

# INFO FLASH 17/05

## EU INSTITUTIONS

### Commission

**(12/05) Facility for Refugees in Turkey – Steering Committee accelerates and scales up implementation.** The Steering Committee of the Facility for Refugees in Turkey [met in Brussels](#) to agree the practicalities of how support through the Facility will be accelerated in the months to come, with €1 billion in commitments foreseen by the end of July. The Committee also welcomed progress on implementation so far, with close to €200 million worth of assistance to refugees decided and contracted to date. Commissioner Johannes Hahn (DG NEAR) said: "The Facility for Refugees in Turkey is up and running. The priority areas for Facility intervention have been agreed (...) and we have a growing number of further projects in the pipeline". Beyond the Facility, the EU continues indeed to provide humanitarian assistance in Turkey in the form of basic assistance and protection services to particularly vulnerable groups (e.g. war affected, children), in order to bridge gaps in informal education and health. In tandem, an Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) will be implemented to improve direct financial assistance to as many as 1 million vulnerable refugees, coupled with protective and humanitarian services. The ESSN will be a joint effort of experienced humanitarian partners and Turkish authorities and will establish a single delivery system of assistance, through electronic cards, to allow refugees to cover their basic needs with dignity.

### Parliament

**(13/05) Most young Europeans feel marginalised by the crisis, says Eurobarometer poll.** More than half of young Europeans aged 16-30 feel marginalised in their own country due to the economic crisis, but few want to move abroad because of it, [finds the latest Eurobarometer poll](#), commissioned by the European Parliament and published on Friday. Nevertheless, for almost all respondents it is important to learn about the EU and how its institutions work. An absolute majority of respondents in 20 countries feel excluded, though there are marked national differences of up to 66 points. Unsurprisingly, the rates are very high in countries worst affected by the crisis. However, in the EU as a whole, few young people (15%) really feel compelled to leave their country because of the crisis; here too, national results are very disparate. 90% of respondents feel it is important to learn about the EU and how its institutions work and just over half (51%) say that voting in European elections is the best way to participate effectively in public life in the EU. Among young Europeans, who are very active on social networks, a relative majority (46%) believe that these networks represent "progress for democracy, because they allow everyone to take part in public debate". By contrast, 27% believe they represent "a risk for democracy, because of the inappropriate use that may be made of personal data".

**(13/05) MEPs to go to Greece to check on refugees and implementation of EU-Turkey deal.** A Civil Liberties Committee delegation [will travel to Greece](#) from 18 to 20 May to check the situation of refugees at the external borders of the EU and assess how the EU-Turkey deal to manage migrant and asylum-seekers flows into the EU is being implemented. MEPs will

visit the Greece/FYROM border, the island of Lesvos and Athens. They will also meet representatives of the Greek Government, and EU and international bodies, as well as NGOs. The aim of the delegation, formed by 10 MEPs led by Peter Niedermüller (S&D, HU), is to evaluate the situation on the ground in order to identify possible needs and further measures to be taken, including with regard to the implementation of the EU-Turkey deal. MEPs want to check how asylum applications are being processed, the information and support that migrants are being offered and hold discussions regarding rescue operations and border management.

**(11/05) Police cooperation: MEPs approve new powers for Europol to fight terrorism.** The EU police agency Europol will soon be able to step up efforts to fight terrorism, cybercrime and other criminal offences and respond faster to threats, thanks to new governance rules approved by Parliament on Wednesday. The new powers come with strong data protection safeguards and democratic oversight tools. The draft rules, [agreed by Parliament](#) and Council negotiators in November last year, will strengthen Europol's mandate to ensure that it is fully equipped to counter the rise in cross-border crimes and terrorist threats, in particular by making it easier for it to set up specialised units to respond immediately to emerging threats. Measures aim at removing online terrorist propaganda faster and closing information gaps among Member states. The rules will also include clear rules for existing units or centres such as European Counter Terrorism Centre, which started work on 1 January this year. The regulation will take effect as of 1 May 2017.

**(11/05) New rules to attract non-EU students, researchers and interns to the EU.** Harmonised EU entry and residence rules to make it easier and more attractive for people from third countries to study or do research at EU universities [were approved by the European Parliament](#). The new rules clarify and improve conditions for non-EU interns, volunteers, school pupils and au pairs. The new rules merge two existing directives (one on students and one on researchers) to ensure that students and researchers may stay at least nine months after finishing their studies or research in order to look for a job or to set up a business, students and researchers may move more easily within the EU during their stay. They also give students the right to work at least 15 hours a week, and researchers the right to bring their family members with them, establishing that these family members are entitled to work during their stay in Europe. The new directive also provides for uniform entry conditions and better protection for interns and volunteers under the European Volunteer Scheme during their stay.

**(11/05) Secure EU external borders to help save Schengen passport-free area, urge MEPs.** The reimposition of checks at the Schengen area's internal borders has put one of the greatest and most tangible achievements of the European project at risk, [observed most MEPs](#) speaking in a debate with the Commission and the Council on Wednesday. They agreed that, in order to restore the normal functioning of the passport-free zone, the EU's external borders need to be properly secured.

Note: The Commission proposed a recommendation to the Council on 4 May to prolong "proportionate controls" at the internal borders of Germany, Austria, Sweden, Denmark and Norway (not an EU member state, but part of the Schengen area) for six months (which may be renewed, no more than three times, up to a maximum of two years).from newsletter. Commissioner Avramopoulos announced in plenary session that the Council is expected to approve the recommendation soon. France also has controls in place, under the national state of emergency following the terrorist attacks in Paris, but these will be considered separately.

**(11/05) Visa liberalisation for Turkey must not turn into a "sell-out", say MEPs.** MEPs [voiced serious concerns](#) about Turkey's lack of progress in meeting the EU's preconditions for liberalising its visa regime for Turkish nationals, as required by the 18 March deal between the EU and Turkey to help stem the flow of migrants into the EU. In representation of the Council, Dutch defence minister Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert recalled that the 18 March statement accelerated an existing process, following a roadmap approved in 2013. "It is not just a present to President Erdogan or a concession, but something from which we all will benefit, millions of European tourists and millions of Turks, including human rights activists." She nonetheless recognized that "Turkey has a lot of homework to do." The Council working party on visas had begun its legislative work on the Commission proposal that morning, she reported. Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos also acknowledged that Turkey still needed to make progress, but said he was "optimistic" that Ankara would "give a final push" to the necessary reforms by the end of June. "We are not watering down our standards", he assured MEPs.

**(11/05) Human trafficking: "Like any market, there must be a demand that drives it".** MEPs [assessed](#) current European legislation to combat human trafficking and protect its victims as well as suggest improvements. The rapporteur of the assessment, MEP Catherine Bearder (ALDE, UK) said most of the victims of human trafficking in Europe are women and girls that come from EU countries, with sexual exploitation being the main reason. She added that despite strategic and technological improvements, human trafficking is still on the rise, and this could be driven by a strong demand, like it happens with any other sort of markets. "We made huge progress five years ago when we came in with the directive on human trafficking", Bearder said, "but still we are not getting the data, we are not as joined up, it has taken a while for the member states to implement the legislation (and one still hasn't). I hope this report will give renewed impetus to the work of the anti-trafficking directive". The text also makes recommendations on how to move forward and discusses the relation between human trafficking and the on-going refugee crisis.

## Council

**(13/05) ITALY - Italy ups migrant controls at Alpine pass to stop Austrian checks.** Italy [said it had deployed](#) 110 more guards to keep migrants from traveling into Austria, after Vienna threatened to introduce tighter border controls that could have hurt trade. Italian Interior Minister Angelino Alfano, speaking alongside his Austrian counterpart Wolfgang Sobotka at the Brenner Pass, said the extra guards would patrol the Alpine crossing point between the two countries. "Migrants who arrive here thinking to go to Austria will be taken to Italian shelters," Alfano said at the Brenner Pass. Italy's announcement appeared aimed at easing tensions after Vienna's announcement of a plan for a 370-metre fence at Brenner drew fire from Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, who said last month it was a "shameless" infraction of European rules. In the past two years, more than 320,000 boat migrants have arrived on Italian shores, and many made their way to Northern Europe by way of the Brenner Pass.

**(12/05) Foreign Affairs Council discusses linkages between migration and development.** At the [Council Meeting](#), ministers focused on the implementation of the Valletta action plan six months after its adoption. Besides drawing the state of play of the Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, ministers adopted the [Council conclusions](#) on the EU approach to forced displacement and development, welcoming the [homonymous Commission Communication of 26/04](#). Both the Communication and the Conclusions acknowledge that

forced displacement has a severe impact not only on displaced individuals and their families, but also on host countries and communities. This makes it essential for the EU to work towards sustainable global and local solutions for displaced persons by addressing root causes and combatting the protracted nature of forced displacement, to improve their lives and move from aid dependence to self-reliance. The recommended approach complements coordinated humanitarian assistance to meet acute and mid-term needs with development approaches that include longer-term perspectives and preserve the dignity and foster the self-reliance of the displaced.

Examples of synergies between the development and humanitarian approaches include the EU Trust Funds, the Facility for Refugees in Turkey, the forthcoming compacts with host countries, such as Jordan and Lebanon, and Regional Development and Protection Programmes (RDPP) in the Middle East, the Horn of Africa and the North of Africa. All these instruments are reviewed on an annual basis. At the same time, the UN-led [World Humanitarian](#) Summit in May 2016 (Istanbul) [offers an opportunity](#) for political, developmental and humanitarian actors to commit to a more coherent and holistic global approach to forced displacement, as part of the broader migration agenda.

**(12/05) EU Urban Agenda - the final steps towards the Amsterdam Declaration.** On 12 May senior civil servants from EU member states [discussed](#) the draft version of the [Amsterdam Declaration](#), intended to facilitate partnerships between cities and urban regions to face todays' challenges, such as pollution and poverty. An important element of the Amsterdam Declaration is the EU Urban Agenda. Cities and other subnational authorities have found that EU policy is not always in line with local and regional policy. So the EU Urban Agenda aims to improve European legislation on cities ('Better Regulation'), achieve better access to and use of European funds, and improve collaboration and the sharing of knowledge. On 30 May EU ministers will gather in Amsterdam at the ministerial conference on the EU Urban Agenda. The purpose of the conference is to sign the Amsterdam Declaration and launch the first thematic partnerships between European cities.

**(12/05) Back to Schengen: Council adopts Commission proposal on next steps towards lifting of temporary internal border controls.** The Council [adopted](#) the Commission's proposal to prolong proportionate controls at certain internal Schengen borders in Germany, Austria, Sweden, Denmark and Norway, for up to six months. These countries had already introduced measures to address the threat to public policy and internal security resulting from the secondary movements of irregular migrants from Greece. Last week, the Commission proposed a recommendation to extend these measures, in line with the Schengen Borders Code, as, and despite significant progress made by Greece, not all of the serious deficiencies identified could be adequately and comprehensively addressed within the three months' limit.

## **Others**

**(12/05) FRA joins Italian immigration and integration workshop.** FRA [took part](#) in the first of a series of thematic workshops organised by the Interministerial Committee for Human Rights and Fondazione Brodolini, and hosted by the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The aim was to establish closer cooperation and liaison among national actors to improve the quality and reliability of collecting fundamental rights data.

## COUNCIL OF EUROPE

**(12/05) The Council of Europe publishes new handbook on “intercultural mediation” for Roma communities.** The Council of Europe [has just published](#) a new handbook on a human rights based approach to promote “intercultural mediation” in Roma communities. The 127-page [ROMED1 Trainers’ handbook](#) is based on five years of work from the Council of Europe and European Commission joint initiative “ROMED1 programme – Intercultural mediation for Roma communities”.

**(11/05) Migrants and refugees: report on Greece and “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”.** A new [report](#) addressing the situation of refugees and migrants in Greece and “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” [was published](#) by Tomáš Boček, the Special Representative on Migration and Refugees of the Council of Europe’s Secretary General. The report is based on his fact-finding mission to the two countries from 7 to 11 March. The Special Representative visited a shelter for unaccompanied children in Athens, a “hotspot” and reception centre on the island of Chios and camps in both countries.

**(10/05) Rights of LGBTI people: preventing emergence of parallel societies.** Without smart policies to foster equality and promote mutual understanding and respect in Europe, parallel societies emerge: people living alongside one another, rather than living together. Supporting its member States to build truly inclusive societies is the goal of the Council of Europe, [said](#) Director General for Democracy Snežana Samardžić-Marković in her opening address at the IDAHO Forum 2016 that opened in Copenhagen today. In order to tackle these problems and build a genuinely inclusive society, European states must put more effort into fighting multiple discrimination, educating young people, combating hate speech and hate crime.

**(10/05) Irregularly present migrants: “Firewalls” needed to prevent denying human rights through sharing personal data.** To prevent state and private sector actors from effectively denying migrants’ human rights, social services providers must be prohibited from sharing the personal data of irregularly present migrants with immigration authorities, [says](#) the Council of Europe’s anti-discrimination body in the new set of policy [recommendations](#) to European governments issued today.

## CIVIL SOCIETY

**(16/05) STATEWATCH - European Commission letter to Greek asylum authorities: all is well in Turkey.** A [letter](#) from the European Commission to the Greek authorities setting out why Turkey should be considered a safe third country [has been condemned](#) by a Greek human rights group as an attempt “to establish standardized reasoning for systematically denying the asylum claims of Syrian and non-Syrian nationals as inadmissible in Greece.”

**(13/05) STATEWATCH - Hungary to resume transfers of asylum seekers under Dublin Regulation to Greece in overall climate of human rights repression.** Hungarian authorities [have recently issued decisions](#) ordering the transfer of asylum seekers to Greece under the [Dublin III Regulation](#). ECRE member [Hungarian Helsinki Committee](#) (HHC) has expressed concern regarding these developments and called on Hungary to continue the suspension of transfers to Greece. Transfers of asylum seekers to Greece have been suspended since 2011 following rulings of the [European Court of Human Rights](#) and the [Court](#)

[of Justice of the European Union](#), on account of the risk of inhuman and degrading treatment of asylum seekers in the country.

**(13/05) MEDICINS SANS FRONTIERES - Europe, don't turn your back on asylum: #TakePeopleIn.** MSF [writes a letter](#) to EU governments and institutions to share their concern that by signing the EU-Turkey agreement you have turned your back on thousands of people fleeing war, oppression, and despair.

**(12/05) ECRE - Policy roundtable on the reception of unaccompanied minor.** To mark the end of the project [No Longer Alone: Advancing Reception Standards for Unaccompanied Children](#), ECRE and its project partners are [organising](#) a policy roundtable to highlight key challenges and solutions for the reception of unaccompanied minors. WHEN: Monday 6/06/2016 (14.30-17.30) / WHERE: Brussels / WHO: policy and decision makers, child rights professionals, NGOs. Registration is available through this [link](#).

**(11/05) EUROCHILD - “Why supporting families is crucial to protecting the best interests of the child” (International Day of Families).** With hundreds of thousands children arriving in Europe, care and support systems in both transit and receiving countries face huge pressure. [International day of families](#) is an important opportunity to recognise the crucial importance of supporting parents in their nurturing and caring role. A wider tendency in society wants to demonize and punish ‘bad’ parents. But the reality is never quite so simple. The solutions lie in supporting families early – before and after childbirth, although investment in family support to prevent children being removed from their parents is still weak or non-existent.

**(10/05) DEUTSCHE WELLE - German police chief concerned at growing anti-refugee violence.** Germany's federal police chief [says](#) there have been 45 arson attacks on refugee shelters so far this year. He warned of the potential threat posed by organized right-wing extremist crime.

## PUBLICATIONS

**Statewatch** - [The Orbanisation of EU asylum law: the latest EU asylum proposals](#) (by Steeve Peers)

**European Parliament** - [On the frontline: the hotspot approach to managing migration](#) (study)

**European Commission** - [State of Play of Hotspot capacity](#) (data)

**CER** - [Why Schengen matters and how to keep it: a five point plan](#)

**CEPS** - [Is globalisation really fuelling populism?](#) (commentary)

**ECDPM** - [Political economy of regional integration in Africa](#) (+ Study [outline](#) + synthesis report)