

## INFO FLASH 05/12

Last week was marked by the EU-African Union Summit in Abidjan and the related discussions on the future of the intercontinental relations, including employment, youth and migration. A series of institutional press releases is complemented by the reactions from civil society organisations and the academia. Another series of press release by the EIB and the EU Committee of the Regions is good food for thoughts to reflect on the future of investments and local growth in the EU.

### EU INSTITUTIONS

#### European Commission

**(30/11) African Union - European Union Summit: Investing in Youth for a Sustainable Future.** The 5th African Union - European Union Summit took place on 29-30 November in Abidjan, under the overarching theme of Youth. The Summit brought together leaders from 55 African Union and 28 European Union Member States. On the occasion, President Juncker said: "We spoke a lot about young people during this summit. Already today, the majority of African citizens are under 25 years old, and by the middle of this century, one in four people on earth will be African. But this demographic dividend cannot deliver without smart investments. This is precisely why we are going to put our investments in education, in infrastructure, in peace and security, as well as in good governance – all of which will in turn inspire good business environments and create much needed jobs and growth." Read the President's full remarks [here](#). In their political declaration, the European and African leaders set out their joint commitment to invest in youth for a sustainable future. Concretely, they committed to focussing their work on four strategic priorities. On this basis, the European and African Union Commission will put forward concrete projects and programmes within three months. Full press release [here](#).

**(24/11) EU protecting the rights and safety of women migrant workers in South East Asia with €25 million.** The Commission launched a new regional programme to make labour migration safe and fair for all women migrants in South East Asia. This programme is part of the new EU-UN "Spotlight Initiative" to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls worth €500 million. With a financial support of over €25 million, the new programme "Safe and Fair" will contribute to improving the labour migration conditions for women in the ASEAN region. Together with UN Women and the International Labour Organization, the EU will work with governments, community-based organisations, civil society and service providers to improve labour laws, access to information and services, and ultimately prevent and put an end to violence and trafficking of women and girls. The programme will also aim at improving data and knowledge on the rights and contributions of women migrant workers. Through targeted awareness raising campaigns, the EU will actively promote the change in attitudes of relevant stakeholders to ensure safety, well-being and fair treatment of women migrant workers in the region. Full press release [here](#).

**(23/11) rescEU: European Commission proposes to strengthen EU disaster management: Questions and Answers.** The European Commission has tabled a set of proposals to strengthen the EU's civil protection response and boost Europe's ability to better

deal with natural disasters. The proposal complements Member States' disaster response systems by establishing a dedicated reserve of operational capacities at Union level – rescEU – and by strengthening preparedness and prevention measures. Concretely, it focuses on two key areas: creating the rescEU system to increase overall disaster response capacities available in the EU and investing more in prevention and preparedness. Full press release [here](#).

**(22/11) European Semester Autumn Package: Striving for sustainable and inclusive growth.** Commission sets out EU's economic and social priorities for the year ahead, gives policy recommendation for the euro area and completes the assessment of euro area Member States' Draft Budgetary Plans. The 2018 European Semester cycle of economic, fiscal and social policy coordination starts against the backdrop of robust economic activity in the euro area and the EU, record high employment levels and unemployment rates declining towards pre-crisis levels. As all Member States contribute to this strong growth momentum, the priority now is to make sure that this lasts and brings benefits to all members of our societies. Alongside responsible fiscal policies, the pursuit of structural reforms should focus on creating the conditions to boost investment further and to increase real wage growth to support domestic demand. Today's package is based on the [Commission's Autumn 2017 Economic Forecast](#) and builds on the priorities of [President Juncker's 2017 State of the Union](#) address. It also reflects the recent proclamation of the European Pillar of Social Rights at the [Gothenburg Social Summit](#). Full press release [here](#).

## European Parliament

**(30/11) EU budget 2018 approved: support for youth, growth, security.** For next year's budget, MEPs have secured more support for unemployed young people and additional funding for SMEs, research programmes and Erasmus. Commitment appropriations for 2018 total €160.1 billion, and payment appropriations €144.7 billion (see below). On the heels of the Council's formal approval of the [conciliation agreement](#) with Parliament on the 2018 budget, Parliament approved the budget by 295 votes to 154, with 197 abstentions. It was then signed into law by President Antonio Tajani. Full press released [here](#).

## European Council / Council of the EU

### Others

**(4/12) FRA - Towards inclusive citizenship.** Citizenship is a great enabler, bringing with it many rights. But when trying to enjoy their rights many people with disabilities face constant barriers. As this year's European Day of Persons with Disabilities focuses on citizenship, FRA calls for greater efforts to build a fairer and more inclusive Europe so people with disabilities can live as fully-fledged citizens. Full press release [here](#).

**(30/11) EU Committee of the Regions - The reform of the Economic and Monetary Union should enable local and regional authorities to invest in Europe's future.** The European Committee of the Regions (CoR), the EU's assembly of local and regional authorities, adopted its [position on the deepening of the European Monetary union](#) (EMU) on 30 November, following a debate with the European Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Pierre Moscovici. Stabilisation, convergence, resilience in managing shocks and

flexibility in fiscal rules were priorities set by EU local and regional representatives as a way to relaunch investment and support the delivery of quality public services. Full press release [here](#).

**(30/11) EU Committee of the Regions - Europe needs to tackle brain drain across its regions by investing in education.** Ensuring equal opportunities for all Europeans and improving the skills mismatch without endangering the existence of disciplines must be the key targets of the renewed EU agenda for education, the European Committee of the Regions stresses. The assembly of EU's cities and regions adopted its position to the [European Commission's recent initiatives](#) in the field of education on Thursday 30 November. Full press release [here](#).

**(30/11) EU Committee of the Regions - Work-life balance for parents and carers: significant progress yet to be made.** Following the European Commission's proposals to introduce new minimum standards at European level for paternity leave, parental leave and carers' leave, the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) welcomes the transition to a new working culture that recognises the economic and social benefits of a better work-life balance. Nevertheless, the EU's assembly of local and regional representatives regrets the absence of any reference to the role played by local and regional authorities in this field and recommends that these authorities should be fully involved in the implementation of the proposed scheme. The CoR also considers the lack of proposals on strengthening the right to maternity leave to be a missed opportunity. Full press release [here](#).

**(29/11) EIB - Italy: new resources from the EIB-EIF and CDP for natural disasters and social projects.** New financial resources for the Italian economy are on the way thanks to three agreements signed today in Luxembourg between the European Investment Bank Group (EIB and EIF) and Cassa Depositi e Prestiti (CDP) at the annual strategy meeting between the two institutions in Luxembourg. Full press release [here](#).

**(28/11) European Economic and Social Committee - EESC hosts Platform for Roma Inclusion addressing education and employment prospects for young Roma.** On Monday 27 and Tuesday 28 November 2017 the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) hosted the 11th European Platform for Roma Inclusion, organised by the European Commission and focusing on the transition of young Roma from education to employment. The Committee, which has worked on Roma inclusion in recent years, thanked the Commission for the opportunity to host the European Roma Platform on its premises for the first time since it was set up in 2009 to help boost cooperation between stakeholders on successful Roma inclusion. Full press release [here](#).

**(28/11) EIB - EIB and European Commission launch new advisory service to help cities plan investments.** URBIS, for "Urban Investment Support" will help cities plan investments to support their own urban development strategies and get easier access to finance. Cities face particular challenges when it comes to accessing finance. Individual municipal projects, for example in the fields of social inclusion, urban regeneration or energy efficiency, can be too risky or too small for the market. At the same time, funding for integrated urban programmes can also be difficult to access, because they group several small projects across different sectors. Finally, cities can also face borrowing limits. Full press release [here](#).

**(24/11) FRA - Supporting the European Commission's Eurosur evaluation.** On 17 October The Agency presented to EU Member States its views on the impact of the

implementation of Eurosur on fundamental rights, following an invitation by the European Commission. In its presentation on 17 October, FRA touched upon rescue at sea, data protection and the principle of non-refoulement. Eurosur is a framework for information-exchange between Member States and Frontex on the situation at the EU's external border. It aims to support Member States by increasing their situational awareness and reaction capability in combating cross-border crime, tackling irregular migration and preventing loss of migrant lives at sea. Full press release [here](#).

**(23/11) EIB - Europe needs more investment targeted at addressing structural issues.** EIB Investment Report 2017/2018 shows that companies are held back by lack of skilled workforce and regulation more than by financing problems. Corporate investment reaches pre-crisis levels, but firms consider only half of their capital stock to be state-of-the-art. Municipalities report significant investment gap, especially in transport, ICT and social housing. Full press release [here](#).

**(22/11) EASO - Joint Press Release of Italian Government and EASO: Italy and EASO sign Hosting Arrangement.** The hosting arrangement between Italy and EASO on the establishment of an operational office in Rome was signed today at the premises of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. The arrangement was signed by the EASO Executive Director, José Carreira, and the General Director for European Union, Giuseppe Buccino Grimaldi. Cooperation with Italy is already excellent and today's arrangement will pave the way for its further consolidation. The arrangement is the sign of Italy's strong will to continue to strengthen its partnership with EASO, as a further step towards a joint responsibility at the EU level in managing asylum requests. EASO is actively engaged in supporting the Italian asylum system, in particular in relation to activities in the hotspots and to the relocation process. The arrangement will now have to be ratified by the EASO Management Board and the Italian Parliament. Full press release [here](#).

**(22/11) EIB - EIB and Cassa Depositi e Prestiti renew their support to Italy's schools upgrading plan.** New loans for up to EUR 1,3bn will be made available over the next three years by the European Investment Bank (EIB) to Italian schools for the modernisation and safety of their buildings and facilities. The financing is part of a new institutional agreement signed with the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research which builds up on a previous commitment coming to an end this year. Full press release [here](#).

## [COUNCIL OF EUROPE](#)

### [CIVIL SOCIETY](#)

**(1/12) ECRE - European return policies – getting the numbers no matter the cost.** Today ECRE published a [Policy Note](#) analysing EU return policies and a [Case Study](#) on returns to Afghanistan identifying the risks, and the ethical, legal and political implications of a narrow focus on increasing the number of returns in general and in the specific context of Afghanistan. As outlined in the ECRE Policy Note: 'Return: No Safety in Numbers,' returns became a dominant political imperative at EU level in 2015 corresponding with an increase of people seeking protection in Europe. The EU toolbox was expanded to that end through the [EU Action Plan on Return](#) from September 2015, the [Partnership Framework](#) of 2016 and the 2017 [Commission Recommendation](#) on making returns more effective when implementing the [Return Directive](#). Full pres release [here](#).

**(1/12) ECRE - Interview: The Media Representation of Refugees and Migrants in Europe.** Interview with Torsten Moritz, Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) on the report [CHANGING THE NARRATIVE: Media Representation of Refugees and Migrants in Europe](#).

CCME & World Association for Christian Communication – Europe Region (WACC)

Since increasing numbers of arrivals of asylum seekers peaked in 2015 the media coverage has intensified. Based on your research presented in the ‘Refugees Reporting’ has the raise in quantity lead to a more thorough, multifaceted and reflected overall coverage? Full press release [here](#).

**(28/11) EuropeanMigrationLaw.eu - The European Council and the drift of power.** A political drift is currently taking place in the field of asylum and immigration whereby the European Council is increasingly becoming central in the decision-making process, unanimity is becoming the rule and enhanced cooperation a serious perspective. Full article [here](#).

**(24/11) ECRE - Weekly Editorial: EU-Africa Summit: migration – the elephant in the room. The EU-Africa Summit of 28 is imminent.** This time around, Summit’s agenda is focused on youth but the elephant in the room will be migration. Migration has to be part of the policies that the EU develops with and towards Africa. It is one of the great global issues of our time, and for two continents so close geographically there will always be complex patterns of two-way mobility, which are entangled with trade, development, and security policies. And the relationship between the two continents will always be tense due to money and history, inter alia, as a recent [paper](#) by International Crisis Group described well. But a new risk to a constructive relationship – and to the wellbeing of the peoples of both continents – develops when Europe approaches migration from the narrow perspective of migration control, defined as prevention of migration from Africa to Europe, full stop. Full article [here](#).

**(24/11) ECRE - NGO takes Italy to court over misappropriation of development funds directed to Libyan coastguards.** The Italian NGO ASGI [filed a suit](#) against the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation before the Administrative Tribunal of Lazio (TAR) accusing the Ministry of misappropriation of funds and misuse of power in regards to Italy’s technical support of border management by Libyan authorities. Full press release [here](#).

**(24/11) ECRE - UN Committees provide authoritative new guidance in defense of child migrant rights.** In a [press release](#) from November 17, United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR) announced two Joint General Comments providing authoritative and extensive guidance in the protection the rights of child migrants. The UN Comments are based on consultations with UN agencies, states, civil society organisations and national human rights institutions from across the globe. Full press release [here](#).

## **PUBLICATIONS**

**MPI - [From Forced Migration to Forced Returns in Afghanistan: Policy and Program Implications](#)**

**MPI - [The Global Compact for Migration: How Does Development Fit In?](#)**

**ECDPM – [Africa-Europe Relations: Time to Reboot](#)**

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

**EuradioNantes** - [The EU and Africa: common challenges on migration](#) (Video Podcast in French)

**EPRS** - [High Level Conference: Towards A Renewed Partnership With Africa](#)