

INFO FLASH 30/09/2022

EU INSTITUTIONS

European Commission

(30/09) Ethiopia: Statement by Commissioner Lenarčič on the humanitarian situation and International Humanitarian Law in northern Ethiopia. Janez Lenarčič Commissioner for Crisis Management said: "The EU is alarmed at the deterioration of the humanitarian operating environment in northern Ethiopia since the resumption of hostilities in August 2022. Reportedly, tens of thousands of people are newly displaced and damage to civilian property and infrastructure is widespread. This comes on top of an already dramatic humanitarian context. According to the World Food Programme, 13 million people across the Tigray, Afar and Amhara regions are in need of food assistance as a direct result of the conflict. At the same time Ethiopia is experiencing the most severe drought recorded since 1981, leaving an estimated 7.4 million people facing grave food insecurity. The renewal of fighting severely hampers humanitarian aid delivery in northern Ethiopia. The supply of humanitarian commodities and fuel as well as cash availability are still totally blocked for Tigray and greatly impeded in all affected areas in Amhara and Afar. Humanitarian organisations had to suspend their operations and withdraw some staff from conflict-affected areas. This is a serious blow to humanitarian operations and to millions of highly vulnerable people in Tigray, Afar and Amhara that depend on humanitarian aid for their survival. Full press release [here](#).

(29/09) Antitrust: Commission adopts Guidelines on collective agreements by solo self-employed people. The European Commission has adopted today its Guidelines on the application of EU competition law to collective agreements ('[Guidelines](#)') regarding the working conditions of solo self-employed people. The Guidelines clarify when certain self-employed people can get together to negotiate collectively better working conditions without breaching EU competition rules. The Guidelines apply to solo self-employed people who work completely on their own and do not employ others.

The Guidelines clarify the circumstances in which certain solo self-employed people, can negotiate collectively to improve their working conditions without breaching EU competition rules. In particular, the Guidelines clarify that: A) Competition law does not apply to solo self-employed people that are in a situation comparable to workers. These include solo self-employed people who: (i) provide services exclusively or predominantly to one undertaking; (ii) work side-by-side with workers; and (iii) provide services to or through a digital labour platform. B) The Commission will not enforce EU competition rules against collective agreements made by solo self-employed people who are in a weak negotiating position. This is for instance, when solo self-employed people face an imbalance in bargaining power due to negotiations with economically stronger companies or when they bargain collectively pursuant to national or EU legislation. Full press release [here](#).

(28/09) Minimum income: more effective support needed to fight poverty and promote employment. Today, the Commission calls on Member States to modernise their minimum income schemes as part of the ongoing pledge to reduce poverty and social exclusion in Europe. The [proposed Council Recommendation on adequate minimum income ensuring active inclusion](#) sets out how Member States can modernise their minimum income schemes

to make them more effective, lifting people out of poverty, while promoting the labour market integration of those who can work. Full press release [here](#).

European Parliament

(15/09) Fundamental rights in the EU: long-standing problems exacerbated by COVID-19. Parliament's latest assessment of the state of fundamental rights in the EU identifies numerous concerns and demands member states act in defence of European values. On Thursday, MEPs assessed the state of fundamental values in the EU in 2020 - 2021, identifying areas of concern and proposing ways to protect freedom, equality and the rule of law more effectively. The text was approved with 410 votes for, 131 against, and 42 abstentions. MEPs are concerned about the impact of COVID-19 measures on democracy and core freedoms, including the rights of people dealing with the legal system and law enforcement, and prisoners. They also regret the persistent rule of law violations in some member states, once again stating that the rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights are inextricably linked. In order to protect these EU values, and the fair and legal distribution of EU funds, Parliament calls on the Commission to employ the EU's budget conditionality mechanism. MEPs condemn Poland and Hungary for not complying with the judgements of the European Court of Justice, and in response ask for concrete action by the EU institutions. Full press release [here](#).

(15/09) Human rights breaches in Ukraine, Uganda, Tanzania, and Nicaragua. On Thursday, the European Parliament adopted three resolutions on the respect for human rights in Ukraine, Uganda and Tanzania, and Nicaragua. Russia must immediately cease all forced transfers of Ukrainian civilians to Russia and Russian-occupied territories. Authorities in Uganda and Tanzania must ensure that people are adequately compensated for lost property due to an oil pipeline project. Nicaragua must immediately and unconditionally release Bishop Rolando Álvarez. Full press release [here](#).

European Council / Council of the EU

(9/09) EUCAP Sahel Niger: mission extended until 30 September 2024 with an adjusted mandate. The Council today decided to renew the mandate of the EU civilian mission EUCAP Sahel Niger until 30 September 2024 with a budget allocation of just over €72 million for the period from 1 October 2022 to 30 September 2024. The Council has also decided to slightly adjust the mission's mandate to allow it to exchange EU classified information with the EU Justice and Home Affairs agencies. Today's decision was taken as part of the strategic review of the mission. EUCAP Sahel Niger, a civilian mission under the Common Security and Defence Policy, was launched at the request of Niger's government in the summer of 2012. Its aim is to help establish an integrated, coherent, sustainable and human rights-based approach among the various Nigerien security actors in the fight against terrorism and organised crime. Accordingly, the mission is designed to provide advice and training to support the Nigerien authorities with strengthening their capacities. Over 100 international experts, the majority of whom are from European security forces and justice departments, are permanently deployed in Niamey. Full press release [here](#).

(8/09) European Peace Facility: EU agrees support to the Southern African Development Community mission in Mozambique. Following the Council's adoption in April 2021 of an assistance measure taking the form of a general programme for support to the African Union in 2022-2024 under the European Peace Facility (EPF), the Political and Security Committee today approved the provision of EUR 15 million in support of the

Southern African Development Community (SADC) mission to Mozambique (SAMIM). The agreed support will provide the military component of SAMIM with collective equipment at company level: camp fortifications and storage containers, medical equipment, vehicles and boats, as well as technological devices. This strand of EPF support is complementary to the ongoing assistance of EUR 89 million to the Mozambican Armed Forces agreed so far, which provides equipment and supplies - not designed to deliver lethal force - to the Mozambican military units trained by the EU Training Mission in Mozambique. By providing this support, the EU joins Mozambican and international efforts to restore peace, safety and security in the North of Mozambique, protect the civilian population, and allow for the return of internally displaced persons, accountable law enforcement, state structures and services to the area. Full press release [here](#).

Others

(30/09) CoR - Ukraine crisis: financial support is urgently needed to ensure affordable and accessible housing in EU regions and cities hosting refugees. Rental and housing markets in European cities and regions have significantly come under pressure since the start of the Russian invasion in Ukraine. Members of the Commission for Territorial Cohesion Policy and EU Budget (COTER) of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) call for increased support for European regions and cities on the frontline of the refugee income to ensure the long-term integration through affordable and accessible housing to all citizens. Full press release [here](#).

(30/09) OECD - Empowering youth to achieve sustainable development through education. Powerpoint presentation [here](#)

(12/09) EU Justice and Home Affairs agencies joint paper on COVID-19 – latest update. The EU Justice and Home Affairs Agencies' Network (JHAAN) has released its [second update of the joint paper on the COVID-19 response](#). This newest update contains further details on the individual and joint efforts by the nine EU Agencies active in the field of freedom, security and justice to deal with the impact of COVID-19. During 2020, the JHA agencies took all the necessary measures to ensure business continuity and uninterrupted operational support. At the same time, the Justice and Home Affairs Agencies' Network, under the presidency of Eurojust, initiated a mutual dialogue to share the agencies' experiences in dealing with the pandemic and consider new avenues for closer cooperation amongst the agencies and with key stakeholders inside and outside the EU. On 15 July 2020, [the first Joint Paper on the COVID-19 response](#) by the JHA agencies was released, capturing the agencies' individual and joint efforts to deal with the impact of the pandemic. As the pandemic continued to run its course throughout 2020, the [first update of the joint paper covering the period of January-December](#) was published in January 2021. Full press release [here](#).

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

(27/09) Putting children at the centre – Council of Europe and EU synergies in protecting children’s rights. The Council of Europe’s Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2022-2027 (the Rome Strategy) and the EU Strategy for the Rights of the Child share a common vision and objectives, focusing on the participation of children, integrated systems for child protection and child-friendly justice, said the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Marija Pejčinović Burić, in her address to the 14th European Forum on the Rights of the Child 2022. Full press release [here](#).

(23/09) Rethinking welcoming policies from an intercultural perspective: new ICC policy brief. The Intercultural Cities programme is happy to publish the policy brief “Rethinking welcoming policies from an intercultural perspective”. The policy brief is a tool targeting public administrations and other entities working with migrant and refugee welcoming and reception, and aims to facilitate discussion amongst those working within the field as well as to assist them in identifying challenges and in finding new ways of addressing them through the intercultural integration approach. This policy brief is the first of a series of policy guidance prepared to build local authorities’ capacity to respond to situations of crisis, including the challenges resulting from the Russian Federation’s aggression against Ukraine. The brief is partly based on a paper produced by the working group on welcoming policies set up by the Spanish Network of Intercultural Cities (RECI) in 2021. The French version will be available soon. Full press release [here](#).

(21/09) Anti Racism Commission calls for French progress on police identity controls and minority rights. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) has called for France to improve the recording of police identity controls and to recognise Travellers’ caravans as a type of housing. Its latest report also recommends human rights training for people working in schools; measures to ensure that the dismantling of migrant camps is supervised, and improved measures to combat racism and LGBTI-phobic speech in politics. ECRI welcomed progress in tackling discrimination and harassment in education; simplified school enrolment procedures for minors in irregular situations; better monitoring of hate speech; progress on recognising refugees’ qualifications, and progress on LGBTI rights, such as banning “conversion therapies”. Full press release [here](#).

(20/09) Anti racism commission releases new conclusions on Albania, Austria, Belgium, Germany and Switzerland. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) today published conclusions on how [Albania](#), [Austria](#), [Belgium](#), [Germany](#) and [Switzerland](#) implemented priority recommendations addressed to them in 2020. These covered the situation of Roma, social rights of vulnerable groups, support to migrants and asylum seekers, anti-discrimination structures and racial profiling in policing. These conclusions are based on government responses and information gathered from other sources. They are not a comprehensive analysis of all developments in the fight against racism and intolerance in the countries concerned. Full press release [here](#).

CIVIL SOCIETY

(30/09) Eurodiaconia - New EMN study: To what extent do EU Member States target the distinct situation of migrant women in their integration policies? The European Migration Network recently published a study on the integration of migrant women. Focusing on the key areas covered by the EU Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion (education and training, employment and skills, health, and housing), they analysed to what extent EU Member States specifically target the differentiated situation of migrant women in integration policies or measures. Migrant women are exposed to multi-layered discrimination owing to their gender and their migrant condition. Likewise, they suffered from higher unemployment rates in comparison to migrant men and non-migrant women. The former highlights the relevance of developing a gendered approach that considers the concrete backgrounds of migrant women to facilitate their integration. Concretely, the EMN identified three main approaches among Member States: 1) Lack of a gendered approach towards integration, 2) Development of integration policies targeting migrant women, and 3) Gender mainstreaming approach. Full press release [here](#).

(29/09) Social Platform - New momentum for care? Unpacking the new European Care Strategy. Published this September, the new [European Care Strategy](#) sets out, for the first time, the EU's vision on access to quality care throughout the life cycle. Widely anticipated, this Strategy is a positive step forward for both carers and those receiving care. The Strategy is also accompanied by [two Recommendations](#) for Member States: on the revision of the Barcelona targets on early childhood education and care, and on access to affordable high-quality long-term care. The publication of this Strategy comes at an important time. After decades of inadequate funding of an undervalued sector, Europe faces a lack of affordable, available, accessible quality care services where and when people need them. This urgency is why Social Platform and many of our member organisations have been so active and vocal in contributing to the wider debate, [giving input](#) to a call for evidence and successfully influencing the European Parliament [report](#) on the same topic. Full press release [here](#).

(29/09) Caritas EU - Migrant children must always be protected. On the occasion of the 14th European Forum on the rights of the child, we join 19 organisations in calling the EU to invest in child protection systems that meet the needs of all children in migration. Full statement [here](#).

(15/09) Caritas EU - Is Europe welcoming Afghans as promised? In Afghanistan, the overall security, economic, and human rights situation is deteriorating, and people's suffering is increasing. Afghanistan's economy has collapsed, and the country is confronting a dire humanitarian crisis, with **23 million** people facing acute hunger. In this context, we are concerned that European countries concentrate their efforts more on preventing Afghans from arriving in Europe rather than implementing more effective protection policies for Afghan asylum seekers, whose needs are dramatically increasing. In addition, there is a significant lack of safe pathways to allow people at risk to leave Afghanistan. Full press release [here](#).

(26/09) Eurodiaconia - European Commission launches Disability Employment Package. The European Commission recently launched its new [Disability Employment Package](#) to support Member States in ensuring that persons with disabilities enjoy social inclusion and economic autonomy through employment. The package released by the European Commission is one of the seven flagship initiatives under the framework of

the [Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030](#) which aims to improve different areas that negatively affect the labour inclusion of persons with disabilities in the EU. Full press release [here](#).

(9/09) ECRE - Joint statement: One year after the country's takeover by the Taliban – How did Europe welcome Afghans in need of protection? As civil society and Afghan diaspora organisations, we are deeply concerned about the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan and the treatment of Afghan asylum seekers and refugees in Europe. One year after the Taliban takeover, the country is in a state of lawlessness without a constitution. The overall security, economic and human rights situation is deteriorating, and people's suffering is increasing. Afghanistan's economy has collapsed, and the country is confronting a dire humanitarian crisis, with 23 million people facing acute hunger. The general level of conflict has dropped compared to before August 2021 since the Taliban was a party to the conflict and has taken power, but the country is far from stable. Targeted killings and systematic attacks against religious and ethnic minorities, particularly against the Hazara community, revenge killings by the Taliban against former government officials and former military forces have significantly increased. Freedom of expression and movement of mainly women and girls has been severely restricted. Other rights are violated by measures taken by the Taliban, such as the ban on secondary school education for girls. Many human rights violations and incidents are going unreported in the absence of a vibrant civil society and due to the fear of Taliban persecution. Full press release [here](#).

(15/09) Eurodiaconia - Eurodiaconia calls on the European Commission for more attention to the social concerns in the EU! In the context of the State of the European Union Speech of Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, Eurodiaconia launches its first Report on the State of the Social European Union. The report stresses our networks' concerns about the state of the European Union. As energy and food prices have been skyrocketing across Europe over the last months and weeks, pushing increasing numbers of households towards their financial limits, we are particularly concerned about this cost of living crisis. It is reaching an unprecedented level of urgency and more than ever a swift and coordinated response is needed from the European Union. Full press release [here](#).

(9/09) ECRE - Editorial: Asylum reforms: Ukraine Stimulates a Rethink at the Restart. The usual busy September restart of political work in Brussels is compounded this year by awareness that time is running out for legislation to be passed before the end of the mandates of the Commission and the Parliament in 2024. Even more so, given that, coincidentally, the change will be marked by a switch from a set of serious Council Presidencies, Sweden, Spain and Belgium, to a nightmare run of Hungary, Poland and Denmark. The situation is acute in the field of EU asylum law where there are eleven legislative proposals outstanding, with limited progress having been made on many of them. From the perspective of fundamental rights – but also of workability and efficiency – they are of varying degrees of awfulness and need significant amendment. At the same time, the Ukraine displacement crisis has both indicated that a very different political approach is possible while generating immense operational challenges across the whole of Europe, reinforcing the need for a rethink. Full press release [here](#).

(9/09) Caritas - Migrants are people, not political tools. Caritas Europa, together with 59 other NGOs, rejects the new proposal of “instrumentalisation” of migration in EU law, which would allow the Member States to derogate from the current asylum rules. Full press release [here](#).

(8/09) ECRE - Joint Statement: NGOs call on Member States: Agreeing on the Instrumentalisation Regulation will be the Final Blow to a COMMON European Asylum System (CEAS) in Europe. In December 2021, the European Commission presented a proposal for a [Regulation addressing situations of instrumentalisation in the field of migration and asylum](#). The proposal introduces a mechanism which allows Member States to derogate from their responsibilities under EU asylum law in situations of “instrumentalisation” of migration. The mechanism is permanently available to Member States who can invoke it in multiple situations, essentially enabling them to derogate at will from their obligations. Full press release [here](#).

PUBLICATIONS

CEB - [From Community Vulnerability to Resilience](#)

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

ECRE - [ECRE Commentary: An Analysis of the Fiction of Non-entry as Appears in the Screening Regulation](#)

ECRE - [ECRE Policy Paper: Quo Vadis EU Asylum Reform? Stuck Between Gradual Approach, \(Mini\)-Package Deals and Instrumentalisation](#)

EPRS - [Impact of Covid-19 on asylum procedures in EU Member States](#)

EPRS - [State of the Union address, European Parliament, 2022](#)

EPRS - [The six policy priorities of the von der Leyen Commission: State of play in autumn 2022](#)

Eurodiaconia - [Briefing on Pathways to School Success](#)

IMF - [Policies to Address the Refugee Crisis in Europe Related to Russia's Invasion of Ukraine](#)

PICUM - [PICUM recommendations on the long-term residents' directive](#)