

INFO FLASH 30/05/2023

EU INSTITUTIONS

European Commission

(24/05) Visa applications reach 7.5 million in EU- and Schengen Associated Countries – a 258% increase to 2021. In 2022, the consulates of the EU- and Schengen Associated Countries received more than 7.5 million applications for short-stay visas. This is a 258% increase compared to 2021 (2.9 million) but still lower than the number of applications in 2019 (17 million). The COVID-19 pandemic had significant effects on the demand for Schengen visa applications worldwide, with 2.4 million visas being issued in 2021, compared to 5.9 million in 2022 and 15 million in 2019. Full press release [here](#).

(4/05) European Union launches the third phase of its Roma Integration programme in partnership with the Council of Europe. The European Union is launching the third phase of the Roma Integration programme in partnership with the Council of Europe. It will contribute to the socio-economic integration of the Roma population in the Western Balkans and Türkiye. The programme will work with the governments in the region to increase their capacities to tackle challenges faced by Roma in the fields of housing, education, employment, health, civil registration, and the green and digital transition. The first two phases of the programme were implemented by the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC). While the newly launched third phase will be implemented by the Council of Europe, the RCC will continue its work on Roma integration through focusing on mainstreaming the inclusion of Roma in the Western Balkans green and digital agendas, which are areas where the RCC has a leading role when it comes to coordination in the region. Full press release [here](#).

(2/05) EU allocates additional €25 million in humanitarian aid in Ethiopia and Kenya. The Commission announced today new funding of €22 million in humanitarian aid in Ethiopia as well as €3 million in Kenya to support those suffering from the impact of conflict, displacement, drought and health issues. The EU's humanitarian funding in both countries will help address the high levels of food insecurity and malnutrition amongst the most vulnerable and provide access to primary health care, clean and safe water, sanitation and hygiene services, as well as education opportunities for children caught in humanitarian crises and who, as a result, have lost out on their schooling. Full press release [here](#).

(2/05) EU Cohesion Policy: 2021-2027 programmes expected to create 1.3 million jobs in the EU. Cohesion Policy funding in 2021-2027 is expected to support the creation of 1.3 million jobs, and to increase the EU's GDP by 0.5% on average by the end of the decade, and up to 4% in some Member States. It will also help deliver many common public goods, providing tangible and concrete benefits to European citizens, regions and cities. These are some of the conclusions of a [report](#) on the outcome of the 2021-2027 Cohesion Policy programming published today. To make this happen, Cohesion Policy will unleash a total volume of investments of €545 billion during this period, of which €378 billion are funded by the EU. These investments will promote lasting socio-economic convergence, territorial cohesion, a social and inclusive Europe and a smooth and fair green and digital transition. Full press release [here](#).

(28/04) Eurobarometer survey shows that traineeships help young people land their first job. A new [Eurobarometer survey](#) released today shows that traineeships are an important stepping stone for young people into the labour market. Four in five young people (78%) surveyed did at least one traineeship, and for one in five (19%) their first work experience was a traineeship. Seven in ten people (68%) found a job following a traineeship, with more than half of those (39%) signing a contract with the same employer, according to the data. Full press release [here](#).

(27/04) The European Commission and Tunisia have expressed the willingness to establish a stronger partnership on migration, anti-smuggling and the promotion of legal migration. On 27 April the European Commissioner for Home Affairs – Ylva Johansson – travelled to Tunisia. She met Nabil Ammar (Minister for Foreign Affairs, Migration and Tunisians abroad), Kamel Feki (Minister of Interior) and Malek Ezzahi (Minister for Social Affairs). This visit is part of the EU and its Member States' broader political engagement with Tunisia and falls under the strategic partnership between the EU and Tunisia. The EU is one of Tunisia's major partners and it continues to support the country. The visit highlights in particular the importance of the migration partnership between Tunisia and the EU and the willingness for such partnership to be deepened in cooperation with the EU Member States, in a 'Team Europe' spirit. On this occasion, Tunisia and the European Commission have expressed the willingness to establish a stronger operational partnership on anti-smuggling, including in particular: (a) support for the protection of maritime borders and Tunisia's southern borders, (b) enhanced police and judicial cooperation, (c) enhanced operational cooperation with relevant EU agencies such as Eurojust and Europol (in this context, the relevant Tunisian authorities and Europol will work towards finalising negotiations with a view to signing a working arrangement) and (d) awareness-raising on the dangers of irregular migration, with EU-funded information campaigns to be launched in May and June. Full press release [here](#).

(26/04) Democratic Republic of Congo: EU allocates over €32 million in additional humanitarian funding. The humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) continues to deteriorate, especially in the east of the country. As a result, the EU is allocating an additional €32.7 million, to support the humanitarian crisis response in the country. The new funding comes in addition to the €45.7 million announced [earlier this year](#) and brings the total funding for the DRC to almost €80 million for 2023. This funding will be channelled through humanitarian organisations to cover immediate needs such as nutrition, healthcare, water and sanitation, shelter and protection. Full press release [here](#).

(19/04) Commission takes action to promote work-life balance in the EU. To safeguard the right to work-life balance across Member States, today the European Commission decided to continue infringement procedures against Belgium, Czechia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Austria, and Slovenia by sending them a reasoned opinion for failing to notify national measures fully transposing EU rules establishing rights on work-life balance for parents and carers. Full press release [here](#).

(18/04) Commission calls for massive boost in enabling digital education and providing digital skills. Today, the Commission adopted two proposals for a Council Recommendation in the context of the [European Year of Skills](#), with the aim to support Member States and the education and training sector in providing high-quality, inclusive and accessible digital education and training to develop the digital skills of European citizens.

The proposals address the two main common challenges jointly identified by the Commission and EU Member States: 1) the lack of a whole-of-government approach to digital education and training, and 2) difficulties in equipping people with the necessary digital skills. Full press release [here](#).

(18/04) New European Bauhaus: call for projects to help rebuild Ukraine and foster sustainable construction skills in Europe. Today, the Commission is calling for proposals for three projects – two for the reconstruction of Ukraine and one for the development of skills in sustainable construction. The calls on the reconstruction of Ukraine are part of the 'Phoenix' initiative announced in February by Commissioner Virginijus Sinkevičius and are financed by the LIFE Programme. The aim of 'Phoenix' is to develop and put at the disposal of Ukrainian cities cutting-edge expertise from the New European Bauhaus (NEB) community in affordable and sustainable reconstruction. The initiative also connects Ukrainian cities with like-minded ones in the EU to exchange experiences on their way to climate neutrality and more energy efficiency. Full press release [here](#).

(11/04) Strengthening social dialogue: first-stage consultation of social partners on European Works Councils Directive. Today, the Commission launches the first-stage consultation of European social partners on a possible revision of the [European Works Councils Directive](#). This consultation follows up on the European Parliament's legislative own-initiative [resolution](#) of February 2023 calling for the Directive's revision. In line with President von der Leyen's [Political Guidelines](#), the Commission is committed to follow up on such resolutions with a legislative proposal, in full respect of proportionality, subsidiarity and better law-making principles. Full press release [here](#).

(3/04) Burundi: EU allocates €9 million to refugee crisis. The EU has allocated €9 million to assist Burundian refugees in neighbouring countries and those who voluntarily returned home. Since 2020, Burundian refugees – who fled the violence in Burundi in 2015 – have started to return home, but over 300,000 of them still remain in neighbouring Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Rwanda and Uganda. Out of the total amount of €9 million, €1.5 million will be allocated to projects on disaster preparedness. All countries in the Great Lakes region are prone to both natural and human-induced disasters, and in 2022 over 75,000 people were internally displaced in Burundi, mainly due to natural disasters. Full press release [here](#).

European Parliament

(10/05) Combating violence against women: MEPs back EU accession to Istanbul Convention. Six years after the EU signed the Istanbul Convention - the first legally binding international instrument on preventing and combating violence against women and girls - it has still not been ratified because of the refusal of a few member states, despite [Parliament's multiple calls to this end](#). However, the [EU Court of Justice's opinion of 6 October 2021](#) confirmed that the European Union can ratify the Istanbul Convention without having the agreement of all member states. The Court found that the appropriate scope for the EU's accession is asylum, judicial cooperation in criminal matters, and obligations of the EU institutions and public administration. Full press release [here](#).

(20/04) Asylum and migration: Parliament confirms key reform mandates. MEPs approved entering into interinstitutional negotiations on all the files on which they voted. Screening of third-country nationals. The decision to start negotiations on this [new regulation](#) was confirmed with 419 votes in favour, 126 against and 30 abstentions. For

the centralised system on conviction information (ECRIS-TCN) negotiations, the result was 431 votes in favour 121 against and 25 abstentions. These rules will apply at EU borders to persons who do not in principle fulfil the entry conditions of an EU member state. They include identification, fingerprinting, security checks, and preliminary health and vulnerability assessment. In their amendments, MEPs added an independent fundamental rights monitoring mechanism which would also verify border surveillance, in order to make sure that possible pushbacks are reported and investigated. Asylum and migration management. The negotiating mandate for the central piece of legislation of the Asylum and Migration Package, on asylum and migration management, was backed by MEPs with 413 votes in favour 142 against and 20 abstentions. The regulation sets out how the EU and its member states will act jointly to manage asylum and migration. It establishes improved criteria to determine the responsibility of member states in processing an asylum application (the so-called 'Dublin' criteria) and fair sharing of responsibility. It includes a binding solidarity mechanism to assist countries experiencing migratory pressure, including following search and rescue operations at sea. Crisis situation. The decision to start negotiations for the crisis situations regulation was confirmed with 419, votes in favour 129 against and 30 abstentions. The text focuses on sudden mass arrivals of third country nationals leading to a crisis situation in a particular member state that would, based on a Commission assessment, include mandatory relocations and derogations of screening and asylum procedures. Long-term resident directive. By 391 to 140 and 25 abstentions, MEPs endorsed a negotiating mandate for proposed changes to the current long-term resident directive. These include acceleration of the granting of EU long-term permits after 3 years of legal residence and the possibility to integrate persons enjoying temporary protection status. EU long-term residents would be able to move to another EU country without additional work restrictions and their dependent children would automatically be granted the same status. Full press release [here](#).

European Council / Council of the EU

Others

(30/05) FRA - Eight years of EU asylum and migration: progress and challenges. Over the last eight years, the EU and its Member States took important steps to strengthen the fundamental rights protection of migrants and asylum seekers. But, despite progress, challenges persist ranging from the treatment of migrants at EU borders to difficult conditions in detention and reception centres, finds the latest migration bulletin from the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA). Full press release [here](#).

(15/05) Frontex - Detections in Central Mediterranean at record level. In the first four months of the year the number of detections of irregular border crossings at EU's external borders reached nearly 80 700, nearly 30% more than a year ago and the highest total for the January-April period since 2016, according to preliminary calculations. The number of irregular border crossings into the European Union across the Central Mediterranean in the first four months of 2023 quadrupled from the same period a year earlier, rising to the highest level since Frontex began collecting data in 2009, even as entries on all other major routes declined from a year ago. Full press release [here](#).

(5/05) Eurostat - Immigration law enforcement in the EU: 2022 figures. were found to be illegally present in one of the EU countries. The number of non-EU citizens issued with an order to leave an EU Member State was 422 400. Following an order to leave, 96 795 non-EU citizens were returned to another country (including other EU countries), and of this, 77 530

were returned outside the EU. This information comes from [data on the enforcement of immigration legislation](#) published by Eurostat today. The article presents a selection of findings from the more detailed [Statistics Explained article](#). Full press release [here](#).

(8/05) EMN - New EMN inform explores displacement and migration related to disasters, climate change and environmental degradation. As more and more people are affected by climate change, the need to understand and prepare for climate-related migration has increased. According to the [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees \(UNHCR\)](#), extreme weather events, such as abnormally intense rainfall, prolonged droughts, heat waves and cyclones are linked to the displacement of approximately 20 million+ people annually. Despite the fact that more people are affected by climate change, it is difficult to directly link environmental degradation to displacement or people's decision to migrate because of the complex interaction between environmental and other factors that can drive migration. Full press release [here](#).

(19/04) EUAA - EUAA discusses joint response to migration and asylum challenges in Europe. Today, the Executive Director of the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), Ms. Nina GREGORI addressed the first session of a three-part online policy dialogue on “Migration and Asylum – Towards a joint European response”. In her remarks at the event organised by the Hanns Seidel Foundation and the Istituto Luigi Sturzo, she outlined the pillars and the work of the strengthened Agency, and how these support Member States, particularly those on the front line of events in the Central Mediterranean. Full press release [here](#).

(31/03) JRC - New edition of Atlas of Migration: easy access to migration facts and figures. The [Knowledge Centre on Migration and Demography](#) releases a new edition of the [Atlas of Migration](#), providing easy access to timely, comprehensive and reliable migration data globally. The Atlas gathers harmonised and validated data from official, international sources, including Eurostat, into a single database and presents it with interactive visualisations. It enables to explore the complexities of international migration and challenge misinformation and disinformation with facts. For instance, do you know how many people in your country are non-EU citizens? The Atlas shows that the large majority (91.6%) of people in the EU live in the country of their citizenship. Around 3.1% are EU citizens living in another EU Member State and only 5.3% are non-EU citizens. Country profiles enable you to check figures of your own country. Always up to date with the latest available data, the Atlas illustrates migratory movements and trends. Full press release [here](#).

(31/03) Eurostat - Orders to leave the EU and returns up in Q4 2022. In the fourth quarter of 2022 (Q4 2022), there were 123 865 non-EU citizens ordered to leave an EU country (+11% compared with Q3 2022), and 28 155 non-EU citizens were returned to another country (including other EU countries) following an order to leave (+9% compared with Q3 2022). Compared with the same quarter of 2021, the number of non-EU citizens ordered to leave rose by 37% and the number of people returned increased by 22%. This information comes from [data on irregular migration and return](#) published by Eurostat today. This article presents a handful of findings from the more detailed [Statistics Explained article on returns of irregular migrants - quarterly statistics](#). Full press release [here](#).

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

(10/05) Did you miss it? The City talk: “ICC index for policy design, from data to strategy” recording is now available! On 2 May 2023 the Intercultural Cities Programme (ICC) organised the first of a series of “City talks” webinars. 70 representatives of intercultural cities and ICC stakeholders registered to hear about “ICC index for policy design, from data to strategy”. Students of the Universidad Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona presented 2 projects prepared in the framework of the Master course “The challenges of Interculturalism”, led by ICC experts and respectively Coordinator and Director of the Spanish Network of Intercultural Cities (RECI), Gemma Pinyol and Daniel de Torres. They analysed ICC Index reports of different cities and proposed measures in order to improve city policies and strategies: a proposal to redesign welcome policies in Mexico City and a new intercultural strategy for Jerez de la Frontera based on the use of public space and taking their Flamenco festival as a starting point. Full press release [here](#).

(5/04) Young Roma people: Committee of Ministers issues recommendation to ensure their participation. The Committee of Ministers has issued a new Recommendation to the governments of 46 Council of Europe member states to ensure substantive participation, representation and inclusion of Roma youth in all spheres of society and decision-making processes, as well as to combat structural racism. The Committee of Ministers recommends including systematically and explicitly the needs and priorities voiced by young Roma people in all policies, standards and programmes that impact them; assessing policies and democratic structures with the aim of redesigning them to ensure Roma youth’s effective participation, representation and inclusion. Combatting all forms and manifestations of structural anti-Roma racism and antigypsyism and their impact on Roma youth participation are necessary conditions to ensure young Roma people’s full and effective access to and fulfilment of all fundamental human rights and freedoms; including free and non-discriminatory access to quality education, training and employment opportunities for all young Roma people. Full press release [here](#).

CIVIL SOCIETY

(30/05) PICUM - Campaigning for regularisation in Europe. Regularisation, that is granting a secure residence status or permit to people who live in an irregular situation, is a key tool to improve the lives of undocumented people and their families and strengthen communities. Over the last twenty years, most European countries have implemented some kind of regularisation measure, either temporarily (regularisation programmes) or permanently (regularisation mechanisms). But too often, regularisation measures have been limited, ineffective, or unfair. It is no surprise that many civil society organisations keep calling for more and better regularisation measures across Europe. Between 2021 and 2023, the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland brought together European civil society organisations in the RISE UP (Rights, Innovation, Solutions and Evidence based policy for Undocumented People) project to share learning and positive examples of regularisation, showcase successful regularisation campaigns, and help civil society advocate and campaign for regularisation nationally. Project partners include the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland, the Confederation of Christian Trade Unions (CSC, Belgium), Aditus (Malta), and the Centre de Contact Suisses-Immigrés (CCSI, Switzerland). Full press release [here](#).

(19/05) ECRE - Joint Statement: Extend the Current Temporary Protection Regime for Displacement from Ukraine until 2025. Extending temporary protection is crucial for ensuring continuous access to rights for those displaced by the war in Ukraine and for maintaining a collective European response. The activation of the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) on 4 March 2022 stands as an unprecedented, prompt and efficient response to the displacement of millions of people fleeing the war in Ukraine. Triggered for an initial period of one year and then extended until 4 March 2024, the TPD provides a legal basis for the protection of almost 5 million people; countries which have not adopted the TPD have aligned national protection regimes with the temporary protection (TP) regime. In an immensely challenging context, the use of the TPD has been a success, ensuring immediate access to legal status and associated rights, and allowing collective management of the situation under the EU's auspices, without the usual political conflicts and paralysis. In light of the ongoing war and the related uncertainty experienced by current TP status holders, measures should be taken to extend their legal status to the full three years afforded by the TPD. The undersigned civil society organisations call on the European Commission to prepare a proposal for a Council Implementation Decision on the extension of the TPD until March 2025 as a matter of urgency. Full statement [here](#).

(11/05) PICUM - AI Act: European parliament endorses protections against AI in migration. Today's vote by the European Parliament's civil liberties and internal market committees on the AI Act overwhelmingly endorsed important protections against harmful uses of AI in migration. PICUM and the Border Violence Monitoring Network (BVMN) – representing close to 180 organisations across Europe – welcome the Parliament's strong stand on these issues but are concerned about gaps that remain in the legislation. The [AI Act](#) will be the world's first binding legislation to regulate the use of artificial intelligence, including in the migration field. The text voted for on 11 May bans harmful uses of AI and subjects "high-risk" uses to enhanced safeguards. Full press release [here](#).

(28/04) ECRE - Editorial: EU Asylum Reform: Parliament Agrees its Positions; Council Enters Wild Terrain. Over the last month, the European Parliament has agreed its positions on another four of the legislative proposals for reform of the Common European Asylum System. Despite some dissent, the plenary approved the positions previously agreed by the LIBE Committee on the Regulation on Asylum and Migration Management (RAMM), the amendments to the Asylum Procedure Regulation (APR), the Screening Regulation, and the Crisis Regulation. From a protection perspective, the Parliament's positions constitute minor improvements on the original Commission draft proposals. In parallel, the Council is continuing its negotiations and the member states' positions get worse and worse. Thus, the final versions of any legislation adopted are likely to constitute a marked deterioration in standards and a significant departure from international law. Almost as concerning, is that the proposed amendments from the two co-legislators render the legislation ever more complex, to the point that implementation will be a challenge. Combined with a reliance on derogations, this in turn suggests an era of de facto de-harmonisation (insofar as harmonisation was ever achieved), with member states failing to apply the new laws, should they pass. Full press release [here](#).

(14/04) Eurodiaconia - The number of persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion remains stable in the aftermath of the Covid-19 crisis. Each year, the Joint Employment Report (JER) by the European Commission and the European Council monitors the employment situation and the implementation of employment guidelines in the EU, providing an annual overview of key employment and social developments and Member State's policy

measures. It also identifies related key priority areas for policy action. This year's JER, adopted by the European Council on March 13, 2023, focuses strongly on the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, especially in the areas of equal opportunities and access to the labour market, fair working conditions and social protection and inclusion. It integrates the 2030 EU headline targets on employment, skills, and poverty reduction and, for the first time, the report also covers the national targets put forward by the Member States, as presented in the June 2022 Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs (EPSCO) Council. Moreover, it incorporates the objectives of the Union of Equality strategies and covers the challenges faced by groups affected by inequalities. Full press release [here](#).

(14/04) ECRE - Roundtable: Funding for asylum and migration inside the European Union, how to ensure compliance with fundamental rights? Under the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027, the horizontal enabling conditions clarify that compliance with fundamental rights is a precondition to qualify for EU funding at national level. Member States and managing authorities of EU funds covered by the Common Provisions Regulation have the duty to effectively apply the Charter of fundamental rights at all stages of the budget cycle, from the inception to the implementation of EU programmes at national level. As the main EU instruments financing activities in support of asylum seekers, protection beneficiaries, and undocumented migrants, but also border management and security actions, the European Social Fund + and, for the first time, the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, Border Monitoring and Visa Instrument, and Internal Security Fund, should be implemented in a way that ensures full respect of fundamental rights in EU projects. Full press release [here](#).

(13/04) Caritas Europa - Development assistance: the EU must do more. In a joint statement with 40 organisations, Caritas Europa calls on the international donor community, including the EU, to allocate development assistance to match increasing needs and reflect corresponding solidarity with people experiencing poverty and marginalisation across the world. Full press release [here](#).

(4/04) HRW - Letter to European Commissioners Re. Use of EU Funds by Italy to Build Migrant Worker Camps in Breach of Fundamental Rights. We are writing to share our concerns and recommendations regarding the use of EU funds to construct temporary housing for migrant workers in Italy. Evidence we have reviewed, including documentation from Italian authorities themselves, indicates that such funds at present are helping perpetuate, not alleviate, the ghettoization, vulnerability, and segregation of migrant workers in rural areas, further entrenching their precarious living conditions. Full statement [here](#).

PUBLICATIONS

Whole-COMM - [Housing and employment for post-2014 migrants: lessons from small and medium-sized towns and rural areas](#)

ECRE - [ECRE Legal Note 14: The right to accommodation under the TPD](#)

ECRE - [Working Paper: Focus on Eurodac: Disentangled from the 'Package Approach' but is it Fit to Fly?](#)

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

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

EPRS - [The EU's external borders: Key trends and developments](#)

EPRS - [The six policy priorities of the von der Leyen Commission: State of play in spring 2023](#)

EPRS - [The EU's global approach to research and innovation](#)

EPRS - [Disappearance of migrant children in the EU](#)