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EU / MEDITERRANEAN / Nearly 2,300 die at sea, EU action plan for Italy and the Central Mediterranean and proposed code of conduct for civilian rescue groups

According to the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) Missing Migrants Project, between 1 January and 5 July 2017, 2,297 people died at sea and 101,266 migrants and refugees entered Europe by sea. The Ministers of Interior of France, Germany and Italy met with the European Commissioner for Migration and Home Affairs in Paris on 2 July 2017 to discuss the situation in the Mediterranean and agreed on a [set of measures](#). The measures include a search and rescue code of conduct for NGOs, additional support for the Libyan coastguard, and reinforcement of the EU strategy on returns of migrants. Human Rights Watch (HRW) stated the measures 'fall far short of what is needed'. The European Commission published an "[Action plan on measures to support Italy, reduce pressure along the Central Mediterranean route and increase solidarity](#)" on 4 July 2017. The plan includes the proposal of a code of conduct for NGOs involved in search and rescue which Italy should draft, in consultation with the EU Commission and through dialogue with NGOs. NGOs involved are concerned a code of conduct could put them under the control of the Libyan and Italian coast guards and thus limit their ability to save migrants. The action plan further foresees measures to control migration in the Mediterranean including EU and member states' engagement with Niger and Mali to prevent movements towards Libya; EU readmission agreements and practical arrangements with third countries as well as Italy to expedite returns and increase existing capacity of stationary hotspots and detention capacity. Amnesty International's new report '[A Perfect Storm](#)', published in July 2017, recommends that EU member states and institutions, including Frontex, ensure adequate search and rescue; that the Libyan coastguard should allow search and rescue operations by civilian vessels including boats operated by NGOs; and that EU member states should open safe and legal routes to Europe.

Sources: International Organization for Migration, [Missing Migrants Project](#), 7 July 2017; [EU Observer](#), 6 July 2017

BALKAN ROUTE / REPORT / Mass abuse and push-backs of migrants along Western Balkan route

Oxfam released a report entitled “A Dangerous Game” in cooperation with the Belgrade Centre for Human Rights (BCHR) and the Macedonian Young Lawyers Association (MYLA) in April 2017. Researchers interviewed 140 migrants and refugees who had been expelled either from Hungary to Serbia, or from Croatia to Serbia, from Serbia to either Bulgaria or Macedonia, from Bulgaria to Turkey or from Macedonia to Greece. Some were expelled more than once. A large majority came from Afghanistan, the others from Pakistan, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Egypt and Lebanon. All 140 migrants reported abuses and breaches of law by police officers, border control or other state security agents while travelling along the Western Balkan route, including against children. In Hungary, police officers made migrants and refugees sit in the snow naked while they poured cold water over them. In Bulgaria migrants were robbed of belongings by police officers before being sent back across the border. Bulgarian authorities administered electric shocks. The report calls on the governments of Serbia, Macedonia, Croatia, Hungary and Bulgaria to immediately stop violating rights of people seeking protection. Furthermore, that the European Union ensure compliance with international law and human rights standards throughout the EU. Read the full report [here](#).

Sources: [OXFAM](#), 6 April 2017; [epo](#), 6 April 2017; [EURACTIV](#), 6 April 2017

UNITED NATIONS

UN / Detention, abuse and harassment can exacerbate effects of torture for victims who migrate

Victims of torture who migrate face particular vulnerabilities and require special responses. The United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture revealed that two-thirds of the 50,000 victims it assists are migrants or refugees. UN experts state that the effects of torture are exacerbated by migrants’ and refugees’ experiences of detention, xenophobia, or harassment. A UN event on torture and migration on 28 April 2017 discussed how to meet the needs of torture victims in the context of migration.

Source: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), [Press Release](#), 26 April 2017

UN / UN experts urge states to make migrants and refugees with disabilities a priority in the global compact on migration

The Committee on Migrant Workers (CMW) and the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) issued a joint statement on 12 April 2017 which calls on states to consider migrants with disabilities in the development of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The Committees expressed concern that many countries lack processes to identify migrants with disabilities, and thus fail to provide them with adequate prevention and services. The statement urges states, in developing the Global Compact, to include persons with disability and organisations in the design, implementation and monitoring of the new framework. The statement is available [here](#).

EUROPEAN POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

EU / Child rights organisations welcome new EU Commission policy to protect migrant and refugee children

The European Commission published a communication on the protection of children in migration on 12 April 2017. The guidelines, which provide concrete actions to protect all migrant and refugee children in Europe, have been broadly welcomed by child rights organisations. The communication provides a series of actions to the protection gaps and needs that children face at all stages of migration processes, ranging from their identification, reception, implementation of procedural safeguards, as well as establishment of durable solutions. Actions focusing on undocumented children include ensuring access to inclusive, formal education, including early childhood education and care, and ensuring timely access to health care, including preventative care as well as to other essential public services. The communication also underlines safeguards which must be applied to all children present on the territory of the European Union. The communication states that children can be detained as a last resort but emphasises that this must be exclusively in exceptional circumstances and the need to make a range of alternatives to the administrative detention of children available and accessible. The communication is available [here](#). A joint statement of several children’s and migrants’ rights organisations

is available [here](#). A Commission Staff Working Document: Implementing the Action Plan on Unaccompanied Minors (2010-2014) was published alongside the communication and is available [here](#).

EUROPEAN COUNCIL / Conclusions focus on increased migration control

On 23 June 2017 the European Council released conclusions on migration, focusing on border control to stop irregular flows of migrants, the implementation of the EU-Turkey Deal, and the reform of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). The EU will seek enhanced cooperation with countries of origin and transit, in particular with Libya, to control borders. It will also increase efforts towards its return and readmission policy through agreements and other forms of practical arrangements with third countries. The EU will also work on an EU list of safe third countries in order to enhance cooperation with third countries. Measures such as the EU-Turkey deal as well as agreements with third countries have been widely [criticised](#) by human rights groups. The full Council conclusions are available [here](#).

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

FRANCE / Violations of fundamental rights of migrants in Calais

The French ombudsperson (Défenseur des droits) stated on 14 June that there were “fundamental rights violations of an exceptional and unprecedented severity” towards migrants in Calais, and urged the state to intervene and provide essential services to migrants. After the dismantlement of the migrant camp in October 2016, there are no shelters available, which impacts in particular on women and children. Migrants sleep rough and are pursued by the police. NGOs are prevented from providing essential services such as access to sanitation, water or food.

Sources: [La Croix](#), 16 June 2017; [La Croix](#), 14 June 2017

GERMANY / NGOs call for a more open Europe and regular pathways for migration

A group of German civil society organisations called on the German government in a joint position paper, released in June 2017, to provide regular pathways for migration and to counter xenophobia. The paper demands more human rights-based migration policies, the sharing of a positive, developmental understanding of migration, the creation of regular pathways for migration, the improved protection of undocumented migrants, the ratification of existing conventions concerning protection of migrants and to not link development aid funding to migration control. The position paper is available [here](#). Similarly, a group of organisations called for a more open Europe for refugees and migrants and improved access to asylum in a joint statement on 19 June which can be viewed [here](#).

Sources: [epo](#), 6 June 2017; [ProAsyl](#), 20 June 2016; [EpochTimes](#), 19 June 2017

IRELAND / REPORT / New report in Irish Parliament recommends regularisation for undocumented migrants

The Joint Committee on Justice and Equality in the Irish Parliament recently launched its ‘Report on Immigration, Asylum and the Refugee Crisis’. The report includes a recommendation to introduce a regularisation scheme for undocumented migrants in Ireland. The proposal for the regularisation scheme would allow all undocumented migrants living in Ireland for at least four years to register for regularisation. A serious criminal bar would be imposed and a two-year probationary period would apply during which applicants would be allowed to work and travel. Undocumented migrants with children born in Ireland or those who have attended a minimum of three years of schooling would also be eligible to register for the scheme. To read the report, click [here](#).

Source: [Migrant Rights Centre Ireland](#) (MRCI), 29 June 2017

SWEDEN / Fierce debate about refused asylum seekers staying irregularly, following Stockholm attack

Following the terrorist attack in Stockholm on 7 April 2017 which left five people dead, a debate has emerged about refused asylum seekers who irregularly stay in the country. A 39-year old Uzbek national was apprehended in relation to the attack. His application for protection had been rejected in June 2016 but he remained in the country. The Swedish Minister for Home Affairs, Anders Ygeman, stated that preparatory legislative work is already ongoing which would include, among other things, an increase in funding to agencies involved in deportations, as well as increased work place controls to check for undocumented workers. Currently, 55% of

refused asylum seekers leave the territory within the given time limit and it is estimated that 12,500 refused asylum applicants are still residing in Sweden.

Sources: [Aftonbladet](#), 27 April 2017; [Svenska Dagbladet](#), 27 April 2017; [GB](#), 10 April 2017; [DN](#), 5 March 2017

HEALTH CARE

ENGLAND / STUDY / NGO study reveals immense impact on health inequalities of charging migrant women for maternity care

The organisation Maternity Action recently released a study entitled “The Impact on Health Inequalities of Charging Migrant Women for NHS Maternity Care”. In England, women without indefinite leave to remain the country cannot be denied maternity care, but may be charged afterwards for the cost of that care. (See [Maternity Action information sheet](#)). The National Health Service (NHS) can contact the Home Office for information about a person’s nationality and immigration status to determine if a person can be charged for maternity care. The Maternity Action study is based on assessments of 32 professionals providing information on how charging for maternity care affects vulnerable migrant women in England, with a focus on undocumented women. The study also includes information provided by 19 interviewed migrant women who were charged for maternity care. The study shows that chargeable women generally have no access to social benefits. These women were particularly likely to be dependent on their partners and to have faced domestic violence and sexual or other exploitation. The results of the study also reveal a high number of cases where migrant women had current or previously medically complex pregnancies. Moreover, the results suggest that the risk of being charged for treatment or reported are significant obstacles for undocumented women to obtain necessary maternal care, with an increased risk of pre-term births and other adverse pregnancy outcomes. To read the full report, click [here](#).

Source: [Maternity Action](#), March 2017

LABOUR AND FAIR WORKING CONDITIONS

BELGIUM / Belgian court condemns Emirati princesses for modern slavery

A tribunal in Brussels sentenced eight persons to suspended 15-month prison sentences and a €165,000 fine for trafficking in human beings and degrading treatment, indicating that this was a case of modern slavery. The case concerned 23 women employed by a company based in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and working for princesses from the UAE during their stay at the Conrad Hotel in Brussels. The investigation revealed that they did not have residence or work permits, were working for little or no remuneration, day and night, sleeping together in one room or on mattresses in front of the princesses’ rooms, and were not allowed to leave the hotel. The tribunal awarded the 23 women financial compensation for their emotional pain and suffering, but no material damages for their lost salaries.

Sources: [Le Soir](#), 23 June 2017; [RTBF](#), 23 June 2017

UK / Modern Slavery Registry keeps record of companies’ statements

The organisation Business and Human Rights Resource Centre has set up a Modern Slavery Registry to keep track of companies’ statements under the UK Modern Slavery Act. The Modern Slavery Act requires companies doing business in the UK with a total annual turnover of £36m to make a statement each year on the steps taken to identify and eradicate slavery and human trafficking in their business and supply chain. The Registry currently contains more than 2,000 publicly available statements. It can be searched by company, sector, country, and it is possible to download the data. Statements can also be submitted to [carrier \(at\) business-humanrights.org](#). Access the Modern Slavery Registry [here](#).

Source: [Business & Human Rights Resource Centre](#), 2017

UNDOCUMENTED WOMEN

EU / EU signs Istanbul Convention

The EU signed the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence on 13 June, also referred to as the 'Istanbul Convention', the place of its adoption. The Convention is the most comprehensive international legal framework to combat violence against women and girls and domestic violence. While the Istanbul Convention has been [signed by all EU member states](#), 14 have yet to ratify it. The EU's accession to the convention is, however, [narrowly limited](#) to the areas of judicial cooperation in criminal matters and asylum and non-refoulement. Nonetheless, signature by the EU is believed to send a strong signal for the importance of women's and girls' rights.

Sources: [Independent](#), 14 June 2017, [Council of Europe](#), 13 June 2017; [Council of Europe](#), 13 June 2017

UNDOCUMENTED CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

COUNCIL OF EUROPE / Action Plan on children in migration

The Council of Europe has published a [Council of Europe Action Plan on Protecting Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe \(2017-2019\)](#). The Action Plan is based on a clear principle: in the context of migration, children should be treated first and foremost as children. It concerns all children in migration who arrive or have arrived in the territory of any Council of Europe member state. The concrete activities proposed thereunder are based on Council of Europe laws and standards that guarantee rights to all migrant children without discrimination based on their nationality or migration status. The Action Plan has three main pillars: 1) ensuring access to rights and child-friendly procedures; 2) providing effective protection; and 3) enhancing the integration of children who would remain in Europe. Some of the actions particularly relevant for undocumented children include those related to child-friendly procedures, alternatives to detention, education, transition to adulthood, age assessment and statelessness.

REPORT / Call for action to protect children

UNICEF also published a report '[A Child is a Child: Protecting children on the move from violence, abuse and exploitation](#)'. The report calls for urgent action, finding that alarming numbers of children are moving alone; without safe and regular pathways. Children often fall through the cracks in migration policy and harsh border enforcement policies leave children in limbo and exacerbate their risk of exploitation. UNICEF's six-point plan to keep refugee and migrant children safe is (1) protect children from exploitation and violence, (2) end detention by creating practical alternatives, (3) keep families together and give children residence status, (4) help children to stay in school and healthy, (5) press for action on the causes that uproot children (6) combat xenophobia and discrimination. The full report is available [here](#).

UK / Parents told not to share children's nationality and birthplace in school census

The National Union of Teachers (NUT) suspects that information about children's nationality and country of birth collected for the National Pupil Database could be used to enforce immigration law, and asks parents not to reveal these details. There are fears that this information could be passed on from the Department for Education to police and the Home Office, in charge of immigration law enforcement. The Department for Education, however, assured that nationality and country of birth information is solely for use by the Department for Education and would not be shared. Parents are not legally required to provide this information but schools are required to ask for it.

Source: [The Guardian](#), 17 April 2017

DETENTION AND DEPORTATION

FRANCE / REPORT / New data on immigration detention in France and petition to end migrant children detention

A group of five French NGOs published their annual report on immigration detention in France for 2016. They denounce a massive and abusive use of detention, including for children, abusive practices of deportations including discrimination against some nationalities, and the lack of alternatives to camps or detention for people seeking protection. In 2016, close to 50,000 people were detained in France, including 4,285 children in the department of Mayotte. Read the full report [here](#). Meanwhile, a group of French organisations has launched a petition calling for a commitment from the new French president, Emmanuel Macron, to end migrant children's detention. In 2016, 182 children were detained in administrative detention centres in mainland France, and 4,285 children were detained in Mayotte. The petition is available [here](#).

FYROM / Immigration detention in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

The Global Detention project (GDP) has released an immigration detention profile for the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) in June 2017. FYROM is considered a key transit country for migrants through which the Western Balkan Route crosses. In 2015, the government introduced a state of emergency which was extended in 2016, the same year the Balkan route was closed and about 1,200 migrants and asylum seekers were stranded in Macedonia. According to the paper, the Gazi Baba specialised detention facility held five times as many people as its presumed capacity. The number dropped to less than 400 in 2016, following the introduction of a "humanitarian corridor" in August 2015. According to the country's law, a person can be detained for up to 24 hours to enable border control procedures and if there are reasons which prevent an individual's deportation, a person can be detained up to 12 months. There are no legal provisions prohibiting the detention of children. To download the immigration detention profile, click [here](#).

GERMANY / NETHERLANDS / Organisations call for immediate stop of deportation of vulnerable people to Afghanistan

A group of Dutch NGOs joined forces to release a statement calling for an end to deportation of vulnerable people to Afghanistan. The statement highlights the unstable security situation in Afghanistan and the sharp increase in the number of children amongst the casualties. The NGOs express their concern regarding the October 2016 deal between the European Union and the Afghan government, "Joint Way Forward", which foresees increased deportations of Afghan nationals. According to German media reports, less than half of asylum seekers from Afghanistan are now granted asylum in Germany. In 2015, 77.6 % of the applications for asylum were granted, in 2016, it was only 60.5%. German organisations such as Pro Asyl have called to end collective deportation flights to Afghanistan.

Sources: [Amnesty International](#), 24 April 2017; [Tagesschau](#), 24 April 2017; [Spiegel ONLINE](#), 24 April 2017; [Passauer Neue Presse](#), 24 April 2017

REPORT / Migrant children in detention at risk of torture

The report '[Protecting Children against Torture in Detention: Global Solutions for a Global Problem](#)' consists of a compilation of over 30 articles written by different experts on deprivation of liberty of children and the protection of children in detention from torture. The report was published by the Centre for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law Anti-Torture Initiative and the American University Washington College of Law and also addresses the situation of immigration detention of children. The publication notes that while states increasingly detain children for immigration control purposes, this is never in the best interest of the child and puts them at risk of torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. The publication urges states to stop using child detention and instead set up alternatives that respect the well-being of children. To read the publication, click [here](#).

REPORT / Protecting stateless people from arbitrary detention

The European Network on Statelessness (ENS) released a new report, entitled 'Protecting Stateless Persons from Arbitrary Detention: An Agenda for Change', in 2017. The report is the final publication of a three-year project aimed at better understanding the extent and consequences of the detention of stateless persons in Europe, and creating tools and advocating for the protection of stateless persons from arbitrary detention through the

application of regional and international standards. The report highlights the particular risk of stateless people to unlawful, prolonged and arbitrary detention due to living in limbo and is available [here](#). The European Network on Statelessness (ENS) has also published a statement including its key demands which can be signed by individuals and is available [here](#).

SPAIN / CAMPAIGN / New campaign to close immigration detention centres

SOS Racismo Madrid has launched a new campaign, 'Imagínate' ('Imagine Yourself'), calling for the closure of migration detention centres (Centros de Internamiento de Extranjeros or CIEs in Spanish). The campaign consists of a video of famous actors speaking up for the rights of migrants. It was launched on 15 June 2017, designated as the 'day for the closure of CIEs and the end of deportations'. To follow or share the campaign, use the following hashtags: #ImaginateCIErre #CIEsNO.

Source: [SOS Racismo Madrid](#), 15 June 2017