

May 2022

The EMN Quarterly provides policymakers and other practitioners with updates on recent migration and international protection policy developments at EU and national level. This edition provides information from **01 October to 31 December 2021**, including the (latest) relevant published statistics

## EMN news



The Quarterly 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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UNACCOMPANIED  
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LEGAL  
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INTEGRATION

BORDER  
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MIGRATION

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HUMAN  
TRAFFICKING

EXTERNAL  
DIMENSION

EU LEGISLATION  
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EVENTS

## Recent EMN publications and events

- Find below EMN publications published between October and December 2021:
- EMN Inform: [Measuring progress to address statelessness in the EU and Georgia](#)

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## EVENT HIGHLIGHTS (EU)

### **Sixth European Migration Forum (EMF) (27-28 October 2021)**

Under the overarching theme “From pandemic to recovery: challenges and best practices in migration management”, the sixth European Migration Forum (EMF) was held virtually on 27-28 October 2021 by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the European Commission. The forum brought together over 200 representatives from civil society organisations, regional, and local authorities as well as European and international institutions, focusing on migrants’ crucial contributions to the EU’s post-pandemic economic and social recovery.

For information about the forum, visit the [event webpage](#).

### **European Council (16 December 2021)**

As part of the European Council (EUCO) meeting (16 December), EU leaders recalled the importance of addressing all migratory routes. They called on the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union to ensure that the recent action plans for countries of origin and transit are made operational. The European Council recognised the importance of a more unified EU returns policy and called on the Commission and the High Representative, together with Member States, to take swift action to ensure effective returns from the EU to countries of origin.

Read the European Council conclusions from the December meeting, visit the [meeting webpage](#).

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## GENERAL POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

### EU developments and update

In this section, readers will find an overview of the EU policy updates covering the period October to December 2021. Interested in learning more about each development? Click the indicated hyperlinks in the displayed updates.

### New measures to support inclusive education and migration and border management

The European Commission adopted two financing decisions totalling EUR 560 million to support quality inclusive education and access to higher education for refugees in Turkey, and migration and border management. The new decisions are part of an additional EUR 3 billion announced by President von der Leyen in June 2021 to continue EU assistance to refugees in Turkey for the period 2021-2023. Find out about each measure by clicking the links below.

- [Individual measure to support migration and border management in Turkey](#)
- [Individual measure to support inclusive quality education for refugees in Turkey](#)

### Supporting Member States in addressing the emergency at the EU's external border

The European Commission has proposed temporary legal and practical asylum and return measures to assist Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland in addressing the emergency at the EU's external border with Belarus. The measures aim to support these Member States in the management of the situation, in full respect of fundamental rights and international obligations, including the principle of non-refoulement.

Read the proposed council decision (available in EU's 24 official languages), visit [EUR-Lex webpage](#).

### Visual overview of new funding instruments

In October 2021, the Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs published a new set of explanatory videos to provide a concise visual overview of the main objectives and actions supported by the three most recent 2021-2027 EU funding instruments: Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), Border Management and Visa Instrument (BMVI), and Internal Security Fund (ISF).

To view the explanatory videos, visit the Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs website [online news article](#).

### National developments

Find out the latest national developments that have taken place across Europe:

**Croatia:** On 9 December 2021 the Council concluded that Croatia has fulfilled the necessary conditions for the application of all parts of the Schengen acquis. This verification that the necessary conditions for the application of all parts of the Schengen acquis have been met by Croatia is a precondition for the Council to be able to take a subsequent decision allowing for the lifting of internal border controls.

**Cyprus:** On 4 October 2021 the Ministry of Labour approved a new decree simplifying access to the labour market for asylum seekers. The latter are now allowed to be employed temporarily until the final approval of the Department of Labour, on condition

that they provide an affirmation letter by their employer. To read the decree, visit the Ministry of Labour [website](#) (website working language is Greek) or directly access the document [here](#).

**Greece:** The multipurpose Reception and Identification Centers (MPRICs) on the islands of Leros, Kos and Samos became operational, with infrastructures covering fully the needs of TCNs. Albania and North Macedonia were added to the list of safe third countries for all applicants of international protection. Turkey is considered safe third country for applicants with origin in Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Somalia. Implementation of extraordinary asylum procedures in the borders (i.e. police and army support to asylum services in cases of mass arrivals) expired on 31 December 2021. A payment of an e-fee of 100€ for each family member for each asylum application subsequent to the first one was adopted.

**Finland:** The Ministry of the Interior has established a project to conduct a [preliminary study](#) concerning the need for amendments in the Aliens Act and how the reform should be implemented. The study will serve as the basis for a reform plan.

An additional project was set up to assess the possible need for legislative amendments to prepare for 'hybrid influencing' that exploits migration. Information related to the new project can be found on the Finnish Ministry of the Interior [website](#).

**Germany:** On 7 December 2021 the [coalition agreement](#) for the newly formed Federal Government was signed. With regards to migration, the agreement foresees several points of action, such as strengthening the resettlement of third-country individuals, seeking agreements with countries of origin to enhance collaboration on legal pathways for migration and return activities, reducing secondary movements within the EU, and diversifying the pathways for legal migration based on different levels of qualification.

**Italy:** On 7 October 2021 the Permanent Conference for the relations between the State, the Regions and the Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano developed an agreement for the adoption of new National Guidelines on the identification, protection, assistance to victims of labour exploitation in agriculture. The guidelines were prepared by an inter-institutional technical group set up and coordinated by the General Directorate for Immigration and Social Integration of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies. State, Regions, Autonomous Provinces, and Local Authorities are committed to implementing the National Guidelines within six months and in close collaboration with law enforcement agencies, supervisory and inspection bodies, social partners, and civil society organisations.

The National Guidelines are available to read on the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies [website](#).

**Malta:** In September 2021 the human trafficking portfolio was transferred from the Ministry for Home Affairs, National Security and Law Enforcement to the Ministry for Equality, Research and Innovation under the Anti-Human Trafficking Office within the Human Rights Directorate aiming at implementing government strategy in this field from a human rights element.

**The Netherlands:** On 15 December 2021 the new Government of the Netherlands presented its coalition agreement. In the area of migration, it reiterates the commitment to a just, humane, and effective asylum and migration policy, with an emphasis on well-managed migration. The government opted for a two-pillar approach which entails, strengthening legal migration and limiting irregular migration, and fighting misuse of immigration procedures and promoting return in cases of illegal stay.

**Poland:** The Office for Foreigners decided to give priority to cases of Afghans evacuees due to their pressing integration needs. Moreover, because of the situation on the Polish-Belarusian border, the Office for Foreigners has decided to also prioritise cases of individuals who apply for international protection after an illegal border crossing (mainly Iraqi applicants, especially those who lived in Kurdistan or Southern Iraq).

**The Slovak Republic:** Following the adoption of the new [Migration Policy of the Slovak Republic: Perspective until the Year 2025](#), the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family set out action plans with concrete tasks and measures to be implemented. These actions concern the areas of legal migration, integration, international protection, irregular migration, and the fight against trafficking in human beings.

**Slovenia:** On 31 December 2021 the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the European Union officially ended. The Presidency focused intensively on negotiations relating to all legislative proposals stemming from the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, particularly the (recast) Eurodac (European asylum dactyloscopy (fingerprints) database) Regulation on the introduction of the collection of other biometric data for persons entering the EU. One of the biggest achievements of the presidency was the adoption of a common statement on the situation in Afghanistan during the extraordinary meeting of the Council of the EU on 31 August 2021. Read the full statement by visiting the [European Council website](#).

**Spain:** The Migration Budget was increased by 17%, to strengthen the state reception network and reinforce actions devoted to the development of legal pathways. In addition, further progress will be ensured in terms of digitalisation.

**Sweden:** Following the resignation of Stefan Löfven as Prime Minister of Sweden, a new social-democratic minority government took office on 30 November 2021, with Magdalena Andersson as Prime Minister. Anders Ygeman, former Minister for Energy and Digitalisation was appointed Minister for Integration and Migration, with Morgan Johansson, former Minister for Migration, becoming Minister for Justice and Home Affairs.

**Georgia:** On 15 November 2021, the European Commission [adopted decision](#) certifying that COVID-19 certificate issued by Georgia is equivalent to the EU Digital COVID Certificate. As a result, Georgia will be connected to the EU's system and their COVID certificates will be accepted under the same conditions as the EU Digital COVID Certificate. At the same time, Georgia accepted the EU Digital COVID Certificate for travel from the EU to Georgia.

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## INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION INCLUDING ASYLUM

### EU developments and updates

On 19-20 October the European Union Agency for Asylum (formerly the European Asylum Support Office – EASO), held a workshop on detention of applicants for international protection in the context of the Common European Asylum System. The workshop, which gathered 15 judges from different EU Member States, was part of EUAA's Professional Development Series, developed in cooperation with members of courts and tribunals from across the EU. It focused on the legal framework pertaining to detention and related key issues.

In November 2021 the European Union Agency for Asylum published trends on the topic of asylum. About 71 400 applications for international protection were lodged in the EU+ during November 2021, the second highest number recorded since 2016. Of this total, Syrians made the most applications while Afghans followed with the second highest number. Persons from Iraq, Venezuela, Pakistan, and Colombia also accounted for a significant number of applications, contributing to the overall increase in November. To view the data and key findings for November 2021, visit the [EUAA website](#).

## National developments

**Belgium:** An increase in the number of asylum applications and lengthy asylum procedures has resulted in reception centres coming under pressure. In response to the situation, Belgian authorities signed an agreement with EUAA to deliver 150 housing containers and make available 46 reception experts, including 25 interpreters.

Addressing the increase in asylum applications from Albania, the Belgian State Secretary for Asylum and Migration visited the country in October 2021 to initiate steps to reduce irregular migration. In November 2021, an awareness-raising campaign was launched to reduce irregular migration and increase awareness of local development initiatives and channels for regular migration.

**Bulgaria:** The Council of Ministers introduced Decision № 633/26.08.2021 to provide support and protection for up to 70 citizens of Afghanistan. So far 50 people have been evacuated and admitted to Bulgaria in three groups under a procedure for international protection and have been granted refugee status.

**Croatia:** The "[Resettle in Croatia](#)" application was developed by the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Croatia as part of the project "Establishment of a resettlement mechanism", co-financed by the AMIF. The application was created with the aim of providing faster and easier access to information and guidelines for persons who arrive in the Republic of Croatia under a resettlement programme, and who are granted international protection upon arrival.

**Cyprus:** In October 2021 a new accommodation centre 'Limnes', with a capacity for 800 residents, began operating in the area of Mennoyia, the second accommodation centre in Cyprus.

The arrival of Pope Francis on 2 December 2021, included discussions and meetings with migrant communities. As a gesture of solidarity and support for migrants, the relocation of 50 asylum applicants was agreed between the Vatican and the Republic of Cyprus, prior to the Pope's official visit. Following the visit, 14 asylum applicants relocated to the Vatican in December 2021.

In the same month, the development of a Reception Strategy for Cyprus was finalised with the support of the EUAA Nicosia Office and the EUAA Reception Team. Representatives from the Cypriot Asylum Service, Social Welfare Services, the Civil Registry and Migration Department, the European Funds Unit, and other stakeholders participated in a series of workshops, resulting in the draft Reception Strategy.

**Estonia:** In November, two evacuated Afghan nationals [arrived](#) in Estonia, and will go through international protection proceeding. The 14 Afghan nationals who arrived in Estonia in August have now been granted international protection in Estonia. In total 16 evacuated Afghan nationals have arrived in Estonia since August 2021.

**Finland:** The Finnish Immigration Service will have central responsibility for preparedness planning concerning the organisation of reception services in the event of large-scale influx of migrants following an [amendment to the Reception Act](#). The Act will enter into force on 1 January 2022.

The Finnish Immigration Service has drawn up [new guidelines](#) for decisions concerning Afghan citizens' asylum and residence permit applications.

**France:** By [a decision of 19 November 2021](#) the Council of State decided to keep Armenia and Georgia on the list of safe countries of origin (the request for revision of the list was filed by associations) since they considered that the situation had stabilised in Armenia and that the tensions in Georgia were not serious enough to modify the list.

**France:** [Law No. 2021-1900 of 30 December 2021 on the budget for 2022](#) provides for the creation of 800 places in temporary accommodation centers, dedicated to the accommodation of beneficiaries of international protection with specific reinforced support needs.

**Germany:** The evacuation operation of local support staff from Afghanistan ended on 31 August 2021. The debate continued about how to proceed with German citizens remaining in Afghanistan and former local support staff who are eligible for entry and stay in Germany but are unable to come. Germany is willing to admit a total of 25 000 people ([article in German](#)), including those evacuated already, and those eligible but who have not yet come to Germany.

**Greece:** By Law 4825/2021 and with the aim to speed up the return procedures, a) specific provisions of the legislation on return decisions were amended in order to regulate issues that arise during the implementation of return and deportation process of third-country nationals residing illegally in the country, and to limit any abuses related to the option of extending the deadline for voluntary departure, b) registered partners were included to the category of family members of beneficiaries, when the family is formed after the entry in Greece, c) the duration of the applicant's card was extended from six (6) to twelve (12) months. Statistical data: the pending cases of the Asylum Service and of Appeals Authority (first and second instance) and the total of asylum applicants residing in all facilities under the management of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum have been decreased about 50% comparing to December 2020. The pending applications on first and second instance reach 40.114 in total, when in December 2020 they were 79.986. UNHCR's cash assistance program concluded on 30.9.21, so the Ministry of Migration and Asylum is responsible for the management of the program which covers the asylum seekers' basic needs.

**Ireland:** On 14 December 2021 the Department of Justice [confirmed that the Afghan Admission Programme would open for applications on Thursday 16 December 2021](#).

**Italy:** Applications for international protection submitted by Afghan evacuees, have been formalised and the relative examination procedures initiated. The first hearing of applicants took place at the Territorial Commissions for the recognition of international protection.

To meet the exceptional reception needs of asylum seekers from Afghanistan, two main legislative developments have been envisaged:

- Decree Law no.139, on 8 October 2021 provided for an increase of the National Fund for Asylum Policies and Services to allow for the activation of an additional 3 000 places in the Reception and Integration System (SAI). By virtue of the abovementioned provision, on 21 December 2021 a decree of the Minister of the

Interior was adopted to finance 2 277 places within 113 active SAI projects. The procedure for financing the remaining 723 places is pending;

- Law no. 234 dated 30 December 2021 (concerning the state budget for the financial year 2022 and multiannual budget for the three-year period 2022-2024) provided for an increase of EUR 29 981 100 in the allocation to the National Fund for Asylum Policies and Services for each of the years 2022, 2023, 2024 to allow for the activation of an additional 2 000 places in the Reception and Integration System (SAI). During the reporting period, a total of 84 Afghans arrived in Italy, organised via operations by the Italian Ministry of Defence.

On 4 November 2021 a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) was signed between the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, UNHCR, IOM, NIHMP and civil society organisations for the opening of a legal entry channel for Afghan nationals in need of international protection, through activation of humanitarian-evacuation corridors from Pakistan and Iran.

The Ministry of Interior has issued an [Administrative circular](#) to all Prefectures in charge of the Centres of Permanence for Repatriation, aimed at improving the quality of life of detained people, from a psychological and social point of view, through the stipulation of protocols with the National Health Service.

**Latvia:** On 2 November 2021 Cabinet Regulation No. 727, [concerning the asylum seeker's personal identity documents](#) was adopted. The regulation determines the format of identity document of the asylum applicant and the procedures for the issuance of the document by the State Border Guard. State Border Guards will continue to issue asylum applicants' identity documents; however, in cases where the asylum applicant wishes to be employed, the foreigner's identity document will be issued by the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs, once it has determined that the legal conditions for granting the asylum applicant the right to employment without restrictions have been satisfied.

**Lithuania:** On 8 October 2021 the Migration Department [reported](#) that all Afghan nationals evacuated from Afghanistan to Lithuania in August 2021 received asylum. Due to the uncertain and unstable situation in Afghanistan, on 29 November 2021 the Migration Department [issued](#) temporary residence permits on humanitarian grounds to Afghan nationals who have not been granted asylum in Lithuania and cannot return to their country of origin, having come to Lithuania irregularly from Belarus.

On 28 October 2021 Lithuania [relocated](#) 12 Eritrean and Sudanese asylum applicants from Italy. Since 2015, the authorities have relocated and resettled 711 persons to Lithuania.

On 8 December 2021 the Migration Department announced that it [processed](#) all 3 272 asylum requests by migrants who crossed irregularly into Lithuania from Belarus, granting asylum to a total of 54 applicants from Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iraq, Syria and Yemen. On 30 December 2021, according to the Vilnius Regional Administrative Court, 698 of the 3 272 Migration Department's decisions were appealed by asylum applicants.

On 23 December 2021 the Parliament [approved](#) amendments to the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners clarifying asylum applicants' and irregular migrants' rights during an extreme situation and setting the rules for the provision of humanitarian aid.

**Luxembourg:** The Minister for Foreign and European Affairs, Jean Asselborn, announced on the 7 October that Luxembourg, in cooperation with its European partners, evacuated more than 40 people from Afghanistan. In addition, Luxembourg was processing the admission of 30 more people and was ready to receive 50 additional Afghan nationals at



risk. The focus was on family reunification. Full statement can be found in the [Luxembourg Government website](#).

**Malta:** In March 2021, the Maltese authorities received the following EU pilots on the compatibility of national implementing provisions with European Union Law:

- EU Pilot 9864/2021/HOME on the compatibility of the national implementing measures with the provisions of Directive 2011/95/EU on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection and with the provisions of Directive 2013/33/EU on laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection; and
- EU Pilot 9884/2021/HOME on the compatibility of the national implementing measures with the provisions of Directive 2013/32/EU on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection (recast).

In view of this, the Maltese authorities have drafted various amendments to transpose in a more accurate manner the provisions of EU directives mentioned by the Commission in the abovementioned EU pilots. These amendments consist in the following:

- Amendments to the International Protection Act (Cap 420). These amendments are currently at second reading stage in Parliament;
- Amendments to the Procedural Standards for Granting and Withdrawing International Protection Regulations (S.L. 420.07). These amendments were published on 24<sup>th</sup> December 2021; and
- Amendments to the Reception Conditions of Asylum Seekers Regulations (S.L. 420.06). These amendments were published on 24<sup>th</sup> December 2021.

**The Netherlands:** On 12 October 2021, 46 Afghan nationals were evacuated from Kabul to Islamabad with the Netherlands as a final destination. The evacuation was organised by the Netherlands with the support of the Pakistani authorities. Evacuees received shelter and support in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Full news article is available on the [Government website](#).

Throughout November 2021, there were several updates in relation to international protection and asylum:

- The [Association of Dutch Municipalities \(VNG\) opened a helpdesk](#) for municipalities, providing advice regarding asylum reception centres and housing for resident permit holders.
- The Minister for Migration announced the [shortening of the list of safe countries of origin](#). A total of 12 countries were removed from the list. This is because there is little or no influx of migrants from these countries and therefore their designation as safe countries of origin had no substantive value.
- The decision and departure moratorium regarding applicants for international protection who resided in the Tigray area before leaving Ethiopia, as well as ethnic Tigrayans from other regions in Ethiopia [was terminated](#).
- The Ministers of Justice and Internal Affairs wrote a letter to parliament [to update](#) them on the search for additional reception capacity and the process to expedite permanent housing for resident permit holders. In the following month, the

government instructed [emergency reception](#) centres to be set up at short notice in three municipalities and one region.

**Portugal:** Between October and December 2021 the IOM Portugal provided support to 143 refugees: 18 relocated people from Italy (originally from Togo, Ivory Coast, Guinea, and Cameroon), 43 people relocated from Greece (originally from Afghanistan), and 82 resettlements (from Egypt and Turkey).

**Slovenia:** In November 2021 an act amending the International Protection Act became applicable and corresponding bylaws came into force. The number of asylum applications continued to be very high, while the vast majority of applicants continued to abscond. There was an increase of applications from nationals of Middle-African countries and Cuba. The list of bylaws is available on the [PIS Legal Information System website](#).

**Spain:** Through the framework of Spain's National Resettlement Programme, 116 people (including 40 minors) from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, coming from Lebanon, Syria and Turkey were resettled on the 15 December 2021.

The National Refugee Resettlement Programme in Spain for the year 2022 was approved. It establishes the reception of up to 1 200 refugees over the next year. The Ministry of Inclusion will host 658 people resettled during the first quarter of 2022.

The [Royal Decree 882/2021](#) of 11 October 2021 regulated the direct provision of grants to NGOs until the 31 December 2022 to finance the National Reception System for Applicants and Beneficiaries of International Protection and the provision of health and social care in the migration centres of Ceuta and Melilla.

**Sweden:** On 30 November 2021 the Swedish Migration Agency adopted a [new judicial position](#) on Afghanistan based on the country guidance of the EUAA. In connection with the new judicial position, the previous decisions by the Migration Agency on suspending the enforcement of returns and asylum decisions were withdrawn.

**Georgia:** During October-December 2021 several trainings for various target groups were held by the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) in cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR): the representatives of the Ministry of IDPs from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs (MOH) were trained on the implementation of the asylum procedure; the staff of the Border as well as Patrol Police was trained on identification and referral of the asylum seeker; and the awareness raising session was held for the media representatives on migration and asylum issues.

## Judgement of the European Court of Justice

[Judgment in Case C-821/19](#) Commission v Hungary (Criminalisation of assistance to asylum seekers): In 2018, Hungary amended laws concerning measures against illegal immigration and enacted provisions which, for example, widened the grounds for not admitting an application for international protection. Considering that Hungary failed to fulfil its obligations under '[the Procedures Directive](#)' [Directive \(EU\) 2013/32](#) and '[the Reception Directive](#),' [Directive \(EU\) 2013/33](#) regarding asylum, the European Commission brought an action for failure to fulfil obligations before the Court of Justice. The Court, sitting as the Grand Chamber, has upheld for the most part the Commission's action.

[Judgment in Case C-91/20](#) Bundesrepublik Deutschland: LW, a Tunisian national, was born in Germany in 2017 to a Tunisian mother whose application for asylum was unsuccessful, and a Syrian father with refugee status since 2015. The asylum application submitted on

behalf of LW was rejected by decision of the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF - Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge). The court stated that LW could enjoy protection in Tunisia, a country of which she is a national. However, LW fulfils the conditions laid down by national law for recognition, as a derived right and for maintaining family unity in the context of asylum. After being consulted, the Court ruled that “The Common European Asylum System does not, in principle, preclude a Member State from automatically extending, as a derived right and for the purposes of maintaining family unity, refugee status to the minor child of a parent who has been granted that status.”

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On 4 November 2021 a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) was signed between the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, UNHCR, IOM, NIHMP and civil society organisations for the opening of a legal entry channel for Afghan nationals in need of international protection, through activation of humanitarian-evacuation corridors from Pakistan and Iran.

The Ministry of Interior has issued an [Administrative circular](#) to all Prefectures in charge of the Centres of Permanence for Repatriation, aimed at improving the quality of life of detained people, from a psychological and social point of view, through the stipulation of protocols with the National Health Service.

**Latvia:** On 2 November 2021 Cabinet Regulation No. 727, [concerning the asylum seeker's personal identity documents](#) was adopted. The regulation determines the format of identity document of the asylum applicant and the procedures for the issuance of the document by the State Border Guard. State Border Guards will continue to issue asylum applicants' identity documents; however, in cases where the asylum applicant wishes to be employed, the foreigner's identity document will be issued by the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs, once it has determined that the legal conditions for granting the asylum applicant the right to employment without restrictions have been satisfied.

**Lithuania:** On 8 October 2021 the Migration Department [reported](#) that all Afghan nationals evacuated from Afghanistan to Lithuania in August 2021 received asylum. Due to the uncertain and unstable situation in Afghanistan, on 29 November 2021 the Migration Department [issued](#) temporary residence permits on humanitarian grounds to Afghan nationals who have not been granted asylum in Lithuania and cannot return to their country of origin, having come to Lithuania irregularly from Belarus.

On 28 October 2021 Lithuania [relocated](#) 12 Eritrean and Sudanese asylum applicants from Italy. Since 2015, the authorities have relocated and resettled 711 persons to Lithuania.

On 8 December 2021 the Migration Department announced that it [processed](#) all 3 272 asylum requests by migrants who crossed irregularly into Lithuania from Belarus, granting asylum to a total of 54 applicants from Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iraq, Syria and Yemen. On 30 December 2021, according to the Vilnius Regional Administrative Court, 698 of the 3 272 Migration Department's decisions were appealed by asylum applicants.

On 23 December 2021 the Parliament [approved](#) amendments to the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners clarifying asylum applicants' and irregular migrants' rights during an extreme situation and setting the rules for the provision of humanitarian aid.

**Luxembourg:** The Minister for Foreign and European Affairs, Jean Asselborn, announced on the 7 October that Luxembourg, in cooperation with its European partners, evacuated more than 40 people from Afghanistan. In addition, Luxembourg was processing the admission of 30 more people and was ready to receive 50 additional Afghan nationals at risk. The focus was on family reunification. Full statement can be found in the [Luxembourg Government website](#).

**Malta:** In March 2021, the Maltese authorities received the following EU pilots on the compatibility of national implementing provisions with European Union Law:

- EU Pilot 9864/2021/HOME on the compatibility of the national implementing measures with the provisions of Directive 2011/95/EU on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection and with the provisions of Directive 2013/33/EU on laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection; and
- EU Pilot 9884/2021/HOME on the compatibility of the national implementing measures with the provisions of Directive 2013/32/EU on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection (recast).

In view of this, the Maltese authorities have drafted various amendments to transpose in a more accurate manner the provisions of EU directives mentioned by the Commission in the abovementioned EU pilots. These amendments consist in the following:

- Amendments to the International Protection Act (Cap 420). These amendments are currently at second reading stage in Parliament;
- Amendments to the Procedural Standards for Granting and Withdrawing International Protection Regulations (S.L. 420.07). These amendments were published on 24<sup>th</sup> December 2021; and
- Amendments to the Reception Conditions of Asylum Seekers Regulations (S.L. 420.06). These amendments were published on 24<sup>th</sup> December 2021.

**The Netherlands:** On 12 October 2021, 46 Afghan nationals [were evacuated from Kabul to Islamabad](#) with the Netherlands as a final destination. The evacuation was organised by the Netherlands with the support of the Pakistani authorities. Evacuees received shelter and support in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Full news article is available on the [Government website](#).

Throughout November 2021, there were several updates in relation to international protection and asylum:

- The [Association of Dutch Municipalities \(VNG\) opened a helpdesk](#) for municipalities, providing advice regarding asylum reception centres and housing for resident permit holders.
- The Minister for Migration announced the [shortening of the list of safe countries of origin](#). A total of 12 countries were removed from the list. This is because there is little or no influx of migrants from these countries and therefore their designation as *safe countries of origin* had no substantive value.
- The decision and departure moratorium regarding applicants for international protection who resided in the Tigray area before leaving Ethiopia, as well as ethnic Tigrayans from other regions in Ethiopia [was terminated](#).
- The Ministers of Justice and Internal Affairs wrote a letter to parliament [to update](#) them on the search for additional reception capacity and the process to expedite permanent housing for resident permit holders. In the following month, the government instructed [emergency reception](#) centres to be set up at short notice in three municipalities and one region.

**Portugal:** Between October and December 2021 the IOM Portugal provided support to 143 refugees: 18 relocated people from Italy (originally from Togo, Ivory Coast, Guinea, and Cameroon), 43 people relocated from Greece (originally from Afghanistan), and 82 resettlements (from Egypt and Turkey).

**Slovenia:** In November 2021 an act amending the International Protection Act became applicable and corresponding bylaws came into force. The number of asylum applications continued to be very high, while the vast majority of applicants continued to abscond. There was an increase of applications from nationals of Middle-African countries and Cuba. The list of bylaws is available on the [PIS Legal Information System website](#).

**Spain:** Through the framework of Spain's National Resettlement Programme, 116 people (including 40 minors) from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, coming from Lebanon, Syria and Turkey were resettled on the 15 December 2021.

The National Refugee Resettlement Programme in Spain for the year 2022 was approved. It establishes the reception of up to 1 200 refugees over the next year. The Ministry of Inclusion will host 658 people resettled during the first quarter of 2022.

The [Royal Decree 882/2021](#) of 11 October 2021 regulated the direct provision of grants to NGOs until the 31 December 2022 to finance the National Reception System for Applicants and Beneficiaries of International Protection and the provision of health and social care in the migration centres of Ceuta and Melilla.

**Sweden:** On 30 November 2021 the Swedish Migration Agency adopted a [new judicial position](#) on Afghanistan based on the country guidance of the EUAA. In connection with the new judicial position, the previous decisions by the Migration Agency on suspending the enforcement of returns and asylum decisions were withdrawn.

**Georgia:** During October–December 2021 several trainings for various target groups were held by the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) in cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR): the representatives of the Ministry of IDPs from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs (MOH) were trained on the implementation of the asylum procedure; the staff of the Border as well as Patrol Police was trained on identification and referral of the asylum seeker; and the awareness raising session was held for the media representatives on migration and asylum issues.

## Judgement of the European Court of Justice

[Judgment in Case C-821/19](#) Commission v Hungary (Criminalisation of assistance to asylum seekers): In 2018, Hungary amended laws concerning measures against illegal immigration and enacted provisions which, for example, widened the grounds for not admitting an application for international protection. Considering that Hungary failed to fulfil its obligations under [‘the Procedures Directive’ Directive \(EU\) 2013/32](#) and [‘the Reception Directive,’ Directive \(EU\) 2013/33](#) regarding asylum, the European Commission brought an action for failure to fulfil obligations before the Court of Justice. The Court, sitting as the Grand Chamber, has upheld for the most part the Commission’s action.

[Judgment in Case C-91/20](#) Bundesrepublik Deutschland: LW, a Tunisian national, was born in Germany in 2017 to a Tunisian mother whose application for asylum was unsuccessful, and a Syrian father with refugee status since 2015. The asylum application submitted on behalf of LW was rejected by decision of the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF - Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge). The court stated that LW could enjoy protection in Tunisia, a country of which she is a national. However, LW fulfils the conditions laid down by national law for recognition, as a derived right and for maintaining family unity in the context of asylum. After being consulted, the Court ruled that “The Common European Asylum System does not, in principle, preclude a Member State from automatically extending, as a derived right and for the purposes of maintaining family unity, refugee status to the minor child of a parent who has been granted that status.”

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## UNACCOMPANIED MINORS AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

### EU developments and updates

- In November 2021 the European Union Asylum Agency (EUAA) published a COI research guide focusing on sexual and gender minorities: lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, non-binary, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ). The guide provides background knowledge, questions, tips, and tools for researching topics related to LGBTIQ persons. The guide focuses on researching the situation of LGBTIQ persons in countries of origin. The guide is available on the [EUAA website](#).

### National developments

**Bulgaria:** Bulgaria continues its participation in the voluntary relocation scheme from Greece. In November 2021 two unaccompanied minors arrived in Bulgaria. Thus, the total number of relocated children in 2021 is 11.

During the period October – December 2021, employees of the Bulgarian State Agency for Refugees (SAR) participated in several training activities and seminars, including: Training on the project "ACTIVATE - Improving the identification of victims, prevention of trafficking in human beings and support mechanisms", organised by the Animus Association Foundation;

Training on "Prevention of Gender-Based Violence", organised by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Representation of UNICEF in the Republic of Bulgaria, and the Animus Association Foundation;

Seminar on "Social work with refugees and migrants. Identification and work with vulnerability", organised by the Animus Association Foundation;

Training for working with children accommodated in the Safe Zone for unaccompanied children - organised by IOM.



**Finland:** The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment has appointed a [working group](#) to prepare a reform of services for children and young people who have arrived in Finland without a guardian and who have been granted a residence permit. The reform aims to ensure that the young people have equal access to services, similar to other groups in need of special support.

**France:** At the request of the French Minister of the Interior, [an instruction](#) on the issuance of residence permits for victims of domestic violence was sent to prefects on 23 December 2021 in order to regularise the status of women who are staying irregularly in France and have been identified as victims of domestic violence. Thus, they will receive a renewable residence permit for several years.

**Germany:** The [project "Together in Sport"](#) funded by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) and co-funded by AMIF continues to reach out to both child asylum applicants and local children as well as youth in selected Greek communities. In cooperation with the German and the Hellenic Olympic Committees and the Greek NGO METAdrasi, children and youth are offered sport and cultural activities in order to strengthen social cohesion. The project also addresses the specific needs of unaccompanied minors (UAMs).

**Greece:** Progressively transfer of all UAMs accommodated in camps in the mainland to long-term accommodation facilities, suitable for their age and needs (2.478 places on 31.12.2021). Operation of the National Emergency Response Mechanism for unaccompanied minors living in precarious conditions, as well as launch of new emergency shelters for them. Finalisation of the National Strategy for the protection of UAMs for public consultation. Provision for full health care coverage for all the UAMs whose asylum case has been rejected, and thus lack a legal status, as long as they are underage and remain in the country. Successful relocation of a total **168 unaccompanied children to other member states**, in the framework of the Voluntary Relocation Scheme from Greece to other European countries. Facilitations in the scope of integration of unaccompanied minors and their smooth transition to adulthood

**Italy:** As part of the Em.As - Empowerment Asylum Commission project - the National Asylum Law Commission and project partner UNHCR have finalised Standard Operating Procedures on "Emergence and referral of survivors of - or at risk of - gender-based violence in the context of the procedure for recognition of international protection," scheduled for publication in January 2022.

A [public notice](#) was [issued](#) for the submission of requests to increase the number of places in reception projects for unaccompanied foreign minors, and funding was subsequently provided for [23 projects](#) for a total of 586 places.

According to the latest data available from the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, which is responsible for monitoring the presence of UAMs on the Italian territory, on 30 November 2021 the number of UAMs present amounted to 11 159. Their main countries of origin were Bangladesh, Tunisia, Egypt, Albania, and Pakistan.

Consolidated data confirm that during the months of August and September 2021 the Central Civil Liberties Department collaborated in the identification of dedicated reception shelters for 27 unaccompanied children evacuated from Afghanistan.

The agreement signed on 19 December 2019 between the Ministry of the Interior and Save the Children ONLUS in favour of foreign minors arriving in Italy unaccompanied and those belonging to a family unit has been further renewed on 20 December 2021. The organisation will continue its activities until 31 December 2022, providing, where requested, information and immediate support, legal guidance, cultural mediation, and mental and

social support to minors from the earliest stages of their arrival in Italy, as well as support in identifying the most vulnerable cases.

In November 2021 the Notice of the "[Percorsi 4 Project](#)" was published to create integrated paths for the social and work integration of unaccompanied foreign minors and young migrants up to age 24 years, if they entered Italy as unaccompanied minors. The paths are based on an "individual dowry", guaranteeing the provision of a series of support services, including the enhancement and development of skills, social and labour insertion, and support towards autonomy. The project makes available 1 500 'dowries' in five target regions of the Complementary Operational Programme, with internships lasting six months, and the possibility of extension for a further six months.

In October 2021 the first group of five UAMs arrived in Italy, out of 35 selected within the project [Pagella in tasca](#), promoted and implemented by the humanitarian organisation Intersos together with the UNHCR-UN Agency for Refugees. They are children aged between 15 and 17 years originally from Darfur, Sudan, and refugees in Niger who will be included in study and social inclusion programmes. They will be hosted by foster families with a community sponsorship mechanism. The families will receive educational, legal, and psychological support. Thanks to a 12-month scholarship, the minors will be able to obtain their secondary school leaving certificate and then choose whether to continue their path in upper secondary school or in vocational training.

**Malta:** In November 2021, the Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers (AWAS) in Malta signed a bilateral agreement with the Maltese Child Protection Services, and the Maltese Court have started issuing the pending care orders of all the UAMs in the reception centers and appointments of representatives (as stated by Article 21-Chapter 602 of the Laws of Malta)-before known as legal guardianship). This also means that those claiming minors upon arrival having no documentation and there is serious doubt that may be minors are issued with a provisional care order and appointment of representative until the age assessment is conducted. In case of minors confirmed by the disembarkation assessment team as minors are issued with a care order and appointment of representative. AWAS had continued to develop the UMAS Protection Services Unit by increasing the number of social workers to specialize in this unit. The Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers had also updated the Age Assessment Procedure and the Age Assessment Tool with the support of EUAA according to the EUAA guideline on Age Assessment. AWAS's professionals continued to be present during Boat disembarkations and persons were immediately screened for visible vulnerabilities. AWAS teams that is the Social Work team continued to support the residents in the centres, whilst the Psychosocial Service continued to support in the identification of vulnerable and provided therapeutic services when needed. AWAS had continued to receive support from EUAA with regard the vulnerability assessments and by the end of December 2021, the team had managed to screen 823 people for any vulnerability. All AWAS and EUAA teams cross-refer. AWAS kept on working closely with the International Protection Agency & NGOs, and they help too in seeking out vulnerable and referring them to AWAS.

**The Netherlands:** On 25 November 2021 the government [announced its plans for prolonged reception and support for unaccompanied minors \(UAMs\)](#) with an asylum status who reach legal adulthood. The prolonged support has been established by the previous government on an incidental basis for 2022. The new government will decide how structural financing will be provided.

On 20 December 2021 [it was announced that the obligation to return for UAMs will be suspended](#) until it has been examined and established that they will be provided with adequate reception and care services in their country of origin. The policy amendment is in response to the [case T.Q.](#) of the Court of Justice of the European Union, which demands that the aforementioned examination must take place before a return decision is issued.

**Portugal:** In this period IOM welcomed the safe arrival of 55 unaccompanied migrant children from Greece to Portugal through an EU relocation initiative.

**Slovenia:** The Government of the Republic of Slovenia extended the project aimed at accommodation of UAMs in the student dormitory of Secondary school for forestry and wood technology.

**Spain:** A Royal Decree has been [approved](#) modifying the legal regime of minors and those previously in foster care to facilitate their integration. The overall objective of the reform is to promote inclusion and reduce the vulnerability of undocumented unaccompanied foreign minors by providing legal possibilities for when they reach the age of majority, consolidating their access to the labour market, which is possible from the age of 16. The approved reform will benefit approximately 15 000 young people.

The Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration has issued an instruction addressed to the Offices of Foreigners by which it has been clarified that all foreign women, regardless of their administrative status (regular or irregular) are also covered by Organic Law 1/2004 of 28 December, of Comprehensive Protection Measures against Gender Violence.

Homogeneous criteria of interpretation have been established to ensure exceptional residence and work authorization for foreign women victims of gender violence whose authorization depended on that of their aggressor. The intention to adapt the criteria was to protect women who are in Spain in a regular situation, with an authorisation to stay in the country that is dependent on that of their aggressor, to favour their reporting of abuse without the risk of losing their legal status.

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## LEGAL MIGRATION

### EU developments and updates

- The European Parliament adopted [Resolution 2020/2255\(INL\)](#) with recommendations on legal migration policy and law, calling on the Commission to submit by 31 January 2022 a proposal for an act that would facilitate and promote legal migration. The recommendations aim to increase the EU's attractiveness for workers of all skill levels and facilitate entry and mobility within the EU for legally migrating third-country nationals applying for work or already holding a work permit.

### National developments

**Cyprus:** On 15 October 2021 the Minister of Finance presented the [Action Plan/Strategy](#) for attracting foreign companies to locate in Cyprus. Incentives given to companies include (amongst others) simplified and fast-tracked immigration procedures, the right to family reunification for the company employees, and a shortened period of stay as a prerequisite for an application for nationality (from seven to five years). The plan entered into force on 1 January 2022, and also introduced a new type of temporary residence permit called a “digital nomad visa.” Third-country nationals (and their family members) who are self-employed or salaried employees, working remotely with employers/clients based outside Cyprus, via the use of Information Technology, are entitled to the new permit.

**Greece:** Digitalisation of the procedure for the submission of TCNs' applications for residence permits renewal. New law provisions (I.4825/2021) a) for the granting of national visas and residence permits to “digital nomads” , b) the amendment of law for

seasonal workers at the agricultural sector, by extending the working time period from 6 to 9 months in any 12-month period and by establishing an authorization, which allows seasonal workers to stay and be employed for a time period up to five years, depending on the application of the employer.

**Estonia:** In December, the Minister of Interior [established](#) a division of the immigration quota for 2022. The quota is partly divided depending on the ground of the residence permit. The immigration quota regulates mainly employment and business migration from third countries to Estonia. : 300 residence permits for employment in manufacturing industry; 200 residence permits for employment in construction sector; 100 residence permits for employment in transport and storage sector; 20 residence permits for employment for entrepreneurship; 23 residence permits for employment in a performing arts institution as person engaged in creative activities; 26 residence permits for employment in the professional activities in the capacity of a sportsman, coach, referee or sports official by summons of a respective sports federation; 5 residence permits on the basis of a treaty; and 637 residence permits on general grounds for employment and entrepreneurship.

**France:** The [bilateral agreement between France and Kenya](#) concerning the mobility of skills and talents was approved and published in the 'Official Journal' on 18 December 2021. This bilateral agreement aims to promote the exchange of young professionals, teachers and researchers from both countries. It includes stipulations on the mobility of students, trainees, academics and a component on the exchange of professionals and skills mobility.

**France:** As part of the policy of attracting talents, the Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs presented on 14 December 2021 [a new strategy](#) of influence for French higher education and research, particularly in the area of influence of French higher education abroad.

**Finland:** A research project commissioned by the government investigated the types of complementary migration pathways available for people in need of international protection. The main focus of the study is on labour-based and study-based complementary pathways. The number of complementary pathway programmes is growing rapidly, and they have the potential to respond to the needs of both people in need of protection and the receiving societies. Find out more about the study, visit the [Finnish Ministry of The Interior website](#).

Specialists' and start-up entrepreneurs' entry into Finland will be easier in 2022. The Finnish Immigration Service will process the residence permits of those coming to Finland via the fast-track route in a maximum of two weeks. More information about the service is available on the [Finnish Immigration Service website](#).

The government has proposed a legislative amendment to increase retention of international students. According to the proposal, foreign students would obtain a residence permit for the entire duration of their studies and their right to work during their studies would also be improved. More information about the proposed legislative amendments is available on the [Finnish Government website](#).

**Ireland:** On 1 November 2021 the government [announced several changes to the employment permits system for workers outside of the European Economic Area \(EEA\)](#).

On 16 November 2021 the Department of Justice [announced a number of immigration changes](#) including some to facilitate travel over the Christmas period.

On 17 December 2021 the Department of Justice [announced a further temporary extension of immigration and international protection permissions](#) until 1 May 2022.

**Italy:** On 21 December 2021 the Council of Ministers issued a Decree regarding the "Transitional programming of entry flows of non-EU workers into the territory of the State for the year 2022". By way of transitional programming of the entry flows of non-EU workers, non-EU citizens are admitted to Italy for seasonal and non-seasonal subordinate work and self-employment within a maximum overall quota of 69 700 workers. The quotas have been defined on the basis of national needs. Non-EU citizens are admitted to Italy up to a quota of 27 700, of which 20 000 are in the road haulage, construction, and tourism-hotel sectors. Some 42 000 units for subordinate seasonal work in the agricultural and tourist-hotel sectors is foreseen, of which 14 000 will be managed by the professional employers' organisations. The Decree on entry flows was published in the [Official Gazette](#) on 17 January 2022.

In the month of November 2021 extraordinary surveillance and control activities continued to be carried out to counteract "caporalato" (illegal recruitment) and labour exploitation in the Lazio Region. The controls were carried out as part of the [ALT CAPORALATO](#) Project, conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and the International Organization for Migration. A total of 74 businesses were checked and a total of 719 labour positions were verified, of which 432 related to workers from non-EU countries. A total of 11 businesses were suspended due to the employment of undeclared workers, some of whom did not hold a regular residence permit.

In November 2021 the National Inspectorate of Labour started a collaboration with the service offered by the inter-institutional Helpdesk [Anticaporalato](#), realised and promoted within the project P.I.U. *Su.Pr.Eme, Percorsi individualizzati di Uscita dallo Sfruttamento*. Intercultural mediators, operators, and experts in different languages provide information on the rights and services available within the national territory of third-country nationals who are victims / potential victims of labour exploitation in the five regions of Southern Italy. Users are supported in the legal, social and health, labour law, and administrative fields.

**Luxembourg:** Health measures, in response to COVID-19, are to be extended until 28 February 2022 for people travelling by air to Luxembourg. Measures have been adapted so that any person aged 12 years and 2 months or above, are required to present documents of proof of either vaccination certificate, recovery certificate or negative test result. Full statement can be found in the [Luxembourg Government website](#).

**The Netherlands:** On 15 November 2021 the [conditions for residence permits for au pairs were refined](#): an au pair must be unmarried, must not have any (foster) children and cannot be older than 25 years when applying. The new rules are to be implemented by the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2022. This amendment was made to prevent potential misuse of the au pair regulation and ensure that the permit is used for the purpose of cultural exchange only.

On 16 December 2021 [it was announced](#) that the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) extended its cooperation agreement with the Employers' Organisation for Sports (WOS) for another five years. The IND has been working closely with the WOS since 2009 to efficiently facilitate residence and work permits for professional athletes, trainers, coaches and physiotherapists from abroad.

**Poland:** On December 16, 2021, the provisions allowing the minister competent for labour to create activation programs for foreigners financed from the Labour Fund entered into force.

On January 14, 2022, the Act of December 17, 2021, amending the Act on foreigners and certain other acts was published in the Journal of Laws (it comes into force within 14 days from its publication). The purpose of the amendment is to streamline the procedures for granting temporary residence permits for foreigners, striving to reduce the length of proceedings, as well as i.a. to improve certain legal solutions regarding the access of foreigners to the Polish labour market (such as extending the possibility of working on a declaration on entrusting work to citizens of Ukraine, Belarus, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Russia from 6 to 24 months).

The project is a part of the A4.1 reform of the National Reconstruction Program (Effective Institutions for the Labour Market) with the deadline for adopting the regulations - end of 2022.

**Portugal:** The kick-off meeting took place for the project “Promoting well-managed labour migration to Portugal.” This project, focused on the agriculture and tourism sectors in the Algarve and Alentejo regions, aims to develop future labour migration schemes for Portugal, based on good management of labour migration, to respond quickly to existing labour market demand, and to encourage the creation of safe pathways for the migration of foreign workers.

During the reporting period Portugal signed a bilateral agreement with India on labour migration.

In the field of preventing child labour, one inspection visit was conducted in the same period, covering one employing entity and involving one foreign worker of Brazilian nationality.

**Slovenia:** On 31 December 2021 the one-year transitional period expired during which beneficiaries of the Withdrawal Agreement from the European Union of the United Kingdom had to apply for a new residence permit issued in accordance with the terms of the Withdrawal Agreement.

**Spain:** The procedure for the entry and stay of foreign professionals in the audio visual sector has been [simplified](#) within the framework of the "Spain Audiovisual Hub" plan, which enables artists or professional workers to remain in Spain with their direct relatives. The concept of a professional worker in the audio visual sector is expanded, which will benefit companies in the sector by encompassing a wider range of both traditional content and multimedia and interactive digital environments.

- The Order of the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration regulating the collective management of hiring at origin for 2022 (GECCO) has been [approved](#). This instrument allows the development of circular migration projects with third countries and in sectors where there is a demand for workers and is one of the most valuable tools to promote regular, safe, and orderly migration. It opens for the first time the possibility of promoting circular migration projects in all sectors of activity. The new projects to be developed over the next year offer the possibility of extending employment contracts to a maximum of 12 months from the date of their signature.

**WAFIRA is the second pilot project on legal migration that the Spanish Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration, in co-financing with the EU, is launching with Morocco.**

**The project partners are Cooperativas Agroalimentarias, the International Labor Organization (ILO) and ANAPEC (the Moroccan public employment service), although the Moroccan Ministry of Labor and Professional Insertion and the OFPPT (responsible for occupational training) will also participate.**

**Georgia:** To raise awareness on visa free rules/conditions and increase the number of EU Visa Free [mobile app](#) users, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) prepared a specialised bilingual (GE/EN) [info-brochure](#) and distributed it to the relevant state agencies;

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## INTEGRATION

### EU developments and updates

- On 10 December 2021 the AMIF funded REGIN (Regions for Migrants and Refugees Integration) project published a new website called '[Integration Lab Database](#)', gathering examples of practices related to migrant integration with the involvement of regional authorities. The website shares integration practices assessed by an evaluation framework. The featured initiatives aim to promote inclusion and sustainability, as well as innovation and a multi-stakeholder approach.

### National developments

**Croatia:** "Within INCLuDE project - Interdepartmental Cooperation in Empowerment of Third-Country Nationals, co-financed by AMIF, implemented by the Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities, the first set of trainings was held in October and November for representatives of public institutions and civil society organizations at the local level on sensitization, development of new knowledge and competencies in the implementation of integration measures and improvement of intersectoral cooperation of services and organizations in local governments. The trainings were attended by 270 people from more than 20 cities throughout the Republic of Croatia."

On 8 December 2021, as part of the activities of the INCLuDE project and organised as part of the Human Rights Film Festival, a roundtable was held on the "Integration of Migrant Women: Opportunities and Challenges." The aim was to present key challenges in the integration of migrant women, focusing on women granted international protection.

On 12 November 2021 a session of the Standing Committee for the Implementation of the Integration of Foreigners into Croatian Society was held, where recent achievements and challenges in the field of integration of persons granted international protection were presented.

On 14 December 2021 a meeting of integration coordinators was held at the local level, with the aim of presenting professional, administrative, and financial preconditions for the development of local integration plans from the perspective of the City of Zagreb.

On 10 December 2021 a meeting of the Advisory Group of Third Country Nationals and Persons of Migrant Origin was held to present news in the field of integration, i.e., activities and measures defined at the national level and within the competence of the City of Zagreb.

**Cyprus:** In October 2021, the project team and the regional intercultural coordinators of the project '[Building structures for intercultural integration in Cyprus](#)' held their first official informative meeting with key stakeholders including the mayors of all major cities, local authority associations, civil society organisations, the EU Representation, and the UNHCR in Cyprus. The project aims to support the integration of third-country nationals by

empowering local authorities, NGOs, and migrant organisations to be part of the integration process.

**Estonia:** In November, the government approved the [Cohesive Estonia Development Plan 2021–2030](#) that sets goals for integration, including adaptation, for the next ten years. Cohesive Estonia 2030 focuses on the promotion of integration and adaptation activities, developing a multifaceted diaspora policy (including supporting Estonian communities abroad, encouraging citizen diplomacy, and creating an infrastructure to facilitate ethnic return migration), strengthening civil society, improving childcare and support structures for families, and implementing smart demographic analysis methods. The development plan will be implemented in collaboration between the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

**Finland:** A workspace for integration and refugee reception experts called Partnership Platform opened on 2 December 2021. The platform is an interactive, digital, and communal platform for operators, experts, stakeholders, and networks involved in the integration, immigration, and reception of refugees. [Partnership platform – a workspace for integration and refugee reception experts to go online today! - Integration](#)

**France:** The Ministry of the Interior organised a "[Integration Week for Newly Arrived Foreign Nationals](#)" throughout the country from 11 to 15 October 2021. The Government wishes to highlight to the general public the progress made in integrating newly arrived foreign nationals, including refugees, to promote territorial initiatives and to strengthen mobilisation, particularly on the issue of professional integration.

**France:** [A decree published on 23 December 2021](#) and [a decision](#), which came into force on 1 January 2022, introduce a standardised certification to assess the language level that can be issued to foreign nationals as part of the Republican Integration Contract signed when they arrive in France as part of their integration pathway. The decree specifies the certification procedures, while the decision sets out and adapts the procedures and duration of civic and language training. It also specifies the time limit within which third-country nationals may request certification.

**Germany:** In view of the changes in Afghanistan, the Federal Ministry of the Interior [opened integration courses](#) on 6 January 2022 to evacuated Afghan nationals who have benefited from international protection and/or whose asylum applications are still being processed. While these courses are usually only open for beneficiaries, not applicants, changes have been made so that Afghans may begin participating in these courses upon arrival.

**Greece:** Publication and completion of public electronic consultation (by Jan.2022) of the New National Integration Strategy which targets asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection and comprises also a pre-integration stage, including education and training. Signature of an MoU between the Ministry of Migration & Asylum and the UNHCR on the implementation of pre-integration and integration initiatives concerning applicants and beneficiaries of international protection focusing on a) enabling integration through investment in refugee talent, and b) monitoring of integration.

**Ireland:** On 16 November 2021 the Department of Justice [announced changes](#) to simplify the processing of citizenship applications.

**Italy:** On 22 December 2021 the UNHCR and Anpal Servizi spa signed a [memorandum of understanding \(MoU\)](#) to facilitate the integration of refugees and asylum seekers into the labour market. The agreement aims at a greater involvement of the private sector, both by providing companies with adequate knowledge and tools to make the workplace



suitable to accommodate refugees, and by strengthening the skills of the network of employment services, as well as civil society actors who support inclusion pathways. It also aims to increase awareness of the economic inclusion of refugees and the benefits that accrue to businesses and the local community. Also, the UNCHR Italy project "Welcome. Working for refugee integration", has since 2016 been rewarding companies that have distinguished themselves for encouraging the inclusion of refugees in the labour market and for promoting personalised pathways.

As of December 2021 two new online knowledge tools have been set up including a [report of the observatory on socioeconomic and financial inclusion](#) and an [interactive dashboard](#) on migrants' businesses. The new tools have been realised within the project 'Futurae', resulting from a collaboration between the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and Unioncamere (the Italian Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Handicrafts and Agriculture), and financed by the National Fund for Migration Policies. As far as the training and coaching activities for migrants' businesses are concerned, so far 20 new businesses have been set up, another 10 are in the process of registration, and 90 further new activities are at an advanced stage of development.

The new Annual Reports on the presence of migrants in metropolitan cities are now online. The fifth edition presents nine in-depth studies and a comparative summary. The publication intends to explore the local dimension of the migratory phenomenon, in relation to the geographical distribution of non-EU citizens, the main indicators of stabilisation, as well as the participation of migrants in the labour market, entrepreneurial dynamism, and remittance flows. The data also allow us to reflect on the consequences of the pandemic, which are more serious for the non-EU population and in particular for foreign women for whom an alarming increase in the rate of inactivity has been recorded. For more information visit this link: [Quaderno di sintesi sulla presenza dei migranti nelle 14 Città metropolitane](#).

**Luxembourg:** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the Department of Integration made an exception to the usual procedure for granting subsidies to associations. Applications for subsidies no longer needed to be submitted within six weeks of the start of a project. Any association that carried out a project promoting intercultural living together during the months of October, November, or December 2021 could submit a grant application.

On 8 October 2021, as part of the National Action Plan on Integration, the Department of Integration within the Ministry of Family Affairs, Integration and the Greater Region launched a [call for projects that promote the local integration of all residents of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg](#) as well as cross-border workers. The call for projects focuses on political and citizen participation.

On 17 November 2021 the first hybrid edition of the [Local Integration Exchange and Support Group \(GRESIL\)](#) took place. During this seventh edition of the GRESIL, 140 political leaders, municipal representatives as well as members of the municipal consultative commissions on integration exchanged views on the theme "Promoting living together in our municipalities through meeting places and exchange".

On 20 November 2021 the [Orientation Day of the Reception and Integration Contract \(CAI\)](#) took place in virtual form for the third time. More than 500 CAI signatories registered for the event and had the opportunity to become familiar with administrative procedures, the country's institutions, and community life in Luxembourg.

Having entered into force on 24 December 2021, the [Ministerial Regulation of 15 December 2021](#) modified the minimum level of remuneration of highly qualified third-country workers who do not enjoy free access to the national labour market.

On 27 October 2021 the Minister of Social Security and the Minister of Health presented the [“Universal Health Care Coverage” project](#). As foreseen by the coalition agreement 2018-2023, the project will provide access to free healthcare to vulnerable persons living in Luxembourg without health insurance.

On 25 November 2021 the [OECD presented the results of its study on "The functioning of the integration system and its actors in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg."](#) It was commissioned by the Ministry of Family Affairs, Integration and the Greater Region in the context of a reform of the integration law of 16 December 2008. The study resulted in a number of recommendations.

On 9 December 2021 the University of Luxembourg presented, in the presence of the Minister of National Education, Children and Youth, [the third national report on education](#). The report highlights, among other things, the educational inequalities of pupils with a migrant background.

**The Netherlands:** On 6 October 2021 it was announced that EUR 50 million [would be made available](#) to increase housing for vulnerable groups, including beneficiaries of international protection. Of the €50 million, €18 million is specifically intended for beneficiaries of international protection.

On 25 November 2021 it was announced that municipalities [will receive incidental financial support for IT-related costs](#) related to the implementation of the new Civic Integration Act which came into effect on 1 January 2022.

**Portugal:** IOM Portugal and the ACM High Commission participated in seven meetings under the High Commission for Migration’s Operative Group, to discuss movements related to the arrival of unaccompanied migrant children, relocation of beneficiaries from Greece, Italy, and Malta, and the resettlement of refugees from Turkey and Egypt. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss the challenges of integration, to inform about procedures in public services, and to exchange best practices.

**Georgia:** Within the reporting period 20 foreigners have been enrolled in the State Language Teaching and Integration Program. As of December 2021, in total 59 foreigners (asylum seekers/temporary residents) continue online learning of the Georgian language on A1 and A2 levels;

In November 2021, 16 asylum seekers accommodated in the Martkopi Reception Centre of Asylum Seekers [started learning](#) "Communication Georgian A1/1" study course of the State Language and Integration Program. Upon the successful graduation of the course the beneficiaries will be granted with certificates.

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## MANAGEMENT OF THE EU EXTERNAL BORDERS, VISAS and SCHENGEN

### EU developments and updates

The Commission and High Representative of the Union have proposed a [new legal framework](#) to prevent and restrict the activities of transport operators that engage in or facilitate smuggling or trafficking of people into the European Union. As part of the European Union's united response to state-sponsored instrumentalisation of people at the EU's external border with Belarus, the proposal, dated 23 November 2021, aims to provide a new instrument to support Member States affected by hybrid attacks.

The European Commission has also proposed updated [rules](#) to reinforce the governance of the Schengen area. The updated rules promote the use of alternative measures to internal border controls and seeks to ensure that the latter remain a measure of last resort. It also addresses unauthorised movements within the Schengen area and aims to again support Member States in managing situations concerning the instrumentalisation of migration, for example, state actors artificially creating and facilitating irregular migration to destabilise another state.

In December 2021 the border management authorities of the EU and the League of Arab States gathered in Amman, Jordan, for the first [Euro-Arab Border Security Conference](#). The aim of this conference was to discuss how to improve and strengthen dialogue and cooperation in response to global challenges. This conference follows the broader framework of dialogue to develop Euro-Arab security cooperation. The dialogue first started in 2015 and continued in Egypt in 2019. Prior to 2021, leaders of the EU and the League of Arab States had agreed to strengthen their strategic cooperation.

### **National developments**

**Estonia:** In November, related from the situation at the Belarusian border and an increased risk of increased irregular border crossings on Estonian border, [a temporary barrier of 40 kilometres was built on Estonian Eastern border](#) (Estonian-Russian border). The temporary barrier was built in ten locations where the Police and Border Guard Board has considered the risk of irregular border crossing to be the highest.

**Germany:** The situation along the EU-external border with Belarus led to an unprecedented increase of [irregular border crossings](#) at the German-Polish Border, however, a downturn was observed in December 2021. [Germany offered Poland its support](#) and scaled up the Federal Police [operations](#) at the German-Polish Border.

**Italy:** 21 148 people, including 2 758 unaccompanied minors, were recorded to have arrived in Italy from 1 October to 31 December 2021.

**Latvia:** [The Law on the Construction of the External Land Border](#) entered into force on 14 November 2021. The aim of the Law is to ensure the rapid and efficient construction of the infrastructure necessary for guarding the external land border by setting out a specific legal framework.

On 28 December 2021, [amendments to the Law on Operation of the Schengen Information System](#), were approved, which improved the Schengen Information System, by extending the possibility of issuing additional categories of persons and objects in international search, entered into force.

**Lithuania:** On 20 October 2021 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs [handed](#) a diplomatic note to Belarus, expressing a strong protest against repeated Belarusian border guards' violations of the Lithuanian state border.

On 9 November 2021 in response to the developing situation at the Belarus-Poland border, the Parliament [declared](#) a state of emergency for a month at the entire border section with Belarus, and within a zone five kilometres from the border, and also including the temporary accommodation centres for migrants, and within a 200 metres zone around these buildings. On 7 December 2021 the state of emergency was [extended](#) until 14 January 2022.

After concluding its Rapid Border Intervention operation in Lithuania on 1 December 2021, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) continues supporting the State Border Guard Service at the Belarus-Lithuania border under the Flexible Operational Activities 2021 operation.

On 13 December 2021 the European Commission [allocated](#) EUR 15 million for Lithuania to modernise border surveillance equipment at the Belarus-Lithuania border.

**Luxembourg:** [The law of 17 December 2021](#) extended the temporary restriction deadline on entry into Luxembourg of third-country nationals residing outside the European Union or the Schengen area from 31 December 2021 until 30 June 2022. The duration of the restrictions and further modalities are to be determined by Grand Ducal regulations. Currently, the restrictions will remain in place [until 31 March 2022](#).

The list of third countries whose residents are not affected by temporary external border restrictions on non-essential travel to Luxembourg has been amended three times between October and December 2021. The [up-to-date list is available here](#).

The list of third countries from which Luxembourg accepts vaccination certificates has been modified several times. The [current list is available here](#).

**The Netherlands:** On 26 November 2021 [a flight ban for flights from southern African countries](#) was announced. The ban was intended to slow down the spread of the new Omicron variant of the coronavirus and took effect immediately. Exception categories for people travelling to the Netherlands included holders of Dutch passports and EU/Schengen residents in transit. The flight ban [was lifted](#) on 23 December 2021.

**Poland:** The state of emergency in certain parts of Podlaskie and Lubelskie provinces has already been cancelled. However as a result of migration pressure organised by Belarussian authorities the border with Belarus is still a source of concern and additional border control and supervision measures over border with Belarus are still in place.

**Portugal:** On the basis of several government resolutions which are renewed every month, [restrictions](#) on entry into the country are in place. These resolutions pertain to air and sea borders.

**Slovenia:** The new national Integrated Border Management (IBM) strategy has been adopted and approved by the Government of Republic of Slovenia. It has been published in the [official gazette](#).

**Georgia:** In the frames of MIA-Frontex cooperation, 21 Frontex officers were deployed to Tbilisi and Kutaisi International Airports, while Georgian patrol police officers placed in EU Member State's (Latvia, Germany) International Airports;

Based on the [new amendments to the Entry/Exit Law](#), from October to December 2021, 822 citizens of Georgia intending to travel to EU/Schengen area were refused to depart from the country.

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## IRREGULAR MIGRATION

**EU developments and updates**

In December 2021 [Frontex released an update](#) on illegal crossings and detentions for the first half of 2021. Specifically, in November 2021 there were approximately 22 450 detections of illegal border crossings on the main migratory routes into the European Union. This figure is similar to the figure for 2020 and is 35% higher than the number detected in 2019. In total, there were 184 180 illegal crossings in the first 11 months of 2021, an increase of 60% compared to the previous year.

## National developments

**Belgium:** For several years transit migration (mainly to the United Kingdom) has been an important issue in Belgium. For this reason, on 31 December 2021, the Brussels Government purchased a building, which will be converted into a reception center for migrants in transit. In the reception centre, planned to be opened at the end of 2022, the migrants will receive information on *inter alia* asylum and return.

**Estonia:** As a response to the influx of irregular migrants to Lithuania, since July Estonia has [deployed](#) each month one ESTPOL5 unit to the Lithuanian-Belarusian border, i.e. three additional units in October -December. Assistance to Lithuania is provided under a bilateral agreement between the Police and Border Guard Board and the Lithuanian Border Guard

**Ireland:** On 31 December 2021 the [Criminal Justice \(Smuggling of Persons\) Act 2021](#) came into force.

On 6 December 2021 the Department of Justice [announced a new scheme to regularise long-term undocumented migrants](#) and their families living in Ireland which was opened in January 2022.

**Latvia:** On 2 November 2021 the Cabinet of Ministers approved the '[Regulations regarding the temporary holding room of the State Border Guard and a specially equipped vehicle](#)'. These provisions are intended to improve the accommodation conditions for persons temporarily detained. The new framework removes provisions that no longer comply with modern requirements and includes provisions specifying the fitting requirements according to international standards, such as a clarification of the minimum space requirement.

On 28 December 2021 [amendments to the Law On Operation of the Schengen Information System](#), which improved the Schengen Information System (SIS) by extending the possibility of issuing additional categories of persons and objects in international search, entered into force. The amendments also provide for the use of the Schengen information system for returning irregularly stay third-country nationals.

**Poland:** On October 25, 2021, the Act of October 14, 2021, amending the Act on foreigners and other acts came into force. The amendment:

- provides that a foreigner who has been apprehended immediately after an unauthorised crossing of the state border being the external border of the EU will be issued an order to leave the territory of the Republic of Poland and will be temporarily banned from entering Poland and the Schengen area;
- allows the Head of the Office for Foreigners to leave the application for international protection unprocessed if it was submitted by a foreigner apprehended immediately after illegally crossing the external border of the EU, unless the foreigner "arrived directly from the territory in which his life or freedom was threatened by the danger of persecution or the risk of serious harm, and

presented credible reasons for illegal entry into the territory of the Republic of Poland and applied for granting international protection immediately after crossing the border". A foreigner dissatisfied with the decision may submit a formal reminder to the Refugee Board (higher level authority) which will be obliged to assess the way of using the administrative discretion by the Head of the Office for Foreigners.

Finally decision of the Head of the Office for Foreigners will be also subject of judicial control;

- introduces a criminal provision with regard to destroying border infrastructure. In particular, fences, entanglements, barriers or turnpikes.

On November 30, 2021, President Andrzej Duda signed amendment to the Act on the Protection of the State Border and certain other acts. The amendment implied the possibility of introducing, for a limited period of time, a residence ban in areas near the border. Basing on the amendment a temporary ban on staying in a specified area in the border zone was introduced for the period from 1 December 2021 to 1 March 2022.

**Slovenia:** The training of 20 new analysts for the national needs according to the CIRAM (Common Integrated Risk Analysis Mode) methodology took place in November 2021.

**Georgia:** On 7 October 2021, an agreement on the readmission of persons residing without authorisation was concluded between the Governments of Georgia and Montenegro;

On 1-3 December 2021, the penitentiary staff of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) was trained on expulsion procedures of irregular migrants.

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## RETURN

### EU developments and updates

In November 2021, Frontex organised the final events of the [Forced-Return Monitoring III project](#). Launched in 2018, the aim of the project was to increase the effectiveness of the Frontex forced-return monitors, and to support the national forced-return monitoring systems in EU Member States.

### National developments

**Belgium:** On 16 December 2021 the Immigration Office opened ICAM (Individual Case Management Support) return desks in 4 major Belgian cities. ICAM return counsellors will inform irregularly staying migrants about their situation, look into possible new residence procedures, and help and encourage them to return voluntarily. This fits into the implementation of the 'adherent policy' introduced 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. ICAM return desks will open soon in other Belgian cities.

**Cyprus:** On 17 December 2021 a repatriation flight of Vietnamese citizens took place with the coordination of the Aliens and Immigration Unit of the Police, the Civil Registry and Migration Department, and the Consulate of Vietnam in Cyprus. A total of 216 Vietnamese nationals, illegally residing in Cyprus, were safely returned to their country.

**Germany:** The Federal Government and the Federal State of Brandenburg [signed a cooperation agreement](#) for establishing an administrative centre at the International Airport Berlin Brandenburg, which opened on 31 October 2020. The centre will house the various competent authorities from federal and state level to ensure fast and humane asylum procedures at the airport, and also to deal with refused entries and removals.

**Greece:** Statistical data: in the last quarter of 2021, a **total of 1953 returns** were made, **760** were **forced** returns and **1193 voluntary** returns.

**Italy:** The technical development of the Italian return case management system (RCMS) continued - with particular reference to the section dedicated to disembarkation events - for the registration of migrants and the subsequent issuing of return decisions where the conditions are met. Despite the difficulties caused by the pandemic, return operations with commercial carriers and charter flights continued to be carried out. As far as pre-repatriation activities are concerned, Italy has begun to use the RCMS platform for Pakistan (those for Bangladesh, Georgia and Sri Lanka are already in use). Also in the context of pre-return, the identification activities carried out by the liaison officers of Gambia and Nigeria continued, as part of missions funded by Frontex.

**Lithuania:** On 8 December 2021 the Minister of the Interior [issued](#) a decree increasing the pay-out to irregular migrants agreeing to return to their countries of origin voluntarily from EUR 300 to EUR 1 000. This policy remained active until 20 January 2022 and only applied to irregular migrants already in Lithuania.

**Luxembourg:** The Government Council of 26 November 2021 [approved a bill amending the Immigration law of 29 August 2008](#). The bill aims to ensure a more effective return management of third-country nationals illegally residing on Luxembourgish territory. To this end, a definition of the notion "expulsion" (in French: "éloignement") is introduced, as well as a ban on entry to Luxembourgish territory.

A Schengen Evaluation mission took place in Luxembourg from 29 November to 3 December 2021. The evaluated areas concern external borders, police cooperation, the SIS (Schengen Information System), and returns.

**Malta:** In December 2021, the Returns Unit met with several local councils of localities which have a substantial number of resident migrants. Throughout the meeting, the head of the Returns Unit explained all Voluntary Return services offered to third country nationals. Local councils were very receptive and will be assisting Return councillors in their future work. It was agreed that counselling will be conducted within their localities. In the same month, the Returns Unit met with different heads of migrant communities to explain all Voluntary Return services being offered. Promotional material was shared with some of the migrant community leaders who were interested in the unit's services. In October 2021, Return Unit officers attended and Event on Migration Partnership and the combined Technical Meeting on Return and Reintegration. The 2-day event involved a multi-session conference which saw the participation of EMM5 NFPs and other senior officials (Directors, senior officials, government experts or similar) of participating countries as well as migration experts. The conference focused on migration partnerships and included a session to present and discuss the results/findings of a thematic report titled '*Towards mutually beneficial and sustainable migration partnerships in the EU's southern neighbourhood: an assessment of perspectives from the south*'.

**The Netherlands:** On 17 November 2021 the decision and departure moratorium for persons from the Tigray area in Ethiopia and for ethnic Tigrayans from Ethiopia was terminated (please see above under Section 2 'International Protection Including Asylum').

**Portugal:** In the framework of ARVoRe VIII project (Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration), IOM Portugal finalised a Project Implementation Agreement with UNIPSICO Uberlandia for the provision of psychosocial support to returnees and reintegration beneficiaries.

IOM continued outreach activities in the framework of the project. In addition to information material available on the project website, the project team led information and awareness sessions for local actors and promoted meetings with relevant Embassies and Consulates. By December 2021 12 information and awareness sessions were organised involving more than 240 practitioners.

Finally, by December 2021 the ARVoRe VIII Project assisted 113 migrants returning to their countries of origin, more than 82% of this total returned to Brazil. Moreover, the programme provided reintegration assistance to 22 cases corresponding to 33 direct beneficiaries.

**Sweden:** On 2 November 2021 the Swedish Migration Agency together with seven other government agencies launched a [campaign](#) against work-related crime, with the aim of increasing the public's knowledge and changing people's attitudes. Work-related crime is when companies deliberately break rules in working life, which leads to people, including migrants, being exploited, companies not being able to compete on equal terms, and tax money going to companies that are not entitled to it.

**Georgia:** MIA's Migration Department participated in seven Collecting Return Operations (CRO) coordinated by Frontex. As a result, 290 Georgian citizens were safely returned from EU Member States;

Within the reporting period expulsion decisions on 53 foreigners were issued and 39 foreigners left country based on those decisions.

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## ACTIONS ADDRESSING TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

### EU developments and updates

On 17 December 2021 the Committee of the Parties held its [29<sup>th</sup> meeting](#) to the Council of Europe Convention against trafficking in Human Beings. The Committee adopted recommendations concerning Malta and the UK, based on the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA)'s evaluation reports. The meeting also considered information about Liechtenstein and Turkey, as well as the border situation between Belarus, Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia. Finally, the Committee discussed topics surrounding technologies for trafficking in human beings.

In December 2021 a [report on the impact of gun violence and trafficking in Europe](#) was published by DG HOME. It found that gun trafficking is a multifaceted phenomenon that predominantly impacts criminal and terrorist gun violence rather than domestic violence or other types of disputes. It also notes that that an increase in gun availability can lead to a criminal arms race, more gun violence, and sentiments of insecurity among the population.

### National developments

**Croatia:** The Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, in cooperation with the Judicial Academy, organised professional seminars on 11 November 2021, 22 November 2021, and 17 December 2021; entitled "Combating Trafficking in Human Beings". These are



professional seminars for judges and prosecutors, organised within the National Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings 2018-2021.

On 18 October 2021 the second formal session of the National Committee for the Suppression of Trafficking in Human Beings was held in the building of the Government of the Republic of Croatia.

**Cyprus:** The Civil Registry and Migration Department has signed the implementation of a new ISF project titled 'Information campaign against the demand for sexual services from victims of trafficking in human beings. The purpose of the project is to run a public informational campaign on the stricter sentences imposed by law against people who are willing to use sexual services from victims of trafficking in human beings, and to reduce and discourage sexual exploitation.

The Cyprus Police is operating a four-digit hotline (1497), on a 24/7 basis, concerning anonymous information and complaints about human trafficking. All information received by the hotline is directly communicated to the Office of Combating Trafficking in Human Beings. The hotline is free of charge.

**Finland:** According to a recent [report](#) by HEUNI (the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations), the Finnish employment service system is not flexible enough to meet the different needs of victims of human trafficking and exploitation. Victims of labour exploitation are not usually in a position to make use of integration services as many spend their time working in conditions of forced labour.

The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health have set up a joint working group, tasked to develop the monitoring and supervision of the accommodation conditions of foreign workers. [Working group seeks ways to prevent abuse in accommodation conditions for foreign workers - Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment](#)

**France:** The survey "[Trafficking in Human Beings in France: Profiles of Victims Assisted by Associations in France in 2020](#)" was published on 15 December 2021. This survey underlines that victims of sexual exploitation represent the majority of victims (77%) in 2020. It presents, among other things, the different forms of exploitation detected by the associations, the conditions of exploitation, as well as the profiles of victims according to the forms of exploitation suffered. Special attention was paid in the survey to unaccompanied minors.

On 22 October 2021, the Ministerial Statistical Service for Internal Security (SSMSI) of the Ministry of the Interior published an analysis entitled: "[Trafficking and Exploitation of Human Beings since 2016: an Approach through Administrative Data.](#)" This publication describes the visible part of the phenomenon of trafficking in human beings and exploitation since 2016 and in particular the impact of the health crisis in 2020.

**Italy:** The Italian Ministry of Defense is active in building the capacity of the security forces in a number of countries on the African continent, to combat human trafficking. In this sense, capacity building tasks are envisaged within the framework of the following missions, for which the authorisation process has been initiated to extend the participation of national military contingents: Libya (EUNAVFORMED IRINI, Operation Safe Sea and Italian Bilateral Technical Assistance Mission - MIASIT), Niger (Bilateral Support Mission to the Republic of Niger - MISIN, EUCAP Sahel), and Mali (UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali).

The mobile squads of the State Police, under the coordination of the Central Operations Service, continued their law enforcement activities within Italian territory. This has led to the arrest of numerous Italian and foreign subjects, believed to be responsible for human trafficking aimed at the exploitation of prostitution and exploitation of agricultural labour. The investigation activities were carried out into several criminal groups, composed of citizens of different nationalities, dedicated to the exploitation of prostitution or agricultural labour.

**Luxembourg:** On 6 December 2021, in accordance with the law of 9 April 2014 strengthening the rights of victims of trafficking in human beings, the Consultative Commission on Human Rights ("*Commission consultative des Droits de l'Homme*" - CCDH) presented its [third report on the trafficking of human beings](#) to the members of the Chamber of Deputies' Commission of Justice.

**Portugal:** OTSH (Observatory on Trafficking in Human Beings) Training Actions focused on the National Referral Mechanism and indicators in order to increase professionals' knowledge and capacity to intervene. A total of 513 professionals were trained. SEF (the Immigration and Borders Service) training Actions delivered a three-week online training course during December 2021. Moreover, 255 staff of the Portuguese Immigration and Borders Service and of the Portuguese Diplomatic missions across the globe were able to assist, discuss and receive updated information on Trafficking in Human Beings. On 18 October 2021, the EU Anti-Trafficking day, a documentary video called *Mulheres - Tráfico* was shown in schools across the country as a way to increase awareness among youth.

In the same period, within the remit of trafficking in human beings for labour exploitation, 52 inspection visits took place involving 52 employers and 52 foreign workers from Moldova, Romania and Thailand.

**Slovenia:** On the occasion of the EU Anti-Trafficking Day on 18 October 2021 the Slovenian Presidency together with the Network of Anti-Trafficking Coordinators of South-East Europe carried out an [information campaign](#) to address the issue of impunity in the context of the crime of trafficking in human beings.

**Spain:** The National Strategic Plan against human trafficking 2021-2023 (PENTRA) has been approved. This Strategic Plan is the first comprehensive tool in Spain to address all forms of human trafficking.

**Georgia:** Under the EU supported project and in close cooperation with the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), a Handbook on Trafficking in Human Beings (THB) has been developed by MoJ for the mobile groups and members of the Permanent Group on Identification of Victims of THB. The new guidelines updated existing questionnaire on confidential identification of the alleged victim of THB;

Supported by the US Bureau of International Narcotics and Law enforcement Affairs and in close cooperation with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) a guidebook on identification of cases of forced labour and labour exploitation was developed by MoJ for the staff of the Labour Inspection Service. The guide shares the best practices of EU Member States, reviews national legislation and international standards, and creates thematic protocol adapted to the Georgian reality on how the Labour Inspector shall identify possible signs of forced labour and labour exploitation;

On 29-30 November 2021, in cooperation with the IOM a training on "Psychological aspects of child exploitation and effective communication practices" [was conducted](#) by MoJ for the staff (25) of the General Prosecutor's Office, MIA and State Care Agency;

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## EXTERNAL DIMENSION

### EU developments and updates

In November and December 2021 the EUAA published new reports on Syria and Iraq. More specifically, the [document on Syria](#) represents the EU assessment of international protection needs of applicants in the country, updated to reflect recent events. [The second report on Iraq](#) is a Country of Origin Information (COI) Report. This publication is a part of a series of reports that will be produced in 2021-2022. They cover the security situation, key socio-economic indicators, and targeting of individuals in the country. The information is relevant for determining the international protection status of asylum applicants.

### National developments

**France:** [A decree](#) publishing the memorandum of understanding between France and Togo on the talents in common scheme (voluntary framework for mobility in Africa - CVMA) was published in the Official Journal on 6 November 2021. This scheme aims to promote mobility to Togo and is funded by France, the French Development Agency and Togo.

**Greece:** With the adoption of Law 4840/2021, the national procedure for the accession of Greece to the International Centre for the Development of Migration Policy (ICMPD) was concluded. Greece officially became the 19th member state of ICMPD on 8 October 2021.

**Italy:** The Director General of Public Security and Diplomatic Advisor to the Minister of Interior, and Security of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, launched the implementation of a project aimed at strengthening the management of borders and irregular immigration. The Technical Protocol, signed in Rome on 7 October 2021, outlined the creation of four border posts as part of the project.

On 21 November 2021 the National Strategy for the Engagement of Egyptian Expatriates 2022-2026 was launched. Promoted by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in collaboration with the Ministry of State for Emigration and Expatriate Affairs, the strategy identifies activities and monitoring mechanisms to ensure the involvement of Egyptian expatriates and their participation in the country's development. The Italian central operational service collaborates with other European countries in the fight against irregular migration and organisations involved in the smuggling of migrants and trafficking of human beings. In particular, the service participates in several operational actions within the priority area "Migrant Smuggling" and is leader of the operational action 2.4 "Central Mediterranean Route" for the fight against criminal organisations operating on this route. Moreover, it participates in the Common Operational Partnership (COP) funded by the European Union with a project dedicated to the increase of relations and information exchange with Nigeria.

The General Directorate of Immigration and Integration Policies of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, allocated more than EUR 10 million as part of the [Public notice n. 2/2019](#) in 2019/2020. The funding helped launch projects aimed at the implementation of pre-departure training and orientation activities for foreign citizens who are eligible to enter Italy for reasons of family reunification, work, and internship. The projects have two objectives:

- To facilitate the integration of those who enter Italy for family reunification through the involvement of the recipients in orientation and civic-linguistic training before their entry into Italy, while also providing general information on the country of destination;

- To guarantee professional training of figures particularly in demand on the Italian labour market through courses to be held in the countries of origin of the recipients. The recipients are also guaranteed Italian language training at a basic level and provided with information on the essential elements of civic education and on health and safety regulations in the workplace

The interventions are aimed at facilitating the entry into Italy of a number of third-country nationals. Of those entering, around 75% is for family reunification, with the remaining 25% for employment opportunities or professional training. Financed initiatives promote information campaigns to target recipients (Third Country Nationals) through dedicated websites, in-person moments such as training courses, dissemination seminars, and individual meetings. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, implementing bodies have reorganised training methods using distance learning tools. Pre-departure training activities are currently held in 15 non-EU countries: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Ivory Coast, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, India, Mali, Morocco, Moldova, Nigeria, Senegal, Tunisia, and Ukraine. In some of these countries bilateral agreements were signed with the Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, aimed at cooperating to regulate entry flows for work purposes. Many of these are countries of origin of the largest migrant communities in terms of the number of citizens legally residing in Italy. With regard to the economic sectors covered by the pre-departure vocational training courses, the area most taken into consideration is agriculture/agrifood. This is followed by construction, home and/or personal care services, logistics, warehousing, tourism, and catering; the latter two sectors, which were greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, are showing signs of clear recovery, so much so that the demand for seasonal workers has exceeded the supply. Of particular note is the sectoral training proposal for medium-high profiles in ICT and for specialised workers in mechanics and the graphics sector.

**Luxembourg:** On 9 November 2021 Luxembourg signed a new [Strategic Partnership Framework with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees \(UNHCR\)](#) for the period 2022 to 2025. The partnership will allow for flexible funding of up to EUR 32 million to the UN agency in the context of the most important humanitarian crises underway, notably in Syria, Afghanistan, and Ethiopia.

On 16 November 2021 the Minister for Foreign and European Affairs, Jean Asselborn, announced [an additional voluntary contribution](#) of EUR 2 million from Luxembourg to help the UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) meet the funding shortfall in 2021.

In a [joint response to the parliamentary question of 25 October 2021](#), several Luxembourgish ministers provided information on the costs of Luxembourg's military intervention and humanitarian and development aid in Afghanistan. The response from the Ministers included information concerning, among other things, Luxembourg's financial contribution of EUR 4 000 000 to UNHCR operations targeting Afghan refugees, over the period 2017 to 2021.

**Malta: Establishment of the Training Institute on Migration Capacity Partnership for the Mediterranean (MCP MED TI) hosted in Malta:** The Training Institute on Migration Capacity Partnership for the Mediterranean (MCP MED TI) was officially launched in Malta on 15 December 2021. Malta worked together with the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) to establish the MCP MED TI and to reach out to potential donors and partners. To date, Denmark, Austria, and the EU have accepted to participate as MCP MED TI donors, and Lebanon and Libya have both responded positively to the invitation to participate as beneficiaries.

**Poland:** Bearing in mind that migrations caused by crisis situations pose a great challenge for both displaced persons and host countries, Poland is involved in humanitarian activities which target refugees, internally displaced people as well as local communities. We are also aware that urgent humanitarian actions have to be taken in order to bring some relief to the people of Afghanistan and Afghan refugees in the neighboring countries, which is why Poland decided to contribute PLN 1,5 M to UNHCR activities in response to the situation in Afghanistan. Moreover, at the same time, Poland decided to contribute another 1 mln PLN to the World Food Program actions: 750.000,00 PLN for Afghanistan and 400.000,00 for Tadschikistan accordingly.

**Slovenia:** The Slovenian Presidency continued intensive work on preparation of Action Plans for priority countries at the Council working level. The October and December 2021 European Council conclusions addressed the external dimension of migration, calling for swift implementation of the Action Plans and mobilisation of sufficient funds for achieving the ambitious goals of the EU external migration policy.

**Georgia:** On 7 October 2021, the MFA [organised a webinar](#) dedicated to the annual flagship programme "Become a Young Ambassador of your Country", where the winners of 2021 programme (17 young ambassadors) introduced their goals, future plans and activities within their upcoming mandate in the respective countries;

In October and November 2021, the MFA and ICMPD held joint meetings with the Georgian Diaspora in [Spain](#) and [Italy](#) to present the Legal Migration Guidebooks produced under the EU project for familiarizing the Diaspora with various migration-related matters.

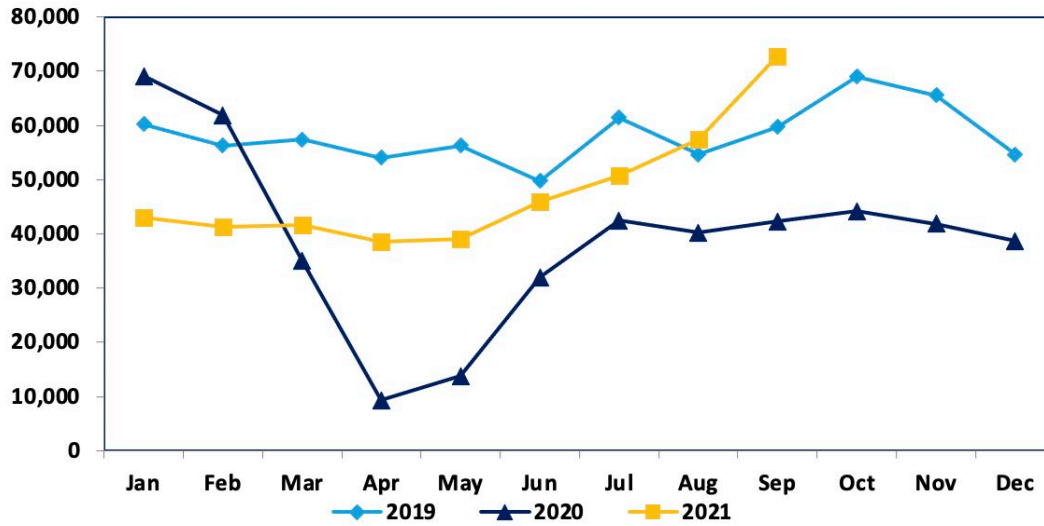
On 10-12 December 2021, under the EU project and cooperation with the IOM, the MFA organised a [Diaspora Business Forum](#) in Tbilisi. The forum aimed to promote Diaspora involvement in the country's economic development, to stimulate cooperation between compatriots living abroad and local businesses, to establish business contacts and to increase access to new markets for local businesses;

On 27 December 2021, MFA hosted an official [award ceremony](#) for distinguished Georgian Diaspora. The aim of the event was to recognize the achievements of Georgian citizens living abroad, who have achieved professional success in the host countries and have also contributed to the popularisation of Georgian culture, sport and science.

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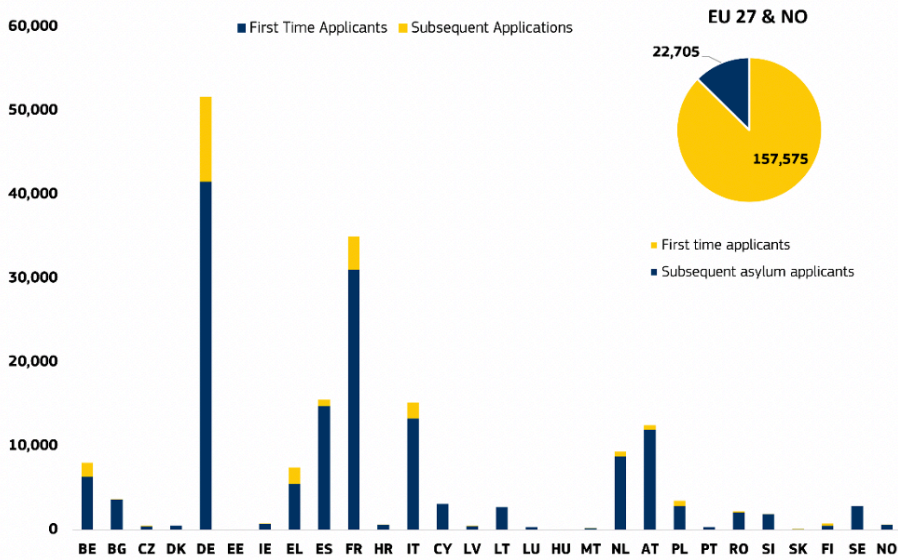
## ANNEX: EU & COMPLEMENTARY STATISTICS, ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, OTHER EMN OUTPUTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

Figure 1: Asylum applications in the EU-27, July 2021 – September 2021

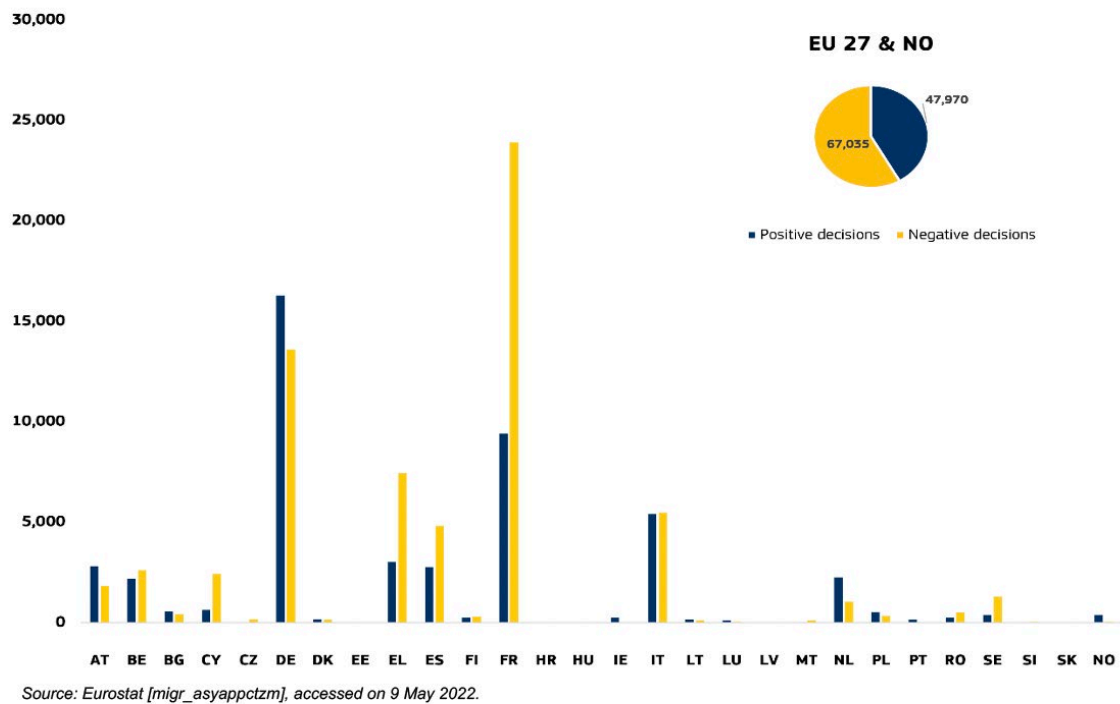


Source: Eurostat [migr\_asyappctzm], total asylum applicants, extracted on 9 May 2022.

Figure 2: First time asylum applicants and subsequent applicants (together, total asylum applicants) in the EU-27 and Norway, Q3 2021 (quarterly data)



Source: Eurostat [migr\_asyappctzm], total asylum applicants, extracted on 9 May 2022.



## UPDATES ON EU LEGISLATION TRANSPOSITION

### National developments

**Italy:** On 21 December 2021 the Chamber of Deputies approved the bill "Provisions for the fulfillment of obligations arising from Italy's membership of the European Union - European Law 2019-2020". This measure provided (in order to close the infringement procedure 2019/2100), for the amendment of Article 41 of the Immigration Act - Testo Unico sull'Immigrazione (TUI) and some sector-specific regulations (allowance for the large family unit, maternity allowance and bonus bebé) to extend them to all holders of single work permits in implementation of the provisions of Article 12 of Directive 2011/98/EU.

**Luxembourg:** Since 1 December 2021 [applications for recognition of foreign higher education qualifications](#) can be submitted in fully electronic format via the [www.guichet.lu](http://www.guichet.lu) platform. The new electronic approach contributes to the realisation of the European Union's Single Digital Gateway (SDG) and the obligations set out in the EU Regulation 2018/1724 of 2 October 2018 establishing the SDG.

**Malta:** Amendments to the International Protection Act (Cap 420) and subsidiary legislation were drafted with a view to transposing in a more accurate manner the provisions of various EU directives mentioned by the Commission in the abovementioned EU pilots. These amendments are currently at second reading stage in parliament. Regarding the subsidiary legislation, amendments to the Procedural Standards for Granting and Withdrawing International Protection Regulations (Subsidiary Legislation 420.07) and the Reception of Asylum Seekers Regulations (Subsidiary Legislation 420.06) were drafted and published on 24<sup>th</sup> December 2021.

**Sweden:** In December 2021 the government proposed a [bill](#) to adapt Swedish law to the EU regulations establishing an Entry/Exit System (EES).

## OTHER EMN OUTPUTS & PAST/UPCOMING EVENTS

### National developments

On **27 January 2022**, EMN Estonia organises a national conference “**Rethinking Migration: Addressing the need for innovation in the field of migration and asylum**”. See more info here: <https://www.emn.ee/en/event/rethinkingmigration>.

**Cyprus:** On 6 November 2021, the EMN Cyprus co-hosted a conference with the Pancyprian Organisation for the promotion of Literacy, and the University of Nicosia. The conference, titled ‘Multilingual Identities and Literacy of Refugees and Migrants’ embraced the topic of literacy education among migrant populations residing in Cyprus and Greece. Academics from Cyprus and Greece analyse in depth the current situation emphasising in secondary education models. On November 9, 2021, the CY NCP organised its National Network Conference online. The conference titled ‘Migration Funding Tools: Program Period 2021-2027’ opened up the pace to organisations, academics, individuals and activists in the field of migration and asylum, to receive vital information on the plethora of funding options for the topic of concern. Representatives from official services and bodies on a local yet an EU level, have presented the current funding tools and future developments. More than 100 participants have registered and attended the online conference which was held in Greek language. Finally, on 17 December 2021 the CY NCP organised its Annual National Conference titled ‘Human Rights in the Field of Returns’. The conference, that took place online, held fruitful discussions and presentations by representatives from EU and international organisations notably FRA, FRONTEX and UNICEF. During the second part of the conference, representatives of local authorities, and NGOs actively involved in the field of human rights and returns, presented their actions and main objectives in regard to the topic. More than 120 participants have registered and attended the online conference which was held in English language.

**Ireland:** a webinar - [Immigration detention and alternatives: Ireland and the EU](#) was held on 24 November 2021.

**Italy:** The National Institute for Health Promotion of Migrant Populations and the Fight against Poverty-related Diseases has published the results of a study carried out thanks to a collaboration protocol with the Ministry of the Interior. The study is entitled, COVID-19 Impact in the Italian Reception System for Migrants during the Nationwide Lockdown: [A National Observational Study](#). The results of the study, which covered about 70% of migrant reception centres in Italy, showed in the first phase of the lockdown that the incidence and distribution of cases of COVID-19 infection were not different from those reported in the general population, demonstrating a higher than expected resilience to the pandemic of the migrant reception system. The Institute, in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior, manages current information flows on new positive cases of COVID-19 in the reception system as well as the number of new positive cases among migrants upon arrival. It is also carrying out, together with some regions, a study on the epidemiology of COVID-19 infection and on the use of health services by the resident immigrant population.

**Luxembourg:** Following the EMN Luxembourg national conference entitled "Detecting and protecting vulnerable migrants", which took place on 30 September 2021, EMN Luxembourg published the recording including the welcome speeches and the first panel discussion [on YouTube](#). Speaker presentations and a conference report including a summary of the second panel discussion are available on [the EMN Luxembourg website](#).



EMN Luxembourg published its inform entitled "[Detection of vulnerabilities in the international protection procedure](#)". The inform provides, among other things, an overview of the most common vulnerable groups, the legal and procedural frameworks, and the special procedural safeguards for vulnerable applicants for international protection in 23 EU Member States. The inform is available in English and in French.

EMN Luxembourg published the national study "[Third-country national victims of trafficking in human beings: Detection, identification and protection in Luxembourg](#)". The study provides an overview of the current procedures and practices, as well as information on recent developments, challenges, and good practices in the area of trafficking in human beings in Luxembourg.

EMN Luxembourg published the national study "[Integration of migrant women in Luxembourg: policies and measures](#)". The study presents policies and measures in place to support the integration of migrant women from third countries in Luxembourg, as well as the challenges they face in their integration, and a future outlook on the upcoming reform of the Luxembourgish Integration Law.

On 26 October 2021 EMN Luxembourg was invited to Luxembourg's [Interministerial Committee on Integration](#) to present its activities, publications, and the different ways in which the EMN Luxembourg and national authorities included in the Committee can collaborate.

**The Slovak Republic:** Podcasts with lectures from the [8<sup>th</sup> EMN Educational Seminar on Migration](#) are available at [EMN Slovakia Podcasts channel](#) at Podbean. The Seminar organised by [EMN Slovak Republic](#) is designed mainly for professionals from state administration or other stakeholders and provides a unique learning platform where renowned experts lecture on selected topics of international migration from the policy, research, and practice perspectives. Videos will be available soon.

**Slovenia:** Conference of the European Migration Network (EMN) entitled EU preparedness on future migration flows was held on 5 and 6 October 2021 as part of the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the EU. The conference report and presentations are published on the EMN national [website](#).

**Spain:** On 30 November 2021 EMN SPAIN held its [annual conference](#) on the analysis of skills in migration processes, with more than 200 attendees both in person and online. Two main objectives were addressed:

To analyse the new challenges related to the recognition of migrants' skills at international and EU level and enhance knowledge of the existing legislative and practical tools for skills recognition to enable better preparedness in the coming years.

To explore experiences in the recognition of qualifications during migration processes, both in the private and public sectors, as well as in the professional and academic spheres.

The conference, opened by the Secretary of State for Migration, Mr. Jesús Javier Perea Cortijo, was developed around two panel discussions between experts from the public and private sectors. It was closed by the General Director of Migration, Mr. Santiago Yerga. During the first panel, European initiatives were discussed, as well as theoretical and practical aspects of the recognition of competences and skills of migrants. In the second part of the conference, the practical experience of countries such as Germany, France, and Spain as well as input from the private sector, were analysed.

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