

# EMN BULLETIN

The EMN Bulletin provides policymakers and other practitioners with updates on recent migration and international protection policy developments at EU and national level. The 15<sup>th</sup> Edition provides information from April 2016 to June 2016, including the (latest) relevant published statistics.

**The Bulletin is organised by policy area. You can directly access the area of your interest by clicking on one of the following themes:**

[1. General policy developments](#); [2. Implementation of the Common European Asylum System](#); [3. Unaccompanied Minors and Vulnerable Groups](#); [4. Legal migration and Integration](#); [5. Management of the external borders](#); [6. Irregular migration and return](#); [7. Actions Addressing Trafficking in Human Beings](#); [8. External dimension](#); [Annex on EU & Complementary Statistics, Additional information, other EMN outputs and upcoming events.](#)

## SPECIAL NOTE

The EMN published the **Synthesis Reports** of two 2015 EMN Studies. The Study on [Integration of beneficiaries of international/humanitarian protection into the labour market: policies and good practices](#) examined the rights to access the labour market for beneficiaries of international protection both in law and in practice, and the availability of employment-related support measures. It also provided examples of good practices and obstacles in Member States' policies related to beneficiaries' labour market access and participation, and reported on the differences in the treatment of third-country nationals having different statuses.

The Study on [Changes in immigration status and purpose of stay: an overview of EU Member States' approaches](#) examined the different legal frameworks, procedures and practices in place in the Member States to enable third-country nationals to change their migration status, as well as the conditions associated with such changes. It also looked at existing obstacles and good practices.



On 17<sup>th</sup> June 2016, the Commission launched the new [Knowledge Centre for Migration and Demography](#) led by the Joint-Research Centre (JRC), in partnership with the International Institute for Applied System Analysis (IIASA). The Knowledge Centre aims at building a solid, interdisciplinary and accessible evidence base on migration and demography with a view to support the Commission and the Member States in policy-making. One of its thematic focus is the forecast of demographic trends in Europe and in the countries of origin, to enable the EU to anticipate migration flows and the related challenges.

## 1. GENERAL POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

### EU DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

- ★ On 15<sup>th</sup> June 2016, the Commission adopted the [Second Report on the progress made in the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement](#). The Report described the state of play and the legal and operational steps taken to return irregular migrants from Greece to Turkey, and on the 'one-to-one' resettlement scheme from Turkey to the EU. Illegal border crossings into Greece were reportedly decreasing and the resettlement scheme started to be operational. The Commission also noted that no evidence was available on the development of new migration routes as a consequence of the closure of the Aegean one. The progress of the visa liberalisation dialogue and the accession process, as well as the implementation of the Facility for Refugees in Turkey were also reported upon. In general, the Report highlighted the success achieved up to that moment under the [EU-Turkey Statement](#); however, the progress made was considered fragile as some important aspects of the Statement were not functional yet.
- ★ The **Fundamental Rights Agency** (FRA) published in May 2015 a [Focus paper on Asylum and Migration into the European Union in 2015](#), which examined the effects of the EU response to the unprecedented arrivals of asylum seekers, especially with regard to compliance to fundamental rights.

### WHAT IS THE EUROPEAN MIGRATION NETWORK (EMN)?

A network co-ordinated by the European Commission, assisted by a Service Provider, in co-operation with National Contact Points (EMN NCPs) established in each Member State plus Norway. Its purpose is to provide up-to-date, objective, reliable and comparable information on migration and asylum, with a view to supporting policymaking in the European Union in these areas, as well as to the wider public. More information, as well as all EMN outputs, is available on the [EMN Website](#).

### NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- ★ **Croatia:** On 16<sup>th</sup> June 2016, the Parliament voted a motion of no confidence to the Government. The President of the Republic will therefore determine a date for the new election.
- ★ **Finland:** There have been [changes in the government](#) of Prime Minister Juha Sipilä. The previous Minister of the Interior, Mr. Petteri Orpo, became the Minister of Finance. The new Minister of the Interior, who is responsible for migration, is Ms. Paula Risikko.
- ★ **Ireland:** Following the general election in Ireland, [Frances Fitzgerald TD](#) was appointed Tánaiste (Deputy Prime Minister) and reappointed to the role of Minister for Justice and Equality. [David Stanton TD](#) was appointed Minister of State for Justice at the Department of Justice and Equality with special responsibility for Equality, Immigration, and Integration.
- ★ **Poland:** The Ministry of the Interior and Administration initiated work on conceptual framework for developing a [new migration policy](#) for Poland. The new policy is intended to put a special focus on economic migration from the East and on the immigration of people of Polish origin. On 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016, the Parliament adopted a [resolution](#) on Poland's immigration policy in which, among others, it expressed criticisms on the [EU Council's decision on the relocation](#) of 120,000 refugees and over the position of the Polish Government of the time.
- ★ **United Kingdom:** On 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2016, the UK held a referendum on whether to remain in the European Union. The result was a vote of 52% to 48% in favour of leaving the EU. This outcome does not take immediate effect. On 13<sup>th</sup> July, following David Cameron's resignation, Theresa May became the new British Prime Minister.

## 2. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMON EUROPEAN ASYLUM SYSTEM

### EU DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

- ★ On 13<sup>th</sup> July 2016, the Commission presented **three legislative proposals** to complete the reform of the Common European Asylum System. The [Proposal for a Regulation establishing common procedures for international protection](#) would repeal the recast Asylum Procedures Directive (2013/32/EU) with the aim to establish an EU asylum procedure that would be "efficient, fair and balanced" and that would achieve greater harmonisation across Member States. The Commission also proposed the replacement of the [recast Qualification Directive](#) (2011/95/EU) with a [Regulation on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection and for the content of the protection granted](#). The Regulation would harmonise the standards for the qualification for and the content of international protection, so that applicants would have the same chance to receive protection and the same rights thereof. The proposal included an amendment of [Long-term Residents Directive](#) (2003/109/EC) of 25 November 2003 concerning the status of third-country nationals who were long-term residents in the EU, to prevent secondary movements. According to the amendment, the 5-year period after which beneficiaries of international protection were eligible for long-term resident status would be restarted each time the person is found irregularly in another Member State. Finally, the Commission [proposed a second recast](#) of the [Reception Conditions Directive](#) (2013/33/EU), which would increase the degree of harmonisation of reception conditions across the EU, reduce the incentives for secondary movements and improve the integration perspectives of applicants.

★ Additionally, as part of the reform of the Common European Asylum System, the Commission proposed the creation of an [EU Resettlement Framework through a Regulation](#). The Framework would be permanent and would set a unified procedure for the selection and treatment of resettlement candidates across the EU. The resettlement operations carried out under the scheme would be financed by the [EU's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund \(AMIF\)](#) for up to €10,000 per person. Member States would decide how many people to admit through the resettlement scheme.

★ On 15<sup>th</sup> June 2016, the Commission adopted the [fourth and final progress report on relocation and resettlement](#). This followed the [Third Report on Relocation and Resettlement](#), published on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2016. The resettlement scheme agreed by the Council on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2015 saw the resettlement of 7,272 persons out of the 22,504 participating states committed to ([Annex](#)). Most of resettled persons were Syrian nationals from Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. Within this total number, 511 persons had been resettled since April 2016 under the 'one-to-one' scheme agreed upon with Turkey. On relocation, 2,280 persons have been relocated since [the launch of the scheme in September 2015](#), which foresaw the relocation of 160,000 asylum seekers from [Italy](#) and [Greece](#) in two years. In general, the Commission noted the progress made, but also called for the full implementation of the relocation mechanism and full compliance with the resettlement commitments.

★ On 26<sup>th</sup> April 2016, the Commission adopted the [Communication Lives in Dignity: from Aid-dependence to Self-reliance](#), which put forward a new development-oriented policy framework to address protracted forced displacement. This included a stronger link between humanitarian and development policies, the strategic engagement with partners, and a sectoral focus on education, access to labour market and services. The aim was to prevent forced displacement from becoming protracted and displaced persons to be dependent on humanitarian assistance.

★ On 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2016, the Commission adopted [a package of more than € 200 million](#) through the [EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian crisis](#) for the countries most afflicted by the inflows of Syrian asylum seekers, namely Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon. In particular, Turkey received €165 million for projects implemented in partnership with other organisations, for ensuring the access to education and the improvement of water facilities. €21 million were allocated to Jordan as an urgent grant to ensure water provision in the North of the country. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) received 15 million to provide urgent education services and cash assistance to Syrian Palestinians in Lebanon and Jordan.

★ Within the context of the EU-Turkey Statement, on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2016, the Commission provided additional € 47 million through the [Facility for Refugees in Turkey](#), which reached a total amount of almost €240 million, since the Facility was established. A part of this amount (€20 million) would be spent on enhancing the capacity of the Turkish Coast Guard to carry out search and rescue operations; another part (€27 million) would be instead devoted to education infrastructures, trainings and, in general, social support.

★ On 15<sup>th</sup> June 2016, the Commission approved its second [Recommendation on the specific urgent measures to be taken by Greece](#) in view of resuming transfers under the [Dublin Regulation](#) by the end of 2015, as foreseen by the [Back to Schengen Roadmap](#). The recommendations concerned, among others, the reception conditions and facilities and the access to the asylum procedures. On 19<sup>th</sup> April 2016, the Commission allocated €83 million, under the new [Emergency Assistance Instrument](#), to enable NGOs and international organisations to work in cooperation with the Greek authorities for improving the conditions of refugees.

On 29<sup>th</sup> July 2016, under the Internal Security Fund, the [Commission has awarded €11 million as emergency funding to Italy and Greece](#) as frontline Member States facing the inflows of migrants. These would be devoted to strengthening the reception capacity in Greece and, for Italy, at supporting the search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean Sea.

#### Judgment of the European Court of Justice Case [C-155/15](#).

In its judgement of 7<sup>th</sup> June 2016, the Court of Justice stated that Article 19(2) of the Dublin III Regulation (604/2013), establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an asylum application, is applicable to a third-country national who, after having made a first asylum application in a Member State, left the territory of the Member States for a period of at least three months before making a new asylum application in another Member State.

In this case, the asylum applicant may, in an action challenging a transfer decision, invoke an infringement of the rule set out in the second subparagraph of Article 19(2) of that regulation.

#### LATEST RELEVANT STATISTICS

★ According to the [latest Eurostat data](#), the total **number of applications for international protection lodged in the EU decreased by 33% in the first quarter of 2016 (299,400), compared to the previous quarter (439,040)**. The applications reached the highest monthly number in February 2016 (106,770) and then dropped to 98,580 in March (see Figure 1a in Annex). **As shown in figure 1b**, in the first quarter of 2016, **96%** of the total applications for international protection **were first time applications** (287,990) and the top three countries of origin of asylum seekers were still **Syria**, and **Iraq** and **Afghanistan** (as in previous quarter).

- ★ A total number of **119,785 first instance asylum decisions were issued in the EU and Norway in the first quarter of 2016**. The total positive decisions for this period amounted to **55,280**, while negative decisions were **64,505** (see Figure 2 in the Annex). The largest number of first instance asylum decisions was issued in **Germany**, followed by **Italy** and **Sweden**.
- ★ EASO published its [Latest Asylum Trends](#) for May 2016. According to the analysis, the number of asylum applications have exceeded half million in the first five months of 2016, compared to 350,000 in the same period of 2015. Syrians asylum applicants were 28,056 in May 2016, followed by Afghans (15,648) and Iraqis (10,341). Nationals from Syria have accounted for the largest number of asylum applicants for more than a year.

## NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- ★ **Austria:** On 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016, the Austrian National Council adopted an [amendment](#) to the Austrian asylum law. The [main parts of this amendment](#) entered into force on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2016. The first change concerned the duration of the international protection status that will now be granted for a limited period of time (so called "Asyl auf Zeit"): the residence permit for persons granted asylum will have a duration of three years, after which it may be prolonged for an unlimited period of time. Secondly, stricter provisions on family reunification were adopted. In particular, applications for family reunification that are not lodged within three months after the refugee status has been granted, and those lodged by beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, will require presenting proof of having sufficient means, adequate accommodation and health insurance. Also, the waiting period for family members of persons enjoying subsidiary protection will be extended from one to three years. Another new provision established an "emergency regulation": the Federal Government and the Main Committee of the National Council may determine by such regulation that there is a risk for public order and national safety. In this case, asylum-seekers may be denied access to asylum in Austria if this is not in violation of the right to private and family life and the principle of *non-refoulement*. Another change extended the integration support to asylum-seekers, if it is very likely that they will be granted asylum. Finally, the time-limit for issuing a decision on the application for international protection was extended from 6 to 15 months.

- ★ **Belgium:** In the framework of a decreasing inflow of asylum seekers to Belgium since the beginning of 2016, on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2016 the Council of Ministers approved the [gradual decrease of national reception capacity](#). About 10,000 reception places will be closed in 2016. A 'buffer' capacity of 7,500 places is planned. Furthermore, the distribution plan of asylum seekers in the different municipalities of the country will not be activated for the time being. Finally, the Council of Ministers has decided to optimise the reception of asylum seekers with medical needs, by approving the creation of a specialised reception centre in Leuven.

The [law of 1<sup>st</sup> June 2016](#), entered into force on 8<sup>th</sup> July, has limited the duration of residence permits granted to refugees. Instead of a residence permit of unlimited duration, refugees will receive a five-year residence permit. After five years, a residence permit of unlimited duration will be issued, provided that the status has not been withdrawn.

- ★ **Bulgaria:** On 12<sup>th</sup> April 2016 the Council of Ministers approved the Framework of a National mechanism for the implementation of the EU resettlement scheme, as set out in the EU - Turkey Statement of 18 March 2016. The first pledge to resettle 40 Syrians from Turkey was made on 20 May 2016.

On 14<sup>th</sup> April 2016 two nationals of Syria were relocated from Greece. They have applied for international protection and their requests are currently pending. The admission of nine other Syrians from Greece took place on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016, whilst other 50 nationals of Iraq and Syria should be also transferred over the summer period. Relocation activities from Italy also took place in the reporting period. On 1<sup>st</sup> June 2016, Bulgaria sent its third request of relocation to Italy concerning 50 persons, and in response 15 Eritreans were transferred from Italy.

- ★ **Croatia:** In May 2016, the government developed a draft Operational Plan for the Relocation and Resettlement of third-country nationals or stateless persons eligible for international protection. The Operational Plan determines the criteria for the resettlement of persons under the EU Relocation and Resettlement schemes. It also sets out measures to prepare the resettlement, such as: the transfer of persons to Croatia, their reception, the procedures for granting international protection and their integration.

- ★ **Cyprus:** In the framework of the EU Relocation scheme, Cyprus accepted 12 persons from Italy in May 2016, and 29 persons from Greece in June 2016.

- ★ **Czech Republic:** The Czech Republic has joined the resettlement activities of EU Member States in Turkey in support of the 1:1 principle established by the EU-Turkey agreement of 18<sup>th</sup> March 2016. In April 2016, the Czech Republic requested files, including of vulnerable cases, of 100 Syrian refugees to be resettled from Turkey. At the end of June 2016, UNHCR submitted the first requested files and the Czech authorities are preparing to conduct a selection mission to Turkey in autumn 2016.

- ★ **Estonia:** Until the beginning of July 27 refugees had been relocated from Greece. Furthermore, officers of the asylum service have carried out interviews with refugees in Turkey and the first families should be resettled to Estonia in the following months.

On 1<sup>st</sup> May 2016 new amendments to the law on international protection entered into force, regulating inter alia the process of resettlement and relocation.

- ★ **Finland:** In June 2016, the Finnish Immigration Service adopted [improvements in the processing of asylum applications](#) to address the backlog of asylum cases. Some technical systems were developed, for instance to automate some manual procedural steps. The asylum interviews are under review to make them more effective.

At the end of May 2016, the Finnish Immigration Service decided to [close down 23 reception centres](#) intended for adults and families and 21 units for minors. Most of them will be closed by the end of November. The accommodation capacity will also be reduced in several reception centres which will continue to be operational.

[Requirements for issuing residence permits to asylum seekers were tightened](#) in May 2016. Residence permits based on humanitarian protection are no longer issued. Residence permits on the basis of international protection will include only refugee status or subsidiary protection.

- ★ **France:** An [information note of 19<sup>th</sup> April 2016](#) from the Ministry of the Interior to regional prefects specified the conditions for the payment of the government aid that was introduced following the increase in migration flows in 2015 and 2016. This aid (€1,000 per accommodation place created) should encourage the municipalities to increase the capacity of reception centres or temporary accommodation centres for asylum-seekers. It also aims to make long-term accommodation available for beneficiaries of an international protection between 1 September 2015 and 31 December 2017.
- ★ **Greece:** Law no. 4375 of 2016 changed the conditions regarding access to the labour market for beneficiaries of international protection, international protection applicants and persons granted a residence permit for humanitarian reasons. The most important change was the abolition of the requirement of holding a work permit. Beneficiaries of international protection and those holding a humanitarian permit will only need their residence permit to access the labour market, whilst applicants for international protection will need a valid "applicant for international protection card" or "asylum seeker card". Finally, beneficiaries of international protection acquired the right to participate in educational/training programs for adults, related to employment and vocational training, and counselling services, under the same conditions as Greek citizens.
- ★ **Ireland:** Ireland committed to send experts to help with the [implementation of the EU - Turkey migration agreement](#). Also, the Irish Department for Justice and Equality provided a progress update on the Report of the Working Group on [Improvements to the Protection Process, including Direct Provision and Supports to Asylum seekers](#)
- ★ **Latvia:** From April to June 2016, 33 persons were relocated to Latvia, and a family of six persons was resettled from Turkey.
- ★ **Lithuania:** Up to July 2016, Lithuania had relocated and resettled a total of 19 people from Greece and Turkey.
- ★ **The Netherlands:** In June 2016, the minister for migration further extended the possibility to [revoke or refuse residence permits for asylum seekers in case of criminal offenses](#). While before February 2016 the permits could only be refused or revoked if the applicant was sentenced to 24 months (refugees) or 18 months (beneficiaries of subsidiary protection) of prison, the minimum length was reduced to 10 and 6 months respectively. In June 2016 the minister decided to [tighten the rules further](#). The permits of persons sentenced to a suspended sentence or a community service order can now also be refused or revoked.

In April 2016, the minister for Migration announced the creation of [a separate austere reception facility for asylum seekers causing nuisance](#). In this manner, they will be isolated and punished for their behaviour, allowing the other asylum seekers to stay safely in the reception facility. In doing so, the Minister is responding to a request of the Dutch Lower House.

A number of recent decisions of the Council of State (the highest court in migration matters) showed that the implementation of the Asylum Procedures Directive has led to [a change in legal practice during 2015](#). Indeed, judges of the Council of State are assessing asylum requests more extensively than before. For instance, if the asylum seeker provides evidence to substantiate her/his claim, the court can assess the credibility of her/his story, while this would not have been possible under the old policy.

In April 2016 it was decided that asylum seekers who registered prior to 18<sup>th</sup> February 2016 and were still awaiting a decision on their application, would receive [a personal letter](#) from the deciding authority, the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND). The letter stated that the total period within which the IND has to make a decision is extended from 6 to 15 months. The letter also indicates the final date on which the asylum seeker may expect a decision on his application.

- ★ **Norway:** On 17<sup>th</sup> June 2016, amendments were made to the Norwegian Immigration Act. As a result, the authority will have more grounds to deny access to Norway in a crisis situation and in cases where the asylum seeker has travelled through a safe Nordic country. Moreover, it will be more difficult to be granted asylum in Norway if there are safe areas in the asylum seeker's country of origin. Stricter requirements for family reunification were also introduced. The authorities will also be able to use fingerprinting in order to improve identity checks. Finally, stricter requirements for permanent residence permits were introduced, including: knowledge of the Norwegian language and society, and proof that the applicant has been able to self-support for the last 12 months.

- ★ **Poland:** On 19<sup>th</sup> June the amended regulations on relocation and resettlement entered into force introducing, inter alia, a longer deadline for security screening for relocation and resettlement procedures: from 7 up to 45 days and, in exceptional cases, to 60 days.

During a plenary session of the Episcopate of Poland on refugees in June 2016, Polish bishops supported the establishment of [humanitarian corridors](#) from the Middle East to Poland by Caritas Poland. Such corridors follow the example of the corridors functioning in Italy from Lebanon thanks to the support of the Catholic Church.

In May 2016, dozens of experts from the [Office](#) for Foreigner and the Border Guard were deployed in Greece and Italy to support those countries in managing the migration crisis.

- ★ **Portugal:** In June 2016, in the framework of the European Agenda for Migration, Portugal had relocated 361 persons and resettled 39 persons who were granted international protection status.
- ★ **Sweden:** On 21<sup>st</sup> June 2016, the [Parliament adopted a law](#) that restrained the grounds for international protection and the possibility for family reunification of asylum seekers. Beneficiaries of international protection will receive temporary residence permits instead of permanent ones. Refugees will be granted a residence permit for three years and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection will receive permits for 13 months. Resettled persons will continue to receive permanent permits. Temporary residence permits for international protection are renewable, if the conditions are still met. A permanent residence permit can only be granted if the person has sufficient means to sustain himself/herself. Moreover, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection will have a right to family reunification only in exceptional cases. The new law will enter into force on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2016 and will be in force for three years.

### 3. UNACCOMPANIED MINORS AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

#### EU AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

- ★ On 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2016, [Eurostat released the statistics on asylum seekers considered to be unaccompanied minors](#) (UAMs) in the EU 2015. Whilst between 2008 and 2013 the number of UAMs among asylum seekers ranged between 10,000 and 13,000 in the whole EU, in 2014 the number exceeded 20,000, and, in 2015 it reached the record level of 88,300. The vast majority of them (91%) were male, half of them (51%) Afghan nationals and almost 40% of them (32,250) applied for asylum in Sweden.

#### NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- ★ **Finland:** During May 2016, the Joutseno and Oulu reception centres further developed [ways to help vulnerable asylum seekers](#), with a focus on unaccompanied women and their children. With the support of the Finnish Immigration Service, the reception centres have launched an EU-funded project which aims at developing good practices to be applied by all reception centres, regardless of their size or type, in providing assistance to the said target group.
- ★ **The Netherlands:** In April 2016, the Minister of Migration reported in a [letter to the Parliament](#) that between 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015 and 18<sup>th</sup> January 2016 around 60 underage married females entered the Netherlands. Due to a change in legislation, requests for family reunifications with an underage partner are rejected by the Dutch immigration authority. Moreover, underage married persons entering the Netherlands independently are placed under the authority of a legal guardian. The Dutch authorities are paying special attention to this group in order to prevent abuses and forced marriages.
- ★ **Norway:** The project to develop improved methods or basis for medical age assessments of minors and young adults, financed by the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI), presented its [findings in a report](#) on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2016. The project has involved British, Italian and Norwegian medical, dental and radiological experts in addition to experts in statistics and image analysis.

### 4. LEGAL MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION

#### EU AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

- ★ On 7<sup>th</sup> June 2016, the Commission proposed a [Directive on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of highly skilled employment](#). The new proposal addresses the shortcomings of [the Blue Card Directive \(2009/50/EC\)](#) with the aim of making the EU a more attractive destination for highly skilled workers from third countries. If adopted, the proposed Directive would enhance harmonisation across EU Member States by ruling out national parallel schemes for highly skilled workers; make easier for third-country nationals to obtain a Blue Card by making the admission conditions more flexible and more inclusive; and improve the rights granted to Blue Card holders, including intra-EU mobility rights.

- ★ On the same day, the Commission released an [Action Plan on the Integration of Third-Country Nationals](#), which developed actions for each of the five policy priorities, i.e. pre-departure/pre-arrival measures, education, labour market integration and access vocational training, access to basic services, active participation and social inclusion

#### Judgment of the European Court of Justice Case [C-558/14](#).

In its preliminary ruling of 21 April 2016, the Court of Justice established that Article 7(1)(c) of the Family reunification Directive (2003/86/EC) allows Member States' authorities to refuse an application for family reunification on the basis of a prospective assessment of the likelihood that the sponsor will have the necessary stable and regular resources to maintain himself and the members of his family, without recourse to the social assistance system. National authorities can perform such assessment in the year following the date of submission of that application, based on the pattern of the sponsor's income in the six months preceding that date.

#### NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- ★ **Austria:** On 21<sup>st</sup> June 2016 the Austrian Federal Government adopted an integration package for refugees. The package implemented measures specified in the 50-Point Plan that was presented last November. Key measures of the package include: (i) the increase of language courses and value and orientation courses offered to beneficiaries of international protection and (ii) the facilitation of non-profit employment in municipalities for asylum-seekers who have a high chance of receiving a residence status

- ★ **Belgium:** The [law of 4<sup>th</sup> May 2016](#) stipulated that family members of third-country nationals can obtain a residence permit of unlimited duration after five years, and no longer after three years. During these five years, the Immigration Office may withdraw the residence permit if the family member fails to meet the requirements for family reunification.

Furthermore, [the law of 17<sup>th</sup> May 2016](#), in force since 8<sup>th</sup> July, increased the maximum time limit for processing applications for family reunification from six to nine months. As it was already the case before, in certain cases the nine-month period can be extended twice by three month-periods.

- ★ **Bulgaria:** During the reporting period, a special ordinance has been elaborated which regulates the terms and conditions of the conclusion, implementation and termination of an "integration agreement" with persons granted international protection. This ordinance is to be soon adopted by the Council of Ministers and its practical implementation will begin in the following weeks. In accordance with the ordinance, the State Agency for Refugees shall draw up integration profiles of third-country nationals and inform them of the possibility to conclude an integration agreement. Among other tasks, the Agency will organise all activities to support the introduction of eligible persons into municipalities, including conducting information campaigns and providing information to the municipality.

On the other hand, municipalities are expected to provide integration-related services, such as: housing, enrolment of minors at kindergarten and schools, courses of Bulgarian language; health care, professional orientation and inclusion of adults in training programmes. The host municipality will draft an Individual integration plan with the beneficiary of international protection after conducting an assessment of the social needs in each case. The Integration plan will be implemented for a period of at least one year and it will include clearly defined integration steps, concrete activities, as well as timeframes for their implementation and the expected results. Partners in the realisation of the integration agreement are a number of public institutions at national and local level, as well as international organisations and NGOs.

- ★ **Estonia:** An amendment to the Aliens Act entered into force on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2016. The amendment foresees the possibility to issue a temporary residence permit for third-country nationals for settling permanently in Estonia, under the following conditions: the obligation to leave Estonia would be unduly burdensome for the person, s/he lacks the possibility of getting a residence permit on another basis and s/he is not a threat to public order and national security.

- ★ **Finland:** The [Ministry of Interior launched a project](#) to reform the residence permit system for investors, entrepreneurs and experts coming from third countries. The reform aims to address the changes in the business world in order to attract foreign investors, entrepreneurs and leading experts to Finland.

In June 2016, [amendments to the Aliens Act were ratified](#) with the consequence that the processing of all residence permit applications will be handled by the Finnish Immigration Service as from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017. However, visas and Schengen C-visas will still be issued by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

- ★ **Ireland:** From 1<sup>st</sup> July 2016, applications for non-EEA fishing crew members will only be accepted from persons outside of Ireland under revisions to the [Working Scheme for undocumented workers in the fishing industry - Non-EEA Crew Members \(Irish Fishing Fleet\)](#).

- ★ **Latvia:** An Information Centre for Immigrants (ICI) opened in Riga and four other centres opened in the Latvian regions of Daugavpils, Jelgava, Cēsis and Liepāja. The aim of these centres is to ensure a sustainable coordination system to support immigrants at the national level. Their operation will be ensured by the society "Shelter "Safe House"" within the framework of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Foundation project

- ★ **Lithuania:** The Government of Lithuania has proposed to issue temporarily residence permits for foreigners intending to start innovative businesses in Lithuania (start-ups) as well as to consider experience as a proof of higher qualifications if diplomas are not available. The proposals are being debated in the Parliament.
- ★ **Netherlands:** In the second quarter of 2016, [municipalities have struggled to meet the target of housing](#) to be provided to beneficiaries of international protection. Currently, 16,000 international protection beneficiaries are housed in asylum seeker centres and are waiting to be assigned their own apartment or house by a municipality. The backlog of beneficiaries in reception centres also bears the risk that newly arriving asylum seekers cannot be received. Hence, the Dutch authorities could be forced to accommodate asylum seekers in emergency reception facilities (e.g. gyms) as already happened in the past.
 

On 12<sup>th</sup> May 2016, the Social and Economic Council [launched the website 'Employment pointer for Refugees'](#) ('Werkwijzer Vluchtelingen'). This website aims to help employers, non-governmental organizations and professional institutions to integrate refugees in the labour market by collecting, presenting and linking information on immigration law and policy, supporting organisations and best practices.

In April 2016, the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment agreed with the Employee Insurance Agency (UWV), who is implementing labour market policies, to [reduce from five to two weeks](#) the time needed for the access of beneficiaries of international protection and asylum seekers to perform voluntary work. Allowing voluntary work is seen as an important measure to stimulate the integration of third-country nationals.

Since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2013 third-country nationals are responsible for the preparation of the compulsory civic integration examination they have to pass after having stayed for three years in the Netherlands. In April 2016, figures showed that only 48% of all third-country nationals that had to pass the exam by end of March 2016 completed it successfully. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment will examine possible measures to increase the number of persons passing the exam.

Finally, in order to implement the Intra-Corporate Transferees Directive the Dutch government put forward a [legislative proposal](#) in June 2016. The law will make it easier for international companies to transfer highly educated third-country nationals from one country to another. Intra-Corporate Transferees will receive a combined residence and work permit.
- ★ **Poland:** As a result of wide consultations with local community, Gdańsk (as a first city in Poland) [adopted](#) its own comprehensive Model of Integration of Foreigners in July 2016.
 

Due to the new migration situation in Europe, including new challenges for integration of foreigners, the Ministry of the Interior and Administration decided to cancel two calls for project proposals under the AMIF and to publish two new calls for pre-integration and integration projects. The decision was criticised by NGOs which claimed that delays in the allocation of EU funds for integration projects were a serious problem, as their activities were largely dependent on such funding.

On 30<sup>th</sup> May, the President [signed](#) the amended Act on the Card of the Pole (to enter into force on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017) which provides for more beneficial provisions addressed to people of Polish origin (holding the Card of the Pole), including, inter alia, facilitated access to citizenship, exceptions from various fees and a new integration benefit.

In May, the [Ukrainian Workers' Trade Union](#) was established as a response to a growing need to support Ukrainian workers who are facing exploitation in the Polish labour market. This is the first trade union of migrant workers in Poland.

In June 2016, [an agreement with China](#) on mutual recognition of diplomas and professional titles in higher education was signed. The aim is to facilitate the mobility of students between the two countries, as the number of Chinese studying in Poland in the past years remained low.
- ★ **Spain:** On 8<sup>th</sup> June 2016, the Monitoring Committee of the Framework Convention on Institutional Cooperation against Racism, Xenophobia and Other Forms of Intolerance was created. The Committee consists of representatives of the General Council of the Judiciary, General Attorney, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality, Ministry of Employment and Social Security, and Centre for Legal Studies. The priority actions of the Committee are focused on the prevention and awareness of legal operators and other professional groups against racism, xenophobia and intolerance. The Commission will also supervise the improvement of statistical data, the collection of the number of complaints analysed, the types of criminal offences recorded, and the decisions based on racial hatred and intolerance. The Commission has decided to open participation to other agents related to the content of the Convention: from public administrations to civil society, as well as to some observers who can contribute to the fight to racism, xenophobia, discrimination and intolerance.

## 5. MANAGEMENT OF THE EU EXTERNAL BORDERS

### EU DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

- ★ On 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2016, the Council and the European Parliament reached an agreement on the Commission's [Proposal for a Regulation establishing the European Border and Coast Guard](#), which would reinforce Frontex' mandate

and enable the EU Agency to support Member States in managing the external borders. The Council endorsed the agreement on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2016 and the Parliament approved it on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2016.

- ★ On 12<sup>th</sup> May 2015, the [Council adopted the Commission's Recommendation](#) dated 4<sup>th</sup> May on **prolonging proportionate border controls within the Schengen area**, as allowed by the [Schengen Borders Code](#), in Germany, Austria, Sweden, Denmark and Norway. The aim was to prevent secondary movements of irregular migrants from Greece. The internal controls would have a maximum duration of six months, and after that period the normal functioning of the Schengen area was expected to be replaced, as foreseen by the [Back to Schengen Roadmap](#) approved in March 2016. The Commission already noted in the [Assessment of Greece's Action Plan to remedy the serious deficiencies identified in the 2015 evaluation on the application of the Schengen acquis in the field of management of the external border](#) that Greece made significant progresses in addressing the weakness in managing the external borders and applying the Schengen acquis. However, some shortcomings still needed to be addressed. Greece would report back to the Commission in August 2016 and the Commission would continue to provide assistance.
- ★ On 4<sup>th</sup> May 2016 the Commission approved the [Fourth report on progress by Kosovo in fulfilling the requirements of the visa liberalisation roadmap](#) in which it ascertained that all the requirements had been fulfilled by Kosovo. As a consequence, on the same day, the [Commission proposed to include Kosovo in the list of visa-free countries for short stays in the Schengen area](#) (up to 90 days), by amending [Regulation No 539/2001](#).
- ★ On 20<sup>th</sup> April 2016, following the [Fifth Progress Report on the Implementation by Ukraine of the Action Plan on Visa Liberalisation](#) adopted in May 2015, the [Commission proposed](#) to include Ukraine in the list of countries whose citizens did not require a visa to enter the Schengen area for short stays (up to 90 days).
- ★ As part of the EU Turkey Statement, on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2016, [the Commission proposed to lift the visa requirements for Turkey citizens](#), under the condition that Turkey would fulfill, as a matter of urgency, the outstanding requirements of the Visa Liberalisation Roadmap outlined in the [Third Report on progress by Turkey in fulfilling the requirements of its visa liberalisation roadmap](#).

#### NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- ★ **Czech Republic:** The new Act on Control of the State Border of the Czech Republic (No. 191/2016) was published on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2016 and will come into force on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2016. The new Act makes the legal regulation more intelligible, modern and fully adapted to the stable and long-term involvement of the Czech Republic and the neighbouring states in the Schengen cooperation. In connection with the Schengen Borders Code, the new Act regulates the control of the state border of the Czech Republic. It lays down the conditions for establishing a border crossing point at an international airport, the obligations of captains and airport operators, procedural rules for the temporary reintroduction of controls at the internal borders, as well as related administrative offences.
- ★ **Poland:** A [temporary reintroduction of internal border controls](#) and temporary suspension of Local Border Traffic agreement with Russia and Ukraine occurred as of 4<sup>th</sup> July 2016 in preparation for the July's World Youth Day in Krakow and the NATO summit in Warsaw.

The [Carpathian Border Guard](#) Unit (located in southern Poland), abolished in 2013, was restored in May 2016 with the aim to better address potential impacts of change in migratory routes in the context of migration crisis.

## 6. IRREGULAR MIGRATION AND RETURN

#### EU DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

- ★ On 27<sup>th</sup> June 2016, [Europol published the latest trends in migrants' smuggling](#) and reported on the profiles of more than 7,000 newly-identified suspects involved in migrants' smuggling since the beginning of 2016.
- ★ On 9<sup>th</sup> June 2016, Frontex published the [Guide for Joint Return Operations by Air coordinated by Frontex](#), with the aim to standardise and simplify the procedures in joint return operations. The Guide would complement [Directive 2004/573/EC on the organisation of joint flights for removals from the territory of two or more Member States, of third-country nationals who are subjects of individual removal orders](#)

#### NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- ★ **Belgium:** At the initiative of the State Secretary for Asylum Policy and Migration, the in-cash departure support granted to Afghan and Iraqi asylum seekers who opt for a voluntary return has been temporarily doubled. At the airport, before departure and under certain conditions, each adult will receive 500 EUR (instead of 250 EUR) and

#### Judgment of the European Court of Justice Case [C-47/15](#).

The Court of Justice ruling of 7<sup>th</sup> June 2016, pointed out that the scope of Return Directive (2008/115/EC) includes the situation of a third-country national who, without fulfilling the conditions for entry, stay or residence, passes in transit through a Member State as a passenger on a bus from another Member State of the Schengen area, directed to a third Member State outside that area.

However, the provisions of the Directive preclude the imprisonment of a third country national in respect of whom the return procedure has not yet been completed, merely on account of illegal entry across an internal border. Indeed, such imprisonment is likely to impede the return procedure and delay return, thereby undermining the directive's effectiveness.

each accompanied minor will receive € 250 (instead of € 125). Furthermore, starting on 15<sup>th</sup> June, the Belgian reception agency (Fedasil) and IOM will offer [specific reintegration support to Afghan returnees](#).

- ★ **Finland:** A delegation of Finnish officials led by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of the Interior, Päivi Nerg, negotiated the [return of Afghan asylum seekers](#) with the authorities of Afghanistan early this week in Kabul. It was agreed during the negotiations that Finland and Afghanistan will enhance cooperation in the return arrangements for those returning to their home country voluntarily.
- ★ **Germany:** The Bundestag – the lower house of the Parliament – has approved a Government’s proposal to add Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia to the list of safe countries of origin. This legislative amendment aims to reduce the number of asylum-seekers from these countries in Germany. Asylum applications of nationals from these countries can be processed in a fast-track procedure, to speed up also the return procedure. The Green Party strongly opposed the designation of these three countries as safe countries of origin, arguing that migrants returned to the North African countries could face torture and that there are grounds for persecution of political opponents and homosexuals. The Minister of Interior defended the proposal, claiming that a large number of people from the three mentioned countries come to Germany "for reasons that are not connected to asylum." The Minister also noted that in the first quarter of 2016, only 0.7 percent of applicants from the three countries were granted international protection, whilst, in 2015, about 2 percent of their applications were approved. The draft law will now pass to the Bundesrat - the upper house of parliament - before it can be implemented.
- ★ **Lithuania:** In May 2016, IOM Vilnius re-started its assisted voluntary return programmes.
- ★ **The Netherlands:** In April 2016, the Minister of Foreign Affairs [concluded an agreement on migration with Côte d’Ivoire](#). The agreement, among other things, should facilitate the readmission of rejected asylum seekers by issuing more travel documents.

The government agreed on [longer terms of imprisonment for smuggling](#) in May 2016. The maximum punishment was increased from four to six years. If smuggling takes place in the exercise of a profession, the maximum prison sentence is eight years instead of six. If the activities are carried out while acting in a professional capacity or as part of an organised group, the maximum prison sentence is 10 years instead of the current 8. In case of serious injury or death as a consequence of smuggling, the sanction is of 15 and 18 years respectively. This measure came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2016.

- ★ **Portugal:** Between April and June 2016, migration experts were provided ad-hoc training and knowledge regarding the EU / Turkey agreement.
- ★ **Sweden:** On 1<sup>st</sup> June 2016, an [amendment](#) to the Reception of Asylum Seekers Act came into force. The amendment provides that asylum applicants who receive a refusal of entry or an expulsion order are no longer entitled to accommodation and daily allowance, once the deadline for voluntary return expires. The amendment does not apply to adults living with children under 18 years who maintain the right to assistance until they leave Sweden.
- ★ **United Kingdom:** On Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2016, the Immigration Bill received royal assent (becoming the Immigration Act 2016) introducing a series of reforms to crack down further on illegal migration. The new measures will tackle the exploitation of low-skilled workers by making it an offence to employ irregularly staying migrants, ensure that only people living lawfully in the UK can have access to services such as UK bank accounts and rental accommodation, and increase powers to make it easier to remove people who have no right to be in the UK.

## 7. ACTIONS ADDRESSING TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

### EU DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

- ★ On 19<sup>th</sup> May 2016, the [Commission reported on the the progress made in the fight against trafficking in human beings](#), as required by [Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims](#). The document described the trends and challenges in addressing trafficking in human beings and the results of the actions taken to fight the phenomenon. The Report also recommended further actions to Member States to comprehensively tackle all aspects related to human trafficking, including early identification of the victims, data collections, prosecuting perpetrators, addressing the exploitation demands and providing protection and assistance, especially to the most vulnerable victims.

### NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- ★ **Cyprus:** Cyprus has advanced to Tier I in the "Trafficking in Persons Report 2016", published by the US State Department on 30<sup>th</sup> June. Moreover, the Head of the Anti-trafficking Unit of the Cyprus Police, Ms Rita Superman, has been honoured by the US State Department with the title "Trafficking in Persons Hero" for devoting her life to the fight against human trafficking.
- ★ **France:** The [law of 13<sup>th</sup> April 2016 against prostitution](#) contained new measures in favour of foreign victims. Victims of human trafficking or smuggling who cooperate will have full access to a temporary residence permit renewable during the length of the criminal process. Moreover, a dedicated path of social and professional integration for those getting out of prostitution has been implemented. The path includes the issuance of a temporary residence authorisation of at least six months (unless their presence constitutes a threat to public order). This temporary

authorisation gives access to employment and is renewable during the length of the dedicated program, as long as the conditions are fulfilled (regarding exiting prostitution and pursuing social and professional integration).

- ★ **Poland:** The Ministry of the Interior and Administration launched an awareness-rising campaign on human trafficking and risks related to taking up job abroad. It is mainly addressed to young people who are looking for jobs during summer holidays.
- ★ **Portugal:** In the second quarter of 2016, migration officers attended several conferences and training sessions related to the prevention, fight and punishment of trafficking in human beings (THB) in order to increase their knowledge on the topic.

Furthermore, in June 2016 the study “Trafficking in persons and criminal proceedings” was published. In the same month, the 1<sup>st</sup> Trimestral Report on THB in Portugal and the IX Conference on Missing Children took place. Also, the Lisbon Regional Network for the Assistance and Support to THB Victims was formally launched in April.

## 8. EXTERNAL DIMENSION

- ★ On 14<sup>th</sup> June 2016, the [Commission adopted six measures](#) under the [Emergency Trust Fund for Africa](#) to improve stability and tackle the root causes of migration and displacement of persons in the Sahel region and the Lake Chad Basin. These included measures for borders management, facilitating return and reintegration, fighting human trafficking and smuggling of persons; but also strengthening the skills of the population, promoting development and improving security. In total, the measures amounted to € 146 million and were applied both at the regional and national (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Chad and Gambia) level.
- ★ On 7<sup>th</sup> June 2016, the Commission adopted a [Communication on establishing a new Partnership Framework with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration](#). The aim of the Partnership Framework was to provide comprehensive and coherent partnerships (so called compacts) with third countries to improve the management of migration. These would serve three short-term objectives, i.e. saving lives, increasing the return rates, and preventing migrants and refugees from taking dangerous journeys to reach Europe and encouraging them to stay closer to their home country. The long-term objective would be to address the root causes of migration, through the synergies created by migration, trade and development policies, and the involvement of an External Investment Fund.

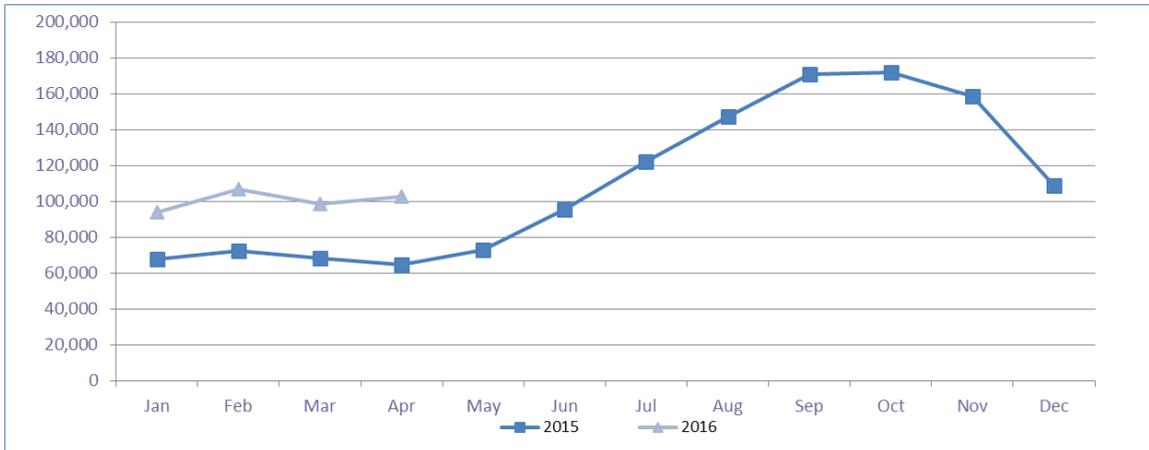
### NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- ★ **Czech Republic:** the Government has decided to provide financial assistance to support third countries heavily affected by the current refugee/migration crisis, as well as to refugees, internally displaced persons and their host communities. From April until June 2016, financial assistance for a total of 35.7 million CZK (equivalent to around € 1.3 million) was provided to Iraq, Western Balkans, Ukraine and countries of the Horn of Africa. The assistance of the Czech Republic is provided via the Ministry of the Interior *Program for Assistance to Refugees in Regions of Origin and for Prevention of Migration Flows*, whose total financial allocation for 2016 amounts to 150 million CZK (around € 5.5 million). Assistance concerns four priority regions – Middle East and Turkey, Western Balkans, North Africa and the Horn of Africa region and Ukraine.

# ANNEX: EU & COMPLEMENTARY STATISTICS, ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, OTHER EMN OUTPUTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

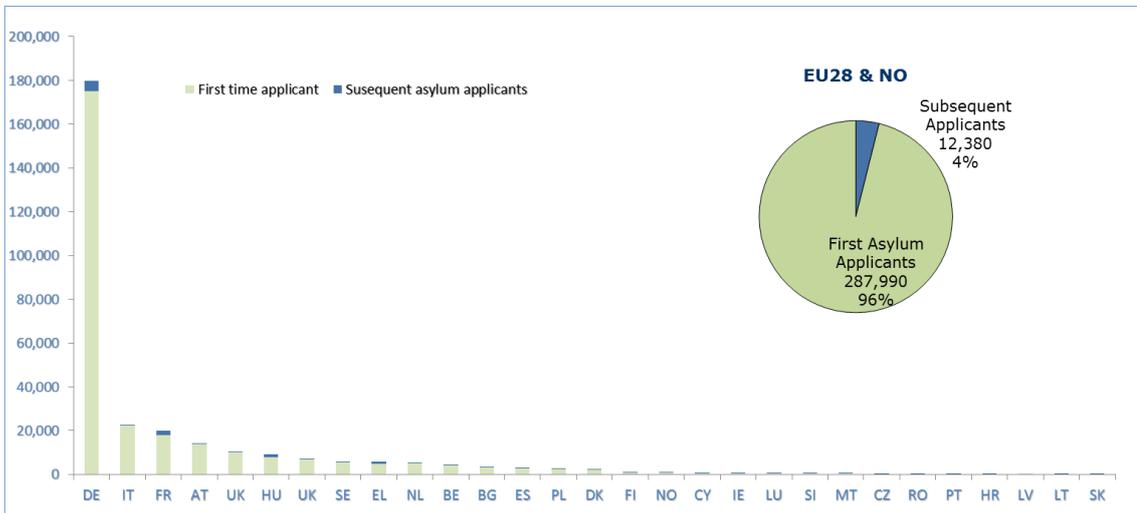
## EU Figures

Figure 1a: Asylum applications in EU-28, January 2015 – May 2016.



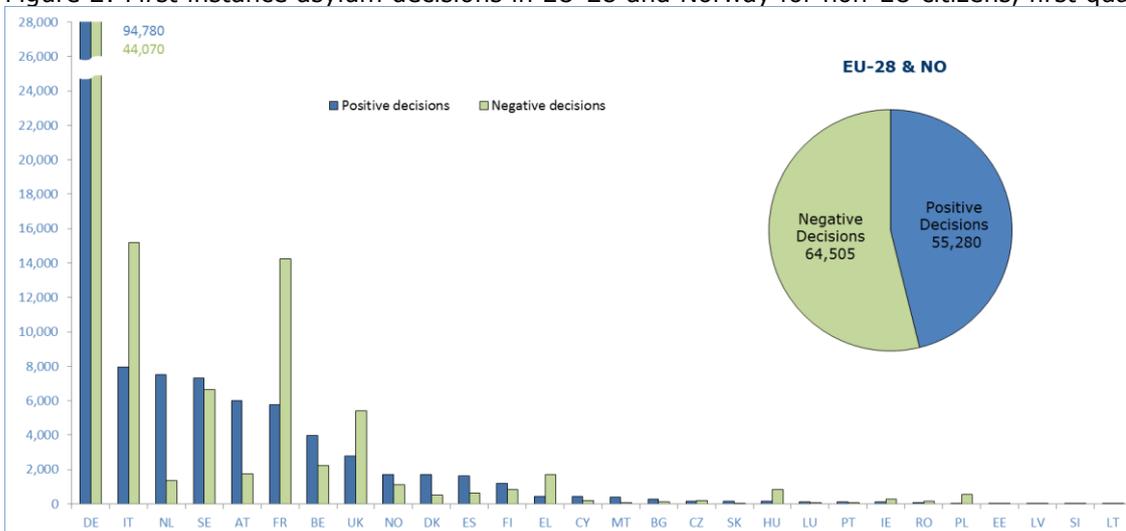
Source: Eurostat [[migr\\_asyappctzm](#)], accessed on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2016.

Figure 1b: First time asylum applicants and subsequent applicants (together, total asylum applicants) in Q1 2016 (January-March), in EU-28 and Norway (quarterly data)



Source: Eurostat [[migr\\_asyappctzm](#)], accessed on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2016

Figure 2: First instance asylum decisions in EU-28 and Norway for non-EU citizens, first quarter 2016 (quarterly data)



Source: Eurostat [[migr\\_asydcfstq](#)], accessed on 29<sup>st</sup> July 2016 – Negative decisions include also “Dublin decisions” (according to Art. 4, EC Regulation n. 862/2007).

Figure 4a: Illegal border crossing in 2015 – Top nationalities (in %)

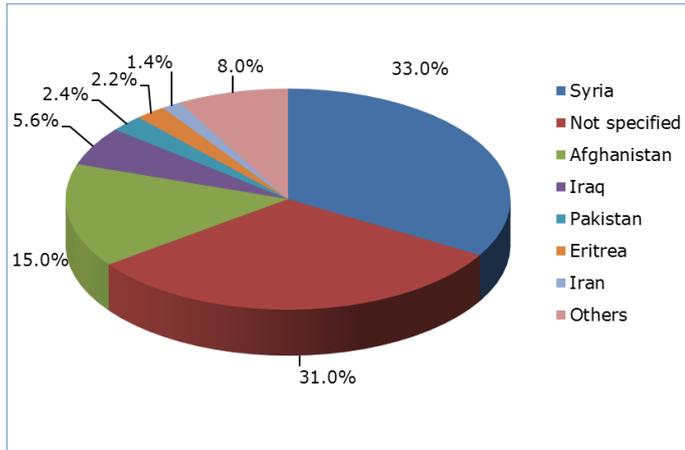


Figure 4b: Refused entry in 2015 – Top nationalities (in %)

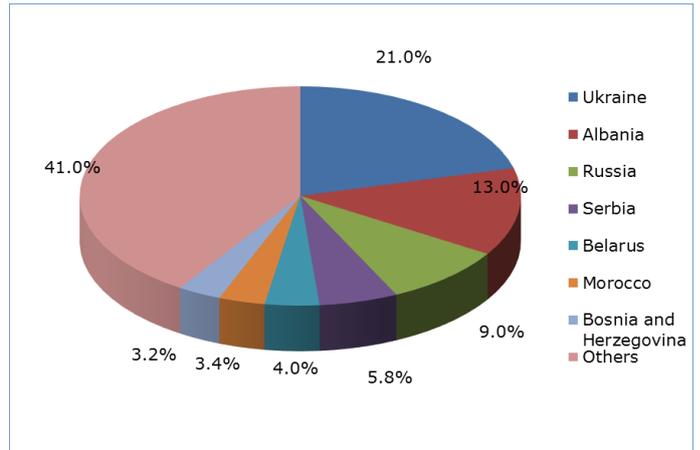


Figure 4c: Illegal stay in 2015 – Top nationalities (in %)

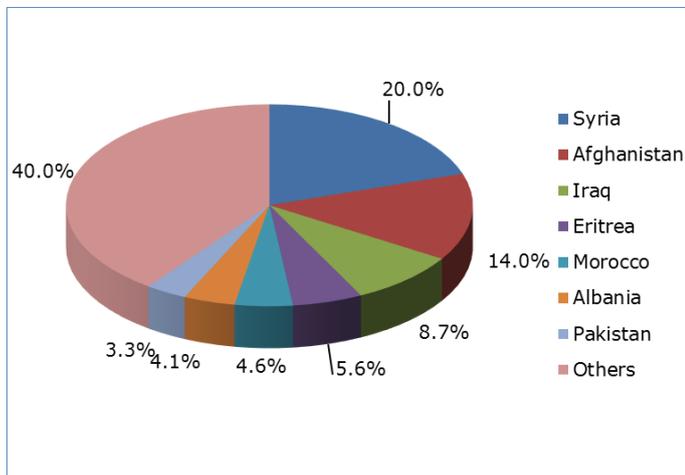
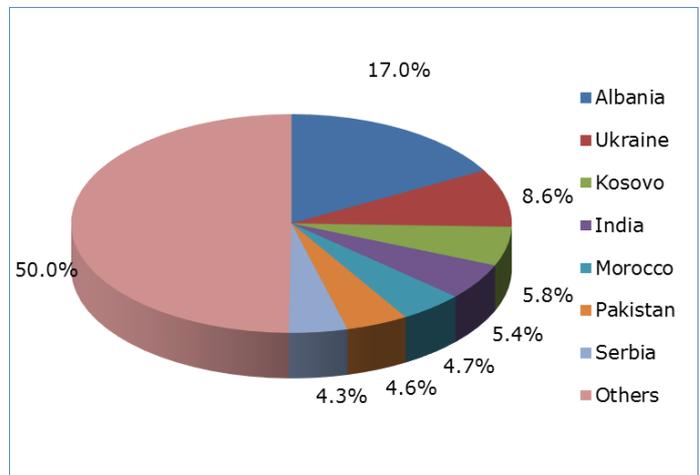


Figure 4d: Effective return in 2015 – Top nationalities (in %)



Source: [FRONTEX ARA Report 2016](#) (January – December 2015)

## Latest available national statistics

### IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMON EUROPEAN ASYLUM SYSTEM

- ★ **Austria:** the Federal Ministry of the Interior published [data on the asylum applications](#) for April and May 2016. According to them, 4,173 persons sought for asylum in April and 3,795 in May. From January to May 2016, there have been 22,435 asylum applications, which represent an increase of 7.85% compared to the same period in 2015 (20,802 applications in 2015).
- ★ **Poland:** In the first 6 months of 2016, there have been almost 7,000 asylum applications, which represent an increase of 66% compared to the same period in 2015.
- ★ **United Kingdom:** The Office for National Statistics' [Migration Statistics Quarterly](#) (produced with Home Office, Department for Work and Pensions and National Records of Scotland) was published on the 26<sup>th</sup> of May. This provides quarterly data on UK migration flows, visas, asylum and settlement.

### UNACCOMPANIED MINORS AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

- ★ **Finland:** Recently, there have been reports of disappearances of unaccompanied minor asylum seekers. According to a [review carried out by the Finnish Immigration Service](#) published in May, a total of 30 unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors have disappeared in Finland since 2014.

### LEGAL MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION

- ★ **Austria:** On 14<sup>th</sup> June 2016 [Statistics Austria reported](#) that in 2015 Austria recorded a net migration gain of 113,067 persons. This represents a significant increase of 56% compared to 2014, when the net migration gain was only 72,324 persons. The increase was mainly caused by net migration of third-country nationals (+77,005 persons), among which the highest were Syrians (+21,903 persons) and Afghans (+18,609 persons).
- ★ **Lithuania:** In 2015 Lithuania issued almost 300 Blue Cards. The majority of Blue Card holders come from Ukraine, Russian Federation, Belarus and USA. As of 1<sup>st</sup> June 2016, 344 Blue card holders are residing in Lithuania
- ★ **Poland:** [In the first half of 2016](#), the number of foreigners applying for temporary residence permit increased by almost 40% (55,468) compared to the same period in 2015. At the same time, the number of persons who applied for long-term residence permits decreased by almost 12% (6,574). Also, in the period January-May more than 500,000 [employer's declarations of intent to hire a foreigner](#) (addressed to citizens of Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, Armenia, Georgia and Moldova) were registered (in the first half of 2015 - nearly 411,000). According to the estimates, the number of declarations in 2016 may reach a record-high number of 1 million. According to the most recent data of the Central Statistical Office, the number of foreigners studying in Poland in academic year 2015/2016 increase by almost 24%, compared to 2014/2015.

### IRREGULAR MIGRATION AND RETURN

- ★ **Finland:** At the beginning of the year, a [record number of foreign nationals returned home](#) through assisted voluntary return. February saw the highest ever number of returnees, 176. Almost as many, 173, returned in March. Iraq is still the most common country of return. In March, 60 people returned to Iraq. The second highest number of people (42) returned to Albania, and the third highest number of people (30) re-turned to Afghanistan.
- ★ **Poland:** In the first 6 months of 2016, the number of foreigners refused entry more than doubled (42,300; largely due to a high increase of citizens of Russia, Tajikistan and Armenia refused entry) compared to the same period in 2015. The number of foreigners apprehended for illegal border crossing and foreigners found to be illegally present increased in the first half by 9% and 42% respectively, compared to the same period of 2015. According to the results of the National Labour Inspectorate [inspections](#), in 2015 Poland recorded a 29% increase in a number of foreigners working illegally (1,122 third country nationals, mainly Ukrainians), compared to previous year.
- ★ **United Kingdom:** Home Office [Immigration Statistics January to March 2016](#) were published on 25<sup>th</sup> February. They provide the latest UK figures on those subject to immigration control, for the period up to year ending March 2016. Topics included: admissions, visas, asylum, settlement, citizenship, detention, removals and voluntary departures.

## Updates on EU legislation transposition

### LEGAL MIGRATION

- ★ **Finland:** On 29<sup>th</sup> June 2016, an [amendment tightened the family reunification criteria](#) to comply with the EU Family Reunification Directive. In the future, to exercise their right to family reunification, beneficiaries of international protection will be required to prove that they have sufficient means of subsistence.
- ★ **Poland:** The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy prepared draft [amendments](#) to the 2004 Act on employment promotion and labour market institutions, with a view of transposing the so-called seasonal workers directive. The proposal provides for a fundamental redesign of a current so-called system of employer's declarations of intent to hire a foreigner (addressed to citizens of Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, Armenia, Georgia and Moldova). Currently, inter-ministerial consultations on the proposed changes are taking place.

## Other EMN outputs and upcoming events (see also the [EMN website](#))

- ★ **Croatia:** Within the framework of the Croatian Salzburg Forum Presidency, a Ministerial Conference was held in Dubrovnik, on 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> June 2016. The Conference focused on the area of regular and irregular migration and asylum, challenges related to border management at the European and the regional level and similar issues. In the Conference participated Member States authorities, the countries of the "Group of Friends" as well as the representatives of European institutions and agencies, international organisations and partners. A strategic framework for action until the end of 2016 was adopted, together with a Joint Declaration which contains guidelines for further action and dialogue in the field of internal affairs.
- ★ **Spain:** The General Secretariat for Immigration and Emigration organised an Information Seminar entitled "Social Protection provided for migrants in Morocco and in Spain" in Madrid on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2016. The aim was to inform the associations of Moroccans residing in Spain about their access to social protection in Spain and vice versa.

The Spanish EMN NCP organized the Third EMN National Conference entitled "Migration and Development: Cooperation with Countries of Origin and Transit". The Conference was held on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2016 in Madrid at the premises of the General Secretariat for Immigration and Emigration, Ministry of Employment and Social Security. It focused on discussing the linkages between migration and development and to identify better practices and challenges on cooperation with third countries.