

INFO FLASH 7/11

The EU Institutions have taken initiatives in the field of security by adopting the Entry/Exit System.

FRA and some civil society organisations have discussed over detention of unaccompanied migrants, family reunification and child well-being.

EU INSTITUTIONS

European Commission

(31/10) Employment: Report confirms effectiveness of EU Globalisation Fund. Today, the Commission has published its report on the performance of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) in 2015 and 2016. The report reaffirms the role of the Fund as a flagship demonstration of European solidarity within the limits of its set-up and budgetary availabilities, having helped close to 19,500 workers to adjust to changing trade patterns and consequences of the economic and financial crisis in that period. 9,072 workers, or close to half of the workers who participated in the Globalisation Adjustment Fund measures, had found new jobs or were self-employed after one year, at the end of the implementation period of the measures. An additional 645 people were at that time in education or training to increase their future employability. Member States also reported that the personal situation, employability and self-confidence of the workers concerned had visibly improved thanks to the Globalisation Adjustment Fund assistance and services. This was even the case for those who had not found new work immediately after the end of the measures. Full press release [here](#).

(31/10) Rohingya Crisis: Commissioner Stylianides visits Bangladesh and reaffirms EU humanitarian support. Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos Stylianides has started a two-day visit to Bangladesh, to assess the situation on the ground and visit EU aid projects that are addressing the Rohingya refugee crisis. His visit comes a week after the EU and its Member States pledged more than 50% of the USD 344 million total funding raised at the international Conference on the Rohingya Refugee Crisis held in Geneva. Commissioner Stylianides is today visiting the Kutupalong camp in the Cox's Bazar area, where an EU funded project is helping over 100,000 people, mostly vulnerable children and women, gain access to essential services. The Commissioner will also hold meetings with government officials of Bangladesh and humanitarian partners to discuss the international community's response to the crisis and Bangladesh's needs moving forwards. Full press release [here](#).

(25/10) Security Union: Commission welcomes adoption of Entry/Exit System for stronger and smarter EU borders. Following today's adoption by the European Parliament of the Commission's proposal to establish an Entry/Exit System to register entry and exit data of non-EU nationals crossing the external borders of EU Member States, the European Commission issued the following statement: "Over the past years we have been working to strengthen and protect our external borders to safeguard and increase the security of the Schengen area. Today's vote reflects the political commitment of the European Parliament to

swiftly deliver on this priority file. It is an important step towards achieving more effective border management and better oversight of who is crossing the EU's external borders – and the Commission warmly welcomes this decision. As President Juncker recalled in his Letter of Intent accompanying his State of the Union Address of 13 September, the Entry/Exit System is a priority initiative which will modernise the management of the EU external border and contribute to the fight against terrorism and serious crime. It will replace the stamping of passports and will allow for an increased automation of border controls, improved detection of document and identity fraud as well as better monitoring of unauthorised short stays of non-EU nationals. The Entry/Exit System will also close an important information gap and will contribute to achieving full interoperability of EU information systems by 2020, in full respect of fundamental rights and data protection rules. Following the introduction of systematic checks on all travellers crossing the external border and with the new European Border and Coast Guard Agency being fully operational, the Entry/Exit System represents further concrete action towards making our borders even stronger, smarter and more secure. The Commission is now looking forward to the Council continuing to deliver on this political priority, so that the system can be up and running by 2020 at the latest." Full press release [here](#).

European Parliament

(7/11) EU external assistance fund supports military's civilian actions for first time. EU fund for stability and peace, covering projects in 70 countries, will be beefed up by 100 million euros to support the military's civilian tasks in third countries. Training, mentoring and advising military forces in countries outside the EU on topics such as human rights or protection of women and children, as well as the provision of non-lethal equipment or infrastructure, such as IT systems or hospitals, will now be eligible for EU support. Foreign Affairs Committee MEPs gave the [informal deal clinched by EP and Council negotiators on 27 October](#) the green light, which for the first time, will allow the [EU fund for stability and peace](#) to finance the military in partner countries to deliver development activities. However, this will only be possible under the following conditions: if the partner country and the EU agree that the military are key to preserving peace or overcoming a crisis and civilian forces are deemed not able to cope with the challenge. Full press release [here](#).

(25/10) Strengthening security checks at Europe's borders. A common electronic system to speed up checks at the Schengen area's external borders and to register all non-EU travellers was backed by Parliament on Wednesday. The new Entry/Exit System (EES) will register information on non-EU nationals, such as name, travel document, fingerprints, facial image, date and place when they enter, exit or are refused entry into the Schengen area. It will apply both to travellers requiring a visa and to visa-exempt travellers admitted for a short stay of 90 days, who cross the Schengen area's external borders. EES would make it easier to check that the authorised duration of a short stay - 90 days in any 180-day period - is respected. Full press release [here](#).

European Council / Council of the EU

Others

(6/11) FRA - Generating quality data for well-being indicators for children. The Agency joined discussions on various approaches to generating quality data on key indicators of children's well-being, in the spirit of the inclusive 2030 Sustainable Development Goals agenda. The discussions formed part of a meeting organised by the Greek Statistical Institute and UNICEF on data on refugee and migrant children, and children from ethnic minorities. FRA gave an overview of the approach taken under its EU minorities and discrimination survey underlying the importance of self-identification. It spoke of the risks associated with applying ethnic identity variables in administrative data and called for genuine participation of people from vulnerable groups throughout all stages of research not just supporting interviewers. Full press release [here](#).

(6/11) FRA - Developing tools to assess the best interest of the child. The Agency is helping the European Asylum Support Office to develop a tool for Member States to assess the best interests of the child in the context of asylum. The first meeting took place in Malta on 26 and 27 October, and was also attended by several Member States, the European Commission, UNHCR and UNICEF. During the meeting, Member States exchanged experiences on best interests procedures and discussed how to develop a tool that is both useful and can be applied to different national contexts. Full press release [here](#).

(2/11) Eurofund - More than one in four working-age adults in the EU remain economically inactive. Unemployment in the EU continues to fall, however more than one in four of the EU's working-age population are economically inactive; meaning they are not working and are either not seeking work or are not available for work. Furthermore, the vast majority of economically inactive people would like to work in some form. Eurofound's new publication [Reactivate: Employment opportunities for economically inactive people](#) looks in detail at what could be Europe's most important economic resource. Full press release [here](#).

(31/10) Eurostat - September 2017 - Euro area unemployment at 8.9% - EU28 at 7.5%. The euro area (EA19) seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate was 8.9% in September 2017, down from 9.0% in August 2017 and from 9.9% in September 2016. This is the lowest rate recorded in the euro area since January 2009. The EU28 unemployment rate was 7.5% in September 2017, stable compared to August 2017 and down from 8.4% in September 2016. This remains the lowest rate recorded in the EU28 since November 2008. These figures are published by Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union. Full press release [here](#).

(30/10) FRA - Covering the fundamental rights angle in news. During the European Broadcasting Union's Intercultural and Diversity Group annual meeting in Berlin, producers and editors of European broadcasters, analysed news examples from a fundamental rights angle. The analysis is part of an [online media toolkit](#) that will facilitate online training to media professionals and students. The toolkit is being jointly developed with relevant media organisations, associations and networks who are helping select examples that best reflect journalistic principles. The close cooperation with journalists in its development ensures that the news examples, selected by the media partner organisations, illustrate the dilemmas facing today's journalists about how to present facts and events. Full press release [here](#).

(30/10) FRA - Training volunteer guardians in Italy. Under a new Italian law on protecting unaccompanied children, volunteer guardians for unaccompanied migrant and asylum seeking children can be nominated. On 20 October in Florence, the Agency took in the first training course for volunteer guardians. The course was organised by the Italian Children's Ombudsman with the support of the European Asylum Support Office. The four-day training course served to certify the first group of guardians in Tuscany. Some 50 people from very different backgrounds took part. The [FRA guardianship handbook](#) was shared with all participants and referred to by different speakers. Full press release [here](#).

(24/10) FRA - Migration situation continues to raise fundamental rights concerns. Fundamental rights remain under threat in a number of EU Member States, according to the FRA's latest monthly report on migration-related issues. Some reception facilities, particularly in hotspots, are overcrowded, claiming asylum can be problematic and vulnerable groups, particularly migrant children, are still at risk. Read the [October 2017 monthly data collection highlights](#). Full press release [here](#).

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

(6/11) Council of Europe pledge to promote gender equality for Roma and Traveller women in politics. Participants attending a Council of Europe conference on Roma and Travellers are pledging to promote gender equality for Roma and Traveller women in politics. The Council of Europe [pledge](#) takes into account that electoral quotas are often an effective means of achieving significant, rapid progress, provided that they are correctly designed and consistently implemented. It invites political parties to promote gender equality and the participation of women from minority groups, in particular Roma and Traveller women, in decision-making bodies and in political representation in future European, national, regional and local elections. A Council of Europe [report last month](#) determined that too few member states meet minimum quotas of female participation in public decision making. The conference – to be held at the Palais de l'Europe (Room 9) on 6 and 7 November – is entirely open to the media. Full press release [here](#).

(2/11) 2017 Exchange on the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue. "Migrants and refugees: challenges and opportunities - What role for religious and non-religious groups?" will be the main theme at the 2017 Council of Europe Exchange on the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue. It will take place at the Palais de l'Europe (room 1, [Webcast](#), on 6-7 November 2017. The Exchange provides a platform for dialogue between public authorities, religious communities and organisations representing non-religious beliefs, and broader civil society on topics of particular importance to the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue. Full press release [here](#).

(31/10) Tackling disinformation in the global media environment – new Council of Europe report. A [report](#) published today by the Council of Europe examines the way in which dis-information campaigns have become widespread and, heavily relying on social media, contribute to a global media environment of information disorder. Whilst acknowledging that the direct and indirect impacts of "information pollution" are difficult to quantify, the report provides a conceptual framework and a structure for dialogue about information disorder by policymakers, legislators and researchers. It contains 35 recommendations to relevant stakeholders such as technology companies, national governments, media, civil society, and education ministries to help them identify suitable strategies to address the phenomenon. The report *"Information Disorder: Toward an interdisciplinary framework for research and policy*

making” was commissioned by the Council of Europe in response to the growing concerns in member states about the long-term implications of dis-information campaigns that are designed specifically to sow mistrust and confusion, and to sharpen existing sociocultural divisions by exploiting nationalistic, ethnic, racial and religious tensions. Full press release [here](#).

(26/10) Ending restrictions on family reunification: good for refugees, good for host societies. “Many refugees have to leave family members behind when they flee their homes. This adds more hardship to the trauma of exile”, says [Nils Muižnieks, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights](#), in his latest Human Rights Comment published today. “Once they have found safety in Europe, being reunited with their family members is often the first priority of refugees. It takes little imagination to realise how horrible it is for them to be deprived of this possibility. Unfortunately, thousands of refugees and persons with other forms of international protection status in Europe face long-term separation from their spouses, children and other loved ones. This is due to increasingly tough laws and policies restricting family reunification, which are often incompatible with the letter or spirit of human rights standards and need to be addressed urgently.” Full press release [here](#).

(25/10) Ending sexual exploitation and abuse of children: towards a world of trust. Today, the Council of Europe’s Convention for the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (“[Lanzarote Convention](#)”) celebrates its 10th anniversary. The Convention which was opened for signature on 25 October 2007 on the Spanish island of Lanzarote, remains to date the most ambitious and comprehensive international legal instrument for the protection of children from sexual abuse and exploitation. The Lanzarote Convention deals with prevention, protection and prosecution of sexual exploitation and abuse of children. It criminalises such offences as sexual abuse, child prostitution, child pornography, participation of a child in pornographic performances, corruption of children, as well as solicitation of children for sexual purposes (grooming). The Convention has now been [ratified](#) by 42 of the Council of Europe member States (all but Armenia, Azerbaijan, Ireland, Norway and the United Kingdom) and is open to States outside Europe. Full press release [here](#).

CIVIL SOCIETY

(7/11) Eurochild - Let’s Work to End Child Immigration Detention. We, the Initiative for Child Rights in the Global Compacts, UN agencies and bodies, global, European and national organisations, welcome the European Commission’s initiative to dedicate the 11th European Forum on the Rights of the Child to the topic of children deprived of their liberty - including children in immigration detention - and alternatives to detention. We call upon EU governments to take immediate steps towards ending child immigration detention, ensuring alternatives to detention are accessible and available. All of Europe’s children deserve care and protection, regardless of their migration status. Let’s work together to end child detention. Full statement [here](#).

(2/11) ECRE - Policy Note: Debunking The “Safe Third Country” Myth. The EU institutions are discussing the definition of the safe third country concept, which has been part of EU asylum law since the adoption of the 2005 Asylum Procedures Directive and features prominently in the European Commission’s (EC’s) proposals for the reform of the asylum acquis. Instigated by the European Council’s call for an alignment of the concept “with the effective requirements arising from the Geneva Convention and EU primary law, while

respecting the competences of the EU and the Member States under the Treaties”, some EU Member States (EUMS) have floated far-reaching proposals to lower the currently applicable standards, going below the already questionable proposals submitted by the EC. Current debates epitomise EUMS' insistence on concepts that undermine access to protection in the EU within an overall strategy of containment of refugees in other regions. The safe third country concept is seen as the 'silver bullet' that will reduce pressure on EUMS' asylum systems by deterring applicants and allowing for expedited examination and then deflection of asylum claims. ECRE warns against the erosion of key principles underlying the international protection regime through the mandatory application of an unduly broad or even flexible definition of the safe third country concept in contrast to existing higher standards applicable in a number of EU Member States. Such an approach will limit refugees' effective access to international protection in the EU. It will also undermine global efforts to increase solidarity in refugee protection and has major political implications for the EU's relations with other countries. Full policy note [here](#).

(27/10) ECRE - Weekly Editorial: The EU at a crossroad: reform and solidarity or isolationism and chaos. The EU Observer quotes an unnamed European Commission official as saying “Migration is the crisis on which the EU is building its future. How we solve it will define the future.” Leaving aside the fact that this is a self-inflicted rather than inevitable crisis, there is nonetheless a certain truth to the statement. At this stage in the “crisis”, it is possible to discern two opposing approaches to the way forward; they lead to fundamentally different futures for the EU as an institution and for Europe as a region, with the Commission hovering somewhere between the two. One direction is represented by a small but disproportionately influential bloc of member states and political parties with a variety of nationalist, populist and conservative agendas (elections in the Czech Republic and Austria boost their numbers). They oppose attempts to introduce orderly, fair and collective handling of the protection of refugees, as well as working generally to undermine human rights and the international law and institutions that uphold them. With his recent misguided remarks about the lack of future for mandatory migration quotas, Donald Tusk proved willing to align with this faction and allow it to define the way forward for the institution he represents. Full press release [here](#).

(27/10) ECRE - Asylum seekers from violence ridden Somalia face asylum lottery in Europe. While Somalia is spiralling into a vicious self-feeding circle of [violence](#), poverty, drought and [displacement](#), European protection rates differ with almost 40 per cent for the first three quarters of 2017. On October 14 a [truck bombing in Somalia](#) killed more than 350 people and injured another 228 making it the deadliest attack on civilians in over a decade. In its Monthly Forecast for [August](#) and [September](#) 2017 the UN Security Council describes continued attacks and a precarious security situation and [according](#) to UNOCHA 6.2 million people are in need of aid and 388.000 children below the age of five are acutely malnourished. A [report](#) published in September by the UN Human Rights Council outlines the main challenges in relation to the human rights situation in Somalia. Full report [here](#).

(27/10) ECRE - Council conclusion confirms cooperation on migrant control with Libya but leaves out human rights concern. During last week's European Council meeting Member States expressed strong support for Italian cooperation with Libyan authorities. The Council's [conclusion](#) revealed little of the concerns that caused EU Commissioner for Human Rights Nils Muižnieks to request clarification on Italian cooperation on sea with Libya. In last month's [letter](#) to Italian Minister of Interior Marco Minniti the Commissioner particularly

addressed the protection of NGO Search and Rescue operations, which are under increasing political pressure. Full press release [here](#).

PUBLICATIONS

WHO - [Strategy and action plan for refugee and migrant health in the WHO European Region](#)

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

MPI - [Social Innovation for Refugee Inclusion: Maintaining Momentum and Creating Lasting Change](#) (Event)

Cities of Migration - [Webinar: Beyond Bricks and Mortar: Rethinking Refugees and Housing](#) (Webinar)

Cities of Migration - [Building Inclusive Cities](#) (Learning Platform)

Eurochild/SOS Children's Villages - [Let Children be Children: Lessons from the Field on the Protection and Integration of Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe](#) (Event)

Acca - [Sustainable Development Goals: redefining global prosperity creation](#)

CER - [How the EU and third countries can manage migration](#)

EPRS - [Area Of Freedom, Security And Justice: Untapped Potential](#)