

EMN BULLETIN

September 2021

The EMN Bulletin provides policymakers and other practitioners with updates on recent migration and international protection policy developments at EU and national level. The 35th edition provides information from **April to June 2021**, including the (latest) relevant published statistics.

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

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SPECIAL NOTE

- The EMN glossary is continuing to expand the number of terms and languages available to harmonise discussions on migration and asylum. A [survey on the EMN glossary](#) has been launched to gather insights on its users and how it is being used. If you are using the EMN glossary, we welcome your feedback.
- The glossary app is now also available in Greek, in addition to English, Finnish, German, Italian and Latvian. Download the app [here](#) for Android and [here](#) for iOS.
- The EMN and the World Bank held two roundtable events during this reporting period: the first on 13 April 2021, covering 'Perceptions in migration'; and the second on 1 June 2021, discussing approaches to EU migration in the framework of 'Innovations in designing and implementing new legal pathways'.
- On 30 April 2021, the EMN Conference in the framework of the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the European Union '[Digital transformation in migration](#)' was held online from Lisbon. On 25 May 2021, the International Conference '[Ten years on the European Anti Trafficking Directive and the new European Strategy to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings \(2021-2025\)](#)' took place as an event associated with the Presidency Conference.
- On 2 June 2021, the EMN published an inform on '[Separated and missing migrants: Member States' approaches to prevent family separation and search mechanisms for missing migrants](#)', which gives a comparative overview of the policy measures and practical approaches the Member States and Norway are taking to prevent and manage the risks of third-country nationals going missing and/or becoming separated from their family members. The inform was developed in collaboration with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

- On 18 June 2021, the EMN's [Annual Report on Migration and Asylum \(2020\)](#) was published. It provides an overview of the key developments and trends in the EU Member States and Norway in 2020, including the impact of COVID-19 on migration, new electronic systems and digital tools and measures taken to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of migration management. The accompanying Statistical Annex is due to be published in the next quarter.
- On 25 June 2021, the EMN published a study entitled '[Accurate, timely, interoperable? Data management in the asylum procedure](#)'. This study provides comparable information and examples from 25 countries on different aspects of data management, including data cross-checking against national and international databases, data quality accuracy and data protection issues observed between 2014 and 2020. It also maps challenges encountered and actions taken to respond to them. The study contributes to the capacity-building of experts working in the field of asylum and generates a better understanding of the policies and processes in place across Europe.

1. GENERAL POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

EU DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATE

- The EU adopted a [new strategy for a stronger and more resilient Schengen area](#). The strategy has four key priorities: effective management of Europe's external borders; strengthened internal measures; improved preparedness and governance; and the enlargement of the Schengen area.

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- **Belgium:** Since its adoption in 1980, the Belgian Immigration Law has been amended 109 times. Recently, a commission was established to reform the law and transform it into a comprehensive Migration Code. In this context, EMN Belgium launched an ad-hoc query to find out more about the structure of the national migration laws of other Member States and the terminology used for migration policies, subjects and institutions, of which a summary is available on the [EMN Belgium](#) website.

On 22 April 2021, the Belgian government adopted a reform plan for its asylum and migration policy, which will increase the budget by € 50 million. The extra budget will be used mainly to increase staff levels in the different migration authorities in order to speed up asylum and other procedures as well as increase the return rate.

- **Cyprus:** On 23 April 2021, the Law on the Prevention and Combating of Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence entered into force after the approval by the House of Representatives. With this new law, Cyprus complies with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention. A new type of temporary residence permit has been introduced for victims of violence from third countries, which is valid for the duration of the criminal proceedings.
- **Estonia:** In April 2021, the Ministry of Social Affairs announced that [foreigners living and working in Estonia can be vaccinated against COVID-19 free of charge](#). The vaccination is open to all people aged at least 12 years.

In May 2021, the Ministry of the Interior, in collaboration with EMN Estonia, published the [Overview of migration statistics 2016-2021](#). The purpose of the publication is to provide an overview of the main migration trends in Estonia between 2016-2020 and to explain the different aspects of migration. The overview is available in Estonian, English and Russian.

In June 2021, the Government approved the '[Internal security development plan 2020-2030](#)'. Among other topics, the development plan sets goals for Estonian migration, citizenship and identity management policy. Additionally, the Government approved a [law concerning the creation of a national automated biometric identification system \(ABIS\) database](#). The ABIS database allows the state to capture and store biometric personal data – fingerprints and facial images – and to compare biometric data. Efficient authentication and verification of identity helps law enforcement bodies to prevent forgeries and solve crimes, thus having a positive effect on both public order and security. The new database is expected to go live in autumn 2021.

- **France:** On 21 April 2021, [Decree n°2021-481](#) was published, extending the powers of the *Paris Police Prefect* in matters of immigration; as of 1 May 2021, the Paris Police Prefect will be responsible for

leading and coordinating the actions of the prefects for the Ile-de-France departments in matters of entry and residence of foreign nationals and will be assisted by a prefect delegated to immigration.

On 1 May 2021, [Decree n°2021-520](#) was published, providing a new version of the Code on Entry and Residence of Foreign Nationals and the Right of Asylum (CESEDA) in order to improve the readability of the Code, which lacked clarity due to successive reforms, and to respect the chronology of procedures.

On 15 June 2021, the 2020 [annual statistics](#) on immigration, asylum and acquisition of French nationality were published by the General Directorate for Foreign Nationals in France (DGEF) of the Ministry of the Interior.

- **Ireland:** On 19 April 2021, proposals for [new hate crime legislation](#) in Ireland were approved by the Government. Crimes motivated by prejudice against characteristics that are protected are specified and now carry more serious sentences than ordinary crimes. The list of protected characteristics has also expanded to include gender and disability.

On 21 April 2021, the [interim report of the independent Anti-Racism Committee](#) was published. The report is in keeping with fundamental human rights principles and informed by United Nations guidance on tackling racism. The report provides policy recommendations for immediate actions to reduce racism such as increasing ethnic equality monitoring in all public services and removing barriers faced by migrant women who experience gender-based violence when seeking support.

- **Italy:** The Italian Authority responsible for the EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) has launched public consultations with institutions, international organisations and social partners for the new multiannual programming of AMIF 2021-2027.

- **Lithuania:** On 7 April 2021, the Government [announced](#) its recognition of emergency travel documents issued by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) for persons who flee their country due to internal disturbance, lose their identity documents and have no possibility of replacing them.

On 5 May 2021, the Government approved the proposal by the Ministry of the Interior and [extended](#) the deadline (from 30 June 2021 to 31 December 2021) for relocating foreigners who have applied for international protection.

- **Poland:** On 1 June 2021, [an amendment to the Act on rules for recording and identification of taxpayers and payers](#) came into force. As a result, municipality offices will be able to assign Universal Electronic Civil Registration System (PESEL) numbers to foreigners upon their request. It will no longer be possible for information to be submitted by a payer with an incorrect taxpayer ID. This aims to make it easier for also third-country nationals to settle accounts with the tax office, for example by submitting tax returns through a free application. They will also be able to better access tax reliefs and deductions, as well as receive tax refunds.

- **Slovenia:** The Act amending the Foreigners Act and the Act Amending the Employment, Self-employment and Work of Foreigners Act both entered into force on 27 April 2021, whilst they became applicable on 26 May 2021. The Act amending the International Protection Act entered into force on 9 May 2021.

- **Sweden:** On 22 June 2021, the Parliament adopted a number of major changes to the Aliens Act. These changes will affect the stay of beneficiaries of international protection in Sweden, family reunification and family formation, stays on humanitarian grounds, as well as other types of immigration of third-country nationals. The bill was based on the proposals of a parliamentary inquiry on Sweden's future migration policies as well as complementary proposals by the government. The changes will enter into force on 20 July 2021 and replace temporary legislation from 2016.

- **Georgia:** The land borders of Georgia [were reopened](#) as of 1 June 2021, allowing entry to [foreigners possessing documentation](#) proving full vaccination along with negative PCR test result, done within 72 hours prior to arrival. Alternatively, citizens of [69 countries](#) are allowed to enter Georgia by presenting a

negative PCR test result, taken within 72 hours prior to entering the country. The Interagency Coordination Council also [decided](#) that foreigners who had a legal right to stay in Georgia up until 14 March 2020, and due to [certain circumstances](#) were unable to leave before the expiration of their legal stay due to the pandemic-related restrictions, could have the right to stay in the territory of Georgia until 1 July 2021.

- **Moldova:** On 25-27 May 2021, the representatives of the Bureau for [Migration and Asylum, Ministry of Internal Affairs](#) attended the regional online training on 'Key concepts and trends in the sphere of migration' in the framework of the [Regional Training Centre on Migration in Azerbaijan](#). The Centre is part of the Project 'Supporting the establishment of a Regional Training Centre on Migration in Azerbaijan', with the aim of expanding and supporting training activities in the field of migration at the regional level. The project was initiated by the State Migration Service of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the IOM Representation in the Republic of Azerbaijan with financial assistance from the IOM Development Fund. The Moldovan representatives presented best practices in the field of migration management and integration of foreigners in the Republic of Moldova, impact of visa liberalisation, the association agreement and next planning.

On 16 June 2021, the [Multi-Year Roadmap for Cooperation on Migration and Sustainable Development in the Republic of Moldova](#) was launched by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The aim is to facilitate an open policy dialogue among diverse stakeholders including Moldovan government agencies, international organisations, academic/research institutions, international financial institutions, Moldovan migrant organisations and the private sector.

2. INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION INCLUDING ASYLUM

EU DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

- On 29 June 2021, the European Asylum Support Office published the [EASO Asylum Report 2021](#), which reported that the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the strengths and weaknesses of the EU's asylum system. EU+ countries' asylum systems found innovative digital solutions to ensure service continuity, but shortcomings were also exposed in the areas of reception conditions, low returns to countries of origin, resettlement and reduced Dublin transfers. This is an opportunity to reinforce resilience for future events.
- The Council of the EU and the European Parliament have reached an agreement to establish a [European Union Asylum Agency](#) (EUAA), building on the experience of the European Asylum Support Office (EASO). The European Commission has endorsed the new mandate. The new agency will support the development of more efficient asylum systems with more uniform, high-quality decision-making. 500 reserve experts will be available to offer assistance on request. EUAA will also support better monitoring and reporting and capacity-building in non-EU countries.

Judgments of the Court of Justice of the European Union

[Case C-194/19, H.A. v. État belge](#)

On 15 April 2021, the CJEU ruled circumstances subsequent to the Dublin transfer decision must be taken into account. The case concerned a third-country national who had applied for international protection in Belgium in 2017, had been notified of a transfer to Spain, and sought to annul the transfer decision when his brother arrived in Belgium. When this request was dismissed on the basis that the change in circumstances had occurred after the transfer decision, H.A. lodged an appeal before the Belgian Council of State. The question referred to the CJEU was whether Article 27 of the Dublin III Regulation must be interpreted as requiring a national court to take into consideration, where appropriate, circumstances arising after a 'Dublin transfer' decision, in order to guarantee the right to an effective remedy. In a Grand Chamber judgment, the CJEU ruled that an international protection applicant must be able to rely on circumstances subsequent to the adoption of a transfer decision in respect of which he or she exercises a remedy.

[Case C-8/20, L.R. v Bundesrepublik Deutschland](#)

On 20 May 2021, the court clarified the concept of 'subsequent application', in assessing the case concerning an Iranian national who lodged an application for international protection in Germany in 2014 and, it was then discovered, had also lodged an unsuccessful application in Norway in 2008. Taking the view that an application addressed to a third State such as Iceland and Norway, cannot be understood as an 'application for international protection' or an 'application' and that a decision

LATEST RELEVANT STATISTICS

- On 23 July 2021, Eurostat [published](#) statistics on asylum seekers for the first quarter of 2021. The number of first-time asylum applicants in the EU-27 decreased by 37% compared with the same quarter of 2020 and by 12% compared with the fourth quarter of 2020. The top three nationalities were Syrians, Afghans and Pakistanis, lodging 18 400, 10 700 and 3 800 applications, respectively. The number of asylum applicants decreased the most for Venezuelans and Colombians (a decrease of 10 000 in applications when compared with the first quarter of 2020) in absolute terms.

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- Bulgaria:** As of 15 June 2021, incoming transfers to Bulgaria under the [Dublin Regulation 604/2013](#) have been resumed, following relaxations of the COVID-19 restrictions. Third-country nationals who will be transferred to Bulgaria need to have a negative PCR test performed up to 72 hours before, or a negative antigen test performed up to 48 hours before, entering the territory of Bulgaria.

Bulgaria is participating in a relocation mechanism from Greece, with the possibility of accepting 70 children. 21 unaccompanied minors have been relocated to Bulgaria so far (17 minors in November 2020 and four minors in April 2021). In total, 12 agreements have been concluded on the integration of unaccompanied minors arriving in Bulgaria from Greece.

The State Agency for Refugees with the Council of Ministers (SAR) initiated the inclusion of applicants for international protection in the fifth phase of the National Vaccination Plan against COVID-19. The fifth phase began in May 2021 and includes vulnerable groups identified due to the high epidemiological risk connected to their living conditions and way of life. An awareness-raising campaign on vaccinations is being carried out in the territorial units. SAR's social experts provide information materials, such as brochures, which are prepared by the Bulgarian Red Cross and translated into the main languages of the countries of origin of recipients.

- The Service for the Reception and Accommodation of Applicants for International Protection initiated the development of the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on the 'Response to sexual and gender-based violence in reception centres for international protection seekers'. The SOP should take effect from the beginning of the second quarter of 2021.
- Croatia:** From 1 June 2021, incoming and outgoing transfers were re-established under the Dublin Regulation, the implementation of which had been suspended in the previous period due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

A decision was made to allocate € 421 000 to implement the project '[Increasing the accommodation capacity of the Reception Centre for applicants for international protection in Zagreb](#)'.

Four officers of the Service for the Reception and Accommodation of Applicants for International Protection participated in the EASO missions in Cyprus and Malta.

- Cyprus:** During the reporting period, irregular arrivals by sea and by land (through the so-called 'Green Line'), especially of Syrian nationals, continued at an alarming pace and put an additional burden on the already overburdened national asylum system, stretching the reception capacity to its limits. As an act of solidarity towards Cyprus, the Polish government donated 80 housing units to the new Reception Centre for Applicants for International Protection 'Limnes'.

On 26 May 2021, an updated National List of Safe Countries of Origin was published in the official Gazette of the Republic of Cyprus. In the context of Art. 37 of the Asylum Procedures Directive 2013/32/EU, the following countries are now considered to be safe and have been added to the list: Armenia, Benin, Kenya, Republic of Moldova, Mongolia, Togo and Ukraine (except Crimea, Luhansk and Donetsk regions). The full list can be found [here](#).

- Finland:** In May 2021, the Ministry of the Interior set up a [project](#) to carry out a study on a legislative amendment that would enable the granting of a temporary residence permit and an alien's passport to asylum seekers who have received a negative decision, but who have found work. This would allow a

person to travel to their own country to obtain a travel document. The project also explores possible solutions to the situation of people who have resided in Finland for a long time without the right to stay.

In May 2021, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) deemed a complaint made against Finland to be manifestly ill-founded and decided not to investigate it. The [case](#) concerned a family that the authorities had, under the Dublin Regulation 604/2013, decided to return to Italy. The applicants had applied for international protection in Finland in 2018. The Finnish Immigration Service did not investigate the applicants' asylum application as they deemed Italy to be responsible for processing their asylum application.

- **France:** On 7 April 2021, [a new decree](#) was published, setting the number of accommodation places dedicated to the reception of asylum seekers and refugees (111 978 places as of 31 December 2021) as well as their distribution across the metropolitan regions.
- **Italy:** In the context of the EmAs project (Empowerment Asylum Commission), there are two new developments concerning the National Commission for Asylum's work: the creation of a website/app that allows easy retrieval of information on the asylum procedures and services made available by the various administrations; and training opportunities for the project staff.

The Ministry of Defence has proposed a law to identify a procedure for granting international protection to Afghan citizens who took part in international missions in Afghanistan, cooperating with the Italian army.

- **Latvia:** On 17 June 2021, [amendments to the Asylum Law](#) were adopted, which facilitate access to employment, healthcare and education services for asylum seekers. On the same day, Amendments to the [Law on the Register of Natural Persons](#), *inter alia*, provide that information on asylum seekers be included, regularly updated and made centrally available to all institutions, with the aim of accelerating the delivery of services to asylum seekers so that all responsible institutions can easily access information about the asylum seekers.
- **Luxembourg:** In April 2021, two new reception centres opened in the municipalities of [Junglinster](#) and [Bascharage](#). The centres are managed by Caritas and Red Cross Luxembourg and provide a capacity of 116 beds, mainly for families. They are 'temporary' facilities in which applicants of international protection reside until they receive a decision on their application for international protection.
- **Malta:** Following the national directives and easing of COVID-19 measures by the Public Health Regulations in May 2021, the Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers (AWAS) updated its mitigating measures accordingly:
 - Making available a standardised complement of staff in all centres;
 - Employees resume work from their place of work.

The following mitigating measures remained in place until June 2021:

- Virtual meetings to continue as much as possible;
- Staff required to remain within their respective centres;

Judgments of the Court of Justice of the European Union

[Case C-901/19](#), *C.F., D.N. v. Bundesrepublik Deutschland*

On 10 June 2021, the CJEU ruled against the use of single, quantitative criterion of a minimum threshold of casualties in an armed conflict for determining whether a 'serious individual threat' exists. The case involved the rejection of the asylum applications of two Afghan nationals, which were appealed before the Higher Administrative Court of Germany. That court asked (i) how Article 15(c) of the recast Qualification Directive 2011/95/EU should be interpreted in respect of how the degree of arbitrary violence in an armed conflict should be measured and (ii) whether Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive must be interpreted as meaning that, in order to determine whether there is a 'serious and individual threat', a comprehensive appraisal of all the circumstances of the individual case is required. The interpretation of this indicator is complicated by the limited availability of reliable data. Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive must be interpreted broadly and thus all the relevant circumstances

- Social workers, the age assessment and psychosocial teams and the Migrant Advisory Unit resumed working but in different bubbles.

Registrations in the centres resumed, with social distancing measures.

- **The Netherlands:** On 22 April 2021, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) [agreed on a collaboration](#) with the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) in taking DNA samples in Greece, Turkey and Sudan from migrants travelling for family reunification purposes. Due to the COVID-19 crisis, a backlog had occurred. With the help of the IOM, the goal is to handle family reunification cases more quickly.

The Minister for Migration [has started](#) reassessing countries identified as 'safe countries of origin', following a [decision](#) by the Dutch Council of State on the reassessment procedure on 7 April 2021. So far, seven countries have been reassessed, of which Algeria is no longer indicated as a safe country of origin. This has direct consequences for the decision-making process with regard to asylum applications from aliens from safe countries of origin.

On 17 May 2021, the Dutch government [made available](#) € 1 million in financial assistance for the implementation of measures to tackle nuisance caused by a relatively small group of asylum seekers. Municipalities can apply for and use the financial assistance, which is a follow-up to a financial scheme initiated in 2020, to implement local approaches to tackle such issues.

On 15 June 2021, the Inspectorate for Justice and Security [reported](#) on the measures that different migration institutions of the Government can use to deal with asylum seekers causing nuisance. The Minister for Migration [has taken note](#) of the report and its recommendations and is considering further steps to improve safety in reception centres and mitigate nuisance or criminal behaviour, in coordination with the organisations cooperating in the asylum procedure.

On 19 May 2021, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) [signed an agreement](#) with the IND to temporarily facilitate video calls from UNHCR locations as part of the family reunification procedure. The aim is to accelerate and secure the reunification process by taking over those interviews that embassies are currently unable to conduct themselves, due to challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Poland:** Some 1 000 applications for international protection were lodged in Poland in the second quarter of 2021, more than twice as many as in the same period in 2020. The main countries of origin of applicants were Afghanistan, Belarus, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine. Poland issued over 500 substantive decisions in the first instance in the second quarter of 2021, of which 40% granted EU-regulated forms of protection. An increase in the number of asylum applicants from Belarus has led to increased efforts made by the Office for Foreigners to ensure that the asylum procedure for these applicants will be finalised on time.
- **Slovak Republic:** On 10 June 2021, the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic and the IOM signed an agreement to support the setting up of medical facilities and to deploy professional staff in Reception and Identification Centres for migrants in the Greek islands. The Slovak Republic will contribute € 1 million. More information can be found [here](#).
- **Spain:** [Organic Law 8/2021](#) of 4 June on comprehensive protection of children and adolescents against violence provides that the competent authorities shall ensure that children in need of international protection have access to the territory and to an asylum procedure irrespective of their nationality and entry into Spain, in accordance with Law 12/2009 of 30 October, which regulates the right of asylum and subsidiary protection.
- **Sweden:** On 22 June 2021, the Parliament adopted changes to the Swedish Aliens Act. According to these changes, people granted refugee status will initially receive a residence permit for three years, and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection will initially receive residence permits for 13 months. To switch to a permanent residence permit, beneficiaries will, among other requirements, have to prove that they can support themselves.

- **Georgia:** Staff dealing with asylum at the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) received training on credibility assessment and consideration of minors' vulnerabilities in the asylum procedure. Due to COVID-19-related travel restrictions, there was a significant decrease in asylum applications in Georgia (-45% compared to the same period in 2020). The asylum procedure is conducted taking due account of the epidemiological situation and respective guidelines of the healthcare authorities.



3. UNACCOMPANIED MINORS AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

EU DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

- On 14 June 2021, the [European Child Guarantee](#) was adopted with the objective to prevent and combat social exclusion and child poverty. Key services that are guaranteed include childcare, education, healthcare, nutrition and housing. The EU Child Guarantee will also take into account the special needs of children in migration as well as the Action Plan on integration and inclusion.

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- **Finland:** On 21 May 2021, Finland received a group of 10 unaccompanied child and adolescent asylum applicants. According to a decision made by the Finnish government on 27 February 2020, Finland will receive 175 vulnerable asylum applicants from the Mediterranean region. Since July 2020, Finland has received 169 asylum applicants, which means that the planned [relocations have almost been completed](#).
- **France:** On 16 June 2021, a [draft law](#) on Child Protection was filed. The purpose of this draft law is to implement new measures to ensure a common base of rights for all children, to support professionals and to take a further step in public policy for child protection by ensuring the sharing of competencies in order to improve:
 - Children's protection against violence;
 - The daily life of protected children, whether in terms of reception or support;
 - Procedural guarantees for children;
 - The management of prevention and protection policy for children.

Italy: The Ministry of the Interior allocated AMIF financial resources to [51 new projects](#) presented by local authorities for the reception of unaccompanied foreign minors (855 new places).

On 7 May 2021, the Ministry of the Interior published a **new notice for local authorities** in charge of projects related to unaccompanied foreign minors as well as mental illness and specialised and prolonged health care issues to increase the number of dedicated places of 1 500 and 300 respectively.

In order to increase the number of places, AMIF resources have been used to finance a **project strengthening the capacity for reception, inclusion and accompaniment of unaccompanied minors in the SIPROIMI network** for the period 2021-2022. Another AMIF project was admitted to monitor the implementation of measures to prevent COVID-19 in the reception centres for unaccompanied foreign minors and families with minors. Furthermore, supporting access to education for unaccompanied foreign minors is the aim of the UAMS ALI (Wings) project, financed by the European Commission (DG HOME) and targeted at 1 000 unaccompanied minors.

On 18 May 2021, a cooperation agreement was signed between the Office of the Government Special Commissioner for Missing Persons and Euronet Worldwide Inc. Euronet will publish the notices of 0-10 years old missing children on the screens of its ATM circuit in Italy, aiming to raise awareness and civic participation in research activities.

In June 2021, a working group was set up with the aim of promoting a coordination mechanism for the identification and the care of people with specific needs and vulnerabilities.

On 8 June 2021, the Ministry of the Interior signed an agreement with the organisation *Terre des Hommes Italia Onlus* to offer, free of charge, a **psychological and psychosocial support service to unaccompanied minors and families** with children arriving in Italy by 31 December 2022.

- **Luxembourg:** On 30 April 2021, the members of the Consultative Commission on the Evaluation of the Best Interests of Unaccompanied Minors were appointed by [ministerial order](#).
- **Poland:** Among the applicants for international protection there, unaccompanied minors represented a bigger share than usual (half of whom were from Afghanistan).
- **Portugal:** Concerning the European Programme for the '[Voluntary relocation from Greece of unaccompanied minors and families](#)', the Portuguese Immigration and Borders Service has transferred 28 unaccompanied minors between 1 April 2021 and 30 June 2021. These transfers fall under the procedure foreseen in Article 17(2) of Regulation No 604/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013.
- **Slovenia:** A systematic solution is being prepared by governmental experts and international organisations to ensure adequate care and accommodation for all unaccompanied minors, regardless of status. The aim is to develop a system with a tailor-made approach for every child, including different accommodation options appropriate for diverse needs, personal circumstances, as well as vulnerabilities.
- **Spain:** [Organic Law 8/2021 of 4 June](#) applies to minors who are on Spanish territory, regardless of their nationality and administrative status of residence, as well as to minors of Spanish nationality abroad. The law provides that when the age of majority of a person cannot be established, he or she shall be considered a minor, pending the determination of his or her age. To this end, the Prosecutor shall conduct a proportionality judgement that adequately weighs the reasons why the passport or equivalent identity document presented, if any, is considered unreliable. The carrying out of medical tests for the determination of the age of minors shall be subject to the principle of promptness, shall require the prior informed consent of the person concerned and shall be carried out with respect for their dignity and without risk to their health, and cannot be applied indiscriminately. In no case may comprehensive nakedness, genital examinations or other particularly invasive medical tests be performed.
- **Georgia:** On 27 May 2021, amendments to the [Law on Citizenship](#) entered into force, defining a special regulation to determine Georgian citizenship for stateless persons and establishing special grounds to grant Georgian citizenship to stateless persons, in cases where they do not meet the requirements of determining Georgian citizenship. Based on the amendments to the [Governmental Ordinance #508](#), the service fee for the stateless status determination was reduced by 50%.



4. LEGAL MIGRATION

EU DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

- On 11 June 2021, the European Commission launched [Talent Partnerships](#), a key initiative under the [New Pact for Migration and Asylum](#), which seeks to address skills shortages in the EU, while strengthening mutually-beneficial partnerships on migration with third countries. Students, graduates and skilled workers will be able to apply for legal pathways to immigrate.
- On 17 May 2021, the Council and the European Parliament reached an agreement on the Revised EU [Blue Card Directive](#), which aims to offer highly skilled third-country nationals a new route for legal migration to the EU. After the first Blue Card Directive (2009) and the Revised Blue Card Directive (2016), this agreement will offer highly skilled migrant workers full skill equivalency and [more flexibility](#) to change post, employer and even host country (after 12 months of employment). Highly skilled applicants of international protection may also apply.

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- **Austria:** In April 2021, the quotas for the temporary employment of foreigners in tourism, agriculture and forestry in 2021 were [increased](#) to a total number of 3 136. Compliance with this quota is determined by an annual average; however, at seasonal peaks, temporary overruns of up to 50% are permitted.

In May 2021, the temporary border controls to the Czech and Slovak Republics were [lifted](#). These controls had been re-introduced due to rises in COVID-19 infection rates. Also in May, Statistics Austria presented the [2020 population statistics](#). The data show a decline of both the number of in-migrants (-

9%) and out-migrants (-12%) compared to the previous year – which may be explained by the COVID 19-related mobility restrictions. The net migration gain, however, remained on the same level (2020: + 40 064 persons; 2019: + 40 613 persons).

- **Cyprus:** The Department of Labour has announced the operation of an online platform for the Public Employment Service. Through the platform, all citizens legally residing in Cyprus, including third-country nationals and asylum applicants, and who are eligible to access the labour market, can register as job seekers through the platform to search for job vacancies and to access assistance with seeking a job.
- **Estonia:** As of April 2021, an amendment to a regulation of the Minister of the Interior entered into force, pursuant to which e-residents will be asked for additional data when applying for a digital ID. The additional data will be requested to enhance already rigorous background checks on applicants for an e-resident digital ID and to assess the purposefulness of the application. The regulation amendment specifies the list of data that needs to be gathered during the process of issuing an e-resident's digital ID. Furthermore, a [new self-service environment for e-residents](#) was launched. Finally, the number of places where the e-resident's digital ID may be purchased was expanded to include Bangkok, Johannesburg, São Paulo and Singapore.

In April 2021, the Constitutional Review Chamber of the Supreme Court declared through a [decision](#) that the Articles 100¹⁰(1), 100¹³(2) and 100¹⁸ of the Aliens Act are unconstitutional and invalid so far as they preclude filing an appeal with the administrative court for challenging premature termination of the period of stay.

- **Finland:** The Finnish Immigration Service has introduced a new function in the service system to make it easier for [seasonal workers to change employers](#) while they are in Finland. The relevant amendment to the Decree of the Ministry of the Interior on Chargeable Services of the Finnish Immigration Service is based on an amendment to the Seasonal Workers Act. Amendments to the Seasonal Workers Act and to the Decree both entered into force on 17 June 2021.

On 30 June 2021, the Ministry of the Interior set up a [project](#) to define long-term objectives for Finland's comprehensive migration policy. The Ministry of the Interior wants to bring together the responsibilities of different operators and set uniform long-term objectives for them. This will be done through cooperation and experimentation with new methods.

The Government wants to facilitate the stay of foreign researchers, students and their families in Finland by extending residence permits and streamlining permit procedures. The aim is to make Finland a more attractive destination for skilled labour. According to the [proposal](#), students would receive a residence permit for the entire duration of their studies. The proposal would also extend to two years the so-called job-seeking permit for researchers and graduates who have completed their studies.

A [new act](#) will strengthen the legal status of wild produce pickers and lay down the obligations of companies in more detail and in more binding terms. At the same time, earnings opportunities of foreign berry pickers will improve, and companies will enjoy a more equal competitive environment, which will help the sector to grow sustainably and become more international.

[New provisions of the Aliens Act](#) will prevent the exploitation of foreign labour and improve the legal status of victims of such exploitation. The legislative amendment aims to make it easier to detect cases of exploitation; to protect victims; and to help the authorities prevent recruitment by employers who have exploited their staff in the past.

- **France:** On 19 May 2021, [a decree](#) was published, extending the online service for the filing of residence permit applications to include 'talent passport' residence permits and artists. On 1 April 2021, [a decree establishing the new list of shortage occupations](#) was published, relating to the issuance, without opposition to the employment situation, of work permits to third-country nationals. On this new list, which is defined by region, new shortage occupations appear.
- **Germany:** The German Federal Government has [offered](#) visas to local personnel who worked for the Federal Armed Forces and other German authorities within the Afghanistan mission. Minister of Defence

Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer emphasised the Federal Armed Force's duty of care to the local personnel who supported the mission for many years.

■ **Ireland:** On 22 April 2021, [normal processing of re-entry visa applications recommenced](#).

On 23 April 2021, the government announced proposals for a [scheme to regularise thousands of undocumented migrants](#). The Department of Justice expects to be ready to accept applications through the scheme by the end of 2021.

On 10 May 2021, the Department of Justice announced that the [Registration Office at Burgh Quay reopened to customers living in the Dublin area](#).

On 20 May 2021, it was announced that [essential family reunification is one of two new categories being added to the priority list of visas](#) currently being processed.

The [publication of a new bill](#) was approved, which includes legislative proposals to amend the 'continuous residence' requirement to allow for total absences of up to 70 days from the state in the year preceding an application for citizenship, and to reduce the residency requirement from five years to three years for naturalisation of children born in the state to parents who are not Irish citizens.

Changes to the employment permits system for workers outside the European Economic Area (EEA), including [the expansion of professions eligible for Critical Skilled Employment Permits](#) (CSEP), were announced.

On 15 June 2021, the [lifting of the temporary entry and transit visa restrictions for nationals of South Africa, Brazil and other South American countries](#) was announced, which initially came into effect on 28 January 2021.

■ **Italy:** The validity of residence permits expiring from 31 January 2020, due to the COVID-19 emergency, has been extended until 31 July 2021.

The investigation aimed at assessing the **adoption of the Migratory Flows Decree 2021** is ongoing (entry of non-EU workers for seasonal and non-seasonal employment).

The Immigration and Integration Policies Commission (ANCI), through the Central Service of the SAI, in collaboration with the Central Directorate of the State Police of the Ministry of the Interior, organised a [webinar on the subject of residence permits](#), attended by about 1 500 participants

■ **Latvia:** On 6 May 2021, the amendments to [the Law on the Management of the Spread of COVID-19 Infection](#) came into force, extending the period until which third-country nationals can re-apply for or re-register a residence permit upon presentation of an expired travel document.

On 28 June 2021, amendments to the [Personal Identification Documents Law](#) came into force, which provides for a personal identification, or 'eID', card for foreigners to be introduced in Latvia. The 'eID' card allows foreigners to access government e-services, use an e-address, verify their identity and sign documents electronically. Personal identification cards will be issued to foreign nationals, including asylum seekers, and included in the Register of Natural Persons.

On 28 June 2021, [the Law on the Register of Natural Persons](#) entered into force, combining the functionality of the current information system of the Population Register and Civil Register. The Law on the Register of Natural Persons will also include and update information about foreigners who have received a residence permit in Latvia, a certificate of registration, or of permanent stay, as an EU citizen, and who have legal relations with Latvia, on the basis of which mutual rights and obligations establish or have been established in the field of real estate, commercial activity, health, taxes, benefits and education.

Information about a foreigner will be included in the Register in accordance with the travel document identifying the person. It will include or update information about their name, date and place of birth, personal identification document, personal identity number allocated by another country, and contact address.

- **Luxembourg:** The [Grand-Ducal regulation of 11 June 2021](#) extended the temporary restrictions on the entry of third-country nationals into Luxembourg until 30 September 2021. The list of third countries whose residents are exempt from these restrictions was updated multiple times, most recently by the [Grand-Ducal regulation of 25 June 2021](#).

Since 1 April 2021, people traveling by plane from a third country [no longer have to do an additional rapid test upon arrival at Luxembourg's airport](#). Since 13 June 2021, every person (older than six years) travelling by plane to Luxembourg has to [present a vaccination certificate, a certificate of recovery, or a negative SARS-CoV-2 test result before boarding](#).

Additional measures were introduced for travel from [India on 1 May 2021](#) and from the [United Kingdom on 7 June 2021](#). Anyone who stayed in these two countries in the 14 days prior to their arrival in Luxembourg must declare their presence for sanitary inspection, undergo a COVID-19 test and quarantine for at least seven days. These measures were in place until 15 July 2021 for both countries.

The deadline for submitting an application for a residence document for British nationals, initially set to 30 June 2021, [has been extended to 31 December 2021](#).

- **The Netherlands:** On 16 April 2021, the requirements for collecting a Provisional Residence Permit (mvv) abroad prior to long-term stay [were temporarily eased](#). Due to the pandemic, some third-country nationals who were already in the Netherlands have been unable to travel internationally to collect their permit. Under certain conditions, these persons may be allowed to obtain the residence permit in the Netherlands.

The Minister for Migration has [extended the application period](#) for the 'Brexit' pass for British nationals living in the Netherlands until 1 October 2021. Because of Brexit, British nationals need a residence permit to legally stay in the Netherlands. Since more than three thousand registered British nationals have not yet applied for a residence permit, the application period was extended.

On 1 June 2021, the IND started a new pilot '[Residence permit essential start-up personnel](#)'. This new purpose of stay should make it easier for innovative start-ups to hire foreign personnel with a special expertise that are essential for the growth of the company. The pilot has a duration of four years. Employees may work another 12 months with the start-up after the pilot finishes.

- **Poland:** To meet the increased interest in information on the legalisation for stay and work opportunities for Belarusian citizens, the Office for Foreigners prepared 'frequently asked questions' (FAQs) in response to this issue, also available in Belarusian.

After almost five years, an agreement was reached on a new directive regulating the entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of highly qualified employment and repealed Council Directive 2009/50/EC, the EU Blue Card Directive. Poland was among those EU Member States that openly endorsed the agreed compromise on the new directive, recognising the pressing need to adopt new regulations.

The ongoing state of the COVID-19 epidemic has not resulted in a decrease in the number of persons applying for legalisation of stay in Poland. In the second quarter of 2021, an upward trend was still observed – around 90 000 applications for residence permits were lodged (50% more than in the second quarter of 2020). The majority of permits granted (80%) were related to work.

A regulation was published on 28 May 2021 and came into force on 15 June 2021, where the minister in charge of foreign affairs gained an extended [competence](#) to issue Schengen visas and national visas other than those issued to members of a diplomatic mission or consular post of a foreign country, and may also cancel or revoke such visas. Belarus is the first and, so far, the only country where this possibility is available to its citizens. From mid-June 2021, the Polish Ministry for Foreign Affairs has the discretion to consider visa applications submitted to the Polish consulates operating in Belarus.

- **Portugal:** On 19 May 2021, [Order no. 5040/2021](#), implemented a simplified procedure for residence permits applications.

[Order no. 4473-A/2021](#) of 30 April 2021 was established with respect to appointment services in the context of COVID-19. It guarantees the rights of all foreign citizens with processes pending with the Foreigners and Borders Service (SEF).

65 work inspection visits were also made during the reporting period, covering 434 workers predominantly of Indian or Nepalese nationality.

- **Slovenia:** The Act amending the Foreigners Act that entered into force on 27 April 2021 is *inter alia* changing the sources of income by which foreigner can demonstrate that they have sufficient means of subsistence. Social transfers such as child benefits can no longer be counted as means of subsistence.
- **Spain:** In accordance with article 124 of the Aliens Regulation, a residence permit may be granted for reasons of employment in cases where the following requirements are met: the applicant does not have a criminal record, serves the established period of stay and certifies the existence of a labour relationship. On 25 March 2021, the Supreme Court handed down judgement No. 1184/2021 specifying that the accreditation of the employment relationship may be demonstrated by any means of proof valid in law. This jurisprudence has been ratified in subsequent Judgments 1802/2021 and 1806/2021. On this basis, the High Court emphasises that not all circumstances give rise to ‘rooting’, but that there must be “a special link with our country”. In the case of work rooting the employment relationship must have been given in the two years prior to the submission of the application. In the light of this case-law, as well as international and European provisions, the [Instrucción SEM 1/2021 has been issued](#).
- **Sweden:** On 22 June, the Parliament adopted changes to the Aliens Act. According to these changes, all new residence permits (except for resettled refugees) will be temporary, and to switch to a permanent permit, third-country nationals will have to prove, among other things, that they can support themselves. A financial support requirement will also apply to family reunification and family formation cases, as a main rule.
- **Georgia:** Following the enactment of amendments to the [Law on Foreigners](#), on 11 May 2021 the [Governmental Ordinance #520](#) was also amended to adjust procedures for granting residence permits. In view of these legislative changes, the front office staff of the Public Service Halls received training on the new regulations.

On 12 April 2021, the process of implementation of the agreement on [Temporary Employment of Georgian Citizens in Specific Sectors of the Labour Market in the State of Israel](#) was launched.

On 10 May 2021 an Agreement between North Macedonia and Georgia on visa exemption for all types of passport holders, meaning holders of diplomatic, service and ordinary biometric passports, [was signed](#). The same agreements with the Republic of Fiji and the Sultanate of Oman entered into force.

On 11 June 2021, the updated [EU visa-free mobile application](#) was launched. The App, with an integrated calendar, includes new features: constantly updated information on individual mobility regulations in the EU/Schengen area (including in the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic); contact details of Georgian diplomatic missions abroad; emergency information; the possibility to save travel history and favourite countries; and other useful information.

5. INTEGRATION

EU DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

No new developments.

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- **Austria:** In June, the [Integration Report 2021](#) was presented. This annual report provides a comprehensive overview on the state of play of integration in Austria. This year’s report focused on the impact of COVID-19 in the areas of labour market integration, education and youth as well as women. As usual, the report is complemented by a [statistical yearbook](#), providing key data, facts and figures on migration and integration in Austria.

- **Croatia:** Danube Compass, a multilingual internet platform, which provides information for new inhabitants of the Danube region, has been updated and translated into Arabic, English, Farsi and Urdu.

In April this year, members of the Advisory Group of Third-Country Nationals and Persons of Migrant Origin were appointed, within the project INCLuDE (Interdepartmental cooperation in empowering third-country nationals). The first meeting was held on 31 May 2021.

The draft of the 'Action plan of the City of Zagreb of beneficiaries of international protection for the period from 2021 to 2022' was under public consultation until 15 July 2021.

- **Estonia:** In May 2021, the Ministry of Culture, with partners, began [visits](#) to all Estonian counties, with the aim of introducing integration and adaptation services, a new online integration-related advisory tool [Linda](#) and other recent developments in the field of integration and adaptation of newly-arrived immigrants. With the visits, the Ministry aims to raise awareness about the available services and tools aimed to facilitate integration process and therefore develop a local level approach and enhance the role of municipalities in this process.

- **Finland:** A [report](#) ordered by the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment assesses whether Finland could use the so-called community sponsorship integration model when accepting refugees. According to the report, the model could make the integration of refugees in Finland faster and support the integration work led by the state and municipalities.

A [glossary on integration](#), published by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, harmonises the use of concepts related to integration, equality and discrimination. The new glossary emphasises equality and an active role for immigrants. The work on the glossary has focused on defining concepts related to the Integration Act (Act on the Promotion of Immigration Integration) and key integration services.

The importance of successful integration is growing in Finland as the working-age population is ageing and the number of people with an immigrant background is increasing. A [government report](#) on integration proposes an extensive programme to better support immigrants in their integration.

- **Germany:** On 29 June 2021, the Federal Institute for Population Research published an [analysis](#) which showed that the proportion of people with a migration background has continued to rise in recent years. While in 2009 around 18.7% of the German population had foreign roots, the proportion has now grown to 26%. This is demonstrated by current figures from the Federal Statistical Office based on the micro-census. The increase is primarily due to the influx of workers from other European countries and immigration from crisis regions. However, there are considerable regional differences regarding the proportion of people with a migration background within the country.
- **Italy:** Since 14 May 2021, the [new version of the Migrant Integration Portal](#) is online. The Portal has adapted to the Design Guidelines for Digital Services of Public Administration and has been optimised and simplified.

On 22 June 2021, the first meeting between the UNAR-National Anti-racial Discrimination Office and the associations that responded to the [request for the elaboration of the National Plan against Racism, Xenophobia and Intolerance 2021-2025](#) was held.

The Civil Liberties and Immigration Department of the Ministry of the Interior has launched consultations for the update of the National Integration Plan, which will define the strategy of intervention for the inclusion of holders of international protection.

- **Luxembourg:** On 23 April 2021, the municipalities of Wiltz, Mertzig and the inter-municipal association *Réidener Kanton* signed the 'Pact of living together' (*Pakt vum Zesummeliewen, PCI*), launching the [new Communal Integration Plan \(PCI\)](#). The new PCI is more comprehensive and dynamic than its predecessor. In May and June 2021, the municipalities [Kopstal](#), [Habscht](#), [Roeser](#), [Strassen](#) and [Clervaux](#) also signed the new PCI.

The Local Integration Exchange and Support Group's (*Groupe d'échange et de soutien en matière d'intégration au niveau local* – GRESIL) [second virtual information event](#) took place on 30 June 2021. The event provided a platform for representatives of 50 municipalities, various ministries, politicians, and associations to gather, exchange, inform and support integration issues at the local level.

On 8 May 2021, the Department of Integration (*Département de l'Intégration*) organised the [second virtual orientation day for the signatories of the Reception and Integration Contract \(CAI\)](#). This event gave more than 400 CAI signatories the opportunity to participate in thematic workshops and to learn from representatives of different ministries, administrations and associations in Luxembourg.

In June 2021, a [national survey on racism and ethno-racial discrimination in Luxembourg](#) was launched. The data will be used to identify areas where specific actions are needed, and to formulate policy recommendations in the fight against racism and discrimination.

- **Malta:** In view of the heightened vulnerability faced by migrants when settling in a new country, in March 2021 Jobsplus (Malta's Public Employment Service) launched a process to include long-term unemployed and TCNs with an international protection status, temporary humanitarian protection and asylum seekers to be eligible as a 'VASTE' (Vocational Assessment, Support, Training and Employment) target group. The [VASTE Programme](#), which has been extended to December 2022, is a € 13 million project part financed by the European Social Fund under Operational Programme II (2014-2020). Its objective is to set up and sustain a number of actions and improved services, focused on enhancing and promoting the skills and abilities of the targeted clientele, to have a more inclusive society.

Jobsplus received approval to proceed with these eligibility amendments on 2 June 2021. This recent development means that multiple training options such as pre-employment skills training, life and communication skills training and basic clerical skills training. Basic ICT training will soon also be available to eligible migrant clients, together with other professional services provided by NGOs.

- **The Netherlands:** The civic integration law (*Wet Inburgering 2.0*), which was originally planned to be implemented on 1 January 2021, is now scheduled to be in force on 1 January 2022. Additionally, financial assistance was made available for municipalities to prepare for its implementation and to support the group of people who still need to integrate according to the law that is currently in force.

As of 1 June 2021, asylum seekers who received a residence permit under a 2007 pardon scheme (RANOV) can now acquire citizenship more easily. For some of these permit holders - the group of people who have obtained a RANOV permit as a minor together with their parent(s) or independently, and who have now reached the age of majority - the requirement to submit identity documents for naturalisation will be waived.

- **Poland:** An information point has been [launched](#) for foreigners coming to Silesia. There, foreigners will obtain information, among others about registration, employment, access to health care, language training, or the city's cultural offer, which will facilitate their acclimatisation. Employees at the information point speak four foreign languages. The point was established in municipal premises at Młyńska 5, and it will be run by the In Corpore Foundation.
- **Georgia:** Services for foreigners have been diversified within the state integration programme. Namely, a new medical component was added, providing persons residing in Georgia under international protection (refugees, humanitarian status holders) and stateless persons, having special health care needs, with funding of up to GEL 1 000 for medical services. The latter includes treatment and medication for programme beneficiaries with acute, chronic and/or life-threatening illnesses and those in need of psycho-social rehabilitation.

6. MANAGEMENT OF THE EU EXTERNAL BORDERS

EU DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

- On 18 June 2021, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) published its update on [Search and Rescue \(SAR\) operations in the Mediterranean and fundamental rights](#). In the first half of 2021, five people per day died or went missing crossing the Mediterranean Sea to reach Europe. Nevertheless, civil society vessels with a humanitarian mandate to reduce fatalities and bring rescued migrants to safety in the EU saved a significant number of migrants in distress at sea.
- On 2 June 2021, the European Commission [presented](#) its new Strategy for a stronger and more resilient Schengen area. [The aim is to strengthen the EU's free travel space and increase its resilience, inter alia, by revising the Schengen evaluation and monitoring mechanism](#). This would entail an accelerated evaluation process, fast-track procedures in case of significant deficiencies, expert counselling and regular monitoring for enhanced trust.

- On 9 April 2021, the European Commission adopted [new rules](#) to upgrade the European Border Surveillance System (EUROSUR), which facilitates the exchange of information among authorities responsible for managing the EU's external border. The aim is to ensure more secure information exchange with an independent security accreditation board, make reporting more regular and effective by including search and rescue operations and improve cooperation with third countries.

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- Croatia:** On 11 June 2021, the Civil Protection Headquarters of the Republic of Croatia issued a Decision on a temporary ban on crossing the borders of the Republic of Croatia (68/2021), according to which entry into the Republic of Croatia is allowed only with a negative PCR test or rapid antigen test (BAT), confirmation of vaccination or recovery from COVID-19. In addition, from June 2021, entry into the Republic of Croatia is possible with the so-called digital COVID-19 certificate.

Funds were allocated for the implementation of two projects, one aiming at upgrading the information system for state border management for the needs of the Entry/Exit System, and another one related to procurement of dogs and vehicles for the protection of the external border of the European Union.

- Finland:** The Ministry of the Interior has sent a draft government [proposal](#) for supplementary legislation on the Entry/Exit System (EES) and the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) out for comments. The purpose of the proposal is to make amendments to the national legislation as required by the relevant European Parliament and Council regulations.

- Italy:** The statistics on **migrants landed** and **registered on arrival** on the Italian coasts from 1 April to 30 June showed there were 12 931 people, including 2 513 unaccompanied minors (up to 28 June 2021). Due to the pandemic emergency, **quarantine vessels continue to be used** for migrants arriving by sea.

On 19 April 2021, a public notice was published for the assignment of the chartering service of 5 vessels, for the period from 5 May 2021 to 31 July 2021. As part of the five-year cycle of the Schengen Evaluation Mechanism outlined by Regulation (EU) No 1053/2013, **Italy will be subject to evaluation** for external border management from 27 June to 5 July 2021. The Central Directorate of Immigration and the Border Police has started the preparatory work by coordinating the involved national authorities.

- Lithuania:** On 24 May 2021, in response to the unprecedented incident of the forced landing in Belarus of a civilian aircraft on an international route to Vilnius, the Lithuanian government has [banned flights to/from Lithuania crossing the territory of Belarus](#).

On 16 June 2021, seeking to reduce the influx of irregular migrants from the territory of Belarus, the Government [provided additional funds to the Ministry of the Interior](#). The funds allocated will be used for the installation of surveillance systems along the Lithuanian border with Belarus.

On 17 June 2021, the State Border Guard Service addressed Frontex, asking for help to guard the border with Belarus amid the growing scale of irregular migration. EU border officers were scheduled to start their work on the border with Belarus on 1 July.

- The Netherlands:** On 1 June 2021, [the flight ban](#) for countries with a very high COVID-19 risk (India, South Africa and all countries in Central and South America) expired. It was replaced by a requirement to self-quarantine on arrival and show a negative NAAT (PCR) test, and to be in possession of a quarantine declaration. This change does not affect the EU entry ban, which still applies.

- Portugal:** On 18 May 2021, [Order no. 5039-B/2021](#) was published, establishing procedures for verification of RT-PCR SARS-CoV-2 tests by the Public Security Police (PSP) and Portuguese Immigration and Borders Service (SEF) according to on the origin of the flights.

- Georgia:** The final draft of a new Integrated Border Management Strategy for 2021-2025 and its action plan was prepared.

With the support of the UNHCR, a training course for border police officers was conducted on international protection. Additionally, employees of the Border Crossing Points were trained on document security and border control.

Based on the new amendments to the [Entry/Exit Law](#), from April to June 2021, 270 citizens of Georgia intending travel to EU/Schengen area were [refused the opportunity to leave](#) the country.



7. IRREGULAR MIGRATION

EU DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

No new developments.

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- **Austria:** In April, a [regulation](#) re-introduced temporary border controls between 12 May 2021 and 11 November 2021 on the internal borders with Slovenia and Hungary to maintain law, order and public safety. During that period, internal borders may only be crossed at points of entry.
- **Belgium:** In order to tackle the issue of cross-border migration, a security upgrade has been undertaken in the port area of Zeebrugge. For example, in May and June 2021 several surveillance cameras, thermal cameras and fences were installed. This security upgrade has been co-funded by the UK Border Force and the European Commission.
- **Croatia:** On 19 and 20 May 2021, a training session for police officers entitled: 'Treatment of third-country nationals in the return process' was held. Also, within the project 'Procurement of equipment and creation of a new and improvement of the existing IT database for registration of illegal migrants in the return process', nine new EURODAC workstations and other equipment for processing migrants were procured.
- **Cyprus:** On 9 April 2021, an amendment of the Aliens and Immigration Law came into force, which changes the sanctions for the illegal employment of third-country nationals. As an example, in case of a first violation, the administrative fine imposed is € 1 500 (up from € 854). The penalties for smugglers have increased to 15 years' (up from 8 years) imprisonment and/or a fine of € 100,000 (up from € 34 170).
- **Finland:** In line with the Government Programme, the [Action Plan for the Prevention of Irregular Entry and Stay](#) has been updated for the period 2021–2024. The purpose of the Action Plan is to comprehensively tackle irregular entry and stay, cross-border crime and the emergence of a parallel society outside the Finnish society.
- **France:** On 10 April 2021, a [decision of the Council of State](#) was published, ruling that a foreign national who, without legitimate reason, refuses to undergo a PCR test with a view to their transfer to the country responsible for examining their asylum application, must be considered as 'absconding', on condition that they have been warned of the consequences of their refusal.
- **Italy:** On 11 May 2021, a Ministry of the Interior Circular was adopted concerning the procedure for the **emergence of irregular employment relationships**. It is now possible for a new employer to replace the previous employer once the employment relationship (which used to initiate the application for regularisation) has ended. In case no new employer is available to recruit the worker, a residence permit may be issued while waiting for employment.
The Commission for Immigration and Integration Policies (ANCI), on the basis of the project "City Initiative on Migrants with Irregular Status in Europe", has set up a **working group dedicated to study the presence of irregular migrants in the territories**.
- **Lithuania:** On 11 June 2021, to accommodate the growing number of irregular migrants coming from the Republic of Belarus territory, Lithuania's authorities have [set up a tent camp for up to 350 people](#) at the Foreigners' Registration Centre in Pabradė.
- **Luxembourg:** On 8 April 2021, the Luxembourgish government provided a [position on the proposed law on the prohibition of detention of minors](#), stating that the detention of families is unavoidable if they categorically refuse the option of voluntary return.

- **Portugal:** In the field of irregular migration, 117 police investigations were initiated and 21 were concluded.
- **Slovenia:** The concentration of illegal migrations increased in certain geographical areas, especially with amplified trends in clandestine illegal migrations. On the basis of [COUNCIL DECISION 2008/616/JHA](#) on the implementation of Decision 2008/615/JHA regarding the stepping up of cross-border cooperation, particularly in combating terrorism and cross-border crime, Slovenia has established joint patrols at the external Schengen border together with Poland, Hungary and Estonia.
- **Georgia:** Staff from the MIA's Migration Department (MD) received training on 'Intercultural communications' and 'Alternative measures to migrant detention in Georgia', organised by the IOM within an EU- and Norwegian government-funded projects.

8. RETURN

EU DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

- On 27 April 2021, the European Commission adopted a new [EU Strategy On Voluntary Return And Reintegration](#) to promote voluntary returns by improving return counselling and reintegration assistance. Stronger legal and operational frameworks should further improve the coordination between all stakeholders to foster the sustainability and ownership of reintegration in partner countries.

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- **Belgium:** Within the Immigration Office, an 'alternatives to detention' unit was created on 1 June 2021. This fits into the implementation of the 'adherent policy' in order to increase the return rate. The 'adherent policy' (Dutch: *aanklampend beleid*, French: *politique proactive*) is a Belgian policy using a wide range of possible measures to strengthen an effective return policy. For example, the State Secretary of Asylum declared in February 2021 that the immigration authorities will be strengthened with an extra 115 return counsellors
- **Czech Republic:** In May 2021, the Department for Asylum and Migration Policy of the Ministry of the Interior began to take part in the Frontex 'Joint Reintegration Services' pilot project. The Czech Republic is among six Member States (together with Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Finland and Germany) that opted to assist with reintegration in Armenia, Brazil, Ethiopia and Ukraine. The first successful case in Ukraine was realised, in cooperation with a local partner of Caritas Internationalis, in June 2021.
- **Italy:** On the grounds of the Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) departure suspensions and delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Italy has granted an **extension** of most projects implementing the **AVR activity**. Such extensions have different dates according to the relevant projects (the longest one goes until December 2022).
- **Lithuania:** On 15 June 2021, the governments of Lithuania and Armenia [signed](#) the Protocol on Implementation of the Agreement on Readmission between Armenia and the European Union. The signed bilateral international agreement establishes quick and effective procedures for the identification, safe return and transit of persons who do not meet the conditions of entry, stay or residence in the territory

Judgments of the Court of Justice of the European Union

[Case C-546/19](#), *B.Z. v. Westerwaldkreis*

On 3 June 2021, the CJEU gave an interpretation of the Return Directive in relation to bans on entry and residence. The case concerned the claimant B.Z. of undetermined nationality, who was born in Syria and has lived in Germany since 1990. Following a criminal conviction, his deportation was ordered in 2014. The order included a six-year ban on entry and residence. When B.Z. appealed, the Federal Administrative Court of Germany referred two questions about entry ban provided by the Return Directive (Directive 2018/15) to the CJEU. The court interpreted the Return Directive as follows: the CJEU held that Article 2(1) of Return Directive must be interpreted as applying to a ban on entry and residence imposed by a Member State which has not made use of the option provided for in Article 2(2)(b) of that directive, against a third country national who is in its territory and is subject to an expulsion order, on the grounds of public security and public order, including on the basis of a previous criminal conviction. The CJEU held further that the Return Directive must be interpreted as precluding the maintenance of a ban on entry and residence

of the signatory countries.

- **Malta:** Following the setting up of the Returns Unit under the Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security in January 2021, several new initiatives have been implemented during the reporting period. Under the AMIF-funded Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme (RESTART VI), asylum seekers and rejected asylum seekers continued benefitting from cash benefits of up to € 2 000 including a flight ticket, pre-departure, transit, and post-arrival assistance by the IOM. With the IOM's support, an AVRR video was produced in four languages and new information materials disseminated.

Moreover, the Returns Unit has effectively returned several migrants who chose to benefit from a national cash-incentive programme.

The Returns Unit also continued conducting return counselling sessions within open and closed centres, and in the Correctional Services Facility. During such sessions, migrants are counselled on an individual basis and provided with information on possible options implemented by the Maltese authorities, should they opt to return.

- **Portugal:** In the framework of the ARVoRe VIII project (Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration), IOM Portugal assisted 44 migrants returning to their countries of origin. 82% of the total number of migrants returned to Brazil.

IOM Portugal promoted awareness raising and information sessions for actors at the local level. 160 professionals participated in these sessions.

- **Slovenia:** During the reporting period, Slovenia joined the [European Return and Reintegration Network \(ERRIN\)](#) - a network of European partner countries, established to facilitate cooperation between migration authorities.

- **Georgia:** The migration department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs participated in four Collecting Return Operations (CROs) coordinated by Frontex. As a result of these CROs, 207 Georgian citizens were safely returned from EU Member States.

16 expulsion decisions were issued, and seven decisions (to Egypt, India, Iran, Israel and Turkey) were executed by the MIA between April and June 2021.

- **Moldova:** On 22-25 June 2021 in Vienna, Austria, employees of the [Bureau for Migration and Asylum](#), representatives of Law Centre of Lawyers and Law Office of the People's Ombudsman of Moldova participated in a training session for recently appointed forced-return monitors from the Republic of Moldova. This activity took place as part of joint efforts of the EU-funded project 'Forced-Return Monitoring III' (FReM III) and the project 'Development of a Forced-Return Monitoring System in the Republic of Moldova'. The training was organised by [ICMPD and funded by the Polish Ministry of the Interior and Administration](#). The aim of the programme is to strengthen the relevant legal and institutional framework for monitoring forced operations by collecting best practices and experiences from other countries. Changes to national legislation in the targeted segment will subsequently be proposed with relevant national stakeholders. The goal is to increase the capacity of relevant institutions to monitor forced return operations in the light of respect for human rights.

9. ACTIONS ADDRESSING TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

EU DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

- On 14 April 2021, the European Commission adopted a [Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings 2021-2025](#), which complements Europol's [Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment](#) with specific actions to tackle trafficking holistically – from prevention mechanisms through cross-border protection of victims to prosecution and conviction of traffickers.

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- **Croatia:** On 11 and 12 May 2021, representatives of the Croatian Government's Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities have participated in a virtual meeting of regional expert groups (REGM) on the topic of 'Trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation, especially of women and girls, aimed at reducing demand in Southeast Europe'.

- **Ireland:** [Plans for a revised National Referral Mechanism \(NRM\)](#) to make it easier for human trafficking victims to come forward and be supported were approved by the Government.
- **Italy:** Within the framework of the 'Housing Table', set up as part of the strategy of the three-year plan to reduce the exploitation of labour in agriculture 2020-2022, a gap in information concerning the critical situation of formal and informal settlements has been revealed. In this context, an investigation was launched, aimed at all Italian Municipalities, to map the situation of precariousness and housing deprivation present on the national territory. Specific attention was given to those situations connected to conditions of labour exploitation.
- **Latvia:** In June, a [Joint Statement of commitment to work against human trafficking for labour exploitation in the Baltic Sea Region](#) was signed by the states of the Council of the Baltic Sea States. The commitment provides that Member States will take a number of measures to strengthen the capacity of different institutions to prevent trafficking in human beings, identify victims and punish perpetrators, improve the legislative framework, supervision and practical cooperation with employers, and ensure adequate protection and assistance for victims of trafficking.
- **Poland:** The Department for Counteracting Trafficking in Human Beings and Hate Crimes commissioned the IOM to conduct training on identifying victims of trafficking in human beings for LOT Polish Airlines flight attendants. The training is funded by the Ministry of Interior and Administration. Two editions of the above training were held in June 2021.

The group for supporting victims of trafficking in human beings functioning within the Team for Counteracting Trafficking in Human Beings began work on the 'Programme for supporting and protecting minor victims of trafficking in human beings'. During the first meeting, on 23 June 2021, a draft of the programme was prepared and sent to the group for approval. It will then be substantively developed by individual members of the group.

The Department for Counteracting Trafficking in Human Beings and Hate Crimes organised two training sessions in the form of workshops for law enforcement agencies, i.e., the Police and Border Guard, on financial flows in human trafficking crime. The workshops were conducted by representatives of the Polish Bank Association. The first took place on 5 May 2021, the second on 27 May 2021.

- **Portugal:** On 5 May 2021, the fourth course on criminal prevention, community police and human rights was held as part of the Training Action to the National Republican Guard (GNR), hosted by the Observatory on trafficking in Human Beings.

On 25 May 2021, the ['Protocol for the definition of action procedures for the Prevention, Detection and Protection of children \(presumed\) victims of trafficking in human beings - National Referral System'](#) was launched. With nine practical tools, it gives special attention to the detection and protection of unaccompanied or separated migrant children who are potentially more vulnerable to trafficking in human beings. As such, three main tools were developed: 'Detection on External Borders', 'Age Assessment' and 'Legal Guardian or Tutor'.

In Portugal, three victims were detected, all victims of labour exploitation. Seven police investigations were initiated with evidence of trafficking in human beings. Concerning trafficking in human beings for labour exploitation, six inspection visits were carried out, covering six employers, involving 40 foreign workers from Indonesia and Anguilla.

[Resolution of the Assembly of the Republic no. 168/2021, of 17 June 2021](#) was published, recommending government compliance with the special regime for granting residence permits to victims of trafficking in human beings and the regularisation of the respective situation, namely in relation to immigrant workers in the Odemira municipality.

- **Slovenia:** The Act amending the Foreigners Act *inter alia* determines that victims of trafficking in human beings can be allowed to stay for a period of 90 days to decide whether to participate as a witness in criminal proceedings.

The law also stipulates that a victim of trafficking in human beings may be issued a temporary residence permit if they are willing to participate as a witness in criminal proceedings; additionally, a temporary residence permit may also be issued in the event when personal circumstances justify residence in Slovenia.

- **Spain:** [Organic Law 8/2021 of 4 June](#) on the comprehensive protection of children and adolescents against violence regulates the protocols for action in centres for the protection of minors. These protocols should contain specific measures for prevention, early detection and intervention in possible cases of abuse, sexual exploitation and trafficking in human beings involving minors who are subject to protective measures and who reside in residential centres under their responsibility. The gender perspective will be particularly taken into account in the development of these actions.
- **Georgia:** Based on close cooperation between the Ministry of Justice of Georgia and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), two independent experts have externally evaluated the implementation of the National Anti-Trafficking Action Plans (NAP) for 2017-2018 and the first year of the [2019-2020 NAP](#). The evaluation report was presented to all stakeholders, including NGOs and international organisations on 28 May 2021. Following the enactment of amendments to the [Law on Trafficking](#), on 28 April 2021, an Inter-Agency Council on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings (THB) updated the rule on provision of one-off state compensation to THB victims and statutory victims. The state compensation is no longer dependent on whether a victim/statutory victim will claim compensation for physical, moral and material damage through the civil proceedings. Legislative changes were also extended to those victims and statutory victims who have been granted the status of victim/statutory victim prior to the enactment of these changes.

10. EXTERNAL DIMENSION

EU DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

No new developments.

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- **Czech Republic:** The MEDEVAC Czech Programme of the Ministry of the Interior provided aid to 27 Belarusian healthcare workers and their families and assisted them with finding jobs in the Czech Republic. Despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the programme managed to carry out two medical humanitarian missions in Lebanon and Ghana, where it provided surgery to people from socially disadvantaged areas in the fields of ophthalmology and gynaecology.

During the second quarter of 2021, the Czech Republic's leading epidemiologist visited the Iraqi Kurdistan region to provide seminars on hospital infections and effective ways of preventing the spread of COVID-19. The Aid in Place Programme of the Czech Ministry of the Interior supported three projects in the field of migration in June 2021 totalling CZK 70 million (approximately € 2.7 million). The project in Jordan implemented by the UNHCR focuses on livelihood support of Syrian refugees. In Bosnia and Herzegovina an IOM project was supported aiming at voluntary returns of migrants and on data collection on migrants present in Bosnia and Hercegovina.

The Aid in Place Programme started a cooperation with a new partner EUCAP Sahel Niger, focusing on border management on the southern Niger border. This project is jointly supported by the Czech Republic and Germany.

- **Estonia:** In April 2021, the government adopted the first [Human Rights Action Plan](#) that sets out Estonia's foreign policy actions for the protection of human rights and advancing democracy.

In May 2021, the government approved Estonia's [Action Plan for Implementing the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security](#) for 2020-2025. Additionally, Estonia and Germany signed a joint declaration on [development cooperation](#). The main cooperation areas of Estonia and Germany are the Eastern Partnership countries of the European Union, and Africa.

- **Italy:** On 8 June 2021 the "[Cartographie des Tunisiens résidents en Italie : Profil socioéconomique et propension à l'investissement en Tunisie](#)" (Mapping of Tunisians residing in Italy: Socioeconomic profile and propensity to invest in Tunisia) was presented. It is the first mapping on the Tunisian diaspora resident in Italy carried out within the **MoBITre Hajti Bik project** (Migration as a resource: mobilization of

Tunisian diaspora and stabilization of disadvantaged communities in Tunisia), financed by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) and implemented by IOM Tunisia, with strong involvement of the diaspora in Italy. The project aims to support the growth of micro and small enterprises in marginalised regions in Tunisia through investments addressed to the Tunisian diaspora in Italy.

On 31 May 2021, the call for tender "**Investment in Senegal**" was closed with the following results: 1 197 applications from Italy and five other European countries; 120 dossiers have been pre-selected for financing. The call was launched as part of the **PASPED PROJECT** funded by AICS and aimed at supporting both the socio-economic development of Senegal and the enhancement of the Senegalese diaspora. Amongst the main objectives: 50 Senegalese residing in Italy or in Europe supported in their economic reintegration in Senegal through the technical and financial aid of their entrepreneurial project.

On 16 June 2021, a joint Italian-French proposal by the Team Europe Initiative (TEI) on the migration route of the central Mediterranean was notified to the EU Commission. A first meeting on the content of the proposal will take place in July.

- **Luxembourg:** On 8 June 2021, Jean Asselborn, the Minister for Foreign and European Affairs, and Minister for Immigration and Asylum, participated in the [reunion of the EU Justice and Home Affairs Council](#). Minister Asselborn insisted that the EU must help prevent deaths in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic and create legal pathways to guarantee sustainable and realistic migration policies.
- **The Netherlands:** On 16 April 2021, the IOM and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs [launched](#) the 'Cooperation on migration and partnerships for sustainable solutions' initiative (COMPASS). The initiative is a global collaboration with 12 countries to protect migrants in their journey, to fight human trafficking and smuggling and to support the reintegration of returnees.
- **Spain:** The first meeting of the Technical Working Group of the Team Europe Initiative for a comprehensive migration approach in the Maghreb, Sahel and West African Countries in the Atlantic/Western Mediterranean route, presented by Spain in January, took place on the 6 June 2021. Spain, together with the European Commission and participating member states, are implementing its roadmap to identify main actions as well as finalising the concept note.

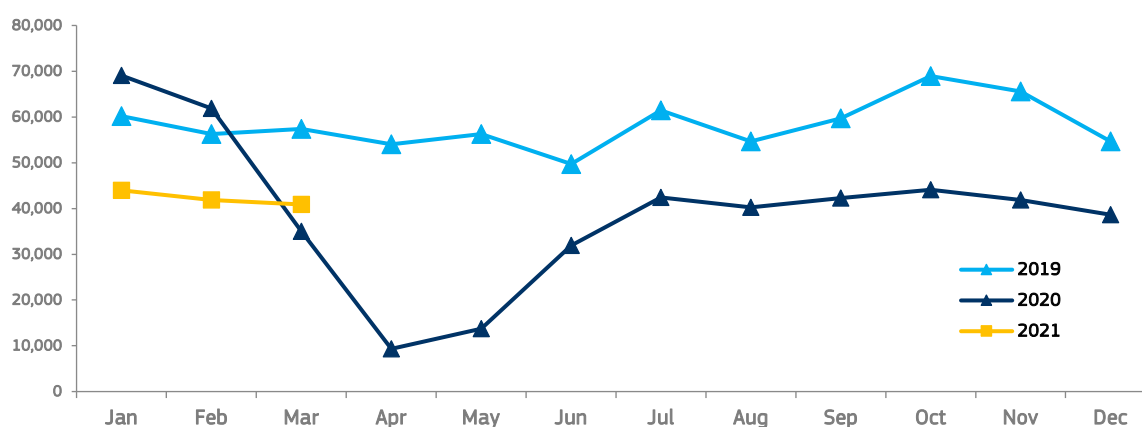
At the multilateral level, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, together with IOM and in coordination with the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration organised on the 31 May and 1 June 2021 several workshops with civil society in the context of the "Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular migration: the implementation of the whole of society approach".

- **Georgia:** On 5 April 2021, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia announced the launch of three flagship grant programmes on/for diaspora: (1) '[Support for Diaspora Initiatives](#)'; (2) '[Become a Young Ambassador of your Country](#)'; (3) '[Supporting the Georgian Dancing and Singing Groups Abroad](#)'.

On 28 May 2021, the forum [Strong Diaspora for United Georgia](#) was held in Tbilisi. The forum aimed to overview the current state of relations with the Georgian diaspora, as well as to present and discuss new initiatives. The forum included two thematic meetings: 'Economy and Business-Georgian Diaspora for the Development of our Country' and 'Education and Culture'. Among the speakers were the President of Georgia, and high-level officials from the government and parliament.

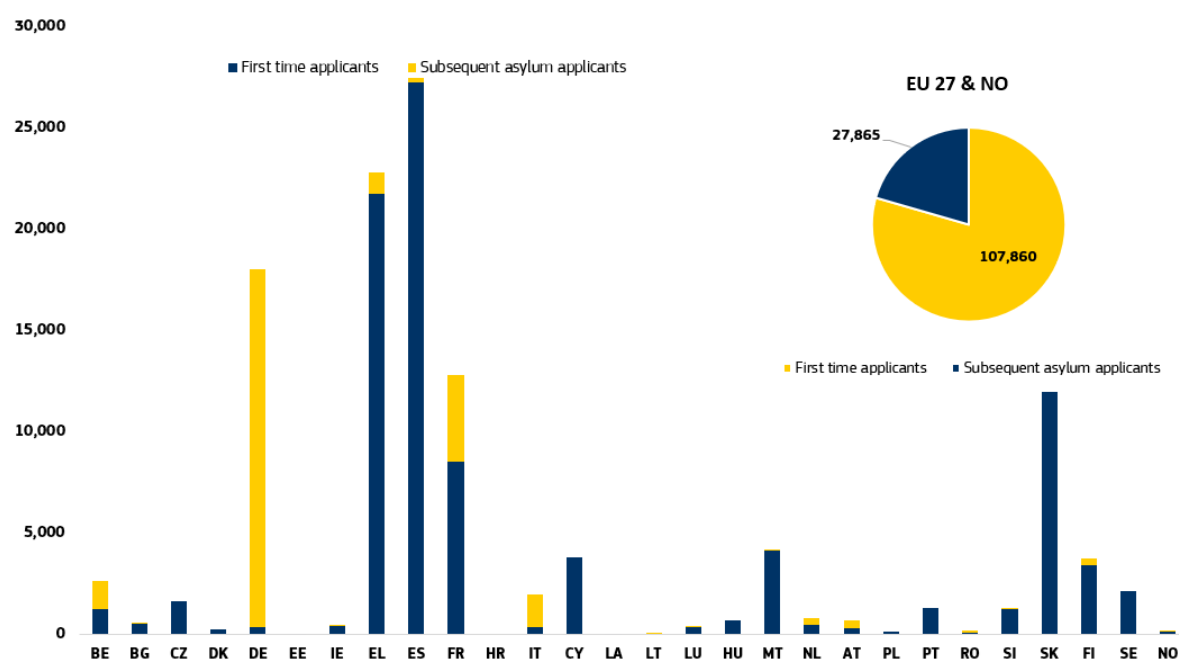
ANNEX: EU & COMPLEMENTARY STATISTICS, ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, OTHER EMN OUTPUTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

Figure 1: Asylum applications in the EU-27, Q1 2021 (January – March)



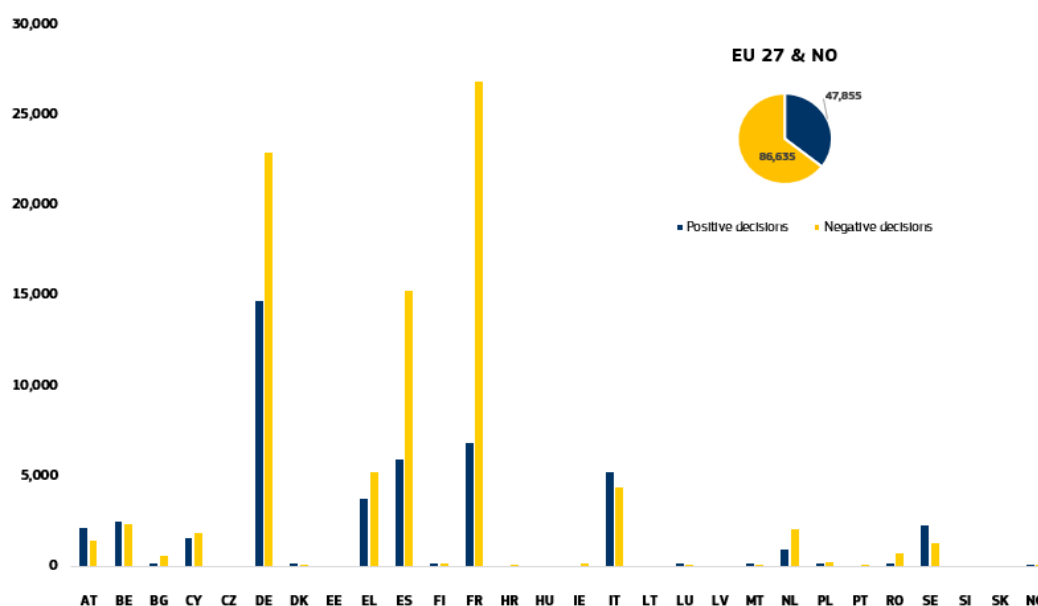
Source: Eurostat [[migr_asyappctzm](#)], total asylum applicants, extracted on 12 July 2021.

Figure 2: First time asylum applicants and subsequent applicants (together, total asylum applicants) in the EU-27 and Norway, Q1 2021 (January – March)



Source: Eurostat [[migr_asyappctzm](#)], accessed on 12 July 2021.

Figure 3: First instance asylum decisions in EU-27 and Norway for non-EU citizens, Q1 2021 (January – March)



Source: Eurostat [[migr_asydcfstq](#)], accessed on 12 July 2021.

Updates on EU legislation transposition

Italy: On 1 April 2021, the Chamber of Deputies approved the Draft European Law 2019/2020, currently being examined by the Senate. Article 2 of this provision provides for the **amendment of Italian immigration law, in order to implement the provisions of Article 12 of Directive 2011/98/EU** (the right to equal treatment between nationals and foreigners). Equality will therefore also be full in the areas of **social security** (many national courts had previously intervened and also the EU court with the case of Martinez Silva C-449/16).

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

- The 'EMN Day' 2021 took place on 11 June 2021 as an online webinar, '[Effective and efficient approaches to migration management at the EU and national level](#)', accompanied by the launch of the 2020 EMN Annual Report on Migration and Asylum. The Statistical Annex to the report will be published shortly.
- The EMN Annual conference on [Digital transformation in migration](#) took place on 30 April 2021, organised by EMN Portugal in the framework of the Portuguese Council Presidency.
- The EMN Conference in the framework of the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the European Union is due to be held on 5-6 October 2021, focusing on new approaches for forecasting and processing migration flows in EU Member States, Norway, Georgia and Moldova. The conference aims to include different perspectives and focus on partnerships with third countries.
- **Croatia:** On 10 June 2021, EMN NCP Croatia organised the [10th virtual meeting of the Croatian National Migration Network](#). The meeting was an opportunity for all participants to present news in their respective fields and work on the issue of migration since the last meeting of the network. EMN NCP Croatia presented the Annual Report on Migration and Asylum for the Republic of Croatia for 2020. Moreover, participants received information on the most significant innovations that have entered into force with the new Aliens Act and the implementation of the Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union.
- **France:** On 25 June 2021, the EMN French National Contact Point organised an online conference on the theme '[Attracting and protecting the rights of seasonal workers in the European Union and OECD countries](#)'.

This conference provided an opportunity to discuss the measures implemented in the different European and OECD countries to attract and protect third-country seasonal workers and to present in particular the profiles of these workers, the measures implemented in the framework of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the measures to fight against exploitation and illegal work (25 June 2021).

- **Luxembourg:** On 18 June 2021 from 9.00-13.00, EMN Luxembourg, together with the Luxembourg Refugee Council (*Lëtzebuenger Flüchtlingsrot/Collectif Réfugiés Luxembourg* - LFR), organised a [conference entitled 'The future of the unaccompanied child in Luxembourg'](#) on the occasion of World Refugee Day 2021.