

# EPC Policy Update for the European Programme for Integration and Migration<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> **This document provides a focused analysis of recent EU-level policy-making, legislation and jurisprudence relevant to EPIM's sub-funds on (1) immigration detention; (2) reforms of the Common European Asylum System; (3) children on the move and (4) EU mobile citizens' access to social benefits and covers the period from 15 May 2016 to 8 July 2016. We kindly ask the readers to keep in mind that the present Policy Update is composed of a selection of documents and does not claim to be exhaustive.**

**Should you, as representatives from EPIM's Partner Foundations or EPIM-supported organisations, have questions related to the analysis provided in this document or on EU developments in the field of migration and integration in general, you are invited to contact the authors ([n.rose@epc.eu](mailto:n.rose@epc.eu) and [y.pascouau@epc.eu](mailto:y.pascouau@epc.eu)). The sole responsibility for the content lies with the author(s) and the content may not necessarily reflect the positions of EPIM, NEF or EPIM's Partner Foundations.**

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## Highlights

As has been the case throughout the past year, the fast-paced developments in the area of asylum and migration have continued in the last two months. In parallel to the intense debates about the [UK referendum](#) in the weeks before and after the vote on 23 June, some important political and legislative advancements were made, such as a [political agreement](#) on the European Border and Coast Guard.

The Foreign Ministers of France and Germany put forward an [initiative](#) entitled ‘A stronger Europe in times of uncertainties’, which reveals their willingness to pursue common policies in the area of security, migration and the economy, if necessary within a core group of like-minded states. Although its impact is uncertain, this revitalisation of Franco-German relations does warrant a closer look.

While finding solutions to intra-EU issues, such as the reform of the Common European Asylum System and the relocation of asylum seekers within the EU, has remained very cumbersome and challenging, the external dimension of the so-called refugee and migrant crisis has moved to the top of the priority list of the European Commission and EU leaders. As the number of refugees and migrants arriving in Greece has decreased significantly, making the [EU-Turkey deal](#) a ‘success’, the Commission put forward a [communication](#) on a new Partnership Framework with third countries, which was welcomed by the European Council but harshly criticised by human rights organisations and NGOs. Framed by the European Commission as ‘saving lives’ and ‘creating opportunities and tackling root causes’, this series of combined instruments ultimately steps up efforts to keep refugees and migrants from coming to Europe. By threatening partner countries with a reduction of development aid in case of non-cooperation in the field of migrants’ return, the EU risks harming those who are most in need of protection.

The European Court of Justice issued important [rulings](#) regarding the detention of persons subject to a return procedure and the rights of asylum seekers in the realm of Dublin transfers.



## Special Focus

### Franco-German proposal for a stronger Europe

In the aftermath of the UK referendum, the Foreign Ministers of France and Germany drew-up on 26 June a 9-page document entitled [‘A strong Europe in a world of uncertainties’](#). Amidst the shock and chaos caused by the Brexit vote and probably also due to the fact that neither the German Chancellor nor the French President have fully backed it, its publication went largely unnoticed by the media and was not commented on by EU heads of state or government. However, this paper does deserve closer attention, as it provides important visions and valuable proposals for action from two countries at the core of the EU. Next to proposals for a “European Security Compact” and the completion of the European Monetary Union, Jean-Marc Ayrault and Frank-Walter Steinmeier acknowledge the urgent need to find common solutions in the field of asylum and migration by putting forward demands and plans on how to achieve a Common European Asylum System:

- Establishment of the world’s first multinational border and coast guard in the EU;
- Endorsement of a “European Act on Immigration”, which states the legal options to reach Europe, as part of finding common answers to the rising number of economic migrants seeking to enter the EU;
- Work towards the reduction of push factors for irregular migration by generating social and economic opportunities in countries of origin;
- Establishment of a truly integrated European asylum, refugee and migration policy, with fully harmonised and simplified standards and procedures:
  - Transformation of the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) into a fully-fledged agency;
  - Improvement of the Dublin system by means of a permanent and binding mechanism.

None of these initiatives are new or revolutionary. However, what is noteworthy is the fact that France and Germany express their willingness to proceed with the establishment of common policies and burden-sharing systems with a core group of like-minded member states if necessary, instead of all 27. In light of the deep political divides between governments regarding the future of the EU’s asylum and migration policy, this is a pragmatic approach, stemming from the recognition that common European action – although desirable – is not always the only possible way forward.

This paper’s content and time of publication reflects the growing general acknowledgement that migration is intrinsically linked to other policy areas and cannot be separated from the external dimension. The EPC’s [Forced Migration Project](#), which looks into the impact of key non-migration policies on the willingness/need of third country nationals to migrate, follows the same logic and may come to similar conclusions. The need for the EU to play a greater and more coordinated role in all areas, be it internal or external, is of paramount importance for successful migration management. Albeit not free of criticism, this newfound impetus of the Franco-German relationship should thus be welcomed. It now remains to be seen in what ways this initiative will be endorsed by the EU heads of state or government and EU institutions.



## Political developments

*Summary:* The EU has continued to intensify its focus on the external dimension of the refugee and migration crisis, which is reflected both in the priorities of the new Slovak Council Presidency and in the contentious European Commission proposal for the establishment of so-called “Migration Compacts” with countries of origin and transit. The impact of the UK referendum on the area of asylum and migration is also subject to debate, and is an issue which will remain with us for the time to come.

### Priorities of Slovak presidency in asylum and migration

On 1 July, Slovakia took over the six-months rotating presidency of the Council from the Netherlands. Next to an “economically strong Europe”, a “modern single market” and a “globally engaged Europe”, one of its four priorities is to encourage the development of “more sustainable migration and asylum policies”. The focus will lie on the following:

- Return to a fully functioning Schengen area (in line with the European Commission’s goal);
- Protection of the external borders, incl. deployment of the European Border Guard;
- Greater use of modern information technology on the external borders, i.e. smart borders;
- Cooperation with third countries, especially migrants’ countries of transit and origin;
- Further developments related to a joint European asylum system in those areas “where there is agreement among the member states”.

As a member of the Visegrád group and an outspoken proponent of more restrictive and security-focused asylum policies, its focus on border management was anticipated. It can be expected that Slovakia will neither vigorously push the negotiations for the proposals to reform the Common European Asylum System, put forward by the European Commission in April, nor the implementation of the relocation scheme.

### Impact of Brexit on CEAS and EU/UK citizens

Despite the fact that the UK’s decision to leave the EU on 23 June was to a great extent based on the desire to gain more control over immigration, the direct impact of Brexit on the area of asylum and migration will be limited. The UK enjoyed an opt-out from the majority of EU asylum and legal migration policy, and did not, for instance, take part in the EU-wide relocation system. However, exceptions to this are the Dublin system, Eurodac and EASO, and it also opted-in to the first-phase asylum directives. The fact that the UK will no longer be able to take part in the Dublin system could have negative consequences, as it might have to conclude bilateral deals with individual EU member states in order to still be able to carry out Dublin transfers to other EU member states.

In addition, the future of the bilateral agreement between the UK and France related to border controls on French soils is uncertain. Under the Touquet agreement, signed in 2003, the UK’s border was effectively pushed back to France, thereby blocking thousands of refugees and migrants in Calais.

Needless to say, the freedom of movement of EU citizens and their family members between the UK and EU member states will potentially be affected most severely. As EU leaders have already made clear, the UK will

only be granted access to the EU single market if it continues to apply the four freedoms (freedom of persons, capital, services and goods). Thus, it remains to be seen what kind of agreement the UK and EU will strike; only then can the effect of Brexit on the free movement of persons be analysed.

### New Migration Partnership Framework for cooperation with third countries

On 7 June, the European Commission [set out](#) plans for a new Partnership Framework to mobilise and focus EU action and resources on external migration management. Despite substantial controversy surrounding this proposal, the European Council of 28/29 June [decided](#) to adopt this new Partnership Framework and gave the High Representative, Federica Mogherini, the mandate to lead the implementation of this new approach.

Under this Framework, the EU seeks to establish tailor-made partnerships with key third countries of origin and transit, to which member states contribute with diplomatic, technical and financial support.

Short-term priorities are:

- Saving lives at sea;
- Increasing returns;
- Enabling migrants and refugees to stay closer to home.

In the long term, third countries should be supported in such ways as to address the root causes of irregular migration.

So-called “compacts” will form the basis of partnerships between the EU and third countries and will consist of different instruments, tools and leverage, depending on the situation and needs of the country concerned. The Commission is planning on establishing such compacts with Jordan and Lebanon in the short term, followed by Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Mali and Ethiopia.

This proposal has sparked substantial protest from international organisations and human rights NGOs. A coalition of more than 100 NGOs [urged](#) the Council and European Parliament to reject this proposal, as it tarnishes the EU’s human rights-based foreign policy and diminishes the right to asylum worldwide. Particularly problematic is that the Commission does not foresee any protective measures or safeguards to ensure compliance with human rights, which could lead to development aid being used as a means to stop migration, instead of fighting poverty. Similarly, Platforma [criticises](#) the Commission’s approach of making development cooperation conditional upon the countries’ performance in the field of migration.

In a plenary session on 7 June, the majority of MEPs [welcomed](#) these plans but many warned against replicating the EU deal with Turkey and using money in exchange for migration control.

### Action Plan on Integration of third country nationals

With a view to supporting member states in the integration of third country nationals and their economic and social contribution to the EU, the European Commission on 7 June [presented](#) an Action Plan on the integration of third country nationals. It puts forward policy, operational and financial support to be delivered at EU level, with special attention being given to newly arrived refugees. For instance, the Action Plan proposes the provision of integration support in the pre-arrival stage, especially for refugees waiting to be resettled, which will hopefully speed up the integration process in the new host society. Moreover, actions are foreseen in education, labour market integration and access to vocational training, access to basic services, and social

inclusion. Lastly, the Commission sets out a more coordinated approach for the use of EU funds to support national integration measures.

The Slovak presidency aims to adopt Council conclusions on this action plan within the upcoming six months.

Overall, it is interesting to note that despite the fact that integration policies remain a national competence, the European Commission is still active in this field, reflecting the dire need on the member states' level to increase integration efforts. This caused the proposal to be a 'pragmatic but not political' one, [according to Social Platform](#)' – a rare trait in the EU's current EU asylum and migration policy. In the EPC's comparative report entitled 'Measures and rules developed in the EU member states regarding integration of third country nationals', one of the topics [covered](#) is that of integration measures implemented in the pre-arrival stage. It notes that several EU member states have already adopted such measures, which can be split into two categories: providing migrants with specific information before leaving the country of origin and the establishment of a fully-fledged system where migrants are requested to participate in a formal integration process. The chief skill assessed in pre-entry regimes is language knowledge; other requirements relate to knowledge of the member state's values, society, history and political institutions.



## Legislative developments

*Summary:* By reaching a political agreement between the European Commission, Council and European Parliament in June, the Dutch Presidency managed to fulfill its promise to conclude negotiations for the establishment of a European Border and Coast Guard by the end of their Council presidency. The publication of an Action Plan for the integration of third country nationals (see above), as well as the proposal for a recast of the Blue Card System by the European Commission reflect the realisation that the long-term challenge of integrating refugees and closing the high-skilled labour gap requires urgent action.

### European Border and Coast Guard (EBCG)

In record time, the Council, European Parliament and European Commission on 21 June reached a political agreement regarding the establishment of a European Border and Coast Guard. The proposal was [approved](#) at first reading by the European Parliament in its plenary session on 6 July and is now awaiting formal adoption by the Council.

From the time the European Commission published its proposal in December 2015, it only took the institutions six months to agree on intensified cooperation on a European level in a highly sensitive area – border management. The common goal of all EU member states to better manage the EU's external borders in light of the ongoing refugee flows and the terrorist threat made it comparatively easy to find common grounds and illustrates the impact political will can have on the speed of policy-making.

In essence, this new agency consists of the current Frontex agency with expanded tasks, which will remain based in Warsaw and will have at its disposal a pool of 1,500 national border guards to be deployed in case a member state is facing disproportionate pressure. It is important to note that the agency will not be given any

executive authority, but will have supervisory powers, mainly to define technical and operational strategies for the EU's external border management. Its tasks include the following:

- Drafting of vulnerability assessments regarding member states' border control capacity;
- Organising joint operations and rapid border interventions;
- Providing technical and operational assistance in the support of search and rescue operations for persons in distress which may arise during border surveillance operations;
- Appointing liaison officers of the agency in member states;
- Promoting cooperation with third countries by coordinating operational cooperation between them and member states on border management;
- Organising, coordinating and conducting return operations and interventions;

One of the most important provisions of the agreement is that it entitles member states to temporarily introduce border controls if another member state refuses to allow the deployment of border guards following a Council decision. Such a measure can only be triggered following a Commission recommendation stipulating that the Schengen area is under an existential threat, and a vote in the Council. The institutions also agreed on reinforced fundamental rights safeguards and a complaints mechanism. As anticipated, the Commission's plan to allow for border intervention without the consent of the member state concerned met substantial sovereignty concerns in the Council and was not approved.

### Proposal for recast of Blue Card Directive

As the EU Blue Card scheme, adopted in 2009, has proven insufficient and has failed to attract a significant number of high-skilled migrants, the European Commission on 7 June [published](#) a proposal aimed at increasing the EU's attractiveness as a destination for such migrants. The Commission estimates that this new scheme would bring an estimated positive annual economic impact of between €1.4 billion to €6.2 billion from additional highly skilled workers. A key provision and bold move is the establishment of a single EU-wide scheme, which would replace parallel national schemes in order to provide more clarity for applicants and employers and make the scheme more visible and competitive. Additional provisions include the following:

- Simplified procedures and possibility of shorter business trips to member states who apply the Blue Card in order to increase intra-EU mobility;
- Lowering of the salary threshold through a flexible range within which member states can adjust the threshold to their labour market contexts;
- Possibility for highly skilled beneficiaries of international protection to apply for a Blue Card;
- Strengthening of the rights of the Blue card holders (quicker access to long-term residence status) and their family members (ability to join the EU blue Card holder simultaneously).

The proposal is now under negotiations in the Council and the European Parliament. In general, opposition especially towards an EU-wide scheme can be expected from various member states, in particular Sweden and the Netherlands, as their national schemes have proven to be more effective than the Blue Card system. Considering the increasingly Eurosceptic and anti-immigration mood in many countries, such interference into a traditionally sensitive policy area is likely to be met with reluctance. Similarly, the Migration Policy Institute [questions](#) member states' willingness to agree to the provisions aimed at increasing possibilities for intra-EU migration of Blue Card holders. While this could indeed attract more highly skilled workers, it is exactly this attractiveness that many countries would like to avoid.

## Other developments

- On 1 June, the provisions for third country nationals of the EU-Turkey Readmission Agreement entered into force. Thereby, EU member states can request Turkey to readmit irregular third country nationals who entered the EU directly from Turkey. These provisions are an important part of the visa liberalisation process for Turkey;
- On 15 June, the European Commission adopted its second recommendation on the specific measures that Greece needs to take to fully implement the EU asylum standards and to possibly resume Dublin transfers from other member states;
- On 20 June, the Council extended the mandate of the EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia until 27 July 2017 and added two supporting tasks: training of the Libyan coastguards and navy as well as contributing to the implementation of the UN arms embargo on the high seas off the coast of Libya. The aim of this naval operation is to disrupt the business model of human smugglers and traffickers in the Southern Central Mediterranean;
- On 22 June, the European Commission announced the launch of new projects worth more than €200 million in the framework of the EU Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian crisis;
- On 2 October, a referendum on the mandatory EU-wide relocation scheme decided upon by the Council in September 2015 will be held in Hungary. This was announced by President Janos Ader on 5 July.



## ECJ case law and legal actions

### ECJ Case law – return procedure

ECJ Case C-47/15 *Sélina Affum v Préfet du Pas-de-Calais, Procureur général de la cour d'appel de Douai*, 7 June 2016

This case concerns Ms Affum, a Ghanaian national, who was intercepted by French police at the entrance of the Channel tunnel, while transiting through French territory on a bus from Belgium to the UK. She had no identity documents except a Belgian passport from another person. France detained her for illegal entry and asked Belgium to readmit her.

The ECJ was asked to analyse the compatibility of the Return Directive with French national law allowing the imposition of a term of imprisonment of a third country national on the basis of illegal entry and stay. In its ruling, the ECJ stated that the Return Directive precludes any legislation of a member state which lays down a sentence of imprisonment for illegal stay, but that it does not preclude legislation allowing for the imprisonment of a third country national to whom the return procedure has been applied and who is staying on the territory without a justified ground for non-return.

Hence, the ruling confirmed that the Return Directive prevents a third country national who has not yet been subject to the return procedure being imprisoned merely because he/she has entered the territory of a member state illegally across the Schengen area.

## ECJ Case law – Dublin III

ECJ [Case C-63/15](#), *Mehrdas Ghezelbash v Staatssecretaris van Veiligheid en Justitie* & [Case C-155/15](#), *George Karim v Migrationsverket*, 7 June 2016

Both cases concern the scope of the right to an effective remedy under the Dublin III Regulation.

In the case of Mr. Ghezelbash, an Iranian national, the Netherlands rejected his asylum claim following acceptance of a ‘take back’ request by France. The situation was a similar one in the case of Mr. Karim, a Syrian national whose application for international protection in Sweden was rejected on the ground that he had already made a request in Slovenia one year before. Slovenia accepted Sweden’s ‘take back’ request. Mr. Ghezelbash and Mr. Karim both submitted circumstantial evidence in support of their claims that the Netherlands and Sweden respectively were the responsible member state for their asylum application.

In both cases, the ECJ was asked whether the applicants are entitled to challenge a decision to transfer them on the ground of incorrect application of one of the criteria for determining responsibility for the claim. The Court decided that an asylum seekers is indeed entitled to plead, in an appeal against a decision to transfer him, the misapplication of Chapter III of the Dublin Regulation. This judgment is based on the reasoning that the Dublin III Regulation confers rights on the asylum seekers to be informed on the reasons for a Dublin transfer, which in turn grants them the right to appeal these reasons. According to the June edition of the EDEM newsletter, these judgements [confirm](#) the progress of the Dublin III Regulation in terms of specifying the scope of effective remedy and its concrete practical implications. This will play an important role in shaping the new ‘Dublin IV’ regulation, currently under negotiations in the Council and European Parliament.



## A closer look ... from EPIM grantees

### Recent developments at the Bulgarian border

*By Center for Legal Aid - Voice in Bulgaria*

By virtue of its geography, Bulgaria is likely the most important land border of the European Union with regards to recent migration flows and Europe’s efforts to keep asylum seekers off the continent’s territory. It borders both Turkey, where millions of refugees reside and which is the main transit route and the last country before reaching Europe for many migrants from the Middle East and Africa, and Greece, the European starting point of the now closed Balkan route.

The Bulgarian government boasts that it has the best guarded border in Europe. Recent developments indicate a further tightening of the border and a legalisation of push-backs, raising serious concerns about the right to seek asylum and access to procedure for those trying to reach Europe by land, especially in light of the EU-Turkey deal from 18 March 2016, which closes the alternative route through the Greek islands.

The Bulgarian-Turkish border, with a length of about 260 km, is by far the most common entry point of migrants into the country: according to data provided by the Ministry of Interior, in the first half of 2016, 2,315 of the 2,654 persons arrested for trying to enter Bulgaria illegally were apprehended at the border with Turkey, almost all of them at the “green border” rather than at a checkpoint. It is important to mention that all are considered

foreigners upon entry, even if they have the intention to apply for international protection, as the status of asylum seeker and thus the right to be on the territory of the country are not conferred until the claim is registered and an asylum seeker card is issued.

On May 5, 2016, the Bulgarian government signed a Protocol with Turkey for the application of the Readmission Agreement between Turkey and Bulgaria. The text has not been made publicly available, and it is only known that it is meant to specify the concrete conditions and procedures for carrying out the readmission of third country nationals from Bulgaria to Turkey, including the selection of responsible officials and border crossing points, deadlines, particularities of handing over the third country nationals, etc.

This Protocol, which was approved by the Bulgarian Council of Ministers on 22 June 22 2016, has been applied in practice on the Bulgarian side since 1 June 2016. Reportedly, Turkey has stalled the implementation – on 22 June the Bulgarian Minister of Interior Romyana Batchvarova stated that there had been no response from the Turkish authorities, indicating an official refusal to take back refugees, and that up to that point, only several Turkish citizens had been returned while 200 requests made by Bulgaria were declined by Turkey. The most recent statistics from the Ministry of Interior show that from 1 June to 1 July, a total of 437 requests had been sent and just 11 people were actually returned back to Turkey. The Protocol is reportedly to be discussed and adopted by the Turkish Parliament. If fully implemented, which appears to be the most likely outcome, it will essentially hinder the majority of asylum seekers coming by land from Turkey from claiming asylum in the EU.

As to the Bulgarian-Greek land border, the projected and feared snowballing of the incoming migrant wave after the closing of the Balkan route and the agreement allowing Greece to return people to Turkey has not fully materialised. The numbers have increased, but not substantially: 332 people in total were apprehended while trying to cross that border into Bulgaria during the first half of 2016. What is worrying is that the Bulgarian authorities are immediately returning potential asylum seekers coming in from Greece, such as a group of 56 Afghani nationals who were on a train headed from Greece to Bulgaria in May 2016, without examining their cases individually, as required by the Dublin regulation and other EU and international legal instruments.



## Facts and figures

*Summary:* The UNHCR sounded the alarm by revealing that in 2015, the highest level of global forced displacement ever recorded was reached. Meanwhile, as a result of the EU-Turkey deal and the closing of the Western Balkan route, there has been a sharp decrease in the number of refugees and migrants arriving in Greece, while the number of stranded persons in Greece and Bulgaria has increased between March and July. Italy is witnessing a situation similar to the one in the same time period last year.

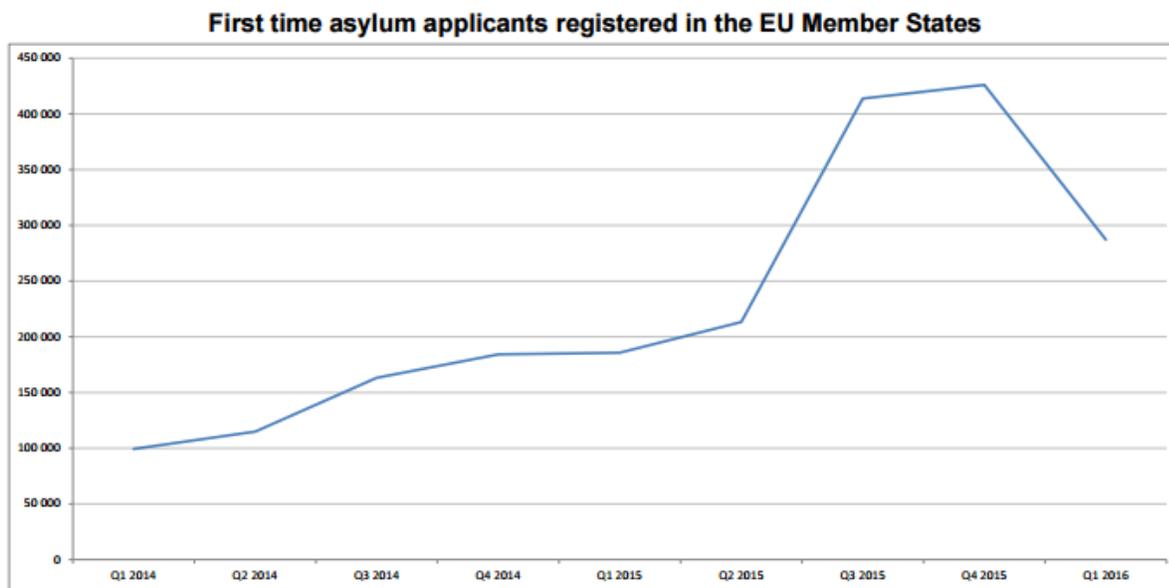
### UNHCR Global Trends report 2015

On 20 June, the UNHCR [published](#) its annual Global Trends report, in which it notes a **sharp increase in global forced displacement in 2015**, leading to the highest level ever recorded. A total of **65.3 million people were displaced as of the end of 2015**, compared to 59.5 million one year earlier. This means that **1 in every 113 people worldwide is now either internally displaced, an asylum-seeker or refugee**. Among this total of 65.3 million, 3.2 million people are awaiting decisions on asylum in industrialized countries. Syria, Afghanistan and

Somalia produced half the world’s refugees, while Colombia, Syria and Iraq had the largest numbers of internally displaced people.

### Eurostat statistics on asylum in the EU

According to a Eurostat press release [published](#) on 16 June, there has been a **33% decrease of first time asylum seekers during the first quarter of 2016**, compared with the fourth quarter of 2015. Among a total of 287,100 first time asylum seekers between January and March 2016, **Syrians remained the main group**, followed by Iraqis and Afghans. In the same time period, **the highest number of first time applicants was registered in Germany (61%)**, followed by Italy (8%), France (6%) and Austria (5%). It is interesting to note that applications decreased considerably in Sweden (-91%), Finland (-85%), and the Netherlands (-72%) compared with the previous quarter.



Source: [Eurostat, 2016](#)

In its ‘Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the European Union 2015’ published on 8 July, the European Asylum Support Office [provides](#) statistics on International Protection in the EU (Asylum decisions, Pending cases, Overview of developments and challenges in 2015 in main countries of origin, etc.), in addition to giving an account of important developments at EU and national level in the field of asylum and the functioning of the CEAS.

### IOM statistics on arrivals in 2016

With regard to the arrival of refugees and migrants to the EU, recent data of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) [show](#) that:

- As of 6 July, **238,754 arrivals to Europe** have been recorded in 2016. **160,165 have arrived in Greece**, compared to **70,978 arrivals in Italy**;
- 2,899 have been found dead or are missing in the Mediterranean;

- The total number of **migrants and refugees stranded in Greece and in the Western Balkans is 62,299**. Since the implementation of the EU-Turkey agreement on 10 March, **the number of migrants and refugees stranded in Greece increased by 34%**.

Stranded Migrants Trends from the EU Turkey Agreement to 29 June 2016 in the Western Balkans			
Country	No. of stranded migrants and refugees on 10 March 2016	No. of stranded migrants and refugees on 29 June 2016	% change from March to June 2016
Greece*	42,688	57,155	34%
the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	1,199	212	-82%
Serbia	1,706	863	-49%
Croatia	231	63	-73%
Slovenia*	408	314	-23%
Hungary	-	2,130	n/a
Bulgaria	865	1,562	81%
<b>Total</b>	<b>47,097</b>	<b>62,299</b>	<b>32%</b>

\*Data available up to 26 June 2016

Source: [IOM](#), 2016

## Implementation of the EU-Turkey deal

Almost four months have passed since the highly controversial agreement between the EU and Turkey came into force. The European Commission's Second Implementation Report from 15 June [notes](#) a **sharp decrease in the number of irregular migrants and asylum seekers crossing from Turkey into Greece** and considers this as proof for the success of the deal. The following statistics are put forward:

- Since 1 May, the **average daily number of arrivals** has decreased to 47, in contrast to around 1,740 daily arrivals in the month before the implementation of the statement;
- Since 20 March, **7 lives have been lost at sea**, compared to 89 deaths in January;
- Since 4 April, **462 persons who entered Greece irregularly after 20 March have been returned to Turkey**, including 31 Syrians who returned voluntarily;
- Since 20 March, a total number of **511 Syrians have been resettled** from Turkey to several EU member states;
- Since 20 March, the **demand for asylum in Greece has greatly increased**. By 12 June, 267 out of 1,429 asylum applications were declared inadmissible, and 252 appeals lodged against these decisions before the Greek Appeal Committees. In 70 cases, the appeal was granted, in 2 decisions, it was rejected.

It remains to be seen in the upcoming months how this deal will develop, especially in light of a Greek appeals committee for the first time [overturning](#) an initial decision considering Turkey a safe third country, on 20 May. The court held that Turkey does not afford refugees the full protection required under the Refugee Convention and does not guarantee the principle of non-refoulement. The European Commission [reacted](#) by claiming this ruling merely underlines that there is no blanket return of asylum seekers from Greece to Turkey, maintaining that Turkey's legal framework for the protection status to Syrians and non-Syrians appears to provide sufficient protection.

## Relevant reports

### Children on the move

In a report published on 14 June, UNICEF [warns](#) of the many dangers refugee and migrant children face on their way to Europe. Human smugglers in particular pose a substantial risk to (unaccompanied) minors on their journey across the Mediterranean, which is why more opportunities for safe, legal and regular migration channels, in addition to more flexible family reunification rules, should be established by EU member states. Accordingly, UNICEF puts forward a number of key principles and action points which take into account the particular vulnerability of children.

### Reform of the CEAS

A study commissioned by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the LIBE Committee [provides](#) an overview of the status quo of the Common European Asylum System, identifying flaws and challenges encountered by all relevant actors, and making proposals as regards policy measures to help improve the current situation. It comes to the conclusion that while cooperation and solidarity among EU member states is desperately needed, the CEAS cannot be a substitute for an overall migration management which promotes legal pathways to the EU and addressed push factors in countries of origin.

### Integration

A report published by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights entitled 'Time for Europe to get migrant integration right' in May 2016 [puts forward](#) recommendations aimed at developing European standards for migrant integration, delivering concrete outcomes. These recommendations relate to family reunion, long-term residence, language and integration courses, etc. and are based on the need for more ambitious integration policies across Europe. According to the report, one key element of successful integration policies is mainstream public support, which has so far been largely absent.

## EU Funding opportunities

A variety of EU funding opportunities are available in the area of asylum and migration. Please find below a selection of relevant (upcoming) EU calls for proposals:

### **Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme:**

- *Capacity building on right of the child and child protection for professionals in asylum and migration*
  - [call out](#) on 13.09.2016 – Deadline: 13.12.2016;
- *Inclusion and participation of EU citizens in their host EU country's civic and political life*
  - [call out](#) on 17.11.2016 – Deadline: 17.01.2017
- *Support dialogue and exchange of best practice in fostering tolerance and mutual respect*
  - [call out](#) on 15.09.2016 – Deadline: 05.01.2017
- *Identification and exchange of best practice regarding the implementation of the EU Framework Decision on combating racism and xenophobia*
  - [call out](#) on 15.09.2016 – Deadline: 5.01.2017.



## EU Calendar

*Upcoming events*



### European Council and Council of the European Union

The next European Council meeting will take place on **21-22 October**.

The next JHA Council meeting will take place on **13-14 October**.



### European Parliament

The next plenary session will take place on **12-15 September**.

The next LIBE committee meetings will take place on **31 August, 5, 8, 26 and 29 September**.



### Other Events

#### 12-13 September

ECRE and partners are organising:

[Conference](#): 'Social Innovation for refugee inclusion', in Brussels.

#### 19 September

The UN General Assembly will host:

[High-Level meeting](#): UN Summit on Refugees and Migrants, in New York.