

PICUM QUARTERLY January - March 2016

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BORDERS

EU / Several measures to prevent irregular migration to Europe: NATO operation and Joint EU-Turkey Action Plan

NATO approved an operation in February 2016 to monitor irregular crossings in the Aegean Sea, with the stated aim of stemming trafficking and irregular migration. Amnesty International [warned](#) that NATO forces in the Aegean Sea must operate in line with international law, and that intercepting boats and pushing migrants and refugees back to Turkey would be illegal. Several Greek organisations [denounced](#) the further militarisation and externalisation of border control and consequent violations of international law. Meanwhile, NATO confirmed that while surveillance was the primary purpose of the operation, it would fulfil international obligations to assist vessels in distress, and those rescued by NATO ships would be returned to Turkey. At a series of European Council meetings, leaders agreed to further secure external borders in order to significantly reduce the number of people arriving to the EU. This includes a [proposal](#) for a European Border and Coast Guard, and an [EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan](#) which foresees financial and political rewards in exchange for Turkey preventing irregular migration towards the EU. Consequently, since 20 March, all new irregular migrants crossing from Turkey to the Greek islands will be returned to Turkey, and for each Syrian returned to Turkey, another Syrian will be resettled from Turkey to the EU. In January 2016, the average daily arrivals from Turkey to Greece had fallen to 2,186, from 3,575 in December 2015. Many human rights groups [criticised the EU-Turkey agreement](#) and questioned how the EU aims to ensure human rights standards and legal safeguards.

Sources: UNHCR Greece Press Review, 4 February 2016; [Reuters](#), 3 February 2016; [The Guardian](#), 12 February 2016; [BBC](#), 11 February 2016; [Amnesty International](#), Newsflash, 11 February 2016; [European Commission press release](#), 10 February 2016; [EU Observer](#), 23 February 2016; UNHCR Greece Press Review: 24 February 2016

EU / GREECE / Developments at Greek borders amidst worsening humanitarian situation

The Council of the EU adopted a [Recommendation](#) on 12 February 2016 to address deficiencies at the EU's external borders. The Recommendation concerns registration, sea border surveillance, border check procedures, risk analyses, human resources and training, infrastructure and equipment and international cooperation. Greece must report on the Recommendation's implementation within three months. Greek Defense Minister Panos Kammenos, announced on 16 February that four of Greece's five new registration centres – the 'hotspots' on the islands of Lesbos, Chios, Leros and Samos - are for the most part operational. The UN refugee agency (UNHCR) and Doctors Without Borders (MSF) suspended their activities at the "hotspot" Moria on Lesbos island on 22 March 2016. MSF stated it did not want its assistance to be instrumentalised in the mass expulsion which disregarded protection needs of asylum seekers and migrants. Referring to its policy on opposing mandatory detention, UNCHR suspended some activities at closed centres on the islands but remain present to monitor that human rights standards are upheld. Meanwhile, an estimated 13,000 people had gathered at a makeshift camp in Idomeni, near Greece's border with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in conditions which were reported miserable and dehumanising. On 22 March, two men at the camp set themselves on fire in protest of the conditions, and were taken to hospital where they are recovering from injuries.

Source: [Council of the European Union Press Release](#), 12 February 2016; UNHCR Greece Press Review: 16 February 2016; [CCTV](#), 21 February 2016; [Die Zeit](#), 22 March 2016; [Al Jazeera](#), 22 March 2016; [UNHCR Briefing Notes](#) 22 March 2016

HUNGARY / Hungary convicts over 1,000 migrants for attempted irregular entry

According to media reports, Hungary has convicted over 1,000 migrants for trying to irregularly enter the country by climbing over a fence built on the southern border. Most of those who have been caught were expelled from Hungary and given a reentry ban for a period of one to two years, while others were handed suspended jail sentences or received entry bans for longer periods of time. The action follows new legislation introduced in 2015 which makes it a criminal offence - punishable by prison or deportation - to damage the newly-built four-meter fence along Hungary's 175km border with Serbia.

Source: [New Europe](#), 10 February 2016

REPORT / The role of policy in migrant decision-making

The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) published the report "Journeys to Europe: The Role of Policy in Migrant Decision-Making" in February 2016. The report is based on interviews with over 50 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers who recently arrived in Europe. It aims to deepen understanding of the role that migration policies play in journeys planned by migrants. The report found that of all respondents, only half had a clear idea of their final destination at the point of departure. Awareness regarding risks during the journey and regulations of destination countries was unlikely to influence the decision to migrate, particularly for those coming from war zones. While trajectories appear to be somewhat influenced by migration policies, those that incentivised movement and facilitated entry had more impact than those which sought to deter migrants. The report recommends that European governments expand regular channels, implement humanitarian visas and ensure improved search and rescue. To download the report, click [here](#).

USA / REPORT / Indicators to measure effectiveness of border control

A report from the Migration Policy Institute focusing on the US/Mexico border entitled "Border Metrics: How to Effectively Measure Border Security and Immigration Control" highlights how the lack of timely, reliable and publicly trusted indicators on the effectiveness of border control represents a fundamental challenge to resolving political debates on migration policies. The authors, Marc Rosenblum and Faye Hipsman, suggest key questions to account for irregular migration levels and modes of entry, and so the effectiveness of the border control measures. The report also describes strengths and limitations of existing approaches. It concludes with recommendations to produce up-to-date and reliable metrics for the proposed indicators, and produce and release border-related data in a more transparent, timely and predictable manner. The report is available [here](#).

UNITED NATIONS

OHCHR / Series of practical guides for civil society

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) recently published a series of practical guides to support civil society actors to engage with the United Nations and to familiarise them with the UN human rights system. The [guide](#) 'Civil Society Space and the United Nations Human Rights System' provides an overview of the conditions for a free and independent civil society, including relevant international human rights standards for freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, and the right to participate in public affairs. The [guide](#) 'How to follow up on United Nations Human Rights Recommendations' mainly targets civil society actors working at national level. It outlines ways in which civil society can follow up and help ensure effective implementation of UN recommendations. To view the full series of practical guides, click [here](#).

EUROPEAN POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION / Current anti-smuggling regulations deter humanitarian assistance and rescue

A [study](#) entitled 'Fit for Purpose? The Facilitation Directive and the Criminalisation of Humanitarian Assistance to Irregular Migrants', commissioned by the European Parliament, assesses existing EU legislation to counter people smuggling – the 2002 Facilitators' Package – and how it deals with those providing humanitarian assistance to irregular migrants. [Article 1.2](#) of the EU Facilitation Directive says that member states 'may decide not to impose sanctions' on those aiming to provide humanitarian assistance. The study finds significant inconsistencies across member states, meaning that humanitarian actors are often deterred from providing assistance. The study calls for a review of the legislative framework, greater legal certainty and improved data collection on the effects of the legislation. The International Maritime Rescue Federation, the federation of maritime search and rescue (SAR) organisations also issued a [statement](#) on 28 January 2016 to clarify the legal framework around search and rescue, noting that would-be rescuers could be deterred from helping people in distress by concerns about possible legal action against them. The statement reiterates that the obligation to rescue persons in distress at sea and deliver them to a place of safety, is clearly established in the international law of the sea.

COURT OF JUSTICE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION / Advocate General concludes that undocumented migrant cannot be imprisoned solely on the basis of irregular stay

The Advocate General for the Court of Justice of the European Union delivered a general opinion on 2 February 2016 in Case C-47/15 *Affum v. Prefet du Pas de Calais*, concerning a Ghanaian woman who had been stopped by French police in March 2013 at the entrance to the Channel tunnel, while travelling by bus from Belgium to the United Kingdom. The woman was detained for irregular entry, which is an offence under France's Code of Entry and Residence of Foreigners and Asylum Law. She was ordered to be transferred to Belgium under a readmission agreement between France and Benelux countries (Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg), and to be detained in administrative detention pending her transfer. Ms. Affum appealed the decision. In his opinion, Advocate General Szpunar rejected the French government's position. He took the view that there are only two situations in which the Return Directive allows national legislation to impose imprisonment on irregularly staying third country nationals: (1) where a person who was returned under the Directive re-enters that member state's territory in violation of an entry ban, and (2) where the return procedure was being applied but the person continues to stay irregularly without justification. Neither scenario applied in this case. To read the Advocate General's Opinion, click [here](#). Read a summary [here](#).

Source: [Court of Justice Press Release](#), 2 February 2016

EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS / Ruling in case of inhuman detention conditions in Greece

On 4 February 2016, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) held that Greece had violated Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) by detaining a Gambian national in conditions that were inhuman or degrading. It also ruled there had been a violation of Article 5(4) ECHR because, at the time in question, Greek

law did not permit effective review of the applicant's detention by a judge pending his deportation. The Court's decision concerning Article 3 was based on its earlier ruling on the conditions of detention on Fylakio and Aspropyrgos during the same period. See the ECHR decision (Affaire Amadou c. Grece) [here](#).

EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF SOCIAL RIGHTS / Annual conclusions on children, families and migrants

On 27 January 2016, the European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR) published its annual conclusions on articles of the European Social Charter relating to the rights of children, families, and migrants (Article 7, 8, 16, 17, 19, 27 and 31), on which state parties had been invited to report by 31 October 2014. The European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR) reports every year on a thematic group of Charter provisions, and every two years publishes follow-up reports to collective complaints for states bound to this procedure. Read [here](#) the 2015 conclusions concerning states that have ratified the Revised Social Charter. Click [here](#) to view 2015 conclusions concerning states having ratified the European Social Charter. 2015 findings relating to the follow-up to decisions on the merits of collective complaints available [here](#).

Source: [Council of Europe](#), 27 January 2016

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

BELGIUM / Foreigners Office condemned for illegal arrests of undocumented migrants

A recent judgement of the Court of Appeal of Brussels has condemned the practice of the Foreigners' Office ordering police officers to arrest undocumented migrants at home, without a mandate from the investigating judge. In autumn 2015, the authority SEFOR (Sensibilising, Follow-up and Return) entered the home of an undocumented migrant while he was sleeping and arrested him. After spending several months in jail, his lawyer obtained his release. The Court of Appeal held that entering private premises without the consent of the person concerned or the authorisation of a judge is a violation of domestic privacy.

Source: [Amoureux, vos papiers](#), 2 March 2016

FRANCE / Adoption of a French law on foreigners rights

France adopted a new immigration law in March which included changes regarding residence permits and detention conditions. Among other provisions, this law extends the possibility for migrants turning 18 to obtain French nationality if they have a sibling with French nationality and have lived in France and attended school since the age of six. Immigration detention is now limited to 48 hours and migrants can within this time appeal the decision of deportation. The law also gives journalists the right to access detention centres.

Sources : [Légifrance](#), 7 March 2016; [Vie Publique](#), 7 March 2016

GERMANY / Proposals for faster deportation of foreign criminals

The German government agreed on a draft bill which aims to accelerate the deportation of foreign criminals. The proposal includes those prosecuted with sexual assault, property crimes and resistance against police. Asylum seekers and refugees who commit crimes would be denied the possibility of obtaining a refugee status, and migrants receiving a prison sentence of at least one year would be eligible for deportation. A foreigner could also be expelled if placed on probation with a suspended sentence. The developments came following reports regarding incidents on New Year's Eve, when large groups of men sexually assaulted and robbed women, mainly in Cologne as well as in other German cities. According to prosecutors, 1139 complaints were submitted to the police of which 485 concerned a sexual offence. Witnesses described the assailants as 'northern-African looking'. The reports triggered a debate in Germany and beyond about the assimilation of migrants and refugees in countries of destination. Various organisations and citizens' initiatives urged to [focus the debate](#) on sexual violence against women and racism.

Sources: [Die ZEIT](#), 27 January 2016; [Reuters](#), 27 January 2016; [Spiegel online](#) 11 March 2016, [Spiegel online](#), 18 March 2016

UK / Migration checks could lead to homelessness and destitution

The British government rolled out a 'right to rent' scheme in February 2016, which could result in at least 2.6 million tenants being subject to new immigration checks. The 'right to rent' scheme requires England's 1.8

million landlords to check their prospective tenants' immigration status starting from 1 February. According to the new Immigration Bill, if a landlord does not comply, they could face a jail sentence. The Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) stated that by limiting access to private rented accommodation, rules could increase the risk of homelessness and destitution.

Source: [Migrants Rights Network](#), 6 January 2016

UNITED STATES / New York City to offer new visa option to undocumented victims of crime

New York City announced on 8 February 2016 that the Commission on Human Rights had been empowered to start issuing visa certifications to undocumented migrants who are victims of crime. Certification is the first step for undocumented migrants in obtaining U and T visas, if they have been the victim of a defined list of crimes, which include sexual assault and domestic violence. The U visa allows an undocumented migrant to remain in the US for up to four years and also gives the person the right to work. The T visa applies only to victims of trafficking, and is valid for three years. Both U and T visa holders may be eligible for permanent resident status, if they meet certain conditions. To apply for the visa, an undocumented victim must provide the US Citizenship and Immigration with certification from a law enforcement agency confirming that one of the covered crimes has occurred and that they are cooperating with the investigation. There are an estimated 535,000 undocumented residents living in New York.

Source: [Politico New York](#), 8 February 2016

HEALTH CARE

UK / Public consultation on plans to extend charging to migrants for primary care services

The UK government closed a public consultation on proposals to extend charging to migrants on 7 March 2016. The new proposals would impose charges on migrants for accident and emergency care, ambulances, prescriptions, dental care, eye care and some aspects of GP (general practitioner) services. Under existing rules, eligibility for care under the UK National Health Service (NHS) is based on ordinary residence. Since April 2015, migrants without a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) have been charged 150% of the tariff price for secondary care, but GP services remain free. Under the new proposals, exempted groups would include victims of domestic violence, sexual violence, torture, female genital mutilation, and trafficking, as well as children who are charges of the state, and refused asylum-seekers supported by the government, but would not include other groups, such as migrant children who are not charges of the state and pregnant women. Civil society organisations have challenged the proposals' exemptions as under-inclusive, stating they are unworkable and will not result in the financial savings promised. See the consultation document [here](#).

Sources: [Open Democracy](#), 4 March 2016; [Pulse Today](#), 16 February 2015,

SPAIN / Regions continue to advocate health care provision for undocumented migrants

An increasing number of regions and municipalities in Spain oppose the national government's law from 2012 which restricts access to health care for undocumented migrants. This includes Catalonia, Basque Country, Navarra, Valencia, Aragon, Balearic Islands, Madrid, Cantabria, Castilla-La Mancha, Murcia, Andalusia and Canary Islands. While some regions, such as Andalusia, offer equal access to health care and have introduced special health cards for undocumented migrants, others such as Catalonia are in the process of passing regional laws circumventing the national decree. Their efforts to implement broader or equal access to health care for undocumented migrants at regional level has impeded the governments' efforts to implement the 2012 decree across Spain.

Source: [ABC](#), 17 March 2016

LABOUR AND FAIR WORKING CONDITIONS

UK / United Kingdom ratifies ILO Protocol on Forced Labour

The United Kingdom has ratified the 2014 Protocol to the ILO Forced Labour Convention of 1930, which aims to prevent forced labour and provide support to victims. The UK now joins Niger and Norway in ratifying the protocol which was adopted at the International Labour Conference in 2014, adding additional measures to the Forced Labour Convention of 1930.

Source: [International Labour Organization](#), 22 January 2016

REPORT / Increased arrivals can have positive effect on labour market

A paper from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) released in January 2016 discusses the impact of increased numbers of refugees and migrants on the labour markets of countries of destination. The IMF Staff Discussion Note "The Refugee Surge in Europe: Economic Challenges" discusses short and long term macroeconomic impacts by providing available data and analysing previous migration flows. The paper finds that the effect of new migrant arrivals on native workers is usually small, and has little effect on the average wages of national workers and unemployment rates. Regarding housing, it states that policies may be needed to encourage a supply response to the growing demand for housing, and on education suggests that targeted measures for migrant students, such as allocating more resources to schools with a high share of migrants, training teachers for intercultural education and providing adequate language support lead to positive results for migrant children at school. To read the paper, click [here](#).

Source: [Financial Times](#), 20 January 2016

UNDOCUMENTED WOMEN

UK / Charging and restrictions to maternity care for undocumented women under the spotlight

An article on the charging regime in the UK and its impact on maternity care for undocumented women was published by the British Journal of Midwifery in January 2016. While the Immigration Act of 2014 requires providers to charge those who do not have indefinite leave to remain in the UK, guidelines issued in 2015 state the necessity of maternity care for all women, disregarding any charging issues. In this article, Maternity Action highlights that the complexity of the charging guidance has led to a confusion for National Health System (NHS) staff about entitlement to care, but also that charging deters undocumented women from seeking access to maternity care.

Source: [Maternity Action](#), 26 January 2016

US / Website launched to provide information and resources for undocumented women

On International Women's Day 8 March 2016, a new website was launched in English and Spanish to provide undocumented migrant women in the United States and their families with information about their rights. Undocumented women were consulted regarding the website [Women Step Forward](#), which was launched as part of the "We Belong Together" campaign, with the assistance of the Immigration Advocates Network. The website will make it possible to track the status of cases in the US Supreme Court addressing migrants' rights, will provide information about existing programs, and allow undocumented women to submit personal stories.

Source: [International Business Times](#), 9 March 2016

UNDOCUMENTED CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

BOOK / “Lives in Limbo: Undocumented and Coming of Age in America”

A new book by Roberto G. Gonzales, entitled “Lives in Limbo: Undocumented and Coming of Age in America” presents the results of a twelve-year study that followed 150 undocumented young adults in Los Angeles. “Lives in Limbo” exposes the failures of a system that integrates children into compulsory education but ultimately denies them the rewards of their studies. This qualitative research explores how highly educated undocumented youth share similar work and life outcomes with their less-educated peers, despite the fact that higher education is touted as the path to integration and success in America. For more information and to purchase the book, click [here](#).

EU / Registered unaccompanied children no longer in contact with state authorities

According to Europol, at least 10,000 unaccompanied children who have arrived in Europe have disappeared after registering with state authorities. Many are feared to have become victims of trafficking. Europol's chief of staff stated that some may have rejoined family members. At the same time, researchers have pointed to challenges in data collection of ‘missing’ children, which lead to inconsistencies and over-counting, as children are registered and go missing from several local and national authorities in different countries during their journey. Analysis of reasons for children disengaging from state support for unaccompanied children finds that many of the children want to find work or reunite with family, and run away from reception centres to continue their journeys, and find living and working conditions more in line with their expectations and aspirations. Others leave state-provided care arrangements as they get closer to adulthood out of fear of deportation. According to UNICEF and International Organization for Migration (IOM) figures, children (accompanied and unaccompanied) currently account for 36% of those risking the sea crossing between Greece and Turkey. The European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC) also sent an [open letter](#) to the European Council, Commission and Parliament calling for a comprehensive European action plan on children on the move, on 25 January 2016.

Sources: [The Guardian](#), 30 January 2016; [Euronews](#), 31 January 2016; [Open Democracy](#), 22 February 2016; IOM Press Release, 2 February 2016; IOM Press Release, 19 February 2016

USA / FACT SHEET / Children with an undocumented parent face disadvantage

The Migration Policy Institute (MPI) has released a fact sheet analysing census data (2009-2013), which indicates that children who have a parent who is an unauthorized or undocumented migrant are at a significant disadvantage, regardless of whether the children were born in the United States. MPI estimates that approximately 5.1 million children (under age 18) — 79 percent (4.1 million) of them born in the United States — live with a parent who is an undocumented migrant, representing 7 percent of the U.S. child population. MPI has found that these children are disadvantaged in terms of experiencing higher levels of poverty and linguistic isolation, reduced rates of family socioeconomic progress and English proficiency as well as lower pre-school enrolment. The fact sheet is available [here](#).

DETENTION AND DEPORTATION

MALTA / New migration strategy ends automatic detention of irregular migrants

Malta has introduced a new [migration strategy](#) for the reception of asylum seekers and irregular migrants. The new strategy aims to end the practice of automatic detention of migrants who enter irregularly. These reforms will allow migrants to be accommodated, medically screened and have their applications processed in a closed Initial Reception Centre for a maximum of seven days, where they will be informed of their right to apply for international protection. Furthermore, assessments will be done to ensure provision of necessary support. Additionally, the strategy introduces grounds for detention and alternatives to detention. The strategy does not address the methods for identification of vulnerable people and age assessment of those who entered Malta regularly.

Sources: [Asylum in Europe](#), 8 January 2016, ECRE, [weekly legal update](#), 8 January 2016

MEXICO / US and Mexican authorities linked to rights violations and abuses in detention

The Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Matías de Córdova A.C. (CDH Fray Matías) released a statement on 20 January 2016 denouncing the violation of migrants' rights at the Tapachula detention centre in Mexico. The CDH Fray Matías is a non-governmental organisation that promotes the human rights of migrants. The statement affirms that US authorities have been found working together with Mexican authorities in the detention centre and denounces rights' violations, abuses and harassment that migrants and asylum seekers are facing on a daily basis. This situation is also linked to increased apprehensions, detention and deportation of migrants by the Mexican state as part of the Southern Border Plan (Plan Frontera Sur). To read the full statement (only in Spanish), please click [here](#).

REPORT / Concerns over procedures in Italian 'hotspots'

An updated report on Italy from the European Council for Refugees and Exiles (ECRE)'s Asylum Information Database (AIDA) shows how Italian authorities have applied a pre-identification approach in the "hotspots", through which those identified as economic migrants are issued with a rejection/expulsion order and detained in the identification and expulsion centres. Those identified as asylum seekers are instead channelled to the Regional Hubs, where they can claim asylum. The Italian Council for Refugees (CIR), author of the report, raises a number of issues in relation to the operation of "hotspots", including limited access to the asylum procedure for specific nationalities, mainly from West Africa; the issuing of mass notifications of expulsion orders; the lack of or inadequate information provided on the procedures and the asylum system; and the lack of access to the "hotspots" for NGOs and UNHCR. The report is available [here](#).

Source: [ECRE Weekly Bulletin](#), 8 January 2016

REPORT / Lack of transparency in immigration detention

The Global Detention Project together with Access Info Europe released the report "The Uncounted: The Detention of Migrants and Asylum Seekers in Europe" in December 2015. The report covers 33 countries across Europe and North America. It reveals that in many countries, it is impossible to obtain an accurate number of migrants held in detention. Many countries refuse to answer freedom of information requests, and when information is released or publicly available it is often incomplete or based on unclear measures that do not fully capture the situation. The report concludes that, particularly in Europe, there is not sufficient transparency in detention regimes. To view the report, click [here](#).

SPAIN / Municipality of Madrid to monitor immigration detention conditions

The Department for Health, Security and Emergencies (Concejalía de Salud, Seguridad y Emergencias) of the municipality of Madrid is working on a plan to monitor immigration detention conditions in collaboration with NGOs and other associations. There is one detention centre in the area of Madrid (Aluche). Immigration detention is generally the responsibility of the state department of home affairs and the municipality will cooperate with organisations which have access to the detained migrants to reach its objective of monitoring detention conditions. According to the organisation SOS Racismo Madrid, about 3,000 people are detained each year in the detention centre in Aluche.

Sources: [El Confidencial](#), 15 February 2016; [SOS Racismo Madrid](#), February 2016

USA / Arrests of Central American families

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security began a national operation during the first week of January 2016 to deport Central American families. Many of these families arrived in 2014 (see [PICUM Bulletin](#) 30 June 2014) and their asylum applications were rejected. According to officials, most of the arrests took place in Georgia, Texas and North Carolina. According to court figures, as of November 2015, judges had decided 905 cases of migrant families of which 80% received a deportation order.

Source: [New York Times](#), 4 January 2016; [The Monitor](#), 4 January 2016

PUBLICATIONS AND OTHER RESOURCES

PROJECT / Identification and protection of victims of trafficking

A new training kit has been developed by the AIRE Centre as part of a two-year EU project. Released on 25 January 2016, the resource aims to help those working on the frontline to better identify and protect victims of human trafficking. The [project](#) 'Upholding Rights: Early Legal Intervention' is a European Commission funded project involving legal experts from Bulgaria, Croatia, Ireland, Lithuania, Scotland and the UK. Source: [The AIRE Centre press release](#), 25 January 2016