

INFO FLASH 14/06

EU INSTITUTIONS

European Commission

(10/06) Ten actions to help equip people in Europe with better skills. The Commission [has adopted](#) a new and comprehensive Skills Agenda for Europe. The aim is to ensure that people develop a broad set of skills from early on in life and to make the most of Europe's human capital, which will ultimately boost employability, competitiveness and growth in Europe. Increasing skills levels, promoting transversal skills and finding ways to better anticipate the labour market's needs, including based on dialogue with the industry, are therefore essential to improve people's chances in life, and support fair, inclusive and sustainable growth as well as cohesive societies. To help tackle skills challenges, the Commission will launch 10 actions which will address these issues and make skills more visible and improve their recognition at local, national and EU levels, from schools and universities to the labour market. Among other things, the Agenda will include a Skills Guarantee to help low-skilled adults acquire a minimum level of literacy, numeracy and digital; and a "Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals" to support early identification and profiling of skills and qualifications of asylum seekers, refugees and other migrants (more info [here](#)).

(8/06) A new strategy to put culture at the heart of EU international relations. The ['Strategy for international cultural relations' presented](#) by the European Commission and the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy aims at encouraging cultural cooperation between the EU and its partner countries and promoting a global order based on peace, the rule of law, freedom of expression, mutual understanding and respect for fundamental values. Today's Communication proposes a strategic framework for deeper and more effective international cultural relations as well as a new model for cooperation with Member States, national cultural institutes, private and public operators from the EU and its partner countries, increasing opportunities, creating synergies and maximising socio-economic benefits. Culture plays an important role also at municipal level. Engaging citizens, state actors and cultural operators alike, is a major resource for strengthening municipalities and communities and for developing market opportunities. As such, this Communication is in line with the ninth priority outlined by European Commission President Juncker in his 2014 Political Guidelines and reflecting the ambition of the EU's forthcoming Global Strategy being prepared by the High Representative. The Commission has also announced that it will propose to the European Parliament and the Council of the EU to organise a European Year of Cultural Heritage in 2018 (Q&A [here](#)).

(7/06) Commission presents Action Plan on Integration and reforms 'Blue Card' scheme for highly skilled workers from outside the EU. The European Commission is presented an [Action Plan](#) to support Member States in the integration of third-country nationals and their economic and social contribution to the EU, as well as a legal proposal to [reform the rules on highly skilled migrants](#) coming to the EU to work, which will support European businesses in attracting qualified and talented people from around the world. These initiatives follow up on the commitment in President Juncker's [Political Guidelines](#), which set legal migration as a priority for this Commission, and are in line with Today's Action Plan is

part of the set of actions announced in the European Agenda on Migration and the Commission's [Communication of 6 April 2016](#). There is a clear risk that the cost of non-integration will be higher than the cost of investment in integration policies. Despite efforts by Member States, migrants and recognised refugees from third countries who are legally resident in the EU continue to face an increased risk of poverty or social exclusion. Whilst integration policies remain very much a national competence, in the current context many EU Member States are facing similar challenges, and the EU level can add value through the structural and financial support it provides. Actions are proposed in key-areas such as: pre-departure and pre-arrival integration measures, in particular for people in clear need of international protection who are being resettled; education, employment and vocational training; access to basic services; and active participation and social inclusion. A more strategic and coordinated approach is also proposed for the use of EU funds to support national integration measures. Under the New Skills Agenda for Europe, the Commission will also support labour market integration with various tools to improve migrants' skills and to recognise and benefit from their existing qualifications.

(7/06) Commission announces New Migration Partnership Framework: reinforced cooperation with third countries to better manage migration. The European Commission [set out plans](#) for a new results-oriented Partnership Framework to mobilise and focus EU action and resources in our external work on managing migration. The EU will seek tailor-made partnerships with key third countries of origin and transit using all policies and instruments at the EU's disposal to achieve concrete results. Building on the European Agenda on Migration, the priorities are saving lives at sea, increasing returns, enabling migrants and refugees to stay closer to home and, in the long term, helping third countries' development in order to address root causes of irregular migration. Member State contributions in these partnerships – diplomatic, technical and financial – will be of fundamental importance in delivering results. First Vice-President Frans Timmermans said the Commission “will also work on an ambitious External Investment Plan (shaped upon the one within the EU, Editor’s note) to help create opportunities and tackle the root causes of migration. Without concrete results from our partners in managing migration better, we should collectively be ready to adapt our engagement and financial aid.” The renewed partnership with third countries will take the form of tailored “compacts” that will be developed according to the situation and needs of each partner country, depending on whether they are a country of origin, country of transit or a country hosting many displaced persons. In the short term we will deliver compacts with Jordan and Lebanon and take steps to agree further ones with Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Mali and Ethiopia. We also intend to increase our engagement with Tunisia and Libya.

European Parliament

(9/06) Moving abroad in the EU? MEPs vote new rules to ensure your papers are accepted. New EU rules to ease free movement for citizens by making it simpler to prove the authenticity of documents such as birth or marriage certificates in another EU member state [were voted](#) by Parliament on Thursday. To avoid any need for translation, new multilingual EU forms are to be attached to the documents. The vote endorsed an informal deal previously struck by Parliament and Council negotiators. Despite the opposition of a part of the Council, an important review clause refers to various documents, such as university diplomas or disability certificates, that could not be included in the scope of the rules at this stage. This text is the first step in a long process, the final aim of which is to have common public

documents within the EU. The regulation will soon be published in the EU Official Journal and be brought into effect gradually, so as to apply in full from 2019.

(7/06) Migration: MEPs back cooperation with Africa but warn against new “Turkey deals”. A majority of MEPs [welcomed](#) plans to step up cooperation with third countries, particularly in Africa, by increasing public and private investment there to support economic and social development and curb migration flows. But many MEPs also warned against replicating the EU deal with Turkey in Tuesday’s debate with EU Commission First Vice-President Frans Timmermans and foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini, who presented a proposal for a new “partnership framework with third countries”. The Commission plans to establish tailored “compacts” with selected countries – Jordan and Lebanon in a first phase, followed by Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Mali and Ethiopia, as well as Tunisia and Libya – so as to enhance border control, increase returns and improve living conditions for migrants and refugees. These strategic partnerships should reward countries willing to cooperate with the EU while penalising those who refuse, it said.

European Council

(10/06) Justice and Home Affairs Council - Simpler property rules for international couples. On the first day of the JHA Council meeting in Luxembourg, eighteen EU member states [agreed](#) to clarify the legal rules that apply to the [property of married couples or registered partners in cross-border situations](#), for instance if the partners have different nationalities or live abroad. The proposed regulations will determine which country’s law is applicable and which court has jurisdiction in matters relating to a couple’s property in the event of divorce or the death of one of the partners. This will enhance legal certainty and will put an end to possibly conflicting proceedings in different member states. The rules will also make it easier to recognise and implement decisions on these matters in another member state.

Others

(13/06) EUROSTAT - Acquisition of citizenship in the EU - EU Member States granted citizenship to almost 900 000 persons in 2014 - Moroccans continue to be the main recipients. In 2014, around 890 000 persons acquired citizenship of a Member State of the European Union (EU), down from 981 000 in 2013. Since 2009, more than 5 million persons in total were granted a citizenship of an EU Member State. Of the total number of persons obtaining the citizenship of one of the EU Member States in 2014, 89% were non-EU citizens (fact sheet and data [here](#)).

(8/06) FRA - Methodological workshop looks at researching exclusion. On 9 June, FRA [took part](#) in a workshop at the Tilburg Law School in the Netherlands on empirical methodologies for researching exclusion. The workshop was part of a project on ‘Investigating Structural Barriers to Batwa/ Historically marginalised population Inclusion in Development in Rwanda’. The main objective was to bring together various experts to help develop a methodology for understanding the framing of social exclusion and inclusion, in particular how to conceptualise and measure inclusion and exclusion. FRA presented some of its experiences in implementing participatory action research methodologies through its Local Engagement for Roma Inclusion (LERI) project.

(8/06) EASO - Joint Press Release: The pre-registration of asylum seekers in the Greek mainland is starting today. The Asylum Service [is launching today](#) a large scale operation to pre-register applications for international protection, offering the possibility to third country nationals in mainland Greece to ask for asylum in the country, for family reunification or relocation to another EU member state. Pre-registration aims to cover the increasing demand for access to international protection from the approximately 49,000 people currently residing in mainland accommodation sites. This exercise is supported financially by the European Commission. The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) support its implementation. The process is open to people who entered Greece from 1 January 2015 and prior to 20 March 2016.

(7/06) Insights from the OHCHR Expert Meeting on Non-Refoulement in International Human Rights Law. On 2 June 2016, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) [organized an expert meeting](#) titled “Non-refoulement in International Human Rights Law” in Geneva. During the meeting, representatives from academia, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), OHCHR, the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), human rights treaty bodies and courts as well as members of non-governmental organizations voiced their ideas on this matter. The meeting aimed to clarify the scope and future of the principle of non-refoulement as well as to highlight possible legal and policy avenues and challenges. One of our GHLG members, Veronika Flegar was invited to speak about her research on extreme poverty, vulnerability and non-refoulement.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

(13/06) New ECHR/HELP training videos on asylum, terrorism. The European Court of Human Rights and the Council of Europe’s [HELP programme](#) (Human rights Education for Legal Professionals) have released two new training videos in the pilot series [COURTalks-disCOURs](#). The 25-minute videos (see video on [Asylum](#) and on [Terrorism](#)), based on educational talks from lawyers at the Court, are geared to providing judges, lawyers and other legal professionals, as well as representatives of civil society, with an overview of the Court’s case-law in matters related to asylum and terrorism. They will also serve as a training tool for the HELP Programme, national judicial training institutes and Bar associations, complementing other information materials such as the handbooks [European Law Relating to Asylum, Borders and Immigration](#) and [Protecting Migrants under the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Social Charter](#), as well as various [factsheets](#) issued by the Court (more info [here](#)).

(10/06) 20 June is the World Refugee Day: we need your words! On 20 June countries around the world organise events to raise awareness about the millions of refugees and internally displaced persons who have been forced to flee their homes due to war, conflict and persecution. The [Intercultural Cities](#) (ICCs) are working hard on ensuring inclusive integration and equal rights and opportunities for the people that chose Europe as host continent, after being uprooted because of conflicts and instability in their own countries. This year, the 99 cities which are member of the Intercultural Cities network are called to jointly celebrate the World Refugee Day through a dedicated campaign based on the diversity advantage concept (at heart of the Intercultural integration policy model) that implies considering migrants as a resource for local economic, social and cultural development, rather than threat or a burden for the host society.

(7/06) Anti-racism commission issues new reports on Azerbaijan, Cyprus, Italy, Lithuania and “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) [published](#) several country reports. As far as EU countries are concerned, ECRI noted some progress in [Cyprus](#), such as the criminalisation of the public incitement to hatred or violence based on sexual orientation or gender identity; a new law allowing registered same-sex partnerships; anti-racism initiatives in schools and advances in the situation of domestic workers. However, lack of integration measures for non-nationals and Roma, anti-migrant sentiment and hate speech remain problematic. In [Italy](#), legislative initiatives were welcomed, as well as the increasing number of legal proceedings following instances of hate speech. The significant efforts made in rescuing and accommodating migrant and asylum seekers was also acknowledged. However, gaps in the anti-discrimination law remain and continuation of forced evictions of Roma from their settlements in the absence of long term re-housing solutions raises concern. In [Lithuania](#), the authorities took further measures to improve the situation of persons who have been granted subsidiary protection. Despite the action plan for Roma Integration, the social marginalisation of this group remains a problem. Homo- and transphobic hatred is also of concern. ECRI called on the Lithuanian authorities to take specific measures to improve the living conditions of Roma and address hate speech against LGBT.

CIVIL SOCIETY

(13/06) Social Platform - Integration high on the agenda. Social Platform Policy & Advocacy Advisor Annica Ryngebeck goes through and analyse the events from this past vibrant week, where integration integration has been high on Social Platform’s agenda. Firstly, she goes through the outcomes of the members lunch on integration, social tension and political trade-offs (read also below). Secondly, she discusses the European Commission [EU Action Plan for Integration of Third Country Nationals](#), and thirdly, she reports on the meeting with the European Migration Forum’s consultative Bureau.

(13/06) Social Platform discusses integration, social tension and political trade-offs. On 7 June Social Platform members met over lunch to debate integration of migrants and other groups in society that are socially excluded, and what tensions and trade-offs can arise. Freek Spinnewijn, Director of the [European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless](#) (FEANTSA) and Sabrina Lenoach, Migration Officer from the [Red Cross EU Office](#) were invited to share their experiences (read [here](#)).

(10/06) ECRE - The slow unfolding of the EU-Turkey deal? At least [35 asylum seekers](#) who applied for protection in Greece, had their claims rejected on admissibility grounds and appealed the decision, [received a positive outcome](#) of their appeal. Their applications had been rejected in first instance on the grounds that Turkey is a Safe Third Country which can offer adequate protection to refugees. The Athens Appeals Committee ruled instead that Turkey does not afford refugees the full protection required under the [Refugee Convention](#) and that the country does not comply with the principle of *non-refoulement*. The appeal decision did not consider the merits of the claim, but only the admissibility of the application in relation to the correct application of the Safe Third Country concept (read [here](#)).

(9/06) ASGI (Italy) - Any hotspot to identify migrants at sea is illegal (via Statewatch). It will be impossible to effectively guarantee rights in an adequate manner on the high seas. ASGI (Associazione per gli Studi Giuridici sull’Immigrazione) [asks](#) the interior ministry and

the Italian government to immediately abandon this course, considering the unlawful aspects listed below, and it invites UNHCR to carefully monitor the situation in order for effective access to the international protection system in Italy to be guaranteed.

(9/06) European Social Network - Investing in children's services, improving outcomes. Ensuring no child is left behind. On 30-31 May the European Social Network (ESN) [launched](#) the study 'Investing in children's services, improving outcomes' at a two day event, which marked the end of a three-year project in 14 European countries. The study assesses how key principles of the European Commission's Recommendation '[Investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage](#)' are implemented in practice (more info [here](#)).

(8/06) Caritas Europa - Restrictive EU migration policies force desperate people to take deadly routes. While [EU] interior ministers [met on 9-10/06] to discuss EU migration policies, people trying to reach the safety of Europe continue to die en route. Caritas Europa and Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Europe [calls on](#) European leaders to alter its restrictive approach to migration. Policies focused on deterrence, including the agreement with Turkey, are not stopping people from trying to reach our countries. Instead, they prolong suffering and push people into the hands of smugglers and traffickers, who find even more dangerous entry routes.

(8/06) Eurotopic - EU plans new migration pact (press review). Eurotopics offers a collection of op-ed articles from the main European newspapers. Read the debate [here](#).

PUBLICATIONS

Acumen Public Affairs - [What to expect from the European Commission's New Skills Agenda?](#) (blog).

MPI - [Understanding the Creation of Public Consensus: Migration and Integration in Germany, 2005 to 2015](#)

MPI - [Maintaining Public Trust in the Governance of Migration](#)

MPI - [Blue Card Redux: European Commission Plan to Recast Work Permit for Highly Skilled Holds Question Marks](#) (blog)

EPRS - [Integrated social services for more efficient service delivery](#) (briefing)