

INFO FLASH 31/08/2023

EU INSTITUTIONS

European Commission

(3/08) Erasmus+: 159 projects selected to modernise higher education worldwide. Today, the Commission selected 159 projects for funding under Erasmus+ Capacity Building for Higher Education, which supports the modernisation and quality of higher education in third countries worldwide. These projects all respond to the overall aim to support the international cooperation of higher education, improve education systems and strengthen growth and prosperity on a global scale. Full press release [here](#).

(16/07) The European Union and Tunisia: political agreement on a comprehensive partnership package. Today, the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen, the Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and the Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte, in a Team Europe spirit, alongside the President of Tunisia, Kaïs Saïed have agreed to implement the comprehensive partnership package announced jointly on 11 June 2023. Full press release [here](#). Full memorandum [here](#).

(13/07) Global Gateway: EU and Latin America and the Caribbean step up action to promote inclusive and equal societies. Ahead of the EU-CELAC Leaders' Summit, Commissioner for International Partnerships, Jutta Urpilainen, announced a new EU programme worth €60 million to step up action against inequalities and to promote inclusive and equal societies in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Commissioner made the announcement at the EU – Latin America and Caribbean Forum bringing together civil society, youth and local authorities, alongside Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, José Manuel Albares Bueno. Full press release [here](#).

(12/07) Commission proposes to strengthen the rights of victims of crime. All the victims of crime across the European Union deserve support. Today's initiative of the European Commission aims to strengthen their rights across the European Union so that they receive support, access information, seek justice and obtain compensation. The proposed update of the existing Directive establishes minimum rules that go beyond those adopted in 2012, effectively addressing the evolving needs of our society, developments in technology and in justice. Full press release [here](#).

(6/07) EU releases €12.5 million for people in Myanmar and Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. The EU has released an additional €12.5 million to address the humanitarian needs of people in Myanmar, as well as those of Rohingya refugees and their host communities in Bangladesh and the broader region. Food insecurity in refugee camps has reached alarming rates due to a massive funding gap that resulted in a reduction of food rations distributed to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. The situation is expected to become untenable by the autumn if no additional funding is mobilised by the international community. The humanitarian situation is also worsening in Myanmar due to an escalation of the conflict and to the consequences of Cyclone Mocha, which hit the country in May 2023. Full press release [here](#).

(3/07) Erasmus+: New funding for European Universities alliances boosts cooperation in higher education. Today, the Commission announced the results of the 2023 Erasmus+ call for the European Universities initiative, which provides support to alliances of higher education institutions. These European University alliances are bringing together a new generation of Europeans who are able to study and work in different European countries, different languages, and across sectors and academic disciplines. Thanks to these alliances, students can obtain a degree by combining studies in several European countries, which contributes to the international competitiveness of higher education institutions in Europe. [Full press release here.](#)

European Parliament

(8/08) Repatriation: how many migrants in the EU are sent back? The EU's New Pact on Migration and Asylum includes new rules and the revision of existing legislation, such as the Return Directive. In a draft resolution on the Return Directive adopted in December 2020, MEPs stressed the importance of protecting individual fundamental rights as well as respect for procedural safeguards. In April 2023, Parliament adopted its negotiating position on the screening regulation and asylum procedures regulation ahead of discussions with the Council. [Full press release here.](#)

(13/07) Search and rescue: MEPs demand more EU action to save lives at sea. Following a plenary debate on Wednesday, the European Parliament today adopted by show of hands a resolution asking for member states and Frontex to provide sufficient capacity in terms of vessels, equipment and personnel dedicated to SAR and a more proactive and coordinated approach in order to effectively save lives at sea. Member states should also make full use of vessels operated by NGOs. A comprehensive EU SAR mission implemented by authorities in member states and Frontex should be established, say MEPs. Parliament strongly condemns criminal smuggling and trafficking, whilst reiterating that safe and legal pathways, notably through resettlement, are the best way to avoid casualties at sea. MEPs also propose that more information about the dangers of this route should be disseminated to people in third countries. [Full press release here.](#)

European Council / Council of the EU

Others

(6/07) EMN - EMN annual report explores trends on migration and asylum in 2022. The European Migration Network (EMN) has released its annual report on migration and asylum, providing an overview of the key developments in the contributing EMN Member and Observer Countries throughout 2022. [Full press release here.](#)

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

(7/08) New tool to support intercultural competence training. Intercultural competence is the set of knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes which enables individuals and organisations to act in an interculturally competent way. It is not a single concept, but a wide range of competences which, when combined, allow for proactive action to secure a healthy intercultural environment. While intercultural competence is developed on an individual basis, organising intercultural competence training for decision makers, public officials and

other relevant stakeholders enables the application of an intercultural lens to public policies and activities, promoting a more inclusive culture. The Manual for the design of a training course on intercultural competence aims to support public authorities to design their own tailor-made training courses with a view to spreading the skills and competence necessary to implement the Council of Europe intercultural integration model in a coherent and multilevel manner. It is split into two publications for ease of access. [Full press release here.](#)

(28/07) Equality data key to countering systemic discrimination in Europe. Addressing and preventing systemic discrimination in all areas – in policy making, programme design, service delivery and employment – is only possible when based on sound equality data, stresses the Council of Europe’s Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion, in the new manual on equality data collection and analysis published today, prepared by its Committee of Experts on intercultural integration of migrants. [Full press release here.](#)

(27/07) Against multiple crises backdrop, the fight against human trafficking must remain high on all stakeholders’ agenda, says GRETA. Multiple crises, conflicts and the climate emergency increase vulnerabilities to human trafficking and diversify trafficking risks, which is why governments and other stakeholders must allocate adequate attention and resources to combating it. This is the message from the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT), in a statement published ahead of the World Day against Trafficking in Persons, and echoed by the Council of Europe’s Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA). [Full press release here.](#)

(7/07) Did you miss it? The City talk: “Inclusive public space: is placemaking the solution?” recording is now available! On 7 July 2023 the Intercultural Cities Programme (ICC) organised the second of a series of “City talks” webinars. Over 100 representatives of intercultural cities and ICC stakeholders registered to hear about placemaking and inclusive public spaces. [Full press release here.](#)

CIVIL SOCIETY

(30/08) ECRE - AIDA Comparative Report: Access to Socio-economic Rights for Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection. ECRE has published a comparative report providing an overview of access to socio-economic rights for temporary protection beneficiaries (TPBs) in 19 EU member states (AT, BE, BG, CY, DE, ES, FR, GR, HR, HU, IE, IT, MT, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, and SI) and 3 non-EU countries (Serbia, Switzerland, United Kingdom) after flight from Ukraine. Information was drawn from ECRE’s Asylum Information Database (AIDA) and supplemented by relevant publications from ECRE, the EU Asylum Agency (EUAA) and UNHCR. The report focuses on the following areas: access to housing, employment, education, healthcare and social welfare. As such, it provides an important contribution to evidence on the implementation of the EU’s Temporary Protection Directive (2001/55/EC, the TPD) and national temporary protection regimes for people fleeing Ukraine. [Full press release here.](#)

(24/08) Eurocities - Fostering opportunities for Ukrainians. “We want to do everything we can to ensure that as many people as possible who have been forced to flee Ukraine can find opportunities in Helsinki,” says Juhana Vartiainen, Mayor of Helsinki. Amid the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine, Riga and Helsinki are some of the cities that have become new

homes for those fleeing the war. Both cities have taken significant strides in receiving and integrating Ukrainian refugees, offering shelter and pathways to a new life filled with opportunities. Full press release [here](#).

(27/07) ECRE - Advanced ELENA Course 2023 on International Protection in Europe - Registration open now! The 2023 Advanced ELENA Course on International protection in Europe will take place on Friday 10 November and Saturday 11 November 2023. The Course will be held at the H10 Marina Barcelona Hotel in Barcelona, Spain. Participants will have the opportunity to learn about the latest developments in European asylum and migration law and to engage with practitioners, academics and decision-makers from all over Europe. This year's course will explore recent jurisprudence and practices of the Court of Justice of the European Union and the European Court of Human Rights. Universal jurisdiction and accountability and the interplay between climate change displacement and asylum will also be addressed, as well as disability rights of refugees. Full press release [here](#).

(26/07) Editorial: The EU's Dodgy Deal with Tunisia is a Classic of the Genre: Undemocratic, Unlawful and Unlikely to Work. After a first abortive effort, the EU's three musketeers, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, Italian and Dutch Prime Ministers Georgia Meloni and Mark Rutte returned to seal a dodgy deal with reluctant partner President Saied of Tunisia, who will accept a bag of Euros in exchange for pretending to prevent refugees and migrants crossing the Mediterranean to Europe. It isn't clear what extra concessions Saied extracted between the trio's first visit in June and that of 16 July. It could have been more money or more likely changes to the modality of payment, with the EUR 150 million of budget support particularly appealing to a man in his position. It was perhaps the wording of the agreement that was adapted, now stating explicitly that Tunisia is not a place for settlement of "migrants in an irregular situation" and that it only guards its own borders - while it agrees to the opposite. Full article [here](#).

(26/07) ECRE - EU External Partners: EU's Dodgy Deal with Tunisia Sparks Outcry Amid Continued Crack-down Against Sub-Saharan Migrants by the Regime. EU's signing of an agreement for a "strategic and comprehensive partnership" with the Tunisian regime has sparked severe critique from MEPs, experts and human rights organisations. Meanwhile, violence and crackdown on Sub-Saharan Africans continue including purges to border areas of Libya and Algeria. Full press release [here](#).

(26/07) ECRE - Overview: Asylum in Europe: the Situation of Applicants for International Protection in 2022. This briefing prepared on the basis of country updates from the Asylum Information Database (AIDA) managed by ECRE, provides an overview of key trends in asylum in Europe in 2022 as documented in AIDA. The briefing demonstrates that, while asylum systems are in place and functioning across Europe, the rights of people in need of international protection are still regularly violated and significant gaps in national asylum systems continue to be reported. This is despite the positive response of states to the displacement from Ukraine, which created additional challenges but also demonstrated that management of large-scale displacement is possible. For the asylum system as a whole, access to asylum remains a particular concern, as does the quality and length of asylum procedures. Reception systems came under pressure in an increasing number of countries, often due to a lack of sufficiently robust contingency planning, and detention of asylum applicants remained commonplace, rather than being a limited exception. Full press release [here](#).

(19/07) Eurodiaconia - UN Special Rapporteur's new Report: Job guarantee as a tool in the fight against poverty. Recently, the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Olivier De Schutter, has highlighted the potential of job guarantee programmes – whereby the government guarantees a decent job to anyone willing and able to work – in addressing the challenges of poverty and unemployment worldwide. Full press release [here](#).

(14/07) Eurocities - How the EU can work better with cities. The EU increasingly recognises the vital role of cities in tackling major global issues and building a just, green and prosperous urban future. A growing number of urban-focused initiatives, driven by the European Commission, have led to significant opportunities for cities to have their say on EU policies. However, despite these positive steps, the many ways that cities can now engage with the EU has led to a lack of clarity about the role and relevance of the different initiatives, as well as fragmentation and competition between them. Ahead of next year's European elections, Eurocities has stated in a new policy paper – how the EU can work better with cities – that it is necessary and timely to review and improve the current initiatives for collaboration between the EU and cities. Improving these initiatives will ensure that cities, in partnership with regions and national governments, can play a key role in developing policies to achieve the EU's long-term goals for a climate neutral Europe by 2050 that leaves no one and no territory behind. Full press release [here](#).

(14/07) ECRE - EU External Partners: Libya and Tunisia Continue Crimes and Abuse – EU Continues Funding. Despite criminal links and continued abuse against civilian rescue operators and migrants the EU is offering new assets to so-called Libyan Coast Guard. Desert deportations and incited violence against Sub-Saharan migrants in Tunisia puts EU-Tunisia migration deal under scrutiny. Full article [here](#).

(14/07) ECRE - Joint Statement: NGOs call on Member States and European Parliament: Go no Lower: Reject the Use of Legal Loopholes in EU Asylum Law Reforms. The Member States and European Parliament, the EU's co-legislators, are moving forward with a reform of EU asylum law in the form of the Pact on Migration and Asylum which reduces protection standards and undermines human rights of asylum seekers in Europe. But not only. Some EU Member States are seeking to revive an additional proposal on “instrumentalisation” launched in 2021, which would allow them to derogate from their obligations in cases of alleged “instrumentalisation of migrants”, thereby undermining harmonisation and the *common* system. For more detail, see this analysis and statement. Full press release [here](#).

(11/07) Eurodiaconia - European Social Dialogue Committee for Social Services. The European Commission has recently adopted a decision to establish the European Social Dialogue Committee for social services. This Committee will serve as a platform to facilitate collaboration and dialogue between employers and workers in the social services sector, which encompasses approximately 9 million workers throughout the European Union. The decision was made in response to a joint request submitted by the European social partner organizations in the sector back in July 2021. Notable organizations involved include Social Employers and CEMR representing employers, as well as EPSU, UNI-Europa, and CESI representing workers. As the 44th European social dialogue committee, the establishment of this new Committee will have a significant impact on the social services sector across the EU. Full press release [here](#).

(5/07) Social Platform - Closing the gaps in social citizenship. With huge economic, social and climate challenges facing Europe, the issue of rising poverty levels, social exclusion and

insufficient social protection must not be ignored. The EUROSHIP project is an important piece of this puzzle, helping to put a spotlight on many of the challenges being faced as well as the real impact that current policies are having on people's lives. The research that has been gathered, analysed and presented to EU decision makers is invaluable to shaping the future of social policies. Consisting of statistical analysis, life-course interviews, consultations with EU stakeholders, evaluations of national policies and expert interviews at EU and national levels, the outcomes of EUROSHIP can make a real difference in identifying and tackling the gaps in current policies. Full article here.

PUBLICATIONS

ECRE - [Reforming EU Asylum Law: the Final Stage](#)

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

EPRS - [Standards for equality bodies: Discrimination under Article 19 TFEU grounds](#)

EPRS - [Future Shocks 2023: Responding to the instrumentalisation of migration](#)

College of Europe - [The EU-Turkey and EU-Pakistan Readmission Agreements and 'Reversed Conditionality'](#)