

## INFO FLASH 6/06

The European Commission launched new initiatives on [youth and education](#) and followed up on the [European Dialogue on Skills and Migration](#) and the [Code of Conduct on countering illegal online hate speech](#).

Among civil society, Social Platform reported on [good practices on economic and social inclusion of migrants in Sweden](#), while ECRE reported on national developments in [Germany](#) and [Italy](#) and issued an editorial on [relocation](#).

Key readings include an EPC commentary on the [Australian model for the EU's migration crises](#), EPRS evidence on [migration and asylum in Italy](#), and the Council of the EU General Secretariat's [Think Tank Review](#).

### EU INSTITUTIONS

#### European Commission

**(1/06) Countering online hate speech - Commission initiative with social media platforms and civil society shows progress.** One year ago, the European Commission and four major social media platforms announced a Code of Conduct on countering illegal online hate speech. It included a series of commitments by Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Microsoft to combat the spread of such content in Europe. An evaluation carried out by NGOs and public bodies in 24 Member States, released on the first anniversary of the Code of Conduct, shows that the companies have made significant progress in following up on their commitments. The European Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law and fundamental rights. The EU and its Member States, together with social media companies and other platforms have a responsibility to act so that the internet does not become a free haven for illegal hate speech and violence. By signing the Code of Conduct, the IT companies committed in particular to reviewing the majority of valid notifications of illegal hate speech in less than 24 hours and to removing or disabling access to such content, if necessary, on the basis of national laws transposing European law. The Code also underlined the need to further discuss how to promote transparency and encourage counter and alternative narratives. One year after its adoption, the [Code of Conduct](#) on countering illegal hate speech online has delivered some important progress, while some challenges remain. Full press release [here](#).

**(30/05) Youth initiative: Commission sets out strategy for high quality, inclusive, future-oriented education.** The Commission has adopted new initiatives on school and higher education, including a proposal on graduate tracking to help Member States collect information on what graduates do after their studies. The overall aim of these initiatives is to help Member States provide high quality and inclusive education for all young people through a series of concrete actions, so they acquire the knowledge and skills needed to participate fully in society, are able to respond to new opportunities and challenges opened up by for instance globalisation and technological change, and can tailor their education to the needs of the labour market. Young people need a broad set of competences to enable them to do well in

life, to find fulfilling jobs and be engaged citizens, irrespective of their background. Education plays a key role in giving them the best possible start to achieve this, but action is needed to improve the quality and performance of education systems in Europe, so they can keep up with societal change and serve all children and young people. Decisions in the education area are taken at national and regional level, but the EU supports Member States while fully respecting the principle of subsidiarity. Full press release [here](#). Q&A [here](#).

**(30/05) 2018 EU budget: Commission proposes budget with focus on jobs, investments, migration and security.** The Commission [proposed a draft budget](#) for 2018 of €161 billion in commitments to stimulate the creation of more jobs, especially for young people, and to boost growth and strategic investments. Building on the actions already undertaken in previous years, next year's EU budget will continue dealing effectively with the migration challenge, both inside and outside the EU. Improved reporting will enhance the focus on concrete results which will be achieved thanks to EU funding. The proposed budget operates within the limitations set by the European Parliament and Member States in the Multiannual Financial Framework — yet under the assumption that the Council will formally adopt the already agreed mid-term revision of that Framework quickly following the elections in the United Kingdom on 8 June. Otherwise, some of the additional proposed expenditure – like the remaining €700 million for the Youth Employment Initiative during 2018-2020 – would be at risk and the Commission would probably need to use budget from the agriculture heading to pay for additional amounts devoted to security and migration. The European Parliament and the European Union Member States will now jointly discuss this proposal.

**(29/05) EU announces over €44 million of humanitarian funding to help people in need in Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan.** The European Commission [has announced humanitarian assistance](#) of over €44 million to help people in need in South-West and Central Asia, who continue to face the consequences of years of conflicts and displacement, as well as recurrent natural disasters. The funding will support Afghan refugees and their families in Iran and Pakistan, help victims of conflict in Afghanistan and improve disaster risk management in Central Asia. €25.5 million will help internally displaced people in Afghanistan who have had to flee conflict or been injured, as well as the most vulnerable Afghan refugees returning to their country. The assistance will focus on areas such as protection, food, emergency shelter, health, water, hygiene and sanitation. The EU will also sustain and expand its support in Iran. Humanitarian organisations working in Iran will receive close to €10 million to help them complement efforts to provide for the basic needs of Afghan refugees and their families, with emphasis on education of children, protection, food, water, health and sanitation. Organisations in Pakistan will benefit from funding of about €7 million, which will notably help Pakistanis who have been displaced by internal conflict and also help provide essential services for Afghan refugees. In Central Asia, over €2 million will be provided for disaster risk reduction so communities are better prepared to respond to natural hazards. The Commission has funded a number of such programmes in the region since 1996.

**(23/05) European Dialogue on Skills and Migration: Employers and Commission together for the integration of migrants.** Today [23/05] Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris Avramopoulos and Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne Thyssen are hosting the second meeting of the European Dialogue on Skills and Migration, at the European Business Summit. The Commissioners officially launched the "Employers together for integration" initiative, in the presence of CEOs and other high-level representatives of several companies committed to fostering migrant integration such as IKEA, Deutsche Telekom, NCC, Accenture, B-post,

Scandic hotels, ADECCO and Microsoft as well as representatives of social and economic partners. The initiative aims to promote employers' efforts across the EU to support the integration of refugees and other migrants in the labour market and beyond. The [European Dialogue on Skills and Migration](#) was launched in 2016 to foster exchanges between the Commission and economic and social partners, in particular employers, on labour migration related issues. For its second edition on 23 May 2017, the Dialogue focuses on the labour market integration of refugees and other legally residing migrants. Full press release [here](#).

## European Parliament

**(1/06) Rise in anti-Semitism demands stronger action, urge MEPs.** The recent rise in anti-Semitism across the EU requires more and stronger action, MEPs say in a resolution approved on Thursday. Hate speech and violence against Europe's Jewish citizens are incompatible with EU values, so all EU member states must take measures to ensure the security of their Jewish citizens, say MEPs. They call on leading national politicians to oppose anti-Semitic statements systematically and publicly, and urge every member state to appoint a national coordinator to combat anti-Semitism. More info [here](#).

## European Council / Council of the EU

**(23/05) "Culture is an essential part of the EU's international relations": Council adopts Conclusions.** On 23 May the Council [adopted conclusions on culture](#) in the European Union's external relations. The conclusions follow the joint communication from the High Representative and the European Commission of 8 June 2016 entitled "Towards an EU Strategy for international cultural relations" of 8 June 2016". They provide guidance on the EU's strategic approach to international cultural relations. The conclusions underline that such an approach should be bottom-up and should respect the independence of the cultural sector. They recognise that international cultural relations can only develop by encouraging cultural diversity within the EU, and they call for consistency and coherence of effort. In order to take forward this work, the Council has agreed as a next step that a working group will be established to assist in drawing up a comprehensive EU strategic approach to international cultural relations. This work will be supported by the Commission and European External Action Service, drawing on the existing cultural diplomacy platform which was set up in 2016 to help promote the EU's cultural engagement with third countries.

## Others

**(2/06) Frontex - Frontex, EFCA and EMSA present results of pilot project "Creation of a European coastguard function".** The Closing Workshop of the pilot project "Creation of a European coastguard function" [gathered](#) some 110 participants from various European and national entities at the premises of the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) in Lisbon. During the event Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, EFCA - the European Fisheries Control Agency and EMSA jointly presented the project results. The 18 months pilot project was launched in January 2016 in order to provide the test bed for the co-operation mechanism proposed by the Commission within the framework of the European border and coastguard package.

**(1/06) FRA - Migration, displacement and violent extremism: confronting emerging realities.** FRA presented its work during a [meeting](#) on 24 May in Stockholm on confronting

emerging realities resulting from migration, displacement and violent extremism. The meeting was organised by the World Bank and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). The discussions will feed into the Agency's research on how cities in selected Member States have responded to the influx of asylum seekers since 2015. The research will seek to identify successful practices with respect to integration within a fundamental rights framework. Full press release [here](#).

**(1/06) FRA - Training tackles suicide in migration hotspots.** The Agency in cooperation with the Greek Reception and Identification Service (RIS) held a workshop on 29 May to discuss guidance on preventing and responding to self-harm in the migration hotspots. The guidance is being developed for field workers. It aims to help them learn about suicide risk factors as well as how to prevent and manage suicide attempts ensuring respect for human dignity and fundamental rights. The guidelines will address a need identified by RIS staff on the Greek islands during previous training sessions co-organised by FRA earlier this year. Recent [research](#) carried out on the island of Chios has revealed that suicide attempts is an emerging concern. Full press release [here](#).

**(23/05) EASO - Eritrean in Italy? Relocation to another European country is safe and legal.** Start your future now! Are you an Eritrean in Italy? Did you know that you can apply for Relocation and move to another European Country in a safe and legal manner? The [true story of Salem](#), Eritrean successfully relocated from Italy to Portugal.

## **COUNCIL OF EUROPE**

**(1/06) Lisbon Forum 2017: managing migration in the face of populism.** The North-South Centre's Lisbon Forum 2017 is tackling on 1 and 2 June the challenges to manage migration flows while preventing the growth of anti-immigrant populist movements, promote inclusive societies that respect cultural diversity and reinforce the dialogue between the North and the South. The forum will bring together experts and representatives from national governments, parliaments, local and regional authorities and civil society. Full press release [here](#).

## **CIVIL SOCIETY**

**(06/06) Social Platform - Economic and social inclusion of migrants – A collection of good practices from Sweden.** On 14-15 December a delegation of Social Platform members traveled to southern Sweden to learn more about successful ways of including migrants and refugees in economic and social life. Over the course of two days we met three organisations that help low- and medium-skilled migrants to find work – including through training, mentoring and job placements – so that they can begin to integrate into society and enjoy access to various rights, including the right to live a life in dignity. Full article [here](#).

**(26/05) ECRE - From host country to deportation country – latest asylum reform in Germany.** Last week the German parliament [passed a reform](#) of the asylum law introducing far-reaching changes affecting data protection of asylum seekers, residence restrictions and prolongation of detention custody. The new legal changes introduce stricter obligations on asylum seekers to cooperate in establishing their nationality and obtaining identity documents. Data carriers, such as mobile phones, sim cards and hardware can be systematically checked by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees in order to establish

their identity. The data collected can also be used in case an asylum seeker is suspected to pose a threat to public order. Pro Asyl warns that accessing private data of refugees circumvents a decision of the German Constitutional Court, according to which private data can only be accessed by court order. Also, Andrea Voßhoff, Federal Data Protection Commissioner, had criticised the change as disproportionate and contrary to the Constitution.

**(26/05) ECRE - Italy: Hungary is unsafe country for transferring asylum seekers under Dublin Regulation.** On 15 May 2017, the Italian Council of State [annulled the transfer to Hungary of an asylum seeker](#) under the Dublin Regulation, confirming its previous position expressed in September 2016. The judgment reaffirmed the deteriorated situation of asylum seekers in Hungary and the lack of minimum standards of reception and procedural conditions, contrary to international and EU law. The Council of State also reiterated the need to use multiple sources when examining the human rights situation in the context of Dublin transfers, by looking at both the legal framework and the factual situation in Hungary. Therefore, the Council of State held that a Dublin transfer to Hungary would expose the applicant to inhumane and degrading treatment.

**(26/05) ECRE - FRA Report on Access to education for migrant children.** The Fundamental Rights Agency of the European Union (FRA) recently [published](#) a report on access to education for asylum-seeking children based on their monthly data collection on migration in Europe. This information is especially important considering that for the year of 2016; over 100.000 children [arrived](#) in Italy, Greece and Bulgaria. The report found that access to education is severely limited for asylum-seeking children especially. Even though the data cannot always be relied on (it is not systematically collected), the report found that nine out of the fourteen Member States (MS) covered in the report did not provide education for children in immigration detention; this was mainly due to the short length and exceptional nature of their detention. Evidently, there are practical difficulties to providing formal education to children on the move, which include, *inter alia*, language barriers, lack of information, low allowances for asylum applicants to cover expenses, and the treatment and integration of traumatized children. The situation is even more difficult for traumatized asylum-seeking children, as the MS seldom offer psychological support (only three out of fourteen MS), and the education staff rarely receive adequate training allowing them to identify and treat this. Unfortunately, few MS address issues arising from irregular school attendance or disabilities, and diplomas from the different countries of origin are not automatically recognized. One silver lining is that, once an asylum-seeking child enters the formal education system, they have access to the same services as national children, and even sometimes receive additional support (such as language services or financial allowances). Full press release [here](#).

**(26/05) ECRE - Weekly Editorial: If relocation is the only game in town then we play for high stakes.** In 2015 EU Member States committed to relocate 160,000 asylum seekers from Greece and Italy. The target was first lowered to 98,000 and approaching the September deadline the figure has been further reduced to 33,000. While this is justified by the Commission on the basis that fewer people are eligible, it is also clear that the major obstacle has been Member States unwillingness to accept people for multiple reasons. Rather than the 160,000 legally foreseen, the current figure has just hit 20,000. The Commission is rightly taking a strong stance in public, including threatening sanctions and infringement procedure. While it is easy to agree with Slovak Prime Minister, Robert Fico who declared the quota system “politically dead”, we should not let recalcitrant Member States off the hook. Full press release [here](#).

## **PUBLICATIONS**

**Council of the EU General Secretariat** - [Think Tank Review](#) (May)

**EPRS** - [Migration and Asylum in Italy](#)

**EPC** - [An Australian model for the EU's migration crisis?](#)

**FRA** - [Fundamental Rights Report 2017](#)

**EPRS** - [The EU and terrorism](#) (Think Tank Review)

**Council of Europe** - [NEAR or FEAR: The Security Aspects of EU Enlargement](#)

**LSE** - [Exposure to news about immigration and crime is positively associated with support for anti-immigration parties](#)