

# INFO FLASH 30/09

## EU INSTITUTIONS

### European Commission

**(28/09) Delivering on migration and border management:** Commission reports on progress made under the European Agenda on Migration. The Commission is today reporting on the progress made on the EU's relocation and resettlement schemes and the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement. At the same time, it is outlining the steps still needed to be taken by Greece in view of a future resumption of Dublin transfers from other Member States. September recorded 1,202 relocations, the highest monthly number so far, twice as high as during the previous reporting period. In total, 5,651 persons have been relocated from Greece (4,455) and Italy (1,196). Member States have continued to increase their efforts on resettlement – offering legal and safe pathways to 10,695 people so far of the agreed 22,504 under the July 2015 scheme. The number of people crossing irregularly in the Aegean continues to reduce in the framework of the EU-Turkey agreement (85 persons per day since June, in comparison to over 1,700 per day in the month before the agreement and 7,000 per day in October 2015). Return operations have continued to be carried out with an additional 116 persons returned since the Second Report, bringing the total number of persons returned under the Statement to 578. Full press release available [here](#). Report available [here](#).

**(28/09) Delivering on transparency: Commission proposes mandatory Transparency Register for all EU institutions.** The European Commission is today proposing a mandatory Transparency Register covering all three EU institutions – the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission – delivering on a key transparency commitment of the Juncker Commission. The Commission has already led by example in making meetings with its decision-makers conditional upon interest representatives being publicly listed in a Transparency Register. Today we are calling on the European Parliament and Council to follow suit, making the Register mandatory for any interest representatives trying to influence policy-making in Brussels. More background info available [here](#). Q&A available [here](#).

**(27/09) Union for the Mediterranean commits to fight structural unemployment.** The full-day meeting addressed the most pressing issues in the region: promoting job creation, improving youth employment and employability (including job matching and placement, strengthening public employment services), and promoting social dialogue. Moreover, the ministers discussed ways to contribute to growth, decent work and inclusion, for example by facilitating the transition from the informal to the formal economy and addressing challenges due to the refugee crisis. Ministers at the Conference asserted the value of a common approach to address the issue of unemployment, particularly of young people and women, as a means to consolidate stability in the region. This regional effort towards job creation and decent work is crucial in the wider context of the recent commitments made by the United Nations and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) towards sustainable development and decent work as enshrined in the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#). The ministers strongly supported an integrated two-track approach, which addresses both the demand-side and the supply-side of the labour market. This means that measures in the form

of macro-economic policies and private sector-led growth (demand), but also measures as vocational training and employability (supply), need to be taken simultaneously. The cross cutting priority is the transition from informal to formal employment, in order to guarantee the quality of jobs. To this end, the ministers encouraged national authorities to actively support the transition, in line with existing ILO efforts. Full article [here](#).

**(20/09) EU – UNICEF partnership helps address learning and protection needs of children and youth affected by the Syria Crisis.** As a new school year gets under way across the Middle East, a major injection of funds from the European Union [is boosting efforts to provide learning opportunities and protection to hundreds of thousands of children and youth](#) who have fled the Syria conflict. More info on the EU-Unicef partnership on education available [here](#).

**(15/09) Call for projects - Support dialogue and exchange of best practice in fostering tolerance and mutual respect.** Dialogue and exchange of best practice will assist Member States and national practitioners in fostering tolerance and mutual respect including through the correct and full implementation of the provisions of the EU Framework Decision on combatting certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law, and in developing tools and practices to effectively prevent and combat bias-motivated crimes. Increased support in these actions also represents a follow up to the conclusions of the Annual Colloquium on Fundamental Rights of 1-2 October 2015 and reflects relevant priorities identified in the European Agenda on Security and in the conclusions of the Justice Ministers discussion on the justice response to the migration crisis, held at the Justice and Home Affairs Council of 8-9 October 2015. Full text of the call available [here](#).

## European Parliament

**(28/09) MEPs reject EU Budget 2017 Council cuts: more funds for migration, jobs, youth.** Budget Committee MEPs [reversed all the cuts proposed by the Council to the draft 2017 EU budget](#) to meet the needs of the migration crisis and slow economic growth. They also boosted funding to fight youth unemployment and increased spending on research and infrastructure projects. In particular, Budgets committee members said that funds to tackle the external dimension of the migration and refugee crises were insufficient, particularly because of cuts to programmes such as the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) and the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP). They partly restored those cuts made by the Commission and reinstated the 2016 levels for the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) Mediterranean lines and for humanitarian aid. The details of the budget will be available shortly and a corresponding resolution will be voted on at the committee's 11 October meeting. The whole Parliament will vote on its position on the Draft Budget 2017 on 26 October. This will kick off three weeks of "conciliation" talks with the Council, with the aim of reaching a deal between the two institutions in time for next year's budget to be voted by Parliament and signed by its President in December.

**(23/09) Lebanon: better EU resettlement tools needed to help the country deal with refugee crisis.** From Syrian refugees on their way to being resettled to Europe to Palestine refugees who have been living in camps for years: members from the civil liberties committee delegation got to speak to many different people during their [fact-finding mission to Lebanon on 19-22 September](#). They were there to assess the situation to help prepare future rules on the resettlement of refugees. They also spoke to representatives of local NGOs and large international organisations. The influx of refugees has heavily affected vital infrastructure in

the country such as education and sanitation. The limitations on their right to work are leading the vast majority of Syrians into exploitation and poverty. "People are living under appalling conditions, in overcrowded apartments shared by several families in order to afford the rent or even in basement parkings, with no water, toilet or electricity," said MEP Moraes (head of delegation). The EU has allocated more than €776 million to support vulnerable communities in Lebanon since the beginning of the crisis. However, Moraes stressed: "There is an urgent need for the EU to adopt legislative tools that actually work and can contribute to alleviate the demographic pressure on countries such as Lebanon and prevent further destabilisation in the region."

**(15/09) Parliament endorses Sir Julian King as Commissioner for Security Union.** The European Parliament [endorsed](#) the candidature of Sir Julian King as Commissioner for the Security Union. He was nominated by the UK government after Lord Jonathan Hill resigned in the wake of the Brexit vote in June. As Commissioner for the Security Union, Julian King will support the implementation of the European Agenda on Security and contribute to delivering an operational and effective Security Union. He will work under the guidance of Commission First Vice-President Frans Timmermans, complementing the work of Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos, who is in charge of Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship. [The European Parliament has also quizzed EU-Counter Terrorism Coordinator Gilles de Kerchove](#) on his plans to cooperate with newly-appointed security Commissioner Sir Julian King, information exchange, prevention strategies and the possibility of training Imams in Europe.

**(15/09) New European travel document to ease return of non-EU nationals.** An EU Commission proposal for a standard European travel document to speed up the return of non-EU nationals staying irregularly in EU member states without valid passports or identity cards was approved by Parliament. A key aim for MEPs has been to strengthen the form's security features and technical safeguards, so as to promote its acceptance by third countries. Third countries are reluctant to accept the return documents provided by member states today, for reasons that include inadequate security details and varying formats, notes Parliament's resolution approving the regulation. To enter into force, the new regulation still needs to be formally approved by the Council of Ministers. More info [here](#).

**(15/09) MEPs urge EU countries to take more asylum-seekers from Italy, Greece and Turkey.** In a non-binding resolution, [Parliament rejected a European Commission proposal](#) to take 54,000 places from a scheme for relocating asylum seekers from Greece and Italy to other EU member states, and use them to resettle Syrian refugees from Turkey in the EU instead, as part of the migration deal agreed between Turkey and EU leaders last March. Under the Commission proposal, EU countries could deduct Syrian refugees needing international protection who they take in from Turkey from the numbers of asylum-seekers whom they have pledged to relocate from Greece and Italy. The deal between Turkey and EU leaders requires the EU to take in one Syrian refugee from Turkey for each Syrian returned from the Greek islands to Turkey. Parliament objects that the intra-EU relocation scheme should not be mixed up with the resettlement one, which involves a non-EU country. "Resettlement should not take place at the expense of relocation", says the text prepared by Ska Keller (Greens, DE). MEPs note that the need for emergency relocation from Greece and Italy to other EU member states is expected to remain high, pointing to the urgent humanitarian situation in Greece and the risk of deterioration in Italy.

## European Council

**(22/09) European Data Protection Supervisor - Migration, security and fundamental rights: A critical challenge for the EU.** As the EU searches for the best approach to secure its borders, the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) said that citizens must be assured that the proposals put forward are effective, but that they also respect data protection laws. In his Opinions on the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and the Smart Borders Package, he said that it is vital that the reform of the EU's border policy be further assessed to ensure its full consistency with the respect for the fundamental rights of those who enter and leave the EU. Full press release available [here](#).

**(20/09) Human rights and democracy: EU annual report 2015 adopted.** The Council adopted the "country and regional issues" part of the EU annual report on human rights and democracy in the world in 2015 which complements the thematic part of the report published on 20 June 2016. In 2015, the EU continued defending and promoting human rights, inclusive and democratic societies. The 2015 annual report sets out the efforts of the EU, through the High Representative Federica Mogherini, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, Stavros Lambrinidis and the EU global network of delegations, to promote the universality of human rights across the world. The "country and regional issues" section of the report provides a short overview of the human rights situation and covers EU policy support on the ground on a country by country basis. Documents available [here](#).

**(16/09) Bratislava Declaration and Roadmap.** At a critical time for our European project, Prime ministers and Heads of state of 27 Member States met in Bratislava to diagnose together the present state of the European Union and discuss the EU common future. On migration, they committed to offer immediate assistance to strengthen the protection of Bulgaria's border with Turkey and to advance migration compacts for cooperation and dialogue with third countries to reduce flows of illegal migration and increased return rates. On fighting terrorism, they committed to set up a Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) to allow for advance checks and, if necessary, deny entry of visa-exempt travelers. They also committed to a systematic effort against radicalisation, including through expulsions and entry bans where warranted as well as EU support to Member States' actions in prevention. Full text of the declaration and roadmap available [here](#).

## Others

**(16/09) European Medicine Agency - Paediatric Committee re-elects chair.** The European Medicines Agency's (EMA) Paediatric Committee (PDCO) [has re-elected](#) Dr Dirk Mentzer as its chair during its meeting in September 2016. Dr Mentzer, who is Head of Pharmacovigilance at the [Paul-Ehrlich-Institut](#) in Frankfurt, Germany and a paediatrician by training, has been the chair of the PDCO since September 2013. This is his second and final mandate as the rules of procedure of the PDCO foresee a maximum of two terms. "As PDCO chair I would like to continue the interaction with other scientific committees at EMA, as well as with academia and patient/parent groups to ensure that the PDCO plays an active role across the whole life-cycle of medicines for children."

**(14/09) EUROFUND - Charting the state of housing across the EU.** The prevalence of structural problems in dwellings in the EU varies considerably between Member States. On average, 12% of EU residents report damp or leaks in their walls and roofs; 9% live in accommodation with rot in the windows, doors or floors; and 14% of resident indicate that

they cannot afford to keep their home adequately warm. Read more [here](#). Report available [here](#).

**(14/09) International Labour Organization - 2016 Global Media Competition on “Breaking Stereotypes on Labour Migration”.** The objective of the [competition](#) is to recognize exemplary media coverage on labour migration by encouraging professional journalists to produce written articles or videos/multimedia that while not overlooking the negative aspects (e.g. often a hard reality of exploitation and violation of human and labour rights), also show the positive results of fair labour migration governance, and highlight and highlight key aspects of migration (e.g. recruitment) as well as the positive contribution of migrant workers to countries of origin, transit and destination. The competition starts on 14 September 2016 and closes on 31 October 2016. Professional journalists are invited to submit one piece of their work to one of the two following categories: written articles (online or print articles); videos/multimedia. Articles should not exceed 2000 and videos/multimedia should not be longer than 5 minutes. Submissions must have been published between 1 January 2015 and 31 October 2016 to qualify. Two winners will be selected in each category; and each winner will receive a prize of \$1000. Winning entries will be featured on ILO website and widely promoted as an example of good journalism. To enter the competition, please fill in the [online entry form](#) before 31 October 2016 (latest 23:59, Central European Time). Entries are accepted in three languages: English, French, and Spanish.

## **COUNCIL OF EUROPE**

**(30/09) Council of Europe’s anti-trafficking body GRETA calls on Romania to intensify efforts to prevent trafficking in children.** In a [report](#) published today, the Council of Europe’s Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings ([GRETA](#)) calls on Romania to step up its efforts to prevent trafficking in children and to improve the identification and assistance to child victims. The report assesses developments since the publication of GRETA’s first evaluation report in 2012 as regards the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. The report says that Romania has made progress in a number of areas, but further improvements are needed in preventing trafficking, identifying victims, providing them with assistance and facilitating their reintegration and compensation. Full press release [here](#).

**(29/09) Removing barriers to young people’s access to rights.** Unhindered and full access of young people to rights is an essential element of a culture of human rights, democracy and rule of law. On 28 September 2016, the Committee of Ministers has adopted a [new Recommendation](#) for its member States to remove legal, political and social barriers to young people’s access to rights. Barriers to accessing quality education, difficulties to secure stable and meaningful employment, insufficient capacity of social and health-care services to cater for the specific needs of young people, negative consequences of precarious life situations and a lack of opportunities for participation in the life of society are among key challenges facing young Europeans today. Full press release [here](#).

**(20/09) No violence against children is acceptable, all violence is preventable.** This was the main conclusion of the [2006 UN Global study on violence against children](#). In 2015, the UN Special Representative on Violence against Children published the results of a [worldwide consultation of children](#), which highlighted that protection from violence was their second highest priority, right after education. Full article available [here](#).

**(19/09) National minorities in Hungary.** National minority representatives report an overall respectful attitude prevailing between the majority and most minority groups in Hungary, according to an [opinion](#), published by the Council of Europe's [Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities](#) (see also the [Comments of the Government of Hungary](#)). But problems persist, especially with regard to Roma communities. The new opinion includes reports of physical attacks against Roma in recent years. It is based on information contained in a [State Report](#), submitted by Hungarian authorities in March 2015 and information from governmental and non-governmental contacts during an Advisory Committee visit to Budapest and Pécs in December 2015. Full press release available [here](#).

**(15/09) Dalai Lama visit highlights shared values.** His Holiness the Dalai Lama used his historic visit to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg to make an impassioned plea for compassion, tolerance and understanding between individuals, different faiths and nations. He expressed his belief that moral education based on what he called “universal values” is the key to achieving greater compassion in the world. He also enthusiastically endorsed the Council of Europe's movement to eradicate hate speech – ‘No Hate Speech. Full article [here](#).

## **CIVIL SOCIETY**

**(30/09) Eurochild - Meeting #1 Council of Europe Child Rights Committee kicks off with high energy.** The Council of Europe hosted its first meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Rights of the Child (CAHENF) on 28-29 September in Strasbourg with participants from 37 Member States, as well as Marta Santos Pais, UN Special Representative on Violence against Children, and Maud de Boer de Buquiero, UN Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, and various international INGOs and NGO, including Eurochild. Two working groups, including the opportunity for the involvement of civil society will be established to work on realising rights of children seeking asylum, and protecting children in the digital environment. Greater participation of children in the different working groups and committees is also expected. Full article [here](#).

**(23/09) Social Platform - Examples of EU integration [of third country nationals].** Annica Ryngebeck reports on a debate in the European Parliament about the integration of third country nationals in the European Union. Among the invited guests were two passionate women from very different national contexts in Sweden and Poland. Full blog piece [here](#).

**(23/09) ECRE - The United Nations Summit for Refugees and Migrants - a failed opportunity for much needed reform?** This week's [UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants](#) – which [had been referred](#) to as an “extraordinary opportunity” by UNHCR Chief Filippo Grandi – has instead been widely criticised by civil society organisations. The outcome of the Summit, the so-called [New York Declaration](#), [has been described](#) as a document “thin on content and connections to practice” which [fails to provide](#) much needed reform and reflects the interests of States more than those of refugees. Full article [here](#).

**(23/09) ECRE - Innovating to include: wrapping up lessons from the Social Innovation for Refugee Inclusion Seminar.** On 12 and 13 September, over 250 participants and speakers from all over Europe and beyond gathered in Brussels to discuss strategies of refugee inclusion and propose innovative and collaborative solutions at the [Seminar on Social Innovation for Refugee Inclusion](#). “Social change is what matters. The so-called refugee crisis has obviously increased the level of fear and xenophobia in our societies, but it has also

pushed forward a strong desire for change. This requires innovators. We are here to discover what is now happening on the ground in the field of refugee inclusion, and to discuss what kind of processes are required to transform our societies into inclusive places”, stated Anne Bathily, ECRE’s Senior Policy Officer and the organiser of the Seminar. Through plenary sessions and workshops, participants had the chance to hear and discuss what innovations are required for a [truly welcoming culture](#), the [role of technology](#) in refugee integration and the role of the [private sector](#) in facilitating access to the labour market. The workshops focused on [refugee participation](#), citizens’ initiatives, housing, higher education and the Boldness Project, a special session led by [Eric Young](#), founder of the Social Projects Studio. Full article [here](#).

**(23/09) ECRE - UK: Inspection examines restrictive family reunification procedure.** A [report](#) of the Independent Chief Inspector on Borders and Immigration found the policy of the UK Home Office to be too restrictive in the treatment of family reunification applications. In 2015, the UK received 8,403 family reunification applications, compared to 5,498 in 2014. The Inspector sampled 181 applications considered at the visa sections of the Home Office in Amman, Istanbul and Pretoria. Although the UK allows for considering family reunification applications outside the Immigration Rules where “exceptional circumstances” or “compassionate factors” arise, this was not seen in any of the cases sampled by the Inspector. Full article [here](#).

**(19/09) Social Platform - More cooperation between civil society and the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights.** Annica Ryngebeck [reports on the meeting of the civil society Advisory Panel to the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights \(FRA\)](#). In line with the news ideas put forward by Michael O’Flaherty, the new Director of FRA, participants focused on initiatives to support civil society in the EU fundamental rights governance.

**(19/09) Social Platform - Time for action, not words on minimum income.** The European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility Marianne Thyssen was invited to answer an oral question on minimum income schemes in the European Union in the official session of the European Parliament. Thomas Händel (GUE), chair of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, asked Commissioner Thyssen to share the Commission’s views on what should be considered as adequate income support and what measures would be taken to assess and improve the quality of minimum income schemes in EU Member States. Social Platform’s Maxime Gehrenbeck [gives a preliminary assessment of the good, the bad and the missing of Commissioner Thyssen’s remarks](#).

**(16/09) ECRE - Relocation of asylum seekers from Greece and Italy needs to be at a faster and increased rate, UNHCR urges.** A day after the European Commission released [new statistics](#) revealing a slow implementation of the relocation mechanism, [UNHCR has called](#) upon EU Member States to increase their pledges and pace of relocation. So far only 3 per cent of the pledge to relocate 160,000 asylum seekers from Greece and Italy to other Member States has been met. Full article [here](#).

**(16/09) New European Family Support Network to be developed.** Following on from the series of ‘Five Nations’ Family Support conferences and seminars held in Ireland, England and Scotland (2013 – 2015) and as a follow up from the Galway school on ‘Child Rights in Practice and Research’ held in December last year that Eurochild co-organised, the UNESCO Global Research Network on Children Families and Communities has recently proposed the development of a ‘European Family Support Network’. Academics from Serbia, Spain, Croatia,

Latvia, UK, Ireland, representatives from the UNICEF Office of Research, Lumos and Eurochild were invited to share their respective work on Family Support, provide recommendations and priorities for the emerging network and discuss new avenues for sharing knowledge and learning. Eurochild hopes that the emerging Network can strengthen our efforts to connect policy, practice & research to work for advancement of children's rights & support peer learning & exchange of knowledge & practice among our members. Full article [here](#).

**(16/09) ECRE - Germany: Lesser standard of protection for people from Syria, Eritrea, Iraq and Afghanistan.** The level of protection given to people fleeing Syria, Eritrea, Iraq and Afghanistan in Germany has decreased drastically this year. Instead of refugee status, the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) is granting subsidiary protection to all four nationalities. In contrast with last year, people from Iraq and Afghanistan often receive no protection at all. People with subsidiary status face stricter conditions for family reunification, than people with full refugee status. Full article [here](#).

## **PUBLICATIONS**

**Council of the European Union** - [Think Tank Review](#) (September 2016)

**Renton J. (Robert Schuman Centre) & Gidley B.** - [Antisemitism and Islamophobia in Europe: A Shared Story?](#)

**International Observatory of Mayor "Living Together"** - [Case Study on the Liaison Officer Programme in Montréal](#)

**Intercultural Cities (Council of Europe)** - ["THE ART OF MIXING": Challenges of Intercultural Cities](#) (Storify)

**Solon Ardittis** - [Flexible solidarity: Rethinking the EU's refugee relocation system after Bratislava](#) (LSE blog)

**OECD** - [State of Fragility 2016](#)

**UNICEF** - [Uprooted: The growing crisis for refugee and migrant children](#)

**UNHCR** - [Missing Out: Refugee Education in Crisis](#)

**Eurochild** - [Recommendations to the Maltese Presidency of the EU Council](#)

**EU Alliance for Investing in Children** - [How the European Commission can make a European Pillar of Social Rights fit for children](#) (joint statement)

**MPI** - [Building Livelihood Opportunities for Refugee Populations: Lessons from Past Practice](#)