

INFO FLASH 31/10/2023

EU INSTITUTIONS

European Commission

(23/10) Commission publishes recommendations to tackle energy poverty across the EU. Energy poverty affects citizens across every EU country. In 2022, high energy prices together with the cost-of-living crisis meant that an estimated 9.3% of Europeans were unable to keep their homes adequately warm, compared to 6.9% in 2021. Recognising the need for even more coordinated action to counter the trend, the Commission has today published a series of recommendations on measures and policies that can be adopted by EU countries to tackle energy poverty. Protecting vulnerable citizens and ensuring that Europe's energy transition is fair and just is a cornerstone of the European Green Deal. Full press release [here](#).

(18/10) New EU Roadmap steps up the fight against drug trafficking and organised crime. On 18 October, the European Commission adopted an EU Roadmap to boost the fight against drug trafficking and organised crime. The drug trade orchestrated by organised crime poses one of the most serious security threats to the EU today. The Roadmap consists of concrete actions that will reinforce the EU's global response to organised crime and drug trafficking networks. Full press release [here](#).

(6/10) Successful political agreement paves the way for the adoption of the new Pact on Migration and Asylum. On 4 October 2023, Member States reached an agreement on the proposed Regulation for situations of crisis and force majeure in the field of migration and asylum. As a key element of the Pact on Migration and Asylum, this agreement paves the way to start the negotiations between the European Parliament and the Council on this legislative proposal. The agreement was the last piece of the puzzle, as it follows a first agreement reached in June 2023 on two main pillars of the Pact: the Asylum and Migration Management Regulation and the Asylum Procedure Regulation. Full press release [here](#).

(17/10) Commission Work Programme 2024. Document available [here](#).

(9/10) Large majority of Europeans consider mental health promotion as important as physical health promotion. On the eve of World Mental Health Day, a new Eurobarometer on mental health has revealed that nine in ten respondents (89%) consider that mental health promotion is as important as physical health promotion. At the same time, less than half of respondents agree that people with mental health issues receive the same level of care as those with a physical condition. Moreover, almost half of respondents (46%) experienced an emotional or psychosocial problem, such as feeling depressed or anxious, in the past twelve months. More than half of these respondents (54%) with a mental health issue have not received help from a professional, according to the survey. These results show that it is crucial to continue working on mental health at EU level. Full press release [here](#).

(19/09) Migration: Commission 10-point plan for Lampedusa. As of early September 2023, the Italian island of Lampedusa has seen a rapid increase in migrant arrivals from North Africa. Following Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's invitation, the President of the European

Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, and the Commissioner responsible for migration, Ylva Johansson, visited the island on 17 September. Together, they presented a 10-point plan to reduce irregular migration and provide immediate EU assistance to the Italian authorities, in accordance with fundamental rights and international conventions. Full press release [here](#).

(16/09) Towards a more digital social security coordination: Commission proposes steps to make it easier for Europeans to live, work and travel abroad. Today, the Commission has proposed concrete steps to further digitalise the coordination of social security systems in Europe, in a dedicated Communication. It lays out actions to make access to social security services quicker and simpler across borders by making full use of digital tools, reducing administrative burden for citizens and business. Full press release [here](#).

(19/09) EU Solidarity with Ukraine: Commission proposes to extend temporary protection for people fleeing Russian aggression against Ukraine until March 2025. The European Commission is proposing today to further extend the temporary protection for people fleeing Russia's aggression against Ukraine from 4 March 2024 to 3 March 2025. This will provide certainty and support for more than 4 million persons enjoying protection across the EU. Full press release [here](#).

(15/09) Share your views on Erasmus+ and help us evaluate it. The European Commission has launched a public consultation on Erasmus+, the European Union's flagship programme for education, training, youth, and sport. This initiative provides an opportunity for individuals and organisations to express their opinions and contribute to the evaluation of Erasmus+. Full press release [here](#).

(7/09) EU-UK relations: Commission and UK reach political agreement on UK participation in Horizon Europe and Copernicus. The European Commission and the United Kingdom have today reached a political agreement on the UK's participation in Horizon Europe, the EU's research, and innovation programme, and Copernicus, the EU's world-leading Earth observation programme. Full press release [here](#).

European Parliament

(26/10) Frontex: MEPs want an effective border agency compliant with fundamental rights. The Civil Liberties Committee insists that a well-functioning European Border and Coast Guard Agency can help member states manage the EU's external borders. The committee adopted on Thursday a draft resolution, with 45 in favour, 7 against and 0 abstentions, wrapping up the fact-finding investigation by the Working Group on Frontex Scrutiny. Full press release [here](#).

(25/10) EU Treaties reform: MEPs submit proposals to strengthen EU capacity to act. The report approved by the Committee on Constitutional Affairs would form Parliament's input at a Convention for the revision of the Union's Treaties. The report comprising draft changes to the Treaties was endorsed by MEPs on Wednesday with 19 votes for, six against, one abstention. The accompanying resolution was adopted with 20 votes for, six against, and no abstentions. MEPs reiterate their call to amend the EU Treaties and ask the Council to "immediately and without deliberation submit the proposals [...] to the European Council", so that a Convention can be set up. Full press release [here](#).

(18/10) EU budget 2024: addressing next year's challenges through mid-term revision. MEPs say that the new geopolitical and economic context, "coupled with the worsening climate and biodiversity crisis", has given rise to "new policy needs". They recall the limits of

the EU's current financial setup and align their position on the 2024 budget with their stance on the proposed mid-term revision of the EU's long-term budget (MFF, multiannual financial framework), which Parliament expects to inject up to €75.8 billion into the EU budget over the period 2024-2027. Drawing from this planned top-up, MEPs bolster initiatives to improve the EU's strategic autonomy in 2024, but also humanitarian aid, migration and external assistance. They say that the "revised MFF regulation must provide the framework for the 2024 budget". Member states have yet to agree on a common position on the revision. Full press release [here](#).

(18/10) Trafficking in human beings: MEPs ready to negotiate new EU rules. Parliament adopted its mandate for negotiations with member states to revise rules on combating human trafficking, ahead of a first round of talks in November 2023. The mandate prepared by the Civil Liberties and Women's Rights committees would expand the scope of the existing directive to include forced marriage, illegal adoption, surrogacy for the purposes of reproductive exploitation and better support for victims. Full press release [here](#) and [here](#).

(20/09) Free movement: Schengen reform to ensure border controls only as a last resort. Civil Liberties Committee MEPs backed proposals which would mean border controls within the free-movement Schengen area can only be reintroduced when absolutely necessary. On Wednesday, MEPs adopted a draft report on the reform of the Schengen Borders Code with 39 votes in favour, 13 against, and 12 abstaining, and authorised the start of negotiations with the Council with 49 votes in favour, 14 against, and 0 abstentions. In response to increasingly permanent border controls within the Schengen area, the proposal seeks to clarify rules, strengthen free movement within the EU, and introduce targeted solutions to genuine threats. Full press release [here](#).

(14/09) Reduce demand and protect people in prostitution, say MEPs. Parliament called on Thursday for EU measures to tackle prostitution and policies that eliminate poverty. The report on prostitution in the EU, its cross-border implications and impact on gender equality and women's rights was adopted by MEPs with 234 votes in favour, 175 against and 122 abstentions. It underlines that the asymmetry between national rules on prostitution within the EU, given its cross-border nature, leads to more victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation and makes for fertile operating ground for organised crime. Member states should assess existing legislation to avoid any loopholes that allow criminals to act with impunity, while the Commission should develop common EU guidelines guaranteeing the fundamental rights of people in prostitution. Full press release [here](#).

European Council / Council of the EU

(27/10) Main results of the European Council. Results [here](#).

Others

(24/10) EIGE - EU gender equality reaches new milestone: is progress accelerating? Ten years ago, EIGE introduced the Gender Equality Index as a marker for the status quo of gender equality in the EU. Each edition came with more or less the same conclusion: progress is at a snail's pace. However, in this year's edition we see the biggest annual jump in the overall score in the history of the Index ever: the EU is at 70.2 points out of 100! Full press release [here](#).

(19/10) EIGE - Three steps forward in closing the gender gap in climate leadership. Most of the European Parliament committees responsible for the Green Deal are gender-balanced. However, women account for two out of the ten chairs: Transport and Tourism Committee (TRAN), Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee (CON). With women under-represented in key decision-making roles, the Green Deal risks failing to deliver on its core promise to leave no one behind. More women in charge of budgets and climate action will consider existing gender gaps and help address many of the gendered impacts of climate change. Achieving gender balance in representation is a step in the right direction, towards targeted solutions. To be meaningful, we must go beyond that to ensure there is space for women and men in all their diversity to lead and share their expertise. Only then can we develop policies that recognise and respond to the fact some groups are more affected than others. And, as a result, improve resilience as we adapt to the impacts of climate change. So, today, we start sharing [Climate Inspiration](#) as part of our Campaign: #3StepForward for green and gender-equal Europe. Full press release [here](#).

(19/09) EIB - Strengthened cooperation between EIB and UN partners to increase impact of climate and development financing. A new agreement has been reached between the EIB and UN institutions to increase the impact of multilateral project financing and to introduce a new level of cooperation between international partners. Additional resources for UN agencies will enable them to provide technical assistance and advisory support for EIB-financed projects. Discussions are taking place with the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and other UN agencies on joining the agreement at a later stage. Full press release [here](#).

[COUNCIL OF EUROPE](#)

(27/10) Local and regional media: Council of Europe Congress calls for more support to prevent local media deserts. Grassroots media play a key role in upholding local democracy, and authorities at all levels can and should take steps to strengthen grassroots media, finds a new [report](#) on local and regional media, presented by co-rapporteurs, Cecilia Dalman Eek (Sweden, SOC/G/PD) and Mélanie Lepoutier (France, ILDG) at the 45th Session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities on 25 October 2023. Full press release [here](#).

(5/10) Member states should facilitate the active political participation of national minority youth, says new Recommendation. European states should take legislative and other measures to enable representatives of national minority youth to meaningfully influence political decision-making at local, regional and national levels, says a new [Recommendation](#) to 46 member states of the Council of Europe, adopted by the organisation's [Committee of Ministers](#). Full press release [here](#).

(29/09) "Learners First": the new Council of Europe Education Strategy launched. Renewing the democratic and civic mission of education; enhancing the social responsibility and responsiveness of education; advancing education through a human rights-based digital transformation – these are three pillars of the new [Council of Europe Education Strategy 2024-2030](#) launched at the 26th [Conference](#) of Ministers of Education that concluded in Strasbourg today. Full press release [here](#).

(21/09) Violence against women: GREVIO publishes annual report. The Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence

(GREVIO) has published its annual report of activities, highlighting the key milestones and accomplishments of the Group of Experts in 2022. These include: the publication of nine baseline evaluation reports (in respect of [Romania](#), [Germany](#), [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#), [Iceland](#), [Switzerland](#), [Estonia](#), [Georgia](#), [Cyprus](#) and [Norway](#)), which is the highest the number of reports published per year so far; the ratification of the Istanbul Convention by three new state parties (the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and the United Kingdom), representing the highest number of ratifications per year since 2018. Full press release [here](#).

(11/09) European Committee of Social Rights publishes 2022 Annual Report. The [European Committee of Social Rights](#) (ECSR) has unveiled its [Annual Activity Report for 2022](#), highlighting Europe's most pressing social rights issues. One pivotal development in 2022 was the Russian military aggression against Ukraine, which had far-reaching implications for the ECSR's operations. It led to Russia's exclusion from the Council of Europe and its ceasing to be a State Party to the [European Social Charter](#). More critically, it had a profound impact on the lives and human rights of Ukrainian citizens, notably their access to social rights as guaranteed by the European Social Charter. Full press release [here](#).

(6/09) Good democratic governance and deliberative democracy: Committee of Ministers adopts new standards. The Committee of Ministers has adopted new recommendations to member states on [good democratic governance](#) and [deliberative democracy](#). The first sets out the fundamentals of good democratic governance, covering protection and promotion of democracy; respect for human rights and the rule of law; public ethics and integrity; good administration, and delivery of high-quality public services. It expands on 12 key principles to guide the actions of decision-makers and public institutions at all levels, and to clarify the standards expected (see also [explanatory memorandum](#)). Full press release [here](#).

[CIVIL SOCIETY](#)

(31/10) Eurocities - Addressing social challenges: A conversation with Renaud Payre, Vice President of Lyon Metropole. One week ahead of the Eurocities Social Affairs Forum, which is taking place in Lyon on 8-10 November 2023, Eurocities talked with Renaud Payre, Vice President of Lyon Metropole and responsible for Housing and Urban Policy. Full article [here](#).

(28/10) Eurocities - What does the green and digital transition mean for cities? From small towns to sprawling metropolis, spanning across Western and Eastern, Northern and Southern Europe, mayors agree climate change will be the top priority for action in the upcoming years – according to [Eurocities pulse survey](#). Greening urban spaces, reducing energy consumption, or slashing air pollution, are urgent and heavy challenges cities are called to deal with every day. Digitalisation, if fully leveraged, can become a key ally for cities in the journey towards a sustainable future. But at the same time, it accounts for 4% of greenhouse gas emissions, and 10% of energy consumption in Europe, and these number are likely to keep growing. Full press release [here](#).

(20/10) ECRE - ECRE's Recommendations: EU's Response to the Displacement from Ukraine. ECRE's [new recommendations](#) published on 10 October collates and updates earlier recommendations to the EU and its Member States. It draws on the work of ECRE's members across Europe which are directly involved in the response, as well as on the findings of the

AIDA Comparative Report providing an overview of access to socio-economic rights for temporary protection beneficiaries (TPBs). Full press release [here](#).

(9/10) Eurodiaconia - Council calls for measures to address impact of precarious work on mental health. Today, the Council approved the first-ever set of conclusions on the interconnection between mental health and employment, with a focus on precarious work.

“Combatting precariousness is one of the best antidotes for the prevention of psychosocial risks at work. These conclusions mark a significant step towards recognising the impact of mental health and actively promoting workers’ psychological well-being.” stated Yolanda Díaz Perez, Spain’s acting Minister for Work and Social Economy. Full press release [here](#).

(6/10) Eurocities - Cultural transformation is at the heart of any other transformation.

“In the extremely challenging times that we are living, we should rather double, triple, quadruple investment in culture and cultural heritage,” says Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailović, Secretary General at Europa Nostra. “The wider field of culture can have a real impact on our society.” Full press release [here](#).

(6/10) ECRE - EU External Partners: Tunisia ‘Rejects’ EU Funding Casting Doubt on Deal as Reports of Abuse Continue to Mount, New Attack by So-called Libyan Coast Guard.

Tunisia rejects EU funding – partly supplied already – putting into question the recent MoU signed in July amid new reports of severe abuse and expulsions from the north-African state. NGO footage reveals new attacks on people in distress in the Mediterranean by the so-called Libyan Coast Guard. Full press release [here](#).

(6/10) ECRE - Editorial: So that’s it Then? Agreement(s) on the EU Asylum Reform. On Wednesday the anticipated announcement came that the Member States had reached an agreement on final piece of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, specifically the merged Crisis and Instrumentalisation Regulations. A few key points to be noted. Full article [here](#).

(29/09) Eurocities - Will the Temporary Protection Directive provide clarity? As the war continues unabated, yesterday, EU member states agreed to extend the Temporary Protection Directive one more year until March 2025.

The Temporary Protection Directive was activated on 4 March 2022 for the first time since its creation in 2001. By doing so, the European Union responded to millions fleeing Ukraine and entering EU countries seeking peace and reception. Full press release [here](#).

(28/09) Eurocities - Protect essential workers in housing crisis. The housing crisis is worsening. Housing affordability is becoming an increasingly growing concern in urban areas throughout Europe where property costs are rising much faster than people’s incomes. According to the European Commission’s 2023 report into the State of Housing in Europe, from 2010 until the end of 2022, average rents increased by 19% in the EU and house prices by 47%, with house price growth consistently outpacing growth in incomes. Full press release [here](#).

(19/09) ECRE - ECRE and PICUM Policy Note: Revision of the Multiannual Financial Framework – Key Recommendations on Migration and Asylum. This week, ECRE and PICUM have published a joint policy note on the proposed revision of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for the period 2021 – 2027, with key recommendations on migration and asylum and an overview table. In June 2023, the European Commission proposed an increase of Member States’ contributions to the long-term EU

budget. The proposal suggests an increase of approximately 65.8 billion euros in the EU budget for the period 2021 – 2027, by topping-up existing programmes and by setting up two new special instruments (including one on Ukraine's reconstruction). Through the revision, "migration and external challenges" would receive an additional 15 billion euros increase broken down as follows: 2 billion euros for the implementation of internal migration policy, and 13 billion euros for external and humanitarian aid policies with a strong displacement focus. The proposal also opens to the possibility of recommitting cohesion policy funds to a new objective for "strategic technologies". Full press release [here](#).

(5/09) European CSOs - Seven Priorities to Expand Resettlement and Safe Pathways to Europe. Ahead of EU Member States submitting their pledges for the EU resettlement scheme, we call on leaders to ambitiously expand safe pathways to international protection and better reflect Europe's capacity to welcome. Full statement [here](#).

[PUBLICATIONS](#)

MPI - [From Safe Homes to Sponsors: Lessons from the Ukraine Hosting Response for Refugee Sponsorship Programs](#)

MPI - [A Winding Path to Integration: Venezuelan Migrants' Regularization and Labor Market Prospects](#)

European Commission - [Promoting diversity and inclusion in schools in Europe](#)

Weatherburn A. - [The Lived Experiences of Migrants in the EU with a Single Permit](#)

ECRE - [ECRE Policy Paper: The Potential of The EU's Long-term Residency Directive](#)