

INFO FLASH 31/05/2022

EU INSTITUTIONS

European Commission

(25/05) EU disburses €300 million in Macro-Financial Assistance to support the Tunisian people. The European Commission, on behalf of the EU, has today disbursed €300 million in Macro-Financial Assistance (MFA) to Tunisia. This is the second and last disbursement under the COVID-19 MFA programme to Tunisia, approved to mitigate the economic fallout of the coronavirus pandemic and enhance macroeconomic stability. The first instalment of €300 million was disbursed in June 2021 after ratification by the Tunisian Parliament of the agreement on Macro-Financial Assistance. At this exceptionally challenging time, the EU remains determined to support Tunisia on the path of economic reforms and full respect of the democratic acquis. This involves an inclusive and transparent political transition process and the return to institutional normalcy, through the respect of the separation of powers and the proper functioning of democratic institutions, including a Parliament. The Tunisian authorities have reaffirmed their commitment to implement a political roadmap, which entails the organisation of a constitutional referendum and parliamentary elections respectively in July and December 2022. This roadmap is based on an inclusive and transparent dialogue involving all the political and social actors as well as the respect of fundamental rights and freedoms, rule of law and independent institutions. Its implementation will be key to ensuring the long-term stability and prosperity of Tunisia. The agreement on a new IMF programme will also be an important milestone for the EU to provide its full support to Tunisia in the future. Full press release [here](#).

(24/05) State of Schengen: Commission sets new priorities and new governance model. Today, the Commission is presenting the State of Schengen Report 2022. This is the first time the Commission is presenting such report, following last year's Schengen Strategy. This report is part of the Commission's initiative to reinforce the Schengen governance through a yearly reporting exercise presenting the state of Schengen, identifying priorities for the year ahead and monitoring progress made at the end of a given year. The State of Schengen report will serve as basis for discussions of Members of the European Parliament and Home Affairs Ministers in the Schengen Forum on 2 June, and in the upcoming Schengen Council on 10 June. Full press release [here](#).

(18/05) Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Member States commit to tackling the employment and employability challenges of the most vulnerable, especially among youth and women. The fifth Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Ministerial on Employment and Labour, held on 17 and 18 May in Marrakech, Morocco, focused on "Employment and employability of the most vulnerable, especially among youth and women". UfM Member States discussed the most pressing labour market challenges in the Euro-Mediterranean region, in particular on how to ensure an inclusive, green, digital and sustainable recovery for all, and particularly for the most vulnerable. Ministers reiterated their commitment to promote an economy that works for people through employment and social policies that respond to youth and gender-specific issues. The Ministers emphasised also the important role of women's economic empowerment, with women being active drivers for the economic recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. Full press release [here](#).

(16/05) State aid: Commission approves €404 million Swedish scheme to help disadvantaged workers access the labour market. The European Commission has approved, under EU State aid rules, a Swedish scheme of around €404 million (SEK 4.2 billion) to help disadvantaged workers access the labour market. The measure aims to create so-called 'Entry Jobs' for disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged workers who are currently unemployed. The scheme also contributes to the [EU's strategic objectives](#) relating to job creation. Sweden notified the Commission of its intention to create Entry Jobs enabling newly arrived immigrants and long-term unemployed to access the Swedish labour market, and to introduce a scheme to compensate workers receiving a lower salary for work carried out in these Entry Jobs. Full press release [here](#).

(6/05) Eurobarometer on the European Year of Youth: Young Europeans are increasingly engaged. Today, the Commission published its [Flash Eurobarometer on Youth and Democracy](#), conducted between 22 February and 4 March 2022. With the [European Year of Youth](#) in full swing, and at the end of the [Conference on the future of Europe](#) - where youth played a crucial part - it allows to take stock of the sentiment among the young generation. The new Eurobarometer survey shows growing youth engagement: today, a majority (58%) of young people are active in the societies they live in and have participated in one or more youth organisations over the last 12 months. This is an increase of 17 percentage points since last [Eurobarometer in 2019](#). In addition, young people's most common expectation for the 2022 European Year of Youth is for decision-makers to listen more to their demands and act on them, and to support their personal, social and professional development (72%). Today, the Commission is also launching a new online tool, the "[Voice your Vision](#)" platform, to make it easier for young Europeans to make their voice heard. Furthermore, policy dialogues between Members of the College and young people are organised in the framework of the Year of Youth. They give a unique opportunity to young people to get direct access to decision-makers and express face to face their vision and ideas on all policy areas. Full press release [here](#).

(5/05) Standing with Ukraine: Commission announces new aid worth €200 million for displaced people. Today, the Commission is announcing a new aid package of €200 million to support displaced people in Ukraine, in the context of the [International Donor's Conference](#) convened jointly by Poland and Sweden. Close to 8 million people, two-third of whom are children, have been internally displaced since the beginning of Putin's war in Ukraine. More than 5.3 million have left Ukraine to seek shelter in the EU and neighbouring countries. Full press release [here](#).

European Parliament

(4/05) Discharge: MEPs delay signing off on accounts of EU border control agency Frontex. Parliament signed off on the 2020 budgets of most EU bodies, except for Frontex, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the Council. In a vote by show of hands, Parliament withheld their approval of the management by the EU's border control agency Frontex of its 2020 budget. As justification, in a resolution adopted by 492 votes in favour, 145 against and 8 abstentions, MEPs cite a failure to fulfil the conditions set out in Parliament's [previous discharge report](#), as well as the ongoing investigations by the EU's Anti-Fraud watchdog OLAF regarding fundamental rights incidents, including migrant push-backs. MEPs point to the fact that they have not seen the full investigation report and thus are unable to take an informed decision at this point. Press release [here](#).

European Council / Council of the EU

Others

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

(20/05) Council of Europe proposes a comprehensive legal and policy framework to combat hate speech. In a Recommendation adopted during its annual session held in Turin, the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers calls on governments to develop comprehensive strategies to prevent and fight hate speech, including the adoption of an effective legal framework and implementing adequately calibrated and proportionate measures. When doing so, national authorities should carefully balance the right to private life, the right to freedom of expression and the prohibition of discrimination. The guidelines recommend that member states differentiate between, firstly, the most serious cases of hate speech, which are to be prohibited by criminal law, secondly, hate speech subject to civil and administrative law and, finally, offensive or harmful types of expressions which are not sufficiently severe to be legitimately restricted under the European Convention on Human Rights but nevertheless call for alternative responses. Full press release [here](#).

(20/05) Protecting rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls: Council of Europe recommendation adopted. The Committee of Ministers, meeting in Turin, has adopted a new recommendation to protect the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls providing measures to better respond to needs and challenges that they face. Drawing on Council of Europe treaties including the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and the Convention on action against trafficking in human beings, the recommendation addresses issues faced by women and girls: from adequate transit and reception facilities, to their health needs or establishing gender-sensitive asylum policies. Also drawing on findings from the European Committee on the Prevention of Torture and from relevant United Nations instruments, it provides member States with a checklist of measures to ensure that migrant women's human rights are better protected. Part of the Council of Europe Action Plan on Protecting Vulnerable Persons in the Context of Migration and Asylum in Europe (2021-2025), the recommendation furthermore provides guidance to member States regarding women's needs in terms of social services, employment, education and participation, to ensure that public policies fully contribute to the integration and empowerment of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls. Full press release [here](#).

CIVIL SOCIETY

(31/05) Eurodiaconia – Joint civil society statement on destitute mobile EU citizens. On Friday, FEANTSA published a joint civil society statement calling for the protection of the rights of destitute mobile EU citizens. Eurodiaconia contributed to the development of the statement and as a cosignatory endorses the recommendations put forward to the European Commission. The plight of destitute mobile EU citizens is something that many of our members are engaged with and earlier this year Eurodiaconia published an updated policy paper on the issue. The timing of this joint statement comes in advance of a new Communication, being prepared by the European Commission, on Directive 2004/38 on the

rights of citizens of the Union and their family members to move and reside freely within the EU. The Communication will seek to clarify how the Directive should be interpreted and transposed by member states. Therefore, it provides a key advocacy opportunity to challenge the misinterpretation of this crucial piece of EU legislation at the national level. Full press release [here](#).

(13/05) PICUM - Non-Ukrainians fleeing the war met with detention. Since the outset of the war in Ukraine, nearly 6 million people have fled violence perpetrated by the Russian army. The majority have crossed borders to the EU. While many have been welcomed in neighbouring countries, a number of reports have emerged of differential treatment towards non-Ukrainian nationals escaping the war. Investigations conducted by [Lighthouse Reports](#) with The Independent, Der Spiegel, Radio France, and Médiapart, revealed that African nationals were detained in Poland and Estonia after fleeing Ukraine. While the total number is unknown, Polish police confirmed on March 15 that at least 52 third-country nationals were detained after crossing the border from Ukraine to Poland. People apprehended at the border were denied legal aid and interpreters, and were left with no information on the circumstances of their detention. For instance, the Polish Border Guard detained a Nigerian student who was forced to sign a document written in Polish, without any appropriate translation, under the threat of five months in jail should he refuse to sign. When the student went to court, he wasn't provided with an interpreter, and eventually found himself in an immigration detention center. Full article [here](#).

(9/05) PICUM - Regulating migration tech: how the EU's ai act can better protect people on the move. As the European Union amends the Artificial Intelligence Act (AI Act), understanding the impact of AI systems on marginalised communities is vital. AI systems are increasingly developed, tested and deployed to judge and control migrants and people on the move in harmful ways. How can the AI Act prevent this? Full article [here](#).

(8/05) Caritas EU - Syria must not be forgotten. On 9-10 May, representatives of donors, refugee-host states, UN agencies and NGOs meet for the sixth Brussels Conference on "[Supporting the future of Syria and the region](#)". Caritas Europa and Caritas Middle East and North Africa (MONA) believe that the Conference must send a strong message of hope and resilience to the Syrian people. We hope that those participating will seize the opportunity to do so. In Syria, more than two thirds of the population are in severe and acute need of humanitarian assistance. Over 90% of people live below the world poverty line due to the global economic recession caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the impact of sanctions and the political and economic crisis in Lebanon. The purchasing power of the Syrian population has been eroded heavily with an increase in prices related to high inflation rates and currency depreciation. Even before the impact of the conflict in Ukraine, prices of staple foods doubled in 2021 and 55% of the population was estimated to be food insecure. Syria ranked among the ten most food insecure countries globally by mid-2021. Full press release [here](#).

(6/05) ECRE - Search and Rescue: UNHCR Call for Urgent Action over Deaths at Sea, Meanwhile Deaths Continue on the Mediterranean and Atlantic Routes. The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) demands "urgent action" over deaths at sea – according to [a report](#) released by the agency on 29 April more than 3,000 people died or went missing attempting to reach Europe by Sea in 2021. Meanwhile, the latest period is marked by a series of deadly tragedies on the central Mediterranean and Atlantic routes. Speaking of a new report released by UNHCR on deaths at sea in 2021, spokesperson Shabia Mantoo stated: "Of the 2021 total, 1,924 people were reported dead or missing on the Central and Western Mediterranean

routes, while an additional 1,153 perished or went missing on the Northwest African maritime route to the Canary Islands”. UNHCR appeals for: “meaningful alternatives to these dangerous journeys”, and the prevention of people becoming victims of traffickers”. Full press release [here](#).

PUBLICATIONS

ECRE - [The Migration Management Strategy of the EU towards Africa Analysed from a Senegalese and West African Perspective](#)

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

MPC - [Convinced to Stay? The Impact of EU-Funded Information Campaigns in West Africa](#)

MPC - [Can Rwanda Be the Solution? Europe’s Cooperation on Migration With Third Countries](#)

MPC - [Governments’ Information Campaigns for Potential Migrants: What’s the Point?](#)

BMC - [The political determinants of the health of undocumented immigrants: a comparative analysis of mortality patterns in Switzerland](#)

PERCEPTIONS - [Practitioners’ perceptions for improving migration management and services](#)

PERCEPTIONS - [Vulnerability and exploitation of migrant workers in Italian agriculture](#)

MPI - [From Fear to Solidarity: The Difficulty in Shifting Public Narratives about Refugees](#)

MPI - [Leveraging Predeparture Counseling to Support Returning Migrants’ Sustainable Reintegration](#)

MPI - [Cultural Competency Secrets to Success with Immigrant and Refugee Families: Spreading and Adapting 2Gen Working Practices](#)

MPI - [COVID-19 and the State of Global Mobility in 2021](#)