

## INFO FLASH 10/10

The Commission has announced additional emergency aid to help refugees in Serbia and has adopted initiatives in the field of youth and employment.

EU Institutions and other stakeholders have reacted over the ongoing budget negotiation from different perspectives, while the Commission has started the implementation of its ambitious External Investment Plan after the proposal was adopted by the Parliament and the Council.

### EU INSTITUTIONS

#### European Commission

**(9/10) The Future of EU Finances: new Cohesion report fuels the discussion on EU funds after 2020.** Today the Commission publishes the 7th Cohesion report, taking the pulse of EU regions, drawing lessons from cohesion spending during the crisis years and setting the scene for Cohesion Policy after 2020. Analysing the current state of the EU's economic, social and territorial cohesion, the Cohesion report brings our Union under a magnifying glass: Europe's economy is bouncing back but disparities persist between and within our Member States. Public investment in the EU is still below pre-crisis levels but regions and Member States need even more support to take up the challenges identified in the [reflection paper](#) on the future of EU finances; the digital revolution, globalisation, demographic change and social cohesion, economic convergence and climate change. Full press release [here](#).

**(8/10) EU announces additional emergency aid to help refugees in Serbia.** The European Commission has today announced an additional €4 million in humanitarian aid for Serbia to assist the thousands of refugees and asylum-seekers in the country. The new contracts come as Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos Stylianides is currently on his fourth visit to the country where he is assessing the humanitarian situation on the ground and discussing the EU's humanitarian support for refugees with government officials. The new projects finance food distribution in reception centres, the protection of the most vulnerable affected populations in particular during the upcoming winter and education-related activities. Since 2015, the EU has been the largest contributor of emergency aid to Serbia. The Commission's humanitarian aid now stands at €25 million, and has enabled the provision of emergency assistance (food, water, hygiene, essential items, health and protection) at transit and reception points, including borders and waiting areas. A total of more than €80 million has been provided to the country in EU migration related funding since 2015. Full press release [here](#).

**(5/10) Commission reports on employment and social situation in the EU: record high employment rates and signs of improvement for the youth.** The EU remains on a firm path towards more employment and growth according to the latest Quarterly Review on Employment and Social Developments in Europe. Employment in the EU continues to grow at a consistent pace and in almost all Member States. Employment increased by 1.5 % in the EU and 1.6% in the euro area in the second quarter of 2017 compared to the same period in 2016. There are 3.5 million and 2.4 million more people employed in the EU and euro area compared to last year. This means that 235.4 million people are now employed in the EU. This

is the highest level ever recorded. Compared to the third quarter of 2014, this corresponds to 8 million and 5.6 million more people employed in the EU and euro area respectively. EU employment increase over the past four years has particularly benefited the younger generation. While youth unemployment is still too high in the EU, the rate decreased steadily and faster than overall unemployment: it now stands at 16.9 %, reaching a level lower than in 2008. Full article [here](#).

**(5/10) Commission adopts initiative to boost apprenticeships in Europe.** Today the European Commission has adopted a [proposal](#) for a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships. This initiative is part of the [New Skills Agenda for Europe](#), launched in June 2016. It also ties in with the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#), which foresees a right to quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning. The Commission has identified 14 key criteria that Member States and stakeholders should use to develop quality and effective apprenticeships. This initiative will help increase the employability and personal development of apprentices and contribute towards a highly skilled and qualified workforce responsive to labour market needs. Full press release [here](#).

**(28/09) EU kick-starts its new EU External Investment Plan.** Following the adoption by the European Parliament and the Council, the European Commission immediately [starts the implementation of its ambitious External Investment Plan](#) to boost investments in Africa and the EU Neighbourhood. The European Parliament and the Council have adopted the European Fund for Sustainable Development, the heart piece of the EU's new External Investment Plan (EIP). The EIP will support more inclusive and sustainable development in Africa and the European Neighbourhood. It will boost public and private investment and thus address some of the obstacles to growth in our partner countries and of the root causes of irregular migration. Moving ahead with the EIP's rapid implementation, the first Strategic Board of the European Fund for Sustainable Development (EFSD) meets today in Brussels. The Strategic Board includes the EU Member States and the European Investment Bank, as well as the European Parliament as observer. They will discuss a series of proposals for concrete areas for investment, the so-called "investment windows". These windows define priority sectors for the EFSD Guarantee, identified as essential for the creation of decent and sustainable jobs in Africa and the EU Neighbourhood. The first investment windows are expected to be approved shortly, so that the EIP can start to make a real difference for beneficiaries on the ground. Q&A Session available [here](#).

**(27/09) State of the Union 2017 – Commission presents next steps towards a stronger, more effective and fairer EU migration and asylum policy.** On 13 September, in his annual [State of the Union address](#), President Jean-Claude Juncker said: "In spite of the debate and controversy around this topic, we have managed to make solid progress (...) We now need to redouble our efforts. Before the end of the month, the Commission will present a new set of proposals with an emphasis on returns, solidarity with Africa and opening legal pathways." The Commission is today reviewing progress on the 2015 European Agenda on Migration and setting out the next steps to put in place the missing elements of a stronger, fairer and more effective EU migration and asylum policy. Building on the progress achieved so far, the Commission is today presenting a series of new initiatives in key areas: a new resettlement scheme for at least 50,000 refugees, pilot projects for legal migration which the Commission can help finance and coordinate, and new measures to make the EU's return policy more effective. The Commission also calls on Member States to urgently make progress on the reform of the Common European Asylum System and make further efforts to work with countries of origin and transit of migration, in particular by providing additional

contributions to the EU Trust Fund for Africa. The Mid-term review of the European Agenda on Migration shows the positive impact of EU migration management over the past two years on reducing the incentives for irregular migration, strengthening the protection of our external borders, upholding our duty to assist refugees and enhancing legal pathways to Europe. Building on these results, it is now essential to maintain the current efforts, step up the work towards more stable and structural solutions and remain ready to respond to unforeseen situations, as the migratory pressure on Europe remains high. That is why the Commission proposes to take the following next steps (continues [here](#)).

**(27/09) State of the Union 2017 - Preserving and strengthening Schengen to improve security and safeguard Europe's freedoms.** As announced by President Juncker in his [letter of intent](#) on 13 September, the European Commission is today proposing measures to preserve and strengthen the Schengen area. The Commission is proposing to update the Schengen Borders Code to adapt the rules for the reintroduction of temporary internal border controls to the current needs to respond to evolving and persistent serious threats to public policy or internal security. Stronger procedural safeguards are also being introduced to ensure that border controls at internal borders remain an exception - a measure of last resort - and are used only if necessary and proportionate, limiting the impact on free movement. The Commission is also publishing a Communication on the measures already taken to respond to security challenges at the external borders and within the Schengen area, and a Recommendation to Member States on how to better apply, if needed, the current rules on temporary border controls. Full press release [here](#).

## European Parliament

### European Council / Council of the EU

**(28/09) Libya: EU renews sanctions for six months against those obstructing peace.** In view of the continuing instability and gravity of the situation in Libya, the Council has extended the duration of the sanctions against Libya, targeting three persons for a period of six months. On 1 April 2016, the Council [imposed restrictive measures](#) against Libya on three persons: Agila Saleh, president of the Libyan Council of Deputies in the House of Representatives; Khalifa Ghweil, prime minister and defence minister of the internationally unrecognised General National Congress; and Nuri Abu Sahmain, president of the internationally unrecognised General National Congress. These persons are viewed as obstructing the implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA) of 17 December 2015 and the formation of a Government of National Accord in Libya. The Council last adopted conclusions on Libya on 17 July 2017. The Council reiterated its firm support to the Libyan Political Agreement and to the Presidency Council and Government of National Accord led by Prime Minister Fayez Sarraj established under it as the sole legitimate government authorities in the country.

## Others

**(9/10) Committee of the Regions - #CohesionAlliance: Europe-wide coalition demands a strong and more effective EU regional policy after 2020.** Cohesion policy – the EU's main investment and solidarity tool - has reduced disparities, spread innovation and brought sustainable growth. It must continue to be a pillar of the EU in the future and not be

undermined by the financial impact of Brexit or the need to fund new tasks. This message was delivered by EU, national local and civil society leaders who gathered in Brussels to launch the #CohesionAlliance during the opening of the [European Week of Regions and Cities](#). Full press release [here](#).

**(6/10) Frontex – Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, after one year.**

One year ago, the European Border and Coast Guard regulation entered into force, bringing to life the European Border and Coast Guard Agency. The agency's new mandate and increased resources were a clear and strong political response not only to the migration but also the security crisis faced by the EU at its external borders in 2015 and 2016. The agency's first anniversary provides an opportunity to review its achievements and consider the way forward. Full press release and report [here](#).

**(6/10) FRA - High level radicalisation experts meet.** The latest research from the Agency fed discussions from the first meeting of the Subgroup to the High Level Commission Expert Group on Radicalisation on 28 September in Brussels. The Agency spoke about its recent findings, drawing on Muslim respondents' experiences of discrimination, their experiences of policing and trust in the authorities from its EU-MIDIS II survey. EU Member States, Commission services, representatives of other EU institutions and relevant EU Agencies discussed the issues of prisons and reintegration, local dimension and multi-agency approaches to radicalisation, groups vulnerable to radicalisation, and exchange of information on radicalised individuals. Proposals for future cooperation mechanisms and structures were also discussed. Full press release and report [here](#).

**(6/10 ) Committee of the Regions - President Lambertz to hold first "The State of the Union: the View of Regions and Cities" address.** The President of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR), Karl-Heinz Lambertz, will deliver the first-ever "[State of the European Union: the View of Regions and Cities](#)" address during the CoRs' plenary session on 10 October in Brussels. The address will be followed by a debate with the European Council's President Donald Tusk and EU local leaders on the future of Europe. EU Commissioner for climate action and energy, Miguel Arias Cañete, will then set out the EU's priorities for the UN climate talks in Bonn as EU cities and regions revitalise a climate coalition with their US and Canadian counterparts. More info [here](#).

**(2/10) FRA - FRA's Executive Board renewed.** During FRA's Management Board meeting on 29 September a Vice-Chairperson and new Executive Board members [were elected](#). Filippo di Robilant, the Italian Management Board member became Vice-Chairperson. Lawrence Quintano, the Maltese Management Board member, and Verica Trstenjak, the Slovenian Management Board member were elected as new Executive Board members. The newly-configured Executive Board then met later that day. The Executive Board assists the Management Board in its decision making. It also includes the Management Board Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, as well as one European Commission representative. The Council of Europe Management Board representative may also participate in Executive Board meetings.

**(29/09) Frontex – Frontex launches capacity building projects for Africa during AFIC meeting.** This week, Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, hosted the 21st meeting of the Africa-Frontex Intelligence Community (AFIC), gathering representatives of 21 African countries and a number of EU institutions. During the gathering, Frontex [launched a project](#) to develop the capacity of AFIC countries to work on joint intelligence analysis of

crime. This project will focus on training experts and setting up AFIC Risk Analysis Cells (RACs). It is funded by the European Commission.

**(29/09) FRA - Council of Europe conference to end immigration detention of children.**

The Agency contributed to a panel discussion during a conference from 25 to 26 September hosted by the Czech Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in Prague. FRA presented the main findings of its comparative report on the European legal and policy framework on immigration detention of children. The conference discussed, among other things, European legal standards for the deprivation of liberty of vulnerable people, guardianship and alternatives to detention. Full press release and publications [here](#).

**(29/09) Committee of the Regions - EU Budget post-2020: cohesion policy is a shared priority for local leaders, European Commission and territorial associations.**

During the structured dialogue with the European Committee of the Regions' commission for Territorial Cohesion Policy and EU Budget (COTER) and the main EU territorial associations, European Commissioners for Regional Policy, Corina Crețu, and for the EU Budget, Günter Oettinger, [stressed that cohesion policy benefits all member states](#) and insisted on its European added value also for the richest areas.

**(27/09) Frontex - Save the Children selected for Frontex consultative forum.**

The Management Board of Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, [has invited Save the Children to join the Frontex Consultative Forum](#) after one civil society organisation withdrew as a member of the Consultative Forum in February. The Frontex Consultative Forum was created in 2012 to assist the agency's executive director and the management board with independent advice in fundamental rights matters. It brings together 15 members from relevant EU agencies and international organisations, as well as from civil society organisations.

**(27/09) Committee of the Regions - Local and regional leaders call for development of social care systems fit for the twenty-first century.**

NAT commission [expressed](#) its firm support for the transition from institutional to community-based care and to provide specific guidelines for the transitional period, reflecting a growing perception that institutional care is outdated and sometimes contradict human rights.

## **COUNCIL OF EUROPE**

**(6/10) Sweden: move beyond emergency mode in migration-related areas to strengthen human rights.**

"Sweden has played a leading role in providing assistance to persons in need of international protection; this should continue" said today Nils Muižnieks, the [Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights](#), at the end of a five-day visit to Sweden. Welcoming Sweden's efforts within the relocation and resettlement programmes, the Commissioner reiterates the urgent need to increase European solidarity, as well as safe and legal avenues for people to reach protection in Europe. Noting the rapid decline in the number of asylum seekers, after a record high of 163,000 in 2015, the Commissioner expresses the hope that the temporary measures which introduced restrictions in 2016 in response to that increase will be lifted before the 2019 deadline. "The need to move beyond emergency mode is particularly urgent when it comes to the limitations introduced to the right to family reunification" says the Commissioner. Full press release [here](#).

**(27/09) Prague international conference to end the immigration detention of children.**

"The cost of alternatives is much lower than that of migration detention. In addition,

alternatives are less dangerous than detention; for the children themselves, in terms of the harm that deprivation of liberty inevitably causes. They are also less dangerous for our societies; the message they deliver is about containing intolerance; about decreasing social tension; and ultimately about preserving the integrity and credibility of our institutions, our belief in human rights and the rule of law, our democratic values”, said the Director General of Human Rights and Rule of Law of the Council of Europe, Christos Giakoumopoulos. The [international conference Immigration Detention of Children: Coming to a Close?](#) was organised in Prague on 25 and 26 September 2017 by the [Czech chairmanship of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers](#). Full press release [here](#).

## **CIVIL SOCIETY**

**(3/10) Social Platform - Will the next EU budget fund Welcoming Europe or Fortress Europe?** “At a 25 September [conference](#) on the future of the European Union’s finances three European Commissioners gave their views on the next EU budget. One inspired me, and the others gave me the chills.” Annica Ryngbeck [reports](#) for Social Platform.

**(29/09) ECRE - Weekly Editorial: Success of the European Agenda on Migration should not be judged by reduction of arrivals.** This week the European Commission published its Communication on the “Delivery of the European Agenda on Migration”. ECRE provided its own assessment in the consultation leading up the Communication. Needless to say, there are some differences between our analysis and that of the EC. Although it contains positive elements, not least the sections on tackling the causes of forced displacement and on opening legal avenues to reach Europe, the Agenda, published in 2015, is a product of its time and its implementation is a function of all that has happened since. Most progress has been made on the components that focus on restricting access to protection in Europe, a theme that runs through the original document. Full press release [here](#).

**(29/09) ECRE - Council of Europe report maps age assessment practice and issues across Europe.** The Council of Europe has published a [report](#) mapping procedures, practices and methods for assessing the age of unaccompanied children in Europe. The report raises concern over inaccuracies in age assessment of migrants related to widely different and often inadequate procedures and safe guards across Member States.

The report highlights *inter alia* that medical age assessment continues to be used as a common method for ascertaining an individual’s age, despite a wealth of evidence on their dubious accuracy and reliability. Another element of concern remains the application of margins of error to qualify the accuracy of age assessment methods. These findings confirm the conclusions drawn from [practice across AIDA countries](#) in 2017, where a majority of administrations continue to over-rely on medical methods. The appropriateness of these methods and their interplay with human rights are also the subject of a [case](#) pending before the European Court of Human Rights, concerning unaccompanied children in Italy. Full press release [here](#).

**(29/09) ECRE - EU Commission’s mid-term review of the 2015 European Agenda on Migration: more focus on EU resettlement, legal migration and return.** This week the European Commission published its [review](#) of the 2015 European Agenda on Migration and presented new initiatives in three key areas: EU resettlement, legal migration and return. In regard to relocation and resettlement, priority is given to the relocation of the remaining asylum seekers under the previous relocation scheme which came to an end this Tuesday, while the Commission is ready to financially support relocation efforts beyond the current

schemes. 29,000 out of an agreed number of 37,000 people have been relocated under the scheme so far. However, the relocation process was characterized by a partially artificial and informal reduction of numerical relocation targets, as highlighted in [ECRE Policy's Note](#) on relocation. Under the [Second Relocation Decision](#) of 22 September 2015, the initial number of people to be relocated was 120.000. On resettlement, the Commission has set aside € 500m to support Member States' in their resettlement efforts, with an increased focus on resettlement of people from North Africa and the Horn of Africa. The Commission further supports the setting up of private sponsorship schemes, to which end it has invited EASO to set up a pilot project, and emphasises needs-based economic migration, on which it is proposing to coordinate and financially support pilot projects for legal migration with third countries. Full press release [here](#).

**(29/09) ECRE - New York Declaration one year on: Responsibilities not yet shared – Interview with Aspasia Papadopoulou Senior Policy Officer for ECRE.** In the New York Declaration adopted on 19 September last year, governments affirmed their commitment to the notion of responsibility sharing, they did not conclude a Global Compact for refugees but kicked off the process for consultation and a second summit to adopt it in 2018. The NY Declaration set out commitments for the protection of refugees in four areas; easing pressures on host countries, enhancing refugee self-reliance, expanding third-country solutions and supporting conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity. One year later, where do we stand? Press release [here](#).

**(28/09) EAPN - Social Rights or Social Plight? EAPN assessment of the 2017 National Reform Programmes.** EAPN presents its assessment of the 2017 National Reform Programmes in terms of poverty: Social Rights or Social Plight? Members assessed how far Member States are pursuing policies which contribute to key social targets of the Europe 2020 strategy (on poverty, employment and education). Are governments investing in social rights and standards to ensure inclusive and sustainable development and growth? Are they demonstrating an increased commitment to quality participation of civil society organisations and people experiencing poverty? Full article and report [here](#).

**(23/09) Social Platform - International Federation of Social Workers: Closing the gaps between education and practice – Creating dialogue, increasing knowledge transfer in social work curricula.** Last week a new law was passed in Greece that democratises and strengthens the quality and capacity of social work to meet people's needs. The law recognizes the role of International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) member, the Hellenic Association of Social Workers in facilitating the further development of the standards of the social work profession. This is unique and major achievement for the Greek profession and all the people and communities that need and use social work services. Full article [here](#).

## **PUBLICATIONS**

**Council of the EU General Secretariat – [Think Tank Review](#)** (September)

**LSE - [Assessing the EU's role in the struggle for gender equality](#)**

**EPRS - [Secondary Movements Of Asylum-Seekers In The EU Asylum System](#)**

**ACCA - [50 drivers of change in the public sector](#)**

**ECDPM - [Strategically financing an effective role for the EU in the world](#)**

