

INFO FLASH 31/12

EU INSTITUTIONS

European Commission

(29/12) CulturEU: Commission steps up support to the cultural sector through an online guide on EU funding. Today, the Commission launched a new interactive guide mapping all funding opportunities available at EU level for the cultural and creative sectors. CulturEU, a one-stop shop for EU funding, gathers a total of 75 funding opportunities from 21 different EU programmes, from Creative Europe and Horizon Europe to structural funds and InvestEU. In just a few clicks, the interactive online tool can direct any European cultural entity to the most appropriate EU financial support available to it. Full press release [here](#).

(21/12) Global Europe: the European Union sets out priority areas for cooperation with partner countries and regions around the world. The Commission has adopted the Multiannual Indicative Programmes (MIPs) of Global Europe setting out priority areas for cooperation with partner countries and regions around the world for 2021-27. This also includes the financial allocation for 2021-2024 (country level) and for 2021-2027 (regional level) that will support this cooperation for a total of almost €26.3 billion. The adoption of the country and regional MIPs will significantly contribute to climate actions, social inclusion and human development and migration and forced displacement and to achieve gender and biodiversity targets. Full press release [here](#).

(21/12) EU continues supporting education of refugees and addressing migration in Turkey with additional €560 million. The European Commission adopted two financing decisions, amounting to €560 million, to support inclusive quality education for refugees in Turkey and access to higher education as well as for migration and border protection as part of an additional €3 billion announced by President von der Leyen in June 2021 to continue EU assistance to refugees in Turkey for the period of 2021-2023. Full press release [here](#).

(17/12) Horn of Africa drought: EU allocates €21.5 million in additional humanitarian funding. The Commission has allocated €21.5 million in additional humanitarian funding to the Horn of Africa to help the region fight off what is rapidly becoming its worst drought in decades, already affecting millions of people. This new EU humanitarian funding will ensure life-saving operations in the most affected areas of Somalia and of the Arid and Semi-Arid lands in Kenya, addressing the urgent needs of local populations, while seeking to enable resilience gains against future shocks. Full press release [here](#).

(14/12) Global Europe: EU launches a global €1.5 billion programme to support civil society organisations. The Commission has today adopted the Global Europe Civil Society Organisations programme worth €1.5 billion for the period 2021–2027. Funding will specifically support civil society organisations outside of the EU, as independent actors of governance and development in their own right and their engagement to contribute to inclusive and participatory democratic processes and better development outcomes. Full press release [here](#).

(9/12) Commission presents Action Plan to boost the social economy and create jobs.

The European Commission has today presented an Action Plan to help the European social economy thrive, tapping into its economic and job-creation potential, as well as its contribution to a fair and inclusive recovery, and the green and digital transitions. Social economy organisations are entities which put social and environmental purposes first, reinvesting most of their profit back into the organisation. There are 2.8 million social economy entities in Europe that employ 13.6 million people and which offer solutions to key challenges in our societies. They span a diverse range of sectors and forms, from care services to recycling; from cooperatives to social enterprises. Enhanced support to the social economy not only creates jobs, but also allows organisations to increase their social impact across the EU. Today's Social Economy Action Plan smooths the way for social economy organisations to prosper and grow. Full press release [here](#).

(9/12) The Commission proposes to extend the list of 'EU crimes' to hate speech and hate crime.

Today, the European Commission is presenting an [initiative](#) to extend the list of 'EU crimes' to hate speech and hate crime, as announced by President von der Leyen in her [2020 State of the Union speech](#). Hate speech and hate crime have seen a sharp rise across Europe and have become a particularly serious and worrying phenomenon – offline and online. Common EU action is needed to tackle this EU-wide challenge. However, currently there is no legal basis to criminalise hate speech and hate crime at EU level. The existing list of EU crimes in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) needs to be extended to ensure minimum common rules on how to define criminal offences and sanctions applicable in all EU Member States. Today's initiative is the first step in the process of extending the list of EU crimes. The next step would be for Member States to approve the initiative, before the Commission can present a legislative proposal. Full press release [here](#).

(9/12) Strengthening human rights and democracy in the world: EU launches a €1.5 billion plan to promote universal values.

On the eve of Human Rights Day and coinciding with the Summit for Democracy, the European Union launches the Global Europe Human Rights and Democracy programme. This programme, worth €1.5 billion, steps up EU support in promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy, and the rule of law and the work of civil society organisations and human rights defenders around the world during the period 2021–2027. The programme will promote and protect the universality of human rights, strengthen the rule of law and accountability for human rights violations and abuses, and defend the full and effective exercise of fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of expression, supporting independent journalism and media, while seizing opportunities and countering risks associated with digital and new technologies. Full press release [here](#).

(1/12) Global Gateway: up to €300 billion for the European Union's strategy to boost sustainable links around the world.

Today, the European Commission and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy launch the Global Gateway, the new European Strategy to boost smart, clean and secure links in digital, energy and transport and strengthen health, education and research systems across the world. It stands for sustainable and trusted connections that work for people and the planet, to tackle the most pressing global challenges, from climate change and protecting the environment, to improving health security and boosting competitiveness and global supply chains. Global Gateway aims to mobilise up to €300 billion in investments between 2021 and 2027 to underpin a lasting global recovery, taking into account our partners needs and EU's own interests. Full press release [here](#).

(1/12) Asylum and return: Commission proposes temporary legal and practical measures to address the emergency situation at the EU's external border with Belarus.

The Commission is today putting forward a set of temporary asylum and return measures to assist Latvia, Lithuania and Poland in addressing the emergency situation at the EU's external border with Belarus. The measures will allow these Member States to set up swift and orderly processes to manage the situation, in full respect of fundamental rights and international obligations, including the principle of non-refoulement. The proposal follows the invitation by the European Council for the Commission to propose any necessary changes to the EU's legal framework and concrete measures underpinned by adequate financial support to ensure an immediate and appropriate response in line with EU law and international obligations, including the respect of fundamental rights. The measures, based on Article 78(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, will enter into force after their adoption by the Council. The European Parliament will be consulted. The measures will remain in force for a period of 6 months. Full press release [here](#).

(2/12) Turkey: EU provides further €325 million in humanitarian aid for refugees.

Today, the EU has allocated an additional €325 million to extend the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) programme until early 2023. The ESSN provides more than 1.5 million refugees in Turkey with monthly cash transfers to cover their essential needs. It is the biggest humanitarian programme in the history of the EU, and the world's biggest humanitarian cash assistance programme. Full press release [here](#).

European Council / Council of the EU

(13/12) Mali: EU sets up autonomous framework for sanctions against those obstructing the political transition.

The Council today amended its sanctions regime in view of the situation in Mali, establishing new criteria that will allow the EU to autonomously impose restrictive measures on individuals and entities responsible for threatening the peace, security or stability of Mali, or for obstructing the implementation of its political transition. To date the EU has only been able to transpose into EU legislation the sanctions decided by the United Nations. Full press release [here](#).

(9/12) Migration and asylum pact: Council adopts EU asylum agency regulation.

The Council today adopted the regulation establishing the EU asylum agency. This regulation aims to improve the application of asylum policy within the EU, by turning the current European asylum support office (EASO) into a fully-fledged agency. This agency will be responsible for improving the functioning of the common European asylum system, by providing enhanced operational and technical assistance to member states and by contributing to more convergence in the assessment of applications for international protection. Full press release [here](#).

(6/12) Council agrees on mandate for negotiations on a EU framework on adequate minimum wages.

The Council today agreed its position on a Commission proposal for an EU law on adequate minimum wages in the EU. Fair wages that provide for a decent standard of living are one of the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights. To improve working and living conditions, this draft law establishes a framework to promote adequate levels of statutory minimum wages, to promote collective bargaining on wage setting and to improve the effective access to minimum wage protection of those workers who are entitled to a minimum wage. Full press release [here](#).

European Parliament

(16/12) EU institutions agree priorities for 2022 for a resilient and reinvigorated EU.

On Thursday, European Parliament President David Sassoli, Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Janša, on behalf of the Presidency of the Council, and Commission President Ursula von der Leyen signed the [Joint Declaration on EU legislative priorities for 2022](#). The Declaration sets out the institutions' shared vision for a transformed, more resilient Europe. It demonstrates the institutions' determination to enable the EU to emerge stronger from the COVID-19 pandemic and the dramatic consequences of climate change and other global crises. Full press release [here](#).

(14/12) Gender-based cyberviolence: Parliament calls for EU law to tackle the problem.

Following a [plenary debate on Monday](#), MEPs adopted a legislative initiative report on tackling gender-based cyberviolence with 513 votes in favour, 122 against, and 58 abstentions. The text reiterates the EU's lack of an adequate legal framework to combat the phenomenon, and to protect and support victims. A common definition of gender-based cyberviolence is needed in criminal law, say MEPs, as are harmonised minimum and maximum penalties. Parliament urges the Commission to criminalise gender-based cyberviolence, and calls for the Council to extend the list of '[EU crimes](#)' - i.e. to officially recognise that gender-based violence is a particularly serious crime with a cross-border dimension. Full press release [here](#).

(14/12) President of Ghana to Parliament: We need a new EU-Africa partnership.

During a formal sitting on Tuesday, Ghanaian President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo expressed his hope that the EU and the African Union can work on a joint strategy and define a new partnership. African countries should not be just a receiver of help from Europe, but they should sit side by side at the decision making table as equals. He stressed that investing in Africa and helping it develop its economy would bring huge export opportunities for European companies. "We need to rely on ourselves and get rid of the image of beggars living on charity, aid and handouts, and make better and more intelligent use of our abundant national resources to pull ourselves out of poverty and into prosperity", said President Akufo-Addo. Full press release [here](#).

Others

(10/12) CoR - European Education Summit: Future education needs must be addressed at all levels of government.

Members of the European Committee of the Regions were invited to represent the EU's regions and cities at the yearly [European Education Summit](#) organised by the European Commission on 9 December. This provided an opportunity to underline the essential contribution of local and regional authorities to developing high-quality digital education and skills, to reinforcing active European citizenship and to responding to future challenges in the field of education and training. This year's event was organised fully online. Full press release [here](#).

(10/12) FRA - Civil society discusses the impact of Covid-19. On 7 December, the FRA Director addressed the EU NGO Forum.

This year it focused on a human rights-based recovery from the pandemic. The [Forum](#) provided a platform for civil society organisations from across the world to recommend how the EU can better protect civic space worldwide, both online and offline. It also offers an opportunity to address inequalities and shortfalls in human rights protection by promoting a rights-based recovery, including strengthening

healthcare and decent work for everyone. The European External Action Service and the European Commission Forum organise the event annually. They did it in partnership with the Human Rights and Democracy Network - a network of EU-level NGOs working on human rights, democracy and peace. Full press release [here](#).

(3/12) CoR - Hate speech against local politicians has "worsened significantly". Council of Europe leader calls for support for local media and emphasises the "major role" of local and regional authorities in tackling disinformation and hate. Full press release [here](#).

(2/12) CoR - Supporting sustainable development of regions and cities a 'top goal' of EU's international partnerships. Regions and cities will be central to the European Union's efforts to support sustainable development in Europe and across the world in the coming years, the European Commission told politicians and officials from scores of countries at an event co-organised by the European Committee of the Regions. They also heard that the EU will soon launch a portal to make it easier for regions and cities on different continents – Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America – to team up as they seek to achieve the United Nations' Agenda 2030 including the Sustainable Development Goals. Full press release [here](#).

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

(9/12) A new draft Recommendation on intercultural integration soon to be assessed by the Committee of Ministers. From 7 to 9 December 2021, the Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity, and Inclusion (CDADI) held its fourth meeting and unanimously endorsed a new draft Recommendation on intercultural integration. The draft Recommendation has been prepared by the Working Group on Intercultural Integration (GT-ADI-INT), the first multilevel subordinate body comprising representatives of national and local authorities. It is based on Council of Europe standards in the field of integration and inclusion, as well as on the review report of the implementation by Member States of CM/Rec(2015)1 on intercultural integration, and on the Model Framework for an intercultural integration strategy at the national level, adopted by the CDADI in June 2021. The draft recommendation contains the essence of the intercultural integration model as a set of policies which seek to include migrants through interaction and participation, to foster equality and sense of belonging, and to value diversity as an asset for community development. It further requires member states to implement intercultural integration strategies through a multilevel approach, involving stakeholders and authorities at all levels in their design, implementation, and evaluation. It finally offers European guidance to support a coherent, comprehensive, and consistent approach to intercultural integration based, among others, on best practices collected in Member States. Full press release [here](#).

(2/12) Call for tenders to be part of the Intercultural Cities Pool of experts (consultancy services and technical expertise on intercultural and inclusive integration). The Council of Europe implements the Intercultural Cities (ICC) programme since 2008. The Programme provides assistance to local authorities from more than 150 cities located all over the world and, to some extent, to European Regions and States. Therefore, the ICC Unit also relies upon a network of consultants and experts with knowledge of international standards and different European systems, and consultants and experts with knowledge of the domestic system in which the activities are implemented. The current ICC Pool of Experts will expire in March 2022. In view of renewing the Pool of Experts and to align it with the current programme of work, the Council of Europe is launching a new call for tenders for consultants to contribute to the ICC programme of activities on a global scale, within the regulations tied to the funds

available. Deadline for applications: 10 January 2022 (16:00, Strasbourg time). Full press release [here](#).

CIVIL SOCIETY

(17/12) ECRE - European Commission Presents Proposed Legislation to Address Situations of “Instrumentalisation” of Migrants and a Revised Schengen Borders Code.

On 14 December 2021, the European Commission presented two legislative proposals, a regulation addressing the situation of instrumentalisation in migration and asylum and a revision of the Schengen Borders Code. The proposal for a Regulation addressing the situation of instrumentalisation in migration and asylum is very similar to the proposed emergency measures for Poland, Lithuania and Latvia which the Commission published at the beginning of December. It includes derogations that allow a lengthened registration period, an expansion and prolongation of the asylum and return border procedure, more limited reception conditions, and non-application of the Return Directive. ECRE issued Comments on the emergency measures earlier this week. This week’s proposal goes further in reducing safeguards in that it does not provide an exemption for people with serious health conditions (neither of the two proposals includes an exemption for vulnerable people per se) nor does it include a reference to the right to an effective remedy. The proposed Regulation also suggests an authorisation procedure whereby Member States faced with “instrumentalisation” of migrants should request that the Commission prepares a Council Implementing Decision, with the derogations applicable for an initial period of six months. Full press release [here](#).

(17/12) EAEA - European Association for the Education of Adults: More inclusion requires adequate funding and support. The European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) supports the European Commission’s initiative to promote inclusion in the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Programmes. A series of recommendations drafted by EAEA calls for adequate funding and support for adult learning organisations and National Agencies to make the programmes truly inclusive. Full press release [here](#).

(16/12) ICMC - ICMC Europe Joins Civil Society Call For EU To Restore Rights and Values at the Border With Belarus and To Protect Children. ICMC Europe joins civil society coalitions to demand immediate humanitarian assistance and access to asylum for those caught in the ongoing humanitarian crisis at the EU-Belarus border and better protection of migrant children. Church officials in EU countries that share a border with Belarus call for solidarity with migrants and refugees. Full press release [here](#).

(15/12) Social Platform - Group of Social Pillar Champions – a step towards building a more social Europe for all and with all. In recent weeks, the European Pillar of Social Rights (Social Pillar) has been getting a lot of attention. From its 4th anniversary on 17 November, to work ramping up on important policy areas it covers (including minimum wages), more and more decision-makers recognise that the EU can – and should – do more on all things ‘social’. As the Social Pillar is front and centre in Social Platform’s work, we could not be silent – and we have not been! In recent months, we have been busy building the Group of Social Pillar Champions in the European Parliament. This informal group brings together Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) from across the political spectrum who are some of the most vocal and visible supporters of social rights, both for their own constituents and people across the whole EU. Building on the strong line taken on social rights at the Porto Social Summit, the group aims to build momentum for stronger, more sustainable, and inclusive social rights for all people in the EU, and to strengthen collaboration between MEPs and social civil society

organisations. We also want to raise the awareness of people across the EU about the Social Pillar, the importance of social justice, and the vital role that the European project has in protecting and promoting human rights. To achieve that, we first needed to raise awareness about the Group of Social Pillar Champions, and to date we have a growing membership of 42 MEP members from 18 EU countries and 5 political groups! Full article [here](#).

(14/12) PICUM - Italy: the 2020 regularisation scheme leaves many behind. In May 2020, the Italian government adopted a scheme to regularise undocumented workers in the country. One year on, the results are difficult to see. We spoke to Giulia Capitani, Migration Policy Advisor at Oxfam Italia, and part of migration reform coalition Ero Straniero, to know more. Full interview [here](#).

(14/12) ECRE - ECRE Comments: EC Proposal on Emergency Measures Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. ECRE [published its Comments](#) on the European Commission Proposal for a Council Decision on provisional emergency measures for the benefit of Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. ECRE does not support the measures proposed, which will have an adverse effect on the right to asylum without adequately responding to the situation at the EU's borders with Belarus. The main fundamental rights affected by the proposal are the right to human dignity (Article 1 EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (CFREU)), the right to asylum (Article 18 CFREU), the prohibition of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (Article 4 CFREU), the right to liberty and security (Article 6 CFREU), protection in the event of removal, expulsion or extradition (Article 19 CFREU), the rights of the child (Article 24 CFREU) and the right to an effective remedy (Article 47 CFREU). Full press release [here](#).

(10/12) ECRE - Ireland: NGO Campaigning Pays Off With Regularisation Scheme for Long-term Asylum Seekers. The Irish government has announced a scheme that will provide a pathway to legal status for people who have been awaiting an asylum decision for at least two years. The news was welcomed by organisations who have long campaigned for the reduction of backlogs in regularisation and the importance of secure legal status for displaced people making their home in Ireland. Full press release [here](#).

(9/12) PICUM - Vaccinating Europe's undocumented: a policy scorecard. Since March 2021, investigative nonprofit newsroom [Lighthouse Reports](#) has been working with PICUM to assess European vaccination policies and strategies, in terms of how inclusive they are of undocumented people. We embarked on a joint data journalism project to try and answer one apparently simple question: are undocumented people included in the vaccination efforts of European governments? The answer is anything but straightforward. Policies are for the most part vague and open to interpretation. This can be a purposeful means of avoiding a charged political debate while still providing for this population, or it can be an exclusionary tactic to deny undocumented people access to the vaccines. Full press release [here](#).

(3/12) ECRE - Editorial: Commission Proposal Leaves Little Solutions but Plenty of Contradictions. As its President forewarned, the European Commission this week launched a [proposal](#) to respond to events at the EU border with Belarus. It was met with exacerbation and bafflement by journalists and fury by political groups in the European Parliament. For civil society trying to respond to events on the ground, including NGOs, the media, lawyers and faith-based groups, the proposal is profoundly frustrating. Full press release [here](#).

(3/12) ECRE - Germany: Incoming Coalition Agreement Signals Significant Change in Asylum and Integration Policy. The coalition agreement presented by the incoming German

government marks a significant change in Germany's asylum and integration policies. While the agreement outlines the removal of punitive measures, prioritised access to residency, EU coordinated search and rescue and pathways to protection in Germany, it also seeks to increase deportations and cooperation with third countries on migration. ECRE member [Pro Asyl](#) finds important improvements as well as "serious gaps". Full press release [here](#).

[PUBLICATIONS](#)

FRA - [Unaccompanied children outside the child protection system – Case study: Pakistani children in Greece](#)

MPI - [How Can Europe Deliver on the Potential of Talent Partnerships?](#)

MPI - [The Invisible Work of Family, Friend, and Neighbor Caregivers and Its Importance for Immigrant and Dual Language Learner Families](#)

ODI - [Public narratives and attitudes towards refugees and other migrants](#) (Italy)

ODI - [Public narratives and attitudes towards refugees and other migrants](#) (Spain)

ALIGN Platform - [Challenging violence against women in public life](#)

FEANTSA – [Newsletter on migration and homelessness](#)

JRC - [A place-based approach to migrant integration](#)

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

EPRS - [European Commission Work Programme for 2022](#)

EPRS - [Migration: Latest challenges](#) (Think Tank Review)

EPC - [From debunking to prebunking: How to get ahead of disinformation on migration in the EU](#)

EPC - [Future-proofing resettlement policies: Next steps for resettlement and community sponsorship in the EU](#)

EPC - [Rethinking EU economic governance: Social investment](#)

CEPS - [Limitations on Human Mobility in Response to COVID-19](#)

ECRE - [National Recovery and Resilience Programmes](#) (Working Paper)

ECRE - [EU Support to Afghanistan: Scoring High on Humanitarian Assistance and Low on Protection in Europe?](#)

ECRE - [Overview of Status Quo Regarding Evacuations, Pathways to Protection and Access to Asylum for Afghans in Europe](#)

Eurodiaconia - [Funding gaps for social services - The perspective of Eurodiaconia members](#)

Eurodiaconia - [Assessing the impact and uptake of social criteria in Public Procurement](#)

Eurodiaconia - [Homelessness and Housing Exclusion](#)

Eurodiaconia - [Roma Child Poverty and Social Exclusion](#)

Eurodiaconia - [COVID-19 & Social Services](#)