities initiated administrative and criminal proceedings against crew members or vessels. They also limited access to European ports, caused disembarkation delays and left rescued people at sea for more than 24 hours waiting for a safe port. Full press release [here](#).

(14/06) CoR - Apprenticeships for future needs: regions and cities have a double role. The European Committee of the Regions and the European Alliance for Apprenticeships organised a joint high-level conference on 3-4 June. At the opening session, the Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights Nicolas Schmit and the chair of the CoR's SEDEC Commission Anne Karjalainen highlighted the pivotal role of regions and cities in providing quality and effective apprenticeships for all. Full press release [here](#).

(4/06) EASO - EASO publishes a COI report: Nigeria - security situation. Today, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) published a Country of Origin Information (COI) report titled Nigeria: security situation. 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 almost 3 700 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 March 2021, some 14 400 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](#).

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

(21/06) Public consultation on the Draft Recommendation on multi-level policies and governance for intercultural integration. We are pleased to launch of a public consultation on the Draft Recommendation on multi-level policies and governance for intercultural integration. This Draft Recommendation has been prepared by the working group on intercultural integration (GT-ADI-INT) set under the Council of Europe's Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI). The draft recommendation, which is prepared for adoption by the Committee of Ministers, will provide guidance to member States – including public institutions and other key stakeholders, for developing policies and action to enhance the inclusion of migrants and manage diversity as a resource. The Appendix provides the actual guidance for policy development. Document CDADI(2021)6, adopted by the CDADI on 17 June 2021, can also be used for reference as it contains guidance for practitioners on the implementation of the intercultural integration model at the national level. The draft Recommendation is now open for public consultation. The aim of the consultation is to provide input and critical comments to the working group in order to enable them to further develop the text. The consultation will be open from 28 June to 14 August 2021. Submissions can be sent to GT-ADI-INT@coe.int. Full press release [here](#).

CIVIL SOCIETY

(25/06) ECRE - Search and Rescue: Civil SAR Fleet Blocked and Criminalised as Death Count Mounts and Returns to Libyan “Hell” Continue. According to the latest update from the European Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) due to red-tape and criminalization by European authorities only two civilian vessels are currently carrying out rescue missions. At least four people including an eight-year old boy died when a boat carrying more than 40 people capsized off the Canary Islands on 17 June. 18 people are believed to have drowned following a shipwreck off Libya on 20 June. More than 14,000 people so far in 2021, have been intercepted and returned to detention in Libya where Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) have been forced to suspend its activities in government run detention centres due to ongoing violence against detainees and recent reports have emerged of children being sexually abused by guards. Full press release [here](#).

(24/06) PICUM - Employers' sanctions - Will the EU finally take steps to protect migrant workers? EU countries should do better to protect undocumented migrant workers' rights under existing EU rules. This is what the EU Fundamental Rights Agency found in their latest report. The research finds major gaps in the implementation of the Employers Sanctions' Directive when it comes to enabling exploited workers to get justice, nearly ten years since it came into force on 20 July 2011. It highlights the need to improve complaints systems, access to compensation and residence permits, and ensure labour inspectorates focus on protecting workers and not immigration law. This research echoes the experiences of our members. Full article [here](#).

(18/06) Caritas Europa - A bridge across the moat for a welcoming Europe, not one of 'Fortresses' and siege - Statement on the occasion of World Refugee Day 2021. As we mark 20 years of World Refugee Day and the 70th anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention, Caritas Europa calls on policy makers to protect the right to asylum and the dignity of people on the move, and to facilitate human mobility instead of building walls. We

are concerned that despite 82.4 million people now living forcibly displaced from their homes worldwide, asylum is under threat in Europe – the place where, war-torn, destroyed, with millions of its own refugees and displaced, these protections were created in the first place, for the survivors of Europe’s great war. Yet European countries are increasingly closing access to their territories, including through illegal pushbacks and acute violence towards people seeking protection and a better life in Europe. Full statement [here](#).

(18/06) ECRE - OHCHR: Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants Urges States to End Wide-Spread Pushbacks. Last week, the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, Felipe González Morales, published his [report](#) to the Human Rights Council that is dedicated to addressing the human rights impact of pushbacks of migrants on land and at sea. The publication draws on various sources, including submissions by civil society and other stakeholders. Full press release [here](#).

(18/06) Eurodiaconia - Report: Joint Migration and Employment Network Meeting. On the 22nd and 23rd of April, Eurodiaconia hosted a two-day joint Employment and Migration Network Meeting. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting was held online. For more information on the meeting and the discussions, you can [read the meeting report](#). Full press release [here](#).

(14/06) PICUM - EU Council adopts Child Guarantee that benefits undocumented children. On Monday 14 June 2021, the EPSCO Council^[1] unanimously adopted the [Council Recommendation establishing a European Child Guarantee](#). In a clear signal to both children and governments, the Council’s text states that all children in need must be able to benefit from the Child Guarantee actions, irrespective of their migration status. This momentous step forward cannot be underestimated, as activities supporting undocumented people have long been [excluded](#) from EU funding in the past. But with member states now tasked with developing national Child Guarantee action plans, national governments and civil society must make sure that undocumented children in need can and will benefit in practice. Full press release [here](#).

(11/06) ECRE - Study: “Experiences and Perspectives of Deported Afghans in the Context of Current Political and Economic Developments in Afghanistan”. Drawing on several years of research, Afghanistan expert Friederike Stahlmann has documented the experiences of 113 of the 908 Afghans deported from Germany between December 2016 and March 2020. This article provides the key findings of her study [“Experiences and Perspectives of Deported Afghans in the Context of Current Political and Economic Developments in Afghanistan”](#) that was published by Diakonie Deutschland, Bread for the World and Diakonie Hessen in June 2021. The majority of the deportees included in the evaluation experienced violence against themselves or their relatives because they had fled to Europe, lived there or were deported. This for example included being persecuted as enemies by the Taliban because of having fled to Europe and the alleged “defection to the enemy.” The accusation of Westernization, of “immoral” behaviour in Europe, as well as apostasy, i.e. lapse from the Muslim faith due to association with non-believers, is a threat to them not only from the public, the Taliban and state actors, but also from their own families. Full press release [here](#).

(11/06) ECRE - European Court of Auditors: Special Report on Frontex’s Support to External Border Management: Not Sufficiently Effective. On 7 June 2021, the European Court of Auditors (ECA) [published](#) its Special Report entitled ‘Frontex’s support to external

border management: not sufficiently effective.’ The performance audit focuses on four of Frontex’s primary activities: situation monitoring, risk analysis, vulnerability assessment and operational response. It makes the finding that Frontex has not been sufficiently effective in helping Member States and Schengen associated countries in managing the EU’s external frontiers. Full press release [here](#).

(11/06) ECRE - Editorial: EU Asylum Agency Moving Forward and the End of the “Package Approach”? News broke this week of an unexpected success for the Portuguese Presidency. Making progress where the Germans failed, they have persuaded the southern Member States to allow elements of the asylum reform proposals to move forward. The so-called Mediterranean 5 (soon to become 6 when the Presidency is over?) will accept an agreement on the transformation of EASO into the EU Asylum Agency (EUAA), thus separating off the EUAA plans from the “package approach” whereby nothing is agreed until everything is agreed – a means of blocking the forward movement of the proposals in order to extract concessions. Full press release [here](#).

(4/06) ECRE - EC Publishes Strategy for the Future of Schengen and Revised Proposal on Monitoring and Evaluation of the Schengen Acquis. This week, the European Commission published [A strategy towards a fully functioning and resilient Schengen area](#) and a proposed revision of the Schengen evaluation and monitoring mechanism. The Schengen strategy sets out key objectives of the European Commission in addressing challenges within the Schengen area, most notably the introduction of internal border controls by Member States. It proposes a series of measures to be taken, including also a long list of activities to be carried out in cooperation with third countries. As part of the Strategy, the European Commission announces that it will propose a revised Schengen Borders Code and organize another Schengen Forum before the end of 2021. Annual ‘State of Schengen Reports’ should be prepared as well. Full press release [here](#).

[PUBLICATIONS](#)

Council of Europe - [Claiming the power of dialogue - Toolkit for antirumours dialogue](#)

Council of Europe - [Migration and integration - Which alternative narratives work and why](#)

Council of Europe - [Interculturalism and Anti-Racism in Cities: From Theory to Practice](#) (Webinar)

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

DIIS - [New report on West African migrants' use of information along the routes to Europe](#)

ECRE - [AIDA 2020 Update: Italy](#)

ECRE - [Playing the visa card?](#)

EPRS - [Asylum in the EU: Facts and Figures](#)

EPRS - [Community sponsorship schemes under the new pact on migration and asylum: Take-up by EU regions and cities](#)

EPRS - [Labour market integration of asylum seekers and refugees](#)

EPRS - [The EU Approach on Migration in the Mediterranean](#)

Journal of Rural Studies - [Immigration and integration in rural areas and the agricultural sector: An EU perspective](#)

JRC - [A rural-urban divide in Europe? An analysis of political attitudes and behaviour](#)

JRC - [Developing countries and pandemic recovery: report maps over 300 migrants' finance schemes](#)

JRC - [Europe's ageing society: more labour mobility could help EU meet demand for health and long-term care workers](#)

JRC - [How to measure the effectiveness of return?](#)

KCMD - [Climate Change Induced Migration \(CLICIM\)](#)

KCMD - [Remittances in North Africa: sources, scale and significance](#)

MPI Europe - [Lessons from Europe: The U.S. Opportunity to Rethink the Links Between Development Assistance and Migration](#)