

## Refugees face winter conditions

Refugees made the headlines once again this winter, as thousands of asylum seekers in Greece, Bulgaria and across the Western Balkans faced heavy snow and sub-zero temperatures in reception centres unprepared for the harsh conditions. At least three asylum seekers [died](#) in the overcrowded Moria reception centre on the island of Lesbos, demonstrating persistent deficiencies in the Greek asylum system. In Bulgaria, two Iraqi men and a Somali woman died of [hypothermia](#) while attempting to cross the border from Turkey.

Despite the poor conditions, the European Commission [recommended](#) the gradual resumption of Dublin transfers to Greece from 15 March onward. This was criticised by [ECRE](#) and other NGOs, which argue that the move is premature. The Commission also recommended the [prolongation](#) of internal border controls in Austria, Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Norway due to continued migratory pressure, which was swiftly approved by the Council of the EU.

## Resumption of returns to Greece recommended

Meanwhile, as Malta took over the rotating European Council presidency at the beginning of the year, external cooperation – particularly with Libya – became a flagship initiative right at the start of Malta's six-month term. At the Valletta informal summit on 3 February 2017, European leaders [agreed](#) to intensify cooperation with Libya through capacity building, development assistance, return programmes and information campaigns.

Progress on other pressing issues varies. The reform of the Dublin Regulation is essentially frozen, but a compromise was reached between the Council and European Parliament on amending the Schengen Borders Code, with a large majority of MEPs approving the initiative in a plenary vote. The European Parliament mid-term presidential [election](#) in January 2017 that brought Antonio Tajani to power does not appear to have a major impact on migration-related files, as he has vowed to refrain from an interventionist approach to the presidency and LIBE committee leaders have largely remained the same.

## Plan to close Central Mediterranean route

# CONTENTS

- 1 • SPECIAL FOCUS** European Council seeks closure of Central Mediterranean route .
- 3 • POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS** EU-Mali discord over readmission . Diplomatic spat highlights fragility of EU-Turkey Statement .
- 4 • LEGISLATIVE DEVELOPMENTS** Agreement to reinforce checks at external Schengen borders . Commission recommends resumption of Dublin transfers to Greece . Commission curbs social benefits for mobile EU citizens . Developments in negotiations over CEAS reform proposals . Prolongation of internal border controls .
- 7 • ECJ CASE LAW & LEGAL ACTIONS** Interpretation of clause for exclusion from refugee status . The right to be heard and subsidiary protection . Interpretation of Art. 17(1) Dublin III Regulation .
- 8 • A CLOSER LOOK... FROM EPIM GRANTEES** Forum Réfugiés-Cosi .
- 10 • FACTS & FIGURES** Commission Report on Relocation and Resettlement . UNHCR Statistics on Arrivals . Frontex estimates of arrivals at EU borders in 2016 . UNICEF figures on unaccompanied children . Recent Reports . Funding Opportunities .
- 13 • EU CALENDAR: UPCOMING EVENTS** EU Institutions . Other Events .

## SPECIAL FOCUS



## EU leaders seek closure of Central Med route

**Children and Youth** | **Immigration Detention** | **CEAS**

In 2016, approximately 181,000 migrants left Libya and travelled to Italy. Since the EU-Turkey Statement was signed in March 2016, the central Mediterranean route has

become the main entry point for maritime arrivals to the EU. Malta, current holder of the presidency of the Council of the EU, has [made calls](#) for the flow of migrants through the central Mediterranean to be stopped at the source. Maltese Prime Minister Joseph Muscat called for an arrangement with Libya to be put in place stating that “There is no doubt that unless the essence of the Turkey deal is replicated in the central Mediterranean, Europe will face a major migration crisis.”

On 25 January 2017, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European Commission released a [Joint Communication](#) addressing migration on the central Mediterranean route. The Joint Communication made several broad policy recommendations to address the challenges posed by the central Mediterranean route. The Communication pledged assistance to Libya and its neighbours in reducing the number of people leaving Libyan shores with the intention of reaching Italy. This assistance included an increase in funding, the deployment of EU missions, increasing resettlement and fighting smugglers and traffickers through EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia and the Libyan Coast Guard. However, High Representative Federica Mogherini and the Commissioner for Migration and Home Affairs, Dimitris Avramopoulos, both [ruled out](#) the possibility of replicating the EU-Turkey Statement with Libya.

On 2 February 2017, a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) was signed by Italy and Libya which set out a framework for increased cooperation on matters related to migration. Strong bilateral relations between Italy and Libya are seen as being crucial to any plans for maritime interception and return in particular, and would need to mirror the relationship between Greece and Turkey, which underpins the EU-Turkey Statement. However, even more so than with Turkey, returning irregular migrants to Libya is deeply controversial given the levels of violence and general instability in that country.

The Maltese presidency’s proposals, together with the Commission and High Representative’s Joint Communication and the Italy-Libya Memorandum of Understanding set the scene for the European Council’s informal meeting in Malta on 3 February 2017. EU heads of state and government continued a growing tendency to tackle migration through a [security-oriented approach](#), which endorsed the arguments advanced by the Maltese presidency. A [Declaration](#) on the external aspects of migration with a focus on the central Mediterranean maritime migration route was adopted. The Declaration welcomed the Maltese presidency’s initiative while also stating the Council’s intention of acting “in full respect of human rights, international law and European values, and in conjunction with UNHCR and IOM.” It also endorsed the Joint Communication of the Commission and the High Representative. In addition, the Council stated that it would work to further develop “external migration policy in order to make it resilient for future crises.”

**“EU heads of state and government predictably continued a growing tendency to tackle migration through a security-oriented approach”**

On 6 February, the Foreign Affairs Council met and issued [Conclusions](#) which recognised “the need for Libyan ownership in helping to address irregular migration flows” and stated that “the EU will continue its activities through different complementary and coordinated activities...”

The question thus remains as to whether future policy initiatives will in any way reflect the EU-Turkey Statement. More specifically, it is unclear whether future policy will include the interception and return of migrants at sea to Libya. In any case, the calls made by the Maltese presidency and endorsed by the European Council have certainly stoked

debate as to the implications of any such policy changes as the EU searches for the “[silver bullet](#)” that would close the central Mediterranean route.

## POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS



### EU-Mali discord over readmission

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The challenges of working with African countries on migration became evident in December 2016, when Dutch Foreign Minister Bert Koenders travelled to Bamako in order to sign an agreement on migration cooperation on behalf of the EU. The Dutch foreign ministry issued a [statement](#) claiming that it was the first time the EU had adopted such specific agreements with an African country on the return of failed asylum seekers.

However, the Malian government subsequently [denied](#) that a readmission agreement had been signed, and requested a confirmation that only a [joint communiqué](#) on collaboration was agreed. Only a few weeks later, the Malian authorities [refused](#) to accept two migrants who were deported to Mali from France using European “laissez-passer” travel documents, and warned airlines not to let people using such documents to fly to Mali. The move came after strong local criticism against measures to deter migrants.

### Diplomatic spat shows fragility of EU-Turkey deal

Children and Youth | Immigration Detention | CEAS

On 27 January 2017, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu [said](#) that Turkey would consider ending migration cooperation with Greece after the extradition of eight fugitive

**“The entire agreement would likely fail if Greece were no longer able to send irregular arrivals back to Turkey”**

Turkish soldiers was blocked by the Greek Supreme Court. The soldiers fled Turkey after an attempted coup on 15 July 2016, and are accused of treason by the Turkish government. Çavuşoğlu claimed that the Court’s decision was politically motivated, but Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras pointed to the

Court’s independence in its response. Although Çavuşoğlu’s comments referred to a bilateral readmission agreement between Turkey and Greece rather than the EU-Turkey Statement signed in March 2016, the former is a key [element](#) of the latter. The entire agreement would likely fail if Greece were no longer able to send irregular arrivals back to Turkey. This confrontation comes only a few months after Turkish President Recep

Tayyip Erdoğan [threatened](#) to allow refugees to reach Europe after the European Parliament voted to halt Turkey's EU accession negotiations.

## LEGISLATIVE DEVELOPMENTS



### Reinforced checks at Schengen borders agreed

CEAS

On 7 December 2016, the Permanent Representatives Committee (Coreper) of the Council [adopted](#) a compromise text agreed with the European Parliament concerning an amendment to the Schengen Borders Code. The amendment obliges member states to extend systematic border checks to include not only third-country nationals but also EU citizens and their family members, in addition to making use of EU-wide databases as much as possible, in particular the Schengen Information System and the Interpol database on lost and stolen documents. The amendment was proposed by the European Commission in December 2015 as a response to the increase of terrorist threats and foreign terrorist fighters. On 16 February, the European Parliament plenary strongly voted in favour of the compromise text, while the Council of Ministers has yet to give its final approval.

### Resumed Dublin transfers to Greece recommended

Children and Youth CEAS

On 8 December, the European Commission presented its fourth [Recommendation](#) on the specific measures Greece needs to implement in order to ensure a well-functioning asylum system and sets out the conditions for the gradual resumption of transfers under the Dublin Regulation. While acknowledging that various challenges, such as adequate reception conditions and effective access to the asylum procedure still remain, the Commission finds that Greece has achieved significant progress in the past months. Hence, it recommends the gradual resumption of Dublin transfers on a case-by-case basis for persons who entered Greece irregularly from 15 March onwards. For the time being, this excludes vulnerable applicants, including unaccompanied minors. As the recommendation is non-binding, it remains at the discretion of each individual member state to decide whether or not to resume transfers to Greece. Germany has already

[announced](#) its intention to follow the Commission's recommendation, along with Austria and Belgium. Considering the fact that 60,000 refugees are still stranded in Greece in often inhumane conditions, ECRE [criticises](#) this plan and casts doubt on Greece's readiness to cope with this additional pressure on its asylum system.

## Commission curbs benefits for mobile EU citizens

### Mobile EU citizens

In a [proposal](#) from 13 December 2016, the European Commission presented a revision of EU legislation on social benefits for mobile EU citizens. The proposal would give member states more freedom to restrict access to welfare payments to individuals that have not (or have insufficiently) paid into national social security schemes. In particular, unemployment benefits to frontier workers and economically inactive citizens are affected, as well as long-term care benefits and the social security status of posted workers. The plan comes in the [context](#) of an estimated 3.7 million economically inactive mobile citizens in the EU, according to the Commission. It is likely to encounter resistance from the European Parliament which has blocked welfare restrictions in the past, while Germany and Austria seek tighter rules for child benefits in particular.

## Developments in negotiations over CEAS proposals

### CEAS

Since the publication of various proposals regarding the reform of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) by the Commission last year, the co-legislators have made progress in negotiations on the strengthening of the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) and the recast of the Eurodac regulation.

As regards EASO, the Civil Justice and Liberty Committee (LIBE) of the European Parliament tabled its [report](#) for plenary on 21 December and Coreper endorsed its [negotiation mandate](#) on behalf of the Council one day earlier. Both Parliament and Council welcome the proposal's general aim to transform EASO into a fully-fledged agency. However, disagreements regarding EASO's specific mandate and power vis-à-vis the member states have become apparent and are likely to dominate upcoming negotiations.

Turning to the recast of the Eurodac regulation, the Council endorsed a [mandate](#) for negotiations with the European Parliament on 9 December 2016, which expresses broad support for the proposal's aim to facilitate returns and tackle irregular migration by reinforcing and expanding the scope of the Eurodac system. The LIBE Committee in the European Parliament is yet to adopt its position.

In contrast, negotiations for the European Commission's [proposal](#) to reform the current Dublin regulation have not progressed significantly. On 8-9 December, the JHA Council merely [took note](#) of a [progress report](#) by the Asylum Working Party of the Council, but given the substantial [political controversy](#) surrounding this proposal, an agreement is unlikely to be reached during the Maltese presidency. Meanwhile, however, six member states (Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Slovakia and Romania) have [submitted](#) reasoned opinions stating that it does not comply with the principle of subsidiarity.

Similarly, the recast of the Reception Conditions Directive, the Qualifications Regulation, the Asylum Procedure Regulation and the Resettlement Framework Regulation are still in the early stages of negotiations.

# Prolongation of internal border controls

CEAS

Following a European Commission [recommendation](#), the Council on 7 February [adopted](#) an implementing decision setting out a recommendation to prolong temporary internal border controls in exceptional circumstances. Thereby Austria, Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Norway are entitled to prolong their temporary border controls for a maximum period of three months.

According to the Commission, the fragile situation and the residue of pressure remaining at some of the borders of these five countries justifies this prolongation. It is interesting to note that Greece, Hungary, Slovenia and Slovakia [opposed](#) the adoption of this recommendation, arguing that the current situation no longer justifies such continued border control on the internal land borders and the consequent impairment of the Schengen area.

In contrast to this, Austria has [vowed](#) to maintain its border controls “indefinitely”, holding that the return to the Schengen system would only be justified by an effective European solution to control the EU’s external borders.

## Other developments

Children and Youth

Immigration Detention

CEAS

### Second progress report on third country partnerships

The European Commission published its second progress [report](#) on partnerships with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration in December 2016. The report highlights external action and outcomes in five priority countries (Ethiopia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal) as well as other partner countries.

According to the report, the EU Trust Fund for Africa mobilised €1 billion in projects that support the objectives of the Valletta Action Plan. A further €726.7 million for external migration-related actions would be added to the EU budget in 2017. The report claims that substantial decreases in transit migration through Niger were achieved, from 70,000 in May 2016 to around 1,500 in November 2016. However, these numbers are based on IOM statistics that were [incorrect](#). An IOM spokesperson admitted that a technical problem with their database led to the surprisingly low figure. Nevertheless, the Commission’s progress report has not been updated, and continues to be quoted.

### Progress report on the operationalisation of the EBCG

Three months after the launch of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, the European Commission [published](#) its first report on the progress achieved so far and the steps ahead. The following progress has been made:

- Set-up of mandatory Rapid Reaction Pool comprising a standing corps of 1500 border guards and other relevant staff, as well as a Rapid Reaction Equipment Pool;
- Launch of three new pools for return intervention teams;
- Adoption of a common vulnerability assessment methodology;

- Establishment of a complaint mechanism to ensure the respect for fundamental rights in the activities carried out by the EBCG;
- Adoption of a model status agreement for operational cooperation with priority third countries.

While commending the progress achieved so far, the European Commission calls on member states to ensure that the necessary resources are made available at the request of the EBCG for ongoing and future joint operations and to follow up on the results of vulnerability assessments.

### **Ombudsman requests human rights impact assessment of EU-Turkey deal**

The European Ombudsman, Emily O'Reilly, formally [asked](#) the European Commission to conduct a more in-depth assessment of the human rights impact of the EU-Turkey Statement. In order to achieve this, the Ombudsman called for the inclusion of a separate section on human rights risks and measures to address them in future progress reports on the implementation of the agreement. The request was made after several NGOs and individual citizens filed complaints because the Commission failed to reply or inadequately replied to their concerns about the human rights impact of the EU-Turkey Statement on returnees from Greece to Turkey.

## **ECJ CASE LAW & LEGAL ACTIONS**



### **Children and Youth** **CEAS**

#### **ECJ [Case C-573/14](#) Commissaire général aux réfugiés et aux apatrides v Mostafa Lounani, 31 January 2017**

This case concerned a Moroccan national who was convicted in Belgium of participation in the activities of a terrorist group but not of having personally carried out any acts of terror himself. This participation consisted of being a member of the leadership of a proscribed organisation and providing that group with logistical support including participating actively in the organisation of a network for sending volunteers to Iraq. The distinction made between actual acts of terror and other types of support became important when, subsequent to this conviction, he made an application to the Belgian authorities for refugee status. This application was excluded on the basis of the exclusion clause contained in Article 12(2)(c) of Directive 2004/83. The question arose as to whether the activities for which this individual was convicted were enough to merit his exclusion from refugee status or is that exclusion reserved for actual acts of terror (as described in Article 1 of the Council Framework Decision 2002/475)?

The Court of Justice found that Article 12(2)(c) and Article 12(3) should be interpreted as meaning that participation in the type of acts for which Mr Lounani was convicted can serve to exclude an individual from refugee status. It follows that the exclusion clause is not to be confined simply to those who carry out acts of terror but should be extended to those who engage in support activities.

**ECJ [Case C 560/14](#) M. v. Minister for Justice and Equality, Ireland and the Attorney General**

**9 February 2017**

This request for a preliminary ruling concerned the interpretation of the right to be heard in the context of the procedure for the granting of subsidiary protection status under Council Directive 2004/83/EC. The case concerned a Rwandan national who was simultaneously rejected for refugee status and subsidiary protection. At the material time in Ireland, national legislation provided for separate procedures for applications for refugee status and applications for subsidiary protection to be considered one after the other. The question arose as to whether the right to be heard necessitated another interview related to that second procedure – subsidiary protection – and the right to call or cross examine witnesses when that interview takes place.

The Court of Justice stated that it did not follow from earlier case-law (Case C-277/11 M. M. v Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Ireland, Attorney General) that an interview must necessarily be arranged in the procedure relating to the grant of subsidiary protection. The Court of Justice found that the right of the applicant for subsidiary protection to be heard must be observed but that obligation does not extend to guaranteeing that an interview takes place as part of that procedure. The Court further held that an interview must still be arranged for the application for subsidiary protection if it becomes apparent, in light of the applicant's circumstances, that one is needed in order to allow that applicant to comment on the elements capable of substantiating that application.

**ECJ [Case C-578/16](#) PPU C.K. and Others v. Supreme Court of Republic Slovenia**

**16 February 2017**

The case concerned a Syrian/Egyptian couple and their child who were subject to a return order from Slovenia to Croatia under Regulation (EU) No 604/2013. Mother and child were allowed to stay in Slovenia on the basis of a psychiatric evaluation which stated that CK was suffering from postnatal depression with suicidal tendencies which required continued care. On the basis of these facts the Slovenian Supreme Court referred questions to the Court of Justice as to how first State responsibility under Article 3(2) and the discretionary clause of Article 17(1) Regulation (EU) No 604/2013 must be interpreted.

The Court of Justice found that interpretation of the clause contained in Article 17(1) is not solely a matter for national law and the relevant national court. It is actually a matter of interpreting Union law, within the meaning of Article 267(3) TFEU. In the present case this required interpreting the return under Dublin III Regulation 604/2013 in light of Article 4 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights. Article 4 requires that even where no systemic deficiencies exist in the country to which an asylum seeker is being returned, circumstances where an asylum seeker has serious mental or physical illness entails a real risk of inhuman or degrading treatment within the meaning of Article 4 Charter. Nevertheless, the Court of Justice found that, on the basis of the facts in the main proceedings, there existed no requirement that Slovenia utilise their discretion under Article 17(1). It remains for the authorities of the member state, and potentially for the member state's courts, to ensure that there does not exist any grave concerns as to the

impact that such a transfer would have on the health of the individual concerned and to take all necessary precautions against any such potential impact.

## A CLOSER LOOK FROM...



# Vulnerability and asylum claims in France

Children and Youth | Immigration Detention | CEAS

By Raphaël Morlat, [Forum Réfugiés-Cosi](#)

In 2016, 85,244 people applied for asylum in France. Although all asylum seekers must be accommodated in reception centres according to the [law](#), the national reception scheme only offers 55,867 places. Due to the obvious lack of places available for every asylum seeker, access to these centres is prioritised on the basis of the vulnerability of the applicants.

OFII (Office Français de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration) [determines vulnerability](#). This evaluation concerns all asylum seekers registered in the prefectures, and relies on an interview based on a questionnaire which only assesses obvious vulnerabilities (physical disabilities, pregnant women, etc.), though it is meant to focus on categories listed in the [Qualification Directive](#). Any vulnerability linked to the asylum claim is discussed during the examination procedure.

This interview thus has a very limited impact on the early identification of vulnerable persons such as victims of torture and of physical, mental or sexual violence as well as victims of human trafficking. In practice, it has been reported that such interviews are not even always conducted. OFII may receive applicants, but may not interview them properly. Many stakeholders have also reported that the interview may not be conducted with an interpreter. These issues could lead to a failure to identify applicants' specific needs and have a negative impact on the examination of their claim.

Vulnerability is also poorly taken into account for detained asylum seekers.[1] While OFPRA (Office Français de Protection des Réfugiés et Apatrides) must adapt the proceedings for vulnerable applicants, there is no specific mechanism to identify them in detention. Vulnerability is discussed during their interview with the case workers examining their claim. But overall conditions, video conferences, insufficient preparation time and a lack of interpreters may lead some asylum seekers not to express their situation, such as in case of human trafficking or torture.

Finally, [French law](#) theoretically prevents the detention of unaccompanied children, except in detention centres at the border (zone d'attente) when they come from a safe country of origin, subsequently lodge an asylum application, base their claim on falsified documentation or present a serious threat to public order. But in practice, the [NGOs](#) working in other detention centres (centre de rétention administrative), where detention of unaccompanied minors is not legally permitted, have reported that 280 youngsters alleging to be minors had been detained in 2015.

Although vulnerability is clearly a new concept included in French law, its practical implementation is questionable. The conditions in which vulnerability is assessed, or sometimes not assessed at all, may prevent asylum seekers from providing all the elements of their claim and being granted asylum.

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[1] According to the law, migrants cannot be detained after lodging an asylum claim. However, people may be detained because they are not allowed to stay on the French territory and subjected to a removal order. In such cases, detainees can apply for asylum and may remain detained.

## FACTS & FIGURES

### Almost 1.2 million asylum applications are still pending in EU member states.

Source: Eurostat Press release, 15 December 2016

## Commission reports on relocation and resettlement

Children and Youth **CEAS**

On 8 February, the European Commission [published](#) its ninth report on relocation and resettlement:

- As of 7 February, 11,966 relocations have taken place (8,766 from Greece and 3,200 from Italy);
- With regard to resettlement, 13,968 people out of the agreed 22,504 have been resettled so far mainly from Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon. Out of these, 3,098 Syrians have been resettled from Turkey within the 1:1 mechanism set out in the EU-Turkey statement;
- Although efforts from the side of EU member states to carry out relocations have increased since December, European Commission First Vice-President, Frans Timmermans, has [announced](#) the Commission's consideration of initiating infringement procedures if no considerable progress has been achieved by March. So far, this has not been achieved.

# UNHCR statistics on arrivals

## Children and Youth CEAS

Recent data by the UNHCR [reveals](#) the following trends:

- 12,355 arrivals have been reported since the beginning of the year. 9,419 have arrived in Italy, while 2,053 arrived in Greece;
- 256 have been found dead or missing so far in 2017;
- 23% of sea arrivals to Italy come from the top ten refugee-producing countries;
- 45% of all sea arrivals to Italy in 2016 would be [entitled](#) to a form of protection if the average EU recognition rates were applied.

### Arrivals to Greece and Italy per Month January 2016 to 5 February 2017



Source: UNHCR Weekly report, 10.02.2017

## Frontex: estimated arrivals at EU borders in 2016

### CEAS

Preliminary [estimates](#) of Frontex disclose the following data with regard to irregular border crossings:

- Decrease of arrivals to Greece: drop by 79% to 182,500 in 2016, compared to the previous year;
- Increase of arrivals to Italy: record number of 181,000 in 2016;
- In line with the decreasing flow on the eastern Mediterranean route, the number of migrants across the Western Balkans in 2016 dropped significantly to 123,000 from 764,000 in 2015.

# Arrivals of unaccompanied children in Italy in 2016

## Children and Youth

According to UNICEF figures [published](#) on 13 January, around 25,800 unaccompanied or separated children arrived to Italy by sea in 2016. This is more than double the 12,360 who arrived during the previous year and accounts for 91% of all the 28,200 children who reached Italy's shores in 2016. The majority were boys aged 15-17 who originated from Eritrea, Egypt, the Gambia and Nigeria.

## Relevant reports

### Children and Youth

### Immigration Detention

### CEAS

#### Report on the human rights impact of the EU-Turkey deal

On 14 February, Amnesty International [published](#) a report entitled "A blueprint for despair: human rights impact of the EU-Turkey deal". It finds that the stemming of the flow of migrants across the Aegean has come at a considerable cost to Europe's commitment to upholding the basic principles of refugee protection and those trapped on Greek islands. After detailing the practice of arbitrary detention, the insufficiencies of the Greek asylum system and the returns to Turkey carried out in the framework of the deal, the report provides recommendations to both the Greek government and the EU and its member states.

#### Report on the implementation of hotspots in Italy and Greece

One year after the first hotspots were set up, ECRE [published](#) a report on 9 December 2016 shedding light on the compliance of the practices and standards of the hotspots with EU asylum law and standards, and whether the fundamental rights of the migrants and refugees are respected. It finds that for a large number of individuals, this is not the case, with many instances of prolonged detention without access to asylum, insufficient information and premature returns. Moreover, ECRE finds that the hotspots have not succeeded in fulfilling their main objective of relieving pressure from Italy and Greece.

#### Report on the asylum situation at the EU's eastern borders

In a report [released](#) on 25 January, five ECRE member organisations present the situation of asylum seekers at the eastern borders of the EU (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia). They draw attention to the rising number of illegal push-backs at Europe's external borders, in addition to increased border controls and the construction of physical and legal barriers restricting access to protection.

#### FRA report on the principle of non-refoulement

In December 2016, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) published a [report](#) on the scope of the principle of non-refoulement in contemporary border management. The report examines specific scenarios and provides guidance on how to avoid violating the principle of non-refoulement in each scenario. The report addresses legal uncertainties in three domains: at the EU's external borders, in third countries and on the high seas. For each scenario the applicable legal framework is described, followed by an outline of current practices and arguments as to whether or not a specific situation constitutes a violation of the principle of non-refoulement.

#### Eurofound report on refugee labour market integration

Eurofound, the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, published a [report](#) on the labour market integration of refugees and asylum seekers in December 2016. The report examines legislation, obstacles to integration, and the role of social partners in the integration process. It concludes that although there is broad consensus on the need for quick and effective labour market integration, many challenges remain, and recent developments such as the introduction of temporary asylum status and lower reception standards undermine integration efforts. A number of policy recommendations that address these challenges are provided in the report.

## EU Funding opportunities

Children and Youth **CEAS**

### Calls for proposals

The European Commission has published the following calls for proposals:

- [VP/2016/015](#): Fast track integration into the labour market for third country nationals targeting exclusively asylum seekers, refugees and their family members
  - call out on 21.12.2015 - Deadline: 30.03.2017
- [VP/2017/007](#): A European framework for mobility of apprentices: Developing European citizenship and skills through youth integration in the labour market
  - call out on 25.01.2017 – Deadline: 29.03.2017
- [AMIF-2016-AG-INTE](#): Integration of Third-Country Nationals
  - call out on 08.12.2016 – Deadline: 28.02.2017

## EU CALENDAR: UPCOMING EVENTS

### European Council and Council of the European Union

	9-10 March	European Council
	25 March	Information European Council (60 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Rome Treaties)
	27-28 March	JHA Council

### European Parliament

	27-28 February	LIBE Committee Meeting
	1-2, 13-16 March	Plenary session
	9, 22-23, 30 March	LIBE Committee Meeting
	3-6 April	Plenary Session

## Other events



2-3 March

[European Migration Forum](#), European Economic and Social Committee, Brussels (application deadline: 12 December)



7 March

[Migration of skilled workers: the revision of the EU Blue Card Directive](#), European Movement International, Brussels

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; (4) Mobile EU citizens' access to social benefits and (5) Integration and covers the period from 6 December 2016 to 17 February 2017. 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 ([m.funk@epc.eu](mailto:m.funk@epc.eu), [f.mcnamara@epc.eu](mailto:f.mcnamara@epc.eu), [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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