INFO FLASH 5/05

EU INSTITUTIONS

European Commission

(3/05) New ACP-EU Partnership: Chief negotiators conclude successful series of regional consultations, culminating with African leaders' meeting. Today, in Eswatini, Chief negotiators Neven Mimica and Robert Dussey met with African Ministers to discuss the African pillar of the future partnership between the EU and 79 countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP). As with other regional consultations held in the Pacific and the Caribbean regions, the objective was to discuss specific needs and priorities of the region, while exploring how to best address them in the future ACP-EU agreement. It is expected that today's discussion will fuel and enrich the tailor-made Africa pillar to be created within the future ACP-EU agreement, also known as the "post-Cotonou" agreement. Full press release here.

(2/05) Africa-Europe Alliance: Commissioner Mimica on official visit to Mauritius, a development success story. Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development Neven Mimica is on an official visit to the Republic of Mauritius, where he met Prime Minister Jugnauth and various Members of the Government. On this occasion, he announced a €7.9 million contribution to support the country's priority to address unemployment and build an innovative Mauritius. Commissioner Neven Mimica said: "The EU has a long-standing relationship with Mauritius, which we believe has made a difference in the country's development success story. We stand ready to further support Mauritius and today's €7.9 million programme shows our commitment. It will support employability, education and innovation, and will contribute to the Africa-Europe Alliance ultimate goal of creating sustainable jobs". Full press release here.

(26/04) EU Justice Scoreboard 2019: results show the continuing need to protect judicial independence. Today, the European Commission publishes the 2019 EU Justice Scoreboard, which gives a comparative overview of the independence, quality and efficiency of justice systems in EU Member States. It provides national authorities with information to help them improve their justice systems. The results are mixed and show relative improvements with regard to the efficiency of justice systems and the quality of justice. At the same time, the Scoreboard shows there are growing challenges with regard to the perception of judicial independence. Full press release here.

(23/04) Code of practice against disinformation: Commission welcomes the commitment of online platforms ahead of the European elections. Today, the European Commission published the latest reports by Facebook, Google and Twitter covering the progress made in March 2019 to fight disinformation. The three online platforms are signatories to the Code of Practice against disinformation and have committed to report monthly on their actions ahead of the European Parliament elections in May 2019. Full press release here.

(17/04) From promise to delivery: Commission welcomes final European Parliament votes under 2014-2019 mandate. Full decision package [here](#).

(17/04) European Border and Coast Guard: Stronger EU borders with a new standing corps of 10,000 border guards. Today, the European Parliament adopted the [Commission's proposal](#) to reinforce the European Border and Coast Guard Agency with a standing corps of 10,000 border guards by 2027. The Agency will also have a stronger mandate on returns and will cooperate more closely with non-EU countries, including those beyond the EU's immediate neighbourhood. This reinforcement will give the Agency the right level of ambition to respond to the common challenges facing Europe in managing migration and its external borders. Full press release [here](#).

(16/04) Commission launches debate on more efficient decision-making in EU social policy. In his [2018 State of the Union speech](#), President Juncker announced a comprehensive review of all passerelle clauses provided for by the EU Treaties. As a result, three Communications have already been adopted: on [common foreign and security policy](#) (September 2018), on [taxation](#) (January 2019) and on [energy and climate](#) (April 2019). The [Communication on the passerelle clauses in social policy](#) is the fourth one. Most social policy areas, where the EU has powers to act, are already subject to qualified majority voting. This has allowed putting in place a comprehensive social "acquis" over the years, with [significant further steps under this Commission](#). A very limited number of areas, however, still requires unanimity among EU Member States and special legislative procedures, in which the European Parliament does not have an equal role as the Council as co-decision maker. Full press release [here](#).

(12/04) Africa-Europe Alliance: EU invests €10 million to improve business climate in West and Central Africa. The EU is investing €10 million in technical assistance and capacity building in partner countries in Africa to help improve the business and investment climate, in cooperation with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Two support programmes are being announced today between the European Commission and the IMF. Ahead of the announcement that will take place in the margins of the World Bank Spring meetings in Washington, Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development Neven Mimica said: "This €10 million contribution to technical assistance will help us and our partners deliver development assistance better, faster and more effectively. It will boost regional integration and economic governance reforms in Africa – in line with our [Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs](#)." This support will help provide tailored technical assistance and training to businesses in West and Central Africa, implemented through two IMF Regional Technical Assistance Centres: one [for West Africa](#), covering Cape Verde, the Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone and one [for Central Africa](#), covering Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, and São Tomé and Príncipe. Full press release [here](#).

(12/04) EU to facilitate financing for small businesses in Africa and the European Neighbourhood. The European Commission makes available €4.2 million under the External Investment Plan to help banks in Africa and the European Neighbourhood to better assist underfinanced sectors such as small businesses, including young entrepreneurs and women. Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven Mimica, is signing this support agreement today in the margins of the World Bank Spring meetings in Washington. This technical assistance programme will be implemented by the International Finance Corporation (IFC). It will support concrete capacity building measures to help local banks to

develop new loan and financial products better suited to support underfinanced sectors such as young entrepreneurs, women and SMEs in low-income, fragile and conflict-affected countries, who have difficulties obtaining financing from their local banks. This technical assistance will complement the EIP's "Small Loans and Guarantee Programme (SLGP)" worth €42 million, which aims to encourage local banks to lend to small companies, which have had difficulty accessing finance to date, including women-owned SMEs. It will also invest in high impact sectors such as health, education and agriculture in difficult emerging markets. With the EU guarantee and accompanying expertise, local banks will be able to provide funding for operations that they would otherwise consider too risky. As a result, the guarantee and accompanying technical assistance is expected to offer access to financing for some 50,000 small businesses, including ones owned by women or engaged in green energy projects, as well as help to create up to 200,000 jobs. Full press release here.

(12/04) EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey: third annual report shows continued vital and tangible support for refugees and their host communities. The third annual report on the implementation of the Facility shows solid results on EU support to refugees and host communities in Turkey, including: monthly transfer to 1.5 million refugees for their basic needs, 5 million primary health care consultations, access to school for 470,000 children. The implementation of the Facility further accelerated in 2018 and its €6 billion budget has now been fully mobilised. Since the Facility's launch in March 2016, 84 projects* in the areas of humanitarian assistance, education, healthcare and socio-economic support were contracted and are delivering tangible results on the ground and improving the lives of refugees and host communities in Turkey. Over €2 billion have already been disbursed to date. Full press release here.

(11/04) Europe remains the world's biggest development donor – €74.4 billion in 2018. The European Union and its Member States continued to be the world's leading provider of official development assistance in 2018 and stepped up their efforts directed at developing countries. This was confirmed by the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) in their latest report on preliminary figures for 2018. Collective assistance from the European Union and its Member States amounted to more than €74.4 billion in 2018. European development assistance represents almost 57% of the total global development assistance by all OECD-DAC donors. Preliminary 2018 figures indicate a slight decrease in overall collective Official Development Assistance (ODA). Taking into account the OECD's recent change of calculation methodology, the adjusted difference between 2017 and 2018 comes to a decrease of €731 million. Full press release here.

(11/04) Publication of preliminary figures on 2018 Official Development Assistance. Preliminary OECD figures show that Official Development Assistance (ODA) provided by the European Union and its Member States has reached €74.4 billion in 2018 on a grant equivalent basis, representing 0.47% of EU Gross National Income (GNI). This is significantly above the 0.21% average of non-EU countries that are members of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC). On a flow basis, this constitutes a 1% decrease compared to 2017 levels. On a flow basis, ODA as a share of GNI has gone down by 0.2 percentage points between 2017 and 2018. (Please read below explanation on methodological change.) The EU is collectively committed to providing 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) as ODA within the timeframe of the 2030 Agenda. Full press release here.

(4/04) European, African, Caribbean and Pacific countries conclude second round of talks on a new ambitious partnership. Today, chief negotiators emphasised the progress made while launching the next phase of the negotiations. This new step will ultimately lead to the creation of tailor-made pillars with each region, which are among the novelties to be introduced in the future ACP-EU Agreement. Today, in N'djamena, Chad, the EU's Chief Negotiator, Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven Mimica, said: "We are on track with the drafting of the foundation text, and we are now pleased to embark on a new path with the negotiation of EU-Africa, EU-Caribbean and EU-Pacific pillars. These pillars will not only fuel our cooperation in bringing new dynamics to it, but they will ultimately allow us to achieve more in responding accurately to the needs and challenges facing each partner." The ACP Chief Negotiator and Chair of the Ministerial Central Negotiating Group who is also the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Africa integration of Togo Professor Robert Dussey, said: "We have taken stock of the negotiations launched six months ago. I am happy to report that substantial progress has been made and we remain focused to ensure that the Agreement will stand the test of time and serve the needs of our people by tackling present and emerging global challenges." Full press release here.

(4/04) EU Trust Fund for Africa: €115.5 million to enhance security, migrant protection and job creation in the Sahel region. The European Commission adopted five new programmes and three top-ups of current programmes worth €115.5 million under the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa to complement ongoing efforts in the Sahel and Lake Chad region. With the security situation in the Sahel becoming increasingly volatile, the EU is committed to continuing its cooperation at regional and national level. It will support the G5 Sahel countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger) in their efforts to provide a common response to major cross-border threats and regional development needs. An additional €10 million will strengthen the G5 Sahel's defence and security capacities, while €2 million will support the coordination of the Sahel Alliance. In Burkina Faso, an extra €30 million will reinforce the existing Sahel Emergency Programme to strengthen access to basic social services and foster community dialogue. Other measures will bolster efforts to protect migrants, fight human trafficking and improve migration management. An additional €30 million will serve to protect migrants and refugees along the Central Mediterranean route and look for sustainable solutions in the Sahel and Lake Chad region. It will further increase the number of migrants benefitting from protection and voluntary return while ensuring their sustainable and dignified reintegration. In Niger, the Joint Investigation Team has dismantled 33 criminal networks and 210 smugglers have been convicted over the past two years. It will receive an extra €5.5 million to build on this success. In Ghana, €5 million for capacity-building and equipment will strengthen the country's border management. Two measures aim specifically at developing economic and development opportunities. In Ghana, new activities worth €20 million will improve job prospects and encourage the transition to green and climate resilient economies. In Mali, an additional €13 million will support job creation and the provision of State public services in fragile security areas around Gao and Timbuktu. Full press release here.

European Parliament

(4/04) MEPs adopted measures to reconcile work and family life. Plenary adopted new rules on paternity leave and non-transferable parental leave, in a final vote on Thursday. The law, informally agreed with EU ministers, and adopted by MEPs with 490 in favour, 82 against and 48 abstentions, sets minimum requirements for all member states, in a bid to boost women's representation in the workplace and strengthen the role of a father or an equivalent second parent in the family. This would benefit children and family life, whilst reflecting societal changes more accurately, and promoting gender equality. Full press release here.

European Council / Council of the EU

(17/04) Declaration by the High Representative, Federica Mogherini, on behalf of the European Union on Sudan. Full declaration here.

(9/04) Improving accessibility to products and services for disabled and elderly people: Council adopts the Accessibility Act. The Council today adopted the Accessibility Act, a directive on the approximation of EU member states legislation on the accessibility requirements for products and services. It is estimated that more than 80 million people in the EU, affected by some degree of disability, will benefit from the new rules. The Commission presented its proposal in December 2015. The negotiations between the Council and the European Parliament ended with a provisional agreement on 8 November 2018. On 19 December 2018 member states' representatives within Coreper endorsed the agreement. Today's adoption of the Accessibility Act by the Council follows the positive vote by the European Parliament on 13 March 2019. Full press release here.

(9/04) Sustainable development: Council adopts conclusions. The Council today adopted a set of conclusions concerning the implementation by the EU of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, which was established in 2015 and comprises a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Given the horizontal nature of the 2030 Agenda, its implementation requires a cross-policy approach by the EU and its member states. Earlier this year, the Commission published a reflection paper "Towards a Sustainable Europe by 2030," to which the conclusions are a response. In its conclusions, the Council underlines the central importance of sustainable development for the European Union and stresses that it is in the EU's interest to continue to play a leading role in implementing the 2030 Agenda and its 17 SDGs. The Council calls for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda to be accelerated "both globally and internally, as an overarching priority of the EU, for the benefit of its citizens and for upholding its credibility within Europe and globally." Full press release here.

Others

(26/04) Eurostat - Asylum applicants considered to be unaccompanied minors - Almost 20 000 unaccompanied minors among asylum seekers registered in the EU in 2018 - One fourth are Afghans or Eritreans. In 2018, 19 700 asylum seekers applying for international protection in the Member States of the European Union (EU) were considered to be unaccompanied minors. This is down by more than one third compared with 2017 (31 400) and below the 2014 level (23 100), when the first increase was observed after remaining at a relatively constant level of around 12 000 per year between 2008 and 2013. In 2018, at

the EU level, unaccompanied minors accounted for 10% of all asylum applicants aged less than 18. Full press release here.

(26/04) Eurostat - Europe 2020 education indicators in 2018 The EU has reached its target for share of persons aged 30 to 34 with tertiary education …only 0.6 pp away from the target for early leavers from education and training. Today, Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union, publishes the most recent data for the EU and its Member States on achievement against the two Europe 2020 education headline targets. The Europe 2020 strategy's target is that at least 40% of 30-34-year-olds in the European Union (EU) should have completed tertiary education by 2020. Reaching the level of 40.7%, the EU crossed this threshold in 2018. Since 2002 when the series started at 23.6%, there has been a steady increase. This growth pattern was even more significant for women (from 24.5% in 2002 to 45.8% in 2018) than for men (from 22.6% to 35.7%), meaning women are above and men still below the overall Europe 2020 target. Full press release here.

(25/04) Eurostat - Asylum decisions in the EU - EU Member States granted protection to more than 300 000 asylum seekers in 2018 - Almost 30% of the beneficiaries were Syrians. The 28 Member States of the European Union (EU) granted protection status to nearly 333 400 asylum seekers in 2018, down by almost 40% from 2017 (533 000). In addition to these, the EU Member States received over 24 800 resettled refugees. Full press release here.

(24/04) EIB - Morocco: EU expands its activities in support of private sector. On the occasion of Europe Day, the Delegation of the European Union to Morocco and the EIB (the EU bank) announced the expansion of their activities in support of the private sector in order to better meet the financing and development needs of Moroccan companies. At this event, the EIB signed a memorandum of understanding with AMICA. Full press release here.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

(16/04) Integration policies should not pursue migration-control goals. The Special Representative of the Secretary General on migration and refugees Tomáš Boček has published an Issue Paperon human rights aspects of immigrant and refugee integration policies based on a comparative assessment of 11 Council of Europe member states. The Issue Paper focuses on specific integration policies such as learning the language or acquiring knowledge about the political institutions, society and democratic values of the receiving country as well as residency requirements, income thresholds or housing requirements in the context of family reunification. "Integration policies should not pursue migration-control goals but facilitate the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms of migrants and refugees. A voluntary and individually-tailored approach is essential for their successful integration", said Tomáš Boček. Full press release here.

(4/04) Alternatives to the detention of migrants: how we can make it work. A variety of concrete examples and practices of alternatives to the detention of migrants from different corners of Europe were presented to some 200 participants at an International conference on Effective Alternatives to the Detention of Migrants, organised jointly by the Council of Europe, the European Commission and the European Migration Network. "Migrants continue to be detained in Council of Europe member states, at times arbitrarily and at times in appalling, unacceptable conditions. Detention of vulnerable persons, especially children, remains an issue of grave concern. We need to find ways to avoid unnecessary human suffering. The

Council of Europe has developed guidance on the legal and practical aspects of alternatives to immigration detention. If applied effectively, these alternatives can present benefits for both individual migrants and member states," said Christos Giakoumopoulos, Director General of Human Rights and Rule of Law of the Council of Europe. Full press release here.

CIVIL SOCIETY

(3/05) ECRE - Editorial: A Qualification, an Assumption and a Contradiction – Positions of the Commission Candidates. It is a year of change in Brussels with the European Parliament elections to be followed by the appointment of a new European Commission, led by a new President. Whether there will be a shift in asylum and migration policy remains to be seen. For now, strikingly similar positions have been put forward by the main candidates for the Commission presidency. Europe should offer protection to refugees; control its borders; and provide safe and legal routes for refugees. In some cases, solidarity is also mentioned, with two leading contenders committing to reform of Dublin. There are positive elements here, including the headline that Europe should offer protection to refugees – not a given these days. Nonetheless, the formula hides a qualification, an assumption and a contradiction that need to be unpicked. Full article here.

(3/05) ECRE - EU Report Links Drop in Arrivals to Spanish Moroccan Cooperation. According to an internal EU report obtained by The Associated Press Spain's cooperation with Moroccan authorities contributed to a significant decrease in arrivals of migrants and refugees in Spain. NGOs raise concern about human rights violations. Intensified cooperation between Spain and Morocco followed a doubling of arrivals in 2018 mainly through the Western Mediterranean route from Morocco and Algeria to Spain. In 2018, the EU granted 140 million Euros for border management to Morocco and 36 million euros in emergency assistance to Spain. From January to February 2019 arrivals in Spain dropped by 77% from 4,104 to 936 and keep going down, figures by the International Organisation for Migration show. Civil society organisations raise concern that Morocco is taking repressive measures to stop people from reaching Spain. In September 2018, Amnesty International called the crackdown of Moroccan authorities on thousands of sub-Saharan migrants and refugees "cruel and unlawful". In mid-March 2019, 45 died attempting to cross the Western Mediterranean from Morocco to Spain as they were waiting to be rescued by the Moroccan authorities who only intervened 24 hours after Spain received the first distress call. Full press release here.

(26/04) ECRE - ECtHR: Submission of Case against Greece and the Persecution of Humanitarians. The Global Legal Action Network (GLAN) have submitted a case to the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) against the persecution of humanitarian actors rescuing refugees at sea. The case was submitted on behalf of Salam Kamal-Aldeen who has worked for Team Humanity on Lesbos, Greece since 2015 supporting their maritime rescue efforts. Salam Kamal-Aldeen was arrested on Lesbos in January 2016, along with a number of his crew. He was later charged with the illegal transport of irregular migrants without authorisation. The judge referred to the work of Team Humanity as using "rescue as a pretext" to pursue this crime. The boat and rescue equipment were confiscated and restrictive measures were imposed on Mr. Kamal-Aldeen. The case is brought to the ECtHR in light of what is a wider effort across the EU to crackdown on and restrict the efforts of humanitarian organisations, in particular those operating in the Mediterranean. Full press release here.

PUBLICATIONS

Eurodiaconia - How to Include EU mobile Roma in a Post-2020 EU Framework.

Eurodiaconia - Strategies to promote access to employment for all people

ESPAS - Global Trends to 2030: Challenges and Choices for Europe

Odysseus Network - 2019 Summer School on EU Immigration and Asylum Law and Policy (Event)

MPI - Preparing for the Unknown: Designing Effective Predeparture Orientation for Resettling Refugees

Council of the EU General Secretariat – Think Tank Review (April)

MPI - Spain's Labor Migration Policies in the Aftermath of Economic Crisis

EPIM - Mainstreamed or overlooked? Migrant inclusion and social cohesion in the European Social Fund

ECRE – Report on the implementation of the Dublin III Regulation in 2018