

INFO FLASH 5/07

EU INSTITUTIONS

European Commission

(1/07) Better regulation: Commission offers new opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the law-making process. The Commission [has opened up](#) another part of the EU decision-making process for stakeholder input. In line with its commitments under the Better Regulation Agenda and the broad effort to increase transparency in the EU Institutions, as of 30 June, draft delegated and implementing acts will now be put online and open for public feedback for a period of four weeks. This new online feedback tool is part of the Commission's new, user-centred web presence. Delegated and implementing acts are used by the EU institutions to update elements of adopted legislation or specify the conditions by which EU laws should be implemented. The online feedback tool allows citizens and stakeholders to express their views during the entire policy and law-making process. Roadmaps for new initiatives, legislative proposals, public consultations and now draft delegated and implementing acts are all open for stakeholder comments and contributions. Citizens and stakeholders can also send their suggestions for administrative burden reduction under existing EU rules through the [Lighten the Load website](#).

(30/06) Facility for Refugees in Turkey: Commission proposes additional €1.4 billion in support. The European Commission [has proposed](#) to mobilise an additional €1.4 billion in support for refugees in Turkey, with a view of raising the total amount allocated under the Facility for Refugees in Turkey to €2 billion by the end of July. The proposed Special Measure, presented by the Commission today at the meeting of the Steering Committee of the Facility, will cover measures in the areas of education, health, municipal and social infrastructure and socio-economic support. The Commission also presented the recently published Humanitarian Implementation Plan for Turkey which sets out the humanitarian strategy under the Facility, with total funding of over €500 million, including contributions from Member States. This is the biggest Humanitarian Implementation Plan ever published by the Commission. The Steering Committee also discussed in detail an ambitious pipeline of projects to be funded under the Facility for Refugees in support of education, health, municipal and social infrastructure, and socio-economic support for refugees and host communities in Turkey. Subject to EU Member States' approval, this Special Measure will be implemented in cooperation with the relevant Turkish authorities, International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian crisis.

(30/06) Commission proposes new rules to better protect children in cross-border family proceedings. The European Commission is proposing improvements to the EU rules that protect children in the context of cross-border parental responsibility disputes related to custody, access rights and child abduction. The new rules will speed up the legal and administrative proceedings and ensure that the child's best interest is always taken into account. When families have disputes or international couples separate, cross-border judicial cooperation is crucial to give children a secure legal environment to maintain relations with both parents (and guardians) who may live in different European countries. More info [here](#).

(30/06) Commission brings together non-confessional organisations to discuss "Migration, integration and European values: putting values into action". European Commission First Vice-President Frans Timmermans [hosted](#) a high-level meeting with ten representatives from philosophical and non-confessional organisations from across Europe. This seventh annual high-level meeting discussed the topic "Migration, integration and European values: putting values into action". The meeting took place within the framework of the ongoing dialogue with churches, religions, philosophical and non-confessional organisations based on Article 17 of the Lisbon Treaty. The high-level meeting provided a platform to discuss three main issues: how to improve integration policies; how to address the rise of populism and intolerance; and, how to build more cohesive societies. Today's discussion focused in particular on addressing fears and increased polarisation in our societies, and the need to move beyond the crisis mode when it comes to migration and think long-term. The need for proactively transmitting values and cultural understanding was underlined, as well as the central role of education. It was agreed that this is a challenge for society at large and that concrete ways to convey values in practice must be developed. The organisations present will continue to work with the Commission to develop these ideas.

(30/06) Draft EU Budget 2017: Commission proposes a budget focused on priorities - growth, jobs and a solid response to the refugee crisis. The Commission [has proposed](#) the 2017 draft EU Budget of €134.9 billion in payments focusing on the two main policy priorities for Europe: supporting the ongoing recovery of the European economy and addressing the security and humanitarian challenges in our neighbourhood. Increased funding will go to investments in growth, jobs and competitiveness in the European Union as well as to securing the necessary resources to protect the external borders of the EU, to reinforce security inside and outside the Union, to provide support for the reception and integration of refugees, and to address the root causes of migration in the countries of origin and transit.

(28/06) Commission calls for renewed commitment to Roma integration. This year's assessment provides, for the first time, an overview of the measures put in place by Member States following the 2013 Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures, which required them to develop National Roma Integration strategies to promote access of Roma to education, employment, healthcare and housing. The Commission has stepped up its efforts to ensure correct implementation of anti-discrimination legislation towards Roma, including at local level, by launching infringement procedures when legislation, such as the [Racial Equality Directive](#) is not properly enforced, notably in education. The Commission is supporting the implementation of the Member States' National Roma integration strategies by providing funding under the European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF) for 2014-2020. The report shows that Member States have achieved progress in a number of areas, but more efforts are still needed. Critical areas of assessment include education, use of EU funds and cooperation with civil society and local authorities. Read more [here](#).

(22/06) European Commission appoints new Director-General for Regional and Urban Policy. The European Commission [appointed](#) Marc Lemaître as Director-General of its department for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO). Mr Lemaître, a national from Luxembourg, is currently Director of the Office for Administration and Payment of individual entitlements (PMO). He will take up his new role on 1 September. Mr Lemaître will succeed current Director-General Mr Walter Deffaa, who will retire on that date.

European Parliament

(1/07) Survey: people reveal their priorities for the EU. The fight against terrorism should be the EU's number one priority followed by action on unemployment, the fight against tax fraud, migration, the protection of external borders and the environment, according to the vast majority of people surveyed in a special Eurobarometer carried out by the European Parliament. Those participating were asked if more or less common action is required on a range of different issues. Check out the interactive infographic [here](#).

(21/06) Plan to check EU citizens at external borders backed by civil liberties MEPs. An EU Commission plan to systematically check all EU citizens entering or leaving the EU [was endorsed](#) by Civil Liberties Committee MEPs. Members amended the proposal to enable member states to run targeted checks, as an exception, in the event of lengthy delays and provided that security is not at risk. The draft regulation is a response to the rise in terrorist threats in Europe, such as the recent attacks in Paris, Copenhagen and Brussels. It also aims to combat terrorist “foreign fighters”, many of whom are EU citizens, irregular migration and human trafficking. Every risk assessment should also be based on EU-wide security indicators developed by the Commission, the new EU border and coast guard agency and the Council, says the text. Each analysis would have to be sent to the border member states’ relevant authorities, the EU border agency and the Commission. Finally, the proposal would also make it mandatory to check all third-country nationals who are leaving the EU against relevant databases, to ensure that they pose no security threat. The Civil Liberties Committee approved a mandate for MEPs to start negotiations with Council very soon to try to reach a first reading agreement.

(21/06) MEPs ask EU to verify whether Turkey is shooting Syrians who try to cross border. The European Union should check the veracity of reports that Turkish border guards are shooting and killing Syrians who are trying to flee their country, [said](#) the Civil Liberties Committee. MEPs also asked the European Commission to assess whether the EU-Turkey deal to manage migration and refugee flows can continue to apply in these circumstances.

(21/06) Aid money is to foster development and not to stop refugees, MEPs warn. Development funds must be devoted to economic and social progress and should not be used to stem the flows of migrants and asylum seekers - development [MEPs warned](#) in a non-binding resolution on the EU Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF), adopted on 21/07. The Commission needs to ensure greater democratic scrutiny and member states must live up to their financial commitments, they added.

European Council

(30/06) Legal aid in criminal proceedings: Council and Parliament reach an agreement. The Permanent Representatives Committee (Coreper) confirmed, on behalf of the Council, the agreement with the European Parliament on the directive on the right to legal aid for citizens suspected or accused of a criminal offence and for those subject to a European arrest warrant. The proposed directive lays down minimum rules concerning the right to legal aid for suspects or accused persons in criminal proceedings who are deprived of liberty, and in certain other situations. It also ensures that legal aid is made available in European arrest warrant proceedings, upon the arrest of the requested person in the executing State. More info [here](#).

(28/06) European Council Conclusions: migration (via EPRS). In the framework of the June meeting, EU heads of State or Government stressed that the flows of predominantly economic migrants in the Central Mediterranean need to be reduced. An effective Partnership Framework of cooperation with individual countries of origin and transit is required, based on the European Commission's [communication](#), and contributing to the implementation of the [Valletta Action Plan](#). EU leaders agreed to mobilise all relevant instruments and sources of funding in support of the Partnership Framework of cooperation with countries of origin and transit. In this context, European Investment Bank (EIB) President Werner Hoyer, who also attended part of the meeting, informed the European Council on the [EIB's initiative for the Southern Neighbourhood and the Western Balkans](#). More info [here](#).

(22/06) European Border and Coast Guard: Council confirms agreement with Parliament. On 22 June 2016, the Permanent Representatives Committee (Coreper) confirmed, on behalf of the Council, the compromise text agreed with the European Parliament on the proposed regulation on the European Border and Coast Guard. The agreement was reached between the Council, Parliament and Commission on 21 June. This agreement is in line with the request from the European Council for negotiations on this file to be concluded before the end of the Netherlands Presidency. Read more [here](#).

Others

(30/06) Experts discuss training needs to counter migrant smuggling. On 28 June, FRA [took part](#) in a meeting organised by the European Police College (CEPOL) on mapping the training needs in the field of migrant smuggling. The meeting served to establish the relevant profiles and competencies of professionals who are involved in the investigation and prosecution of the migrant smuggling cases, including staff in the migration hotspots.

(30/06) FRA joins Contact Group meeting. On 20 June in Brussels, FRA [took part](#) in the Contact Group meeting for the Return Directive, convened by the European Commission. EU Member States and agencies participated in the meeting. The meeting discussed possible changes to EU's Schengen Information System (SIS II) affecting return policies. It was an opportunity to learn about the latest legal developments, including the proposal on revising the EU's fingerprinting system for asylum seekers, Eurodac. FRA mentioned some of the fundamental rights implications of this proposal referring to, for instance, purpose limitation, best interest of the child, and intrusion on privacy.

(30/06) EU education spending: programmes match objectives, but link with employment not always made, say EU Auditors. EU spending on education is in line with the Union's objectives, but provisions for establishing a clear link between education and employment are not always used, [according to a new report](#) from the European Court of Auditors. "Unemployment is one of the biggest challenges that the European Union has faced in recent years. Investment in education is crucial, as the EU unemployment rate has been three times lower for people with a higher level of education," says Iliana Ivanova, the ECA Member responsible for the report. "For that reason, the Europe 2020 strategy identifies targets for education objectives. The EU has allocated some €33 billion for 2007-2013 and around €27 billion for 2014-2020 to support education through cohesion policy".

(28/06) European Court of Auditors - Roma integration: significant progress, but obstacles and dilemmas remain. EU policy initiatives and EU-funded projects to promote Roma integration have made significant progress, but there are still obstacles and dilemmas

which prevent the money from having the greatest possible impact, according to a new report from the European Court of Auditors. In particular, say the auditors, progress has been hampered by a lack of suitable data, including data on ethnicity. Read the full text [here](#).

(27/06) FRA - EU Justice and Home Affairs agencies meet to discuss joint training needs. FRA [hosted a meeting](#) of training coordinators of EU Justice and Home Affairs agencies on 14 June in Vienna to discuss joint training initiatives of the agencies in the area of freedom, security and justice. Representatives from the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), the EU Border agency (Frontex), the European External Action Service, the European Agency for managing large-scale justice and home affairs IT systems (eu-LISA), the European Police College (CEPOL), the EU drugs agency (EMCDDA) and Europol participated. The European Judicial Training Network also participated to jointly assess areas of possible cooperation with the agencies. A main focus of the meeting was how the agencies can cooperate further to best meet the emerging training needs in relation to the current migration crisis. The agencies will continue to strengthen cooperation in the area of training, especially in the areas and countries where it is currently most needed; for example in the migration hotspots in Greece and Italy.

(23/06) Committee of the Regions - No future for the European pillar of social rights without the involvement of regions, CoR and EP rapporteurs say. Creating a European pillar of social rights can make a major contribution to the approximation and coordination of social policies and rights in the Member States, according to the rapporteurs of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) and the European Parliament (EP). In a debate at the CoR Commission for Social Policy, Education, Employment, Research and Culture (SEDEC), representatives of cities and regions expressed the need for more support to implement appropriate employment and social policies. More info [here](#).

(23/06) Europe's human rights crisis surmountable, say participants at key conference to find ways forward. Suggestions to help tackle Europe's pressing human rights crisis were captured at the Fundamental Rights Forum in Vienna. Over 700 leading experts from around the world contributed to the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights' event. All the 100+ practical ideas that were generated are being distilled in the Forum Chair's Statement. It emerged that areas that need joint action include guaranteeing that everyone, including vulnerable groups, is involved in decisions on policy measures that affect them. Participants recommended broadening legal ways of reaching safety as an alternative to risky irregular entry. EU Institutions and Member States could consider enlarged resettlement schemes, as well as building public support for responsible asylum policies through political leadership and creating powerful counter-narratives to anti-refugee rhetoric. More info [here](#).

(22/06) SAVE THE DATE: EASO Journalist Network Meeting and launch of the EASO annual report on the situation of asylum in the EU (8 July). EASO will organise the Annual Journalist Network Meeting together with a presentation of its yearly reference report: The Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the European Union and information on the latest asylum trends (2016). The report aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the situation of asylum in the EU+ (EU Member States plus Norway and Switzerland) by examining requests for international protection to the EU, analysing application and decision data, and focusing on some of the most important countries of origin of applicants for international protection. This meeting will also provide an opportunity to discuss and present EASO's activities and operational work in the context of the hotspots and a presentation on the draft Regulation setting up a European Union Asylum Agency. More information [here](#).

(22/06) FRA - New practical guide on access to justice in European law. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and the European Court of Human Rights [launched](#) a practical handbook on European law relating to access to justice.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

(29/06) Stop evictions of Roma and Travellers. Traditionally, summer holidays coincide with the eviction of Roma and Travellers throughout Europe, which takes place almost unnoticed. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) join the Council of Europe, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), the European Network of European National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI) and the European Network of Equality Bodies (Equinet) in a [statement](#) to condemn the recent evictions of Roma and Travellers in Europe. Throughout Europe, Roma and Travellers – particularly those living in informal settlements, slums or halting sites – face a disproportionately high threat of eviction. Signatories call on national, regional and, in particular, local authorities to find sustainable solutions to the housing problems that many Roma and Travellers face, in order to avoid evictions. More info [here](#).

(28/06) Protection and future of migrant children: a challenge for Europe. One in three of the migrants and asylum seekers crossing between Greece and Turkey is a child. Last year alone, an estimated 300,000 children crossed the Mediterranean fleeing the horror of war and seeking refuge, traumatised by violence and death. Practically all of them have seen their lives shattered, their families separated, their rights to life, education, health and justice put aside. What Europe can do to address this challenge, to protect migrant children's rights and ensure their future is the key theme of a conference organised by the French Defender of Human Rights, in co-operation with the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children and the Council of Europe taking place in Paris on 28 June 2016. The event participants discussed ways of ensuring children rights' to education, leisure and quality healthcare. They also exchanged experiences on the immediate protection of children from the very real risks of human trafficking, violence, sexual abuse and exploitation, as well as placement in detention centres. More info [here](#).

(26/06) 26 June: International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. Ahead of the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, which aims at the total eradication of torture, the heads of the two international bodies set up to monitor the treatment of any person deprived of their liberty [expressed their deep concern](#) at the risks increased instability poses for the protection and preservation of human dignity. Malcolm Evans, Chairperson of the United Nations Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment (SPT), and Mykola Gnatovskyy, President of the Council of Europe European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT), said: "Violent and so-called frozen conflicts, large-scale refugee and migration flows as well as international terrorism pose clear threats for the treatment of individuals who are deprived of their liberty in connection with these phenomena. The economic crisis has also impacted negatively on the treatment of people in detention in many countries. When facing these challenges, states are often tempted to cut corners with human rights. While fighting terrorism or managing migration flows are legitimate objectives, they can never justify inflicting ill-treatment on persons deprived of their liberty or detaining people in inhuman or degrading conditions."

CIVIL SOCIETY

(1/07) ECRE organises a Seminar on Social Innovation for Refugee Inclusion. How can social innovation and social innovators contribute to the integration of refugees in European societies? In collaboration with the [U.S. Mission to the European Union](#), the [Council of Europe](#) and the [European Economic and Social Committee](#), ECRE is organising a seminar on the topic of “Social Innovation for Refugee Inclusion”. The seminar will take place in Brussels on 12-13 September and speakers will range from refugee groups to civil society organisations, cities, tech companies, start-ups, and private sector representatives. Attendance to the event is free of charge, but registration is required and available through this [link](#). More info [here](#).

(29/06) Social Platform - The EU agenda behind the Migration Partnership Framework. In this in-depth analysis, migration and development expert, Bob van Dillen, exposes the weaknesses of the European Commission’s Migration Partnership Framework and questions its capacity to really serve the purpose of helping people in need. Additionally, the author lays down a series of urgent actions that, if applied, will not only truly help people in need but will also put Europe back to its very foundations; those of international solidarity and protection of human rights and dignity. Read [here](#).

(29/06) Joint NGO statement ahead of the European Council of 28-29 June 2016 NGOs strongly condemn new EU policies to contain migration (via ECRE). In light of the European Council meetings on 28-29 June, a large group of NGOs released a [statement](#) asking EU leaders to reject the dangerous European Commission [Framework Partnership proposal](#) which aims to use aid, trade and other funds as leverage to encourage countries to reduce the number of migrants reaching EU shores. Unfortunately EU leaders [decided to adopt](#) the Framework Partnership proposal despite the [call](#) from ECRE, Amnesty International, Save the Children, Oxfam and 120 other human rights, humanitarian, medical, migration and development organisations.

(23/06) Caritas Europa - Everyone’s reason to apply for asylum is unique! “Yes” to individual assessment of asylum application. “No” to concept of “safe country of origin”. In Caritas Europa’s newly issued [position paper on the concept of “safe country of origin”](#), the pan-European network argues against the idea of using nationality as a filter to dismiss asylum applications. Caritas Europa urges the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Member States to reject the concept of “safe country of origin”. Instead, Europe must protect the principle of individual right to asylum, as agreed in the UN Refugee Convention of 1951. More info [here](#).

(21/06) Eurochild - World Refugee Day: Child rights professionals share their stories. In 2015, of the more than 1 million people who applied for asylum in the EU Member States, 30 percent were children. But very little is known about what happens once children move on and try to rebuild their lives across Europe. But professionals working with children and families are raising the alarm. Many of these children are being denied basic rights, including care within a family, education, and freedom from violence. The potential negative consequences for Europe's future are huge and worrisome. On the occasion of World Refugee Day, Eurochild has released a series of interviews entitled “[Turning the tide for children on the move](#)” offering a snapshot of the situation of children on the move in different parts of Europe in both transit and destination countries. It is built on interviews with professionals working with and for children and families. Nine child rights professionals from Eurochild's

membership share the challenges they face on the ground and recommendations to national governments and EU institutions for the protection of the rights of children.

(29/06) ECRE - Worrying trends in human trafficking. The vulnerable migration flows in Greece and Early Legal Intervention (blog by AIRE centre). In 2015 the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) reported the highest levels of displacement globally since World War II. The EU as a whole received over 1.2 million first-time asylum claims, double the 2014 number (563,000). In January 2016, Europol confirmed that 10,000 refugee children were missing, with many of them feared to have fallen victims to human trafficking. The EU also highlighted in a recent report that trafficking in the context of migration and asylum is an emerging trend. The AIRE Centre and ECRE have been exploring, amongst other issues, the extent to which this last finding is relevant in the context of the ongoing migration crisis in Greece. This formed part of the Joint Learning Initiative Field Visit to Greece in late May 2016. The team met with a number of asylum stakeholders and the Greek National Trafficking Rapporteur and attempted to see how identification of actual or potential trafficking victims is being conducted inside and outside the asylum framework, in practice. The outcome of this exercise was disappointing and worrying. Read [here](#).

(27/06) International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims - Symposium: Early bird registration extended until 31 July. The IRCT [has extended the deadline](#) for the early bird registration for the [Scientific Symposium](#) to 31 July. The Symposium is the first global event to look in detail across disciplines at how to deliver on the promise of the right to rehabilitation for torture survivors. Participants now have the opportunity to save 100 Euro on the registration fee throughout the month of July. From 1 August the regular fee for international participants will increase to 480 Euro, while local participants based in Mexico will pay 320 Euro. Up to 450 participants from across regions and professions are expected to attend the event. The event is jointly hosted by the IRCT and Colectivo Contra la Tortura (CCTI) and is being held prior to the IRCT Gen. Assembly, which runs from 8 to 9 December.

(23/06) Human Rights Watch - Italy: Children Stuck in Unsafe Migrant Hotspot. According to a [HRW Report](#), children as young as 12 and traveling without family members are kept for weeks in overcrowded and unsafe conditions in the Pozzallo migrant registration center in Sicily, Human Rights Watch said today. Some asylum-seeking and other migrant children stay for over one month with unrelated adults in the center, designed for short-term stays, due to lack of space in shelters for children, putting them at risk of sexual abuse and violence from adults. Members of a parliamentary commission of inquiry on reception and detention facilities conducted a long-planned visit to the Pozzallo center on June 23, 2016. As of June 21, all but 60 people had been transferred out of the center.

PUBLICATIONS

MPI - [Improving Education for Migrant-Background Students: A Transatlantic Comparison of School Funding](#)

EPRS - [Integration of migrants: The education dimension](#) (briefing note)

EPRS - [Strategic Communication: The EU's Response To Invasive Narratives](#) (Policy Podcast)

EPRS - [European Border And Coast Guard Agency](#) (Plenary Podcast)

Slovak EU Presidency - [Programme of the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the EU](#)

CEPS - [An Analysis of the Schengen Area in the Wake of Recent Developments](#)