

INFO FLASH 1/08

The European Commission has launched new initiatives on [migration management in Libya](#) and [refugee integration and accommodation in Greece](#), has published progress reports on the [relocation of asylum seekers from Italy and Greece](#) and on the [Security Union](#), and has sent reasoned opinions to the [Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland for non-compliance with their legal obligations on relocation](#). The Council has agreed on its mandate on the [new rules to make the EU attractive for highly qualified workers](#).

Frontex has launched a [public call for applications for civil society organisations to join the Frontex Consultative Forum for Fundamental Rights](#), while the WHO has issued [estimates cost of reaching global health targets by 2030](#) and reported on a [Joint United Nations statement on ending discrimination in health care settings](#).

On the occasion of the 4th World Day against Trafficking of Persons the Council of Europe has issued a press release on [refugee children](#) and [reports on Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, France and Norway](#). The [FRA](#) and [Eurofund](#) have also released relevant documents.

POLITICO.eu reported on the latest legal development after the [Court of Justice of the EU issued a rule on migration and asylum](#) and the [architect of the EU-Turkey refugee pact pushed for West Africa deal](#).

EU INSTITUTIONS

European Commission

(31/07) EU school children to receive milk, fruit and vegetables. The new EU school fruit, vegetables and milk scheme will be in place on 1 August, ready to be implemented across the Union as of the first day of the 2017/2018 school year. Aimed at promoting healthy eating habits among children, the scheme will include the distribution of fruit, vegetables and milk products, as well as dedicated educational programmes to teach pupils about the importance of good nutrition and to explain how food is produced. This single scheme merges and optimises the existing projects that last year reached over 20 million children. Although participation is optional, all 28 Member States indicated they will take part in the initiative in the 2017/2018 school year. Full press release [here](#).

(28/07) EU Trust Fund for Africa adopts €46 million programme to support integrated migration and border management in Libya. Following up on the Commission's Action Plan to support Italy from 4 July, the EU Trust Fund for Africa adopted today a programme worth €46 million to reinforce the integrated migration and border management capacities of the Libyan authorities. The new actions respond to the measures proposed under the Action plan to address the migratory flows along the Central Mediterranean Route. The programme aims at stepping up activities in support of the Libyan Border- and Coast Guards, to enhance their capacity to effectively manage the country's borders. The programme will be

implemented by the Italian Ministry of Interior and co-financed by Italy. Full press release [here](#).

(27/07) Seafarers: New measures to improve working conditions. The European Commission is proposing that an agreement between social partners to improve the working conditions of seafarers on board of EU-flagged vessels, be enshrined in EU law. The European Commission is proposing that an agreement between social partners to improve the working conditions of seafarers on board of EU-flagged vessels, be enshrined in EU law. The proposal will ensure that seafarers are better protected against abandonment in foreign ports in the future, and will strengthen their rights to compensation in the event of death or long-term disability due to an occupational injury, illness or hazard. More information [here](#).

(27/07) EU launches new humanitarian programme for the integration and accommodation of refugees in Greece. The European Commission has today announced a new wave of emergency support projects to help refugees in Greece worth €209 million. This includes the launch of the flagship 'Emergency Support To Integration & Accommodation' (ESTIA) programme to help refugees and their families rent urban accommodation and provide them with cash assistance. This marks a change from previous humanitarian projects which mainly provided support for accommodation in camps and the provision of direct supplies. Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris Avramopoulos added: "Europe means solidarity and this is what today's decision is about. The Commission has been standing side by side with Greece from day one and together we have come a long way. The projects launched today are one part of our wider support to the country but also to those in need of our protection. Around 1.3 billion euros of EU funds are at the disposal of Greece for the management of the migration crisis." Full press release [here](#).

(27/07) Security: the EU is driving work to share information, combat terrorist financing and protect Europeans online. The 9th Security Union progress report, published today, highlights the recent steps taken to prevent terrorist financing through trafficking in cultural goods and improve the interoperability of EU information systems. Based on a comprehensive assessment of EU security policy since 2001, the report also highlights the remaining gaps and challenges to be addressed. Incomplete implementation of existing policies remains a challenge, as do evolving threats such as radicalisation and cybercrime — which may require changes to existing instruments. Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris Avramopoulos said: "In this rapidly changing security environment, we must intensify our efforts to deliver on all essential elements and work swiftly to achieve a genuine and effective Security Union. Fragmentation makes us all vulnerable. Unity and trust by enhancing cooperation and facilitating information exchange between our Member States is the only way for the EU to bring concrete added value and ensure the security and safety of European citizens." Commissioner for the Security Union Julian King said: "The Comprehensive Assessment fulfils a commitment I gave to the European Parliament to carry out a thorough review of the EU's security policy – the first in 16 years. There are some important lessons, including the need for greater agility to respond to the evolving threat landscape. There will be an opportunity to discuss with Parliament in September." Full press release [here](#).

(26/07) Migration: Record month for relocations from Italy and Greece. Today, the Commission [has adopted](#) its 14th progress report on relocation of asylum seekers within the EU and resettlement of refugees from outside the EU. With relocations reaching record levels in June (with over 2,000 relocated from Greece and almost 1,000 from Italy) and almost all

Member States pledging and transferring regularly, relocating all those eligible remains feasible before September. However, more efforts are needed to accelerate transfers from Italy, especially in view of the current situation in the Central Mediterranean. Meanwhile, good progress continues to be made on resettlement and the Commission has launched a new pledging exercise to resettle the most vulnerable people from Libya, Egypt, Niger, Ethiopia and Sudan while continuing resettlements from Turkey.

(26/07) Relocation: Commission moves to next stage in infringement procedures against the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. The European Commission [has today sent reasoned opinions](#) to the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland for non-compliance with their legal obligations on relocation. Despite repeated calls for action and the launch of infringement procedures by the Commission last month, these three countries remain in breach of their legal obligations and have shown disregard for their commitments to Greece, Italy and other Member States. On 15 June 2017, the Commission launched infringement procedures and sent letters of formal notice to the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. The replies provided have not been found satisfactory as none were accompanied by an indication that these Member States would start relocating swiftly to their territory. None of the arguments put forth — whether it be the ongoing Court case against the Council which does not have suspensive effect, showing solidarity by other means, or difficulties in carrying out security checks — justify a failure to pledge available places. This is why the Commission has decided to move to the next stage of the infringement procedure. The Council Decisions require Member States to pledge available places for relocation every three months to ensure a swift and orderly relocation procedure. Whereas Hungary has not taken any action at all since the relocation scheme started, Poland has not relocated anyone and not pledged since December 2015. The Czech Republic has not relocated anyone since August 2016 and not made any new pledges for over a year.

(24/07) Proposal for a new EU strategy on Afghanistan: in support of peace and prosperity. Today, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European Commission [have set out their vision](#) for how the European Union can support Afghanistan both to address its challenges and to bring about positive change for the Afghan people. In recent years, Afghanistan has been confronted with a number of challenges that threaten the progress made in its economic and social development and its democratic institutions. The European Union recognises that the delicate security situation and the fragile economic situation the country is facing, combined with a clear determination on the part of the Afghan authorities to implement much-needed reforms necessitates renewed attention from the international community. Today, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European Commission have set out their vision for how the European Union can support Afghanistan both to address its challenges and to bring about positive change for the Afghan people. The Joint Communication on elements for an EU strategy on Afghanistan is available [online](#)

European Parliament

European Council / Council of the EU

(26/07) Legal migration: Council agrees mandate on new rules to make the EU attractive for highly qualified workers. On 26 July, the Permanent Representatives Committee (Coreper) [agreed on a mandate for negotiations](#) on a draft directive covering entry

and residence conditions for highly qualified workers coming from third countries (blue card directive). Based on this mandate, the Council presidency will start negotiations with the European Parliament. "The purpose of the Blue Card is to attract highly qualified workers to Europe. The number of specialists and economic transformers in the world is limited and the competition for them is strong. Making them choose Europe will strengthen our competitiveness and contribute to economic growth", said Andres Anvelt, minister of interior of Estonia, which currently holds the Council presidency. "A common European residence and work permit that will facilitate and make conditions more flexible is necessary if we want to compete with the American green card or the Canadian point system", minister Anvelt added. The reform of the blue card directive aims at making it more attractive for highly qualified workers from third countries to come to work in the EU. It will also aim to improve their mobility between jobs in different member states. It would replace the existing blue card directive, harmonising further conditions of entry and residence and improving the situation of highly qualified workers.

Others

(28/07) Frontex - Frontex Consultative Forum on Fundamental Rights: Public Call for Applications for Civil Society Organisations. The Frontex Management Board has launched a public call for applications for civil society organisations to join the Frontex Consultative Forum for Fundamental Rights. One civil society organisation will be selected on the basis of eligibility and selection criteria enclosed in Annex IV. The selected organisation will have the same term of mandate, ending in 31 December 2018, as the remaining civil society organisation members. Pursuant to Article 70 of the European Border and Coast Guard Regulation, Frontex had established the Consultative Forum on Fundamental Rights to assist the agency's executive director and the management board with independent advice in fundamental rights matters. The forum is currently composed of 14 members and headed by two chairs elected by its members for a two-year term. The work of the Consultative Forum is undertaken in a spirit of transparency, mutual respect, informed participation and collegiality. If your organisation is interested in becoming a member of the Consultative Forum, please read the Background Note for the Public Call for Applications and send a completed Application Form together with supporting documentation to consultative.forum@frontex.europa.eu and/or frontex@frontex.europa.eu by 23 August 2017. More info [here](#).

(28/07) FRA - Strengthen child protection to guard against trafficking. In 2016, around one in three asylum seekers in the EU was a child. Many go missing and risk falling into the hands of human traffickers. Ahead of UN World Day against Trafficking in Persons on 30 July, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) calls for stronger child protection safeguards to help end the exploitation of children. Full press release [here](#).

(28/07) Eurofund - World Day against Trafficking in Persons. On the occasion of [World Day against Trafficking in Persons](#) we invite you to download or order our publication on Regulation of labour market intermediaries and the role of social partners in preventing trafficking of labour. The right to free movement for workers within the European Union was enshrined in Article 48 of the EEC Treaty in 1957. Nowadays, private labour market intermediaries – such as temporary work agencies and employment placement agencies – contribute to facilitating this labour mobility in their role as mediator between individual workers and organisations in need of labour. However, due to loopholes in regulation, some workers and vulnerable groups run the risk of being exploited by fraudulent agencies. This

report examines how public authorities are currently regulating labour market intermediaries across Member States, highlighting the effectiveness or otherwise of different registration or licensing schemes. Full press release and publication [here](#).

(27/07) WHO - Joint United Nations statement on ending discrimination in health care settings. United Nations entities recall that a central principle of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is to “ensure that no one is left behind” and to “reach the furthest behind first”. Recognizing that discrimination in health care settings is a major barrier to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), United Nations entities commit to working together to support Member States in taking coordinated multisectoral action to eliminate discrimination in health care settings. Full press release [here](#).

(27/07) WHO - WHO estimates cost of reaching global health targets by 2030. The SDG Health Price Tag, published today in *The Lancet Global Health*, estimates the costs and benefits of progressively expanding health services in order to reach 16 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) health targets in 67 low- and middle-income countries that account for 75% of the world’s population. The analysis shows that investments to expand services towards universal health coverage and the other SDG health targets could prevent 97 million premature deaths globally between now and 2030, and add as much as 8.4 years of life expectancy in some countries. While most countries can afford the investments needed, the poorest nations will need assistance to reach the targets. Full press release [here](#).

(26/07) Eurofund - Employment shifts in Europe during the recovery: three little noticed trends. This blog piece, originally posted on [Social Europe](#), is based on research carried out by its author, John Hurley, jointly with Enrique Fernandez-Macias and other researchers for Eurofound in the European Jobs Monitor (EJM) project. The EJM tracks structural change in European labour markets – in terms of employment shifts by occupation and sector – and also provides a qualitative assessment of these shifts using different proxies of job quality, notably average hourly wage. Full press release [here](#).

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

(28/07) States must act urgently to protect refugee children from trafficking. Ahead of the World Day against Trafficking in Persons marked on 30 July, the Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings ([GRETA](#)) raises alarm about the high prevalence of child trafficking in Europe and the particular risks of migrant and refugee children falling victim to trafficking and exploitation. Children represent a quarter of identified victims of human trafficking on average in Europe, according to available data. Children are subjected to trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, forced marriage and, increasingly, forced criminality. Several of GRETA's recent country evaluation [reports](#) highlight serious shortcomings in the response of States to the protection of children at risk of being trafficked and the provision of assistance to child victims of human trafficking. Full press release [here](#).

(18/07) Human trafficking: new reports published on Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, France and Norway. The Council of Europe's expert group against human trafficking ([GRETA](#)) has recently published its new monitoring reports on Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, France and Norway, outlining progress and outstanding issues, and providing recommendations to the countries' authorities. The [report on Belarus](#), the first of its kind for this country, commends the adoption and application of dedicated anti-trafficking legislation, as well as measures taken to raise public awareness. However, GRETA stressed the need for

more co-operation between the authorities and civil society, as well as additional measures to improve the socio-economic situation of persons prone to being trafficked. GRETA also urged the Belarusian authorities to ensure that the identification of victims is independent from the criminal investigation, to specifically define in law the recovery and reflection period, as well as to set up a State compensation scheme accessible to victims of trafficking and to ensure that they are not punished for unlawful activities, if they were compelled to do so. Full press release [here](#).

CIVIL SOCIETY

(28/07) POLITICO.eu - Architect of EU-Turkey refugee pact pushes for West Africa deal. The European Union should strike deals with West African countries to stem the influx of migrants reaching Italy from Libya, according to an architect of the 2016 migration deal between the EU and Turkey. Gerald Knaus, director of the European Stability Initiative think tank, said many West African migrants risked the perilous voyage across the Mediterranean because they knew they would not be sent home for years — if at all — due to legal and bureaucratic delays, even if their requests for asylum in Europe were rejected. "Every migrant from West Africa who survives the dangerous journey from Libya to Italy remains in Europe for years afterwards — regardless of the outcome of his or her asylum application," Knaus said in an interview. To accelerate the deportations of rejected asylum seekers to West African countries that are considered safe, the EU needs to forge agreements with their governments, he said. Full article [here](#).

(28/07) France24 - 'Hotspots' in Libya: French President Macron's troubling announcement. French President Emmanuel Macron said Thursday he wanted to create "hotspots" in Libya this summer where migrants would be pre-screened for asylum claims, an announcement that sparked concern from Human Rights Watch (HRW) and a number of NGOs. Both Cimade – a [French](#) charity for migrants – and HRW have criticised the decision, as well as other [NGOs](#). Full article [here](#).

(27/07) ECRE - Civil Society organisations raise concern over German violations of the right for family reunification for asylum seekers from Greece. The undersigned organisations would like to express our serious concerns on a de facto violation of the right for family reunification and breach of relevant provisions stipulated in the EU Regulation 604/2013 (Dublin III Regulation), regarding asylum seekers' transfers from Greece to Germany under family reunification procedure. We refer specifically to a practice recorded during the last months according to which, asylum seekers entitled to be transferred to Germany under the relevant provisions of the Dublin III Regulation, are "blocked" in Greece for periods exceeding the deadlines provided by the above mentioned provisions, for reasons related to supplementary terms of a maximum number of transfers per month. This situation is jeopardizing the whole process and undermines the right of asylum seekers to family reunification, as provided by Dublin III Regulation and violates further their right to family life as stipulated in article 8 of the European Convention for Human Rights as well as article 7 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. In particular, during the last months we have become aware of many cases of asylum seekers whose taking charge requests have been accepted by Germany though their transfer 2 to Germany has not taken place, although the six-month deadline (art. 29) has expired. We have also been aware of many other cases for which the above deadline is to expire soon, but nevertheless no arrangements have been made for their transfer. Open letter and press release available [here](#).

(26/07) POLITICO.eu - Top court clears Austria, Slovenia of turning back asylum seekers. Austria and Slovenia were entitled to deport migrants during the 2015-2016 migration crisis back to the state where they first arrived, according to a ruling from the European Court of Justice on Wednesday. The case establishes that the Dublin Regulations — which state that an asylum seeker's application must be processed in the EU country of arrival — applied during the crisis. The landmark ruling in effect dismissed the notion that migration during 2015-2016 was an “exceptional circumstance” despite more than a million arrivals on European shores — a number that the EU struggled to both logistically and politically manage — in 2015 alone. And it clears Austria and Slovenia for returning hundreds of migrants back to Croatia, the first EU country that many of the returned migrants first arrived in. Allowing an EU country of arrival — Croatia in this case — to wave on migrants to their final destination without examining their applications “would be incompatible with the Dublin III Regulation,” the court determined, and “a member state cannot be absolved” of the responsibility to examine the asylum application of those migrants who first entered the EU country. The decision also overruled the ECJ advocate general’s opinion, which was non-binding, that the refugee crisis was an exceptional circumstance under which countries where the asylum application was filed — not necessarily the country of arrival — are responsible for examining those applications. Full article available [here](#).

PUBLICATIONS

EPRS - [Le soutien de l'UE aux pays en développement](#) [What is Europe doing for its citizens?] (in French)

LES - [All EU migrants are not equal: the gendered consequences of Brexit](#)