



EMN BULLETIN

The EMN Bulletin provides policymakers and other practitioners with updates on recent migration and international protection policy developments at EU and national level. The 21st Edition provides information from October 2017 to December 2017, including the (latest) relevant published statistics.

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

[1. General policy developments](#); [2. Implementation of the Common European Asylum System](#); [3. Unaccompanied Minors and Vulnerable Groups](#); [4. Legal migration and Integration](#); [5. Management of the external borders](#); [6. Irregular migration and return](#); [7. Actions Addressing Trafficking in Human Beings](#); [8. External dimension](#); [Annex on EU & Complementary Statistics, Additional information, other EMN outputs and upcoming events.](#)

1. GENERAL POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

EU DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

- ★ On 7th December, the European Commission put forward a [political roadmap](#) to reach a comprehensive agreement on how to pursue a sustainable migration policy. It calls on EU Member States to focus both on the internal and external dimension of migration policy by ensuring swift progress on the reform of the EU's Common European Asylum System, continuing to open legal pathways to Europe, securing adequate funding for the future, as well as further strengthening partnerships with third countries. The main target here is to reach an [agreement](#) on the Common European Asylum System by June 2018, including an approach whereby compulsory relocation would apply to a 'crisis' situation only, while regular relocation would be based on voluntary commitments from Member States. Another key element is the strengthening of financial support and cooperation on resettlement and return with countries of origin and transit, including the resettlement of an additional 50.000 vulnerable refugees by May 2019. This Communication was published ahead of the European Council's [Thematic Debate](#) on migration on 14th December.
- ★ On 15th November, the European Commission [published](#) a progress report on the European Agenda on Migration, taking stock of the most important developments since the last reports of 6th September 2017 and identifying key actions requiring follow-up by the relevant actors. Against the background of a decrease of 63% of irregular border crossings along the main migratory routes, the Commission noted the progress made in the protection of the EU's external borders, the cooperation with partner countries to address the root causes of irregular migration, the improvements to migrants' protection as well as fight against smuggling. Examples of the progress made are as follows:
 - **Addressing root causes and saving lives:** since October, one million vulnerable Syrian refugees receive monthly electronic cash transfers through the EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey. In addition, over 15,000 migrants, among them over 10,000 from Libya, have benefitted from assisted voluntary return.
 - **EU solidarity and support with refugees and host countries:** in response to the launch of a new [resettlement scheme](#) in September 2017, over 34,400 pledges have been received from 16 Member States. More than 31,500 persons have been relocated under the EU relocation scheme.

- **Return and readmission:** Following the conclusion of an agreement on Standard Operating Procedures on return with Bangladesh in September, the EU will also foster structured practical cooperation with other key countries, such as Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal and Mali.

In the framework of this progress report, the European Commission also [published](#) a Staff Working Document outlining the best practices and a set of Standards Operational Procedures for the implementation of the hotspot approach. The aim is to supply Member States hosting hotspots with clear guidance on what to do once the hotspot approach has been activated in accordance with Article 18 of the [European Border and Coast Guard Regulation](#).

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- ★ **France:** On 15th December, the government circulated guidelines of the policy on reception and integration of foreign nationals in France for 2018 to prefects. The main points are the integration pathway of newly arrived migrants, including the signature of the Republican Integration Contract (CIR) and French language courses, support for access to employment and housing of refugees (in particular the most vulnerable groups), as well as integration by financing temporary accommodation centers, and evaluation of the reception and integration policy.
- ★ **The Netherlands:** Following parliamentary elections on 15th March, the new governments presented its [coalition agreement](#) 'Vertrouwen in de toekomst' (Confidence in the future) on 10th October. The new governments consists of the Liberals (VVD), the Christian Democrats, the Social Liberals (D66), as well as the Christian Union. Examples of policy proposals in the field of migration contained in the coalition agreement are as follows: Firstly, as regards asylum, the new government wants to work towards a fully-fledged European asylum policy. The new government inter alia proposes to conclude, preferably at EU level, migration agreements with safe third countries for the purpose of reception and return. The resettlement quota for the Netherlands is planned to increase from 500 to 750. Furthermore, it is planned to reduce the duration of initial temporary asylum residence permits from five years to three years. Asylum seekers with a good chance of being granted asylum will be placed in smaller reception centres near the municipalities where they will eventually be housed to promote integration. Secondly, in the field of legal migration, the new governments inter alia intends to stimulate and facilitate labour migration to strengthen the Dutch economy. This may be done by easing the rules on stay and residence or by introducing three-year work permits. The new government also plans to raise the language requirement from A2 level to B1 level for newcomers, particularly beneficiaries of international protection. Courses for the B1 level will be financed by the national government. Thirdly, in the context of return, the coalition agreement foresees an intensified cooperation with third countries, an integrated approach to the asylum procedure including return, and increased possibilities for the use of detention. Lastly, various measures are planned to intensify the fight against human trafficking, for instance by dispatching a permanent police liaison officer in countries that are sources of human trafficking.

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMON EUROPEAN ASYLUM SYSTEM

EU DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

- ★ On 29th November, the Council [endorsed](#) a mandate for negotiations on a directive laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection. Besides defining the reception conditions to which applicants will have access, the draft directive also establishes that applicants shall have access to the labour market no later than nine months after lodging an application for international protection. If applicants have sufficient means, they may be required to cover or contribute to the cost of their reception conditions. With a view to limiting secondary movements, the draft directive limits the provision of reception conditions to the Member State responsible for the application, and allows Member States to restrict the applicants' freedom of movement to a geographical area, assign them a specific residence or define reporting obligations. On the basis of this mandate, the Council will now start negotiations with the European Parliament.
- ★ On 15th November, a mandate for negotiations on a regulation establishing an EU resettlement framework for the admission of persons in need of international protection was [endorsed](#) by the Council. Under this new framework, the Council would adopt a two-year EU resettlement and humanitarian admission plan on the basis of a proposal from the Commission. Member States would contribute to this plan on a voluntary basis with the support of funding from the EU's budget. This mandate follows a [proposal](#) put forward by the European Commission in July 2017 and will form the basis of negotiations with the European Parliament.

- ★ On 19th October, the European Parliament [adopted](#) its position on the reform of the Dublin Regulation. The position calls for a sharing of responsibility for asylum seekers between all EU Member States on the basis of mandatory relocation quotas. Such transfers of asylum seekers to other EU countries would be based on “genuine links” such as family, prior residence or studies. In case no such link exists, asylum seekers would be automatically assigned to a Member States based on a fixed distribution key. The European Parliament also asserts that the country in which the refugee arrives first should be responsible for registration and pushes for asylum applications to be processed faster.

Relocation and Resettlement

- ★ According to the European Commission’s Progress Report on the European Agenda on Migration [published](#) on 15th November, 31,503 people have been [relocated](#) as of 9th November (10,265 from Italy and 21,238 from Greece). While 758 applicants remain to be relocated from Greece, a total of 3,110 people applicants remain to be relocated from Italy. In terms of resettlement, 81% (18,366) of the 22,504 resettlements agreed have been completed, mainly from Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon. Member States also continued to carry out resettlements under the EU-Turkey Statement, with the total number of people resettled under both EU resettlement schemes amounting to 25,739.

LATEST RELEVANT STATISTICS

- ★ EASO [published](#) its latest asylum trends for October 2017. The number of applications for international protection in the EU, Norway and Switzerland amounted to 61,634 in October, which is about the same number as in September but significantly lower than in October 2016, when there were approximately 22,000 more applicants across the EU. Almost 4% of all applications were lodged by unaccompanied minors. As in previous months, Syria continued to be the main country of origin for asylum applications, followed by Afghanistan and Iraq.

The overall EU recognition rate decreased for the third consecutive month, to 35% in October. The citizenships with the highest recognition rates were Syrians (90%) and Eritreans (87%) while the lowest recognitions rates were recorded for Bangladeshi (3%) and Albanian nationals (6%).

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- ★ **Austria:** On 18th October, the Act Amending the Aliens Law 2017 was [published](#) in the Federal Law Gazette I No. 145/2017. According to this act, foreigners regularly staying in Austria may apply for a visa for exceptional circumstances from within the country, in particular for humanitarian reasons.¹ Furthermore, the right of residence of all asylum seekers is restricted to the federal state that is granting basic welfare support to the respective asylum seeker.²

In its October session, the Constitutional Court repealed a provision in the asylum law, which provided for a shortened period of two weeks for appeals against decisions of the Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum on an application for international protection, provided that the decision is linked to a return decision.

The usual period of appeal under the Proceedings of Administrative Courts Act is four weeks. According to the [Constitutional Court](#), the reduction is not required to regulate the subject (“essential”) and therefore violates Article 136 of the Federal Constitutional Act.

In the [2017-2022 Austrian government programme](#), one of the measures aimed at increasing efficiency in asylum procedures is the envisaged exclusion of the extraordinary revision to the Administrative High Court in asylum procedures. However, this was rejected by the Administrative High Court.

New European Commission infringement package

On 7th December, the European Commission issued a new [infringement package](#) on a number of legal actions against EU Member States on migration-related matters. (1) the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland were [referred](#) to the Court of Justice for non-compliance with their legal obligations on relocation; (2) the infringement procedure against Hungary concerning its asylum law was [taken forward](#); (3) Greece, the Netherlands and Portugal were asked to reconsider charges for residence permits for third-country nationals and Romania was urged to implement legal migration directives correctly.

¹ Art. 2 par 37 of the amendment.

² Art. 3 par 15c of the amendment.

According to the Court, the planned exclusion of the extraordinary revision in asylum procedures would mean a suppression of the currently existing uniform standards in accordance with the rule of law and a constitutional step backwards in a particularly sensitive human rights area, which does not entail any significant increase in efficiency.

- ★ **Belgium:** At the beginning of November, the Parliament adopted a [reform of the Belgian asylum law](#), inter alia in order to harmonise it with the European asylum law. The changes brought by the reform include - among others – the introduction of the concept of safe third country; the introduction of a special needs procedure; the possibility for the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons – in the framework of the assessment of the asylum application – to consult information that has been electronically sent or received by the applicant; and a simplification and harmonization of the time limits to lodge an appeal with the Council for Alien Law Litigation. The legislative texts should be published in the Belgian Official Gazette at the beginning of 2018.
- ★ **Estonia:** In December, the Johannes Mihkelson's Centre (JMK), one of the main Estonian non-governmental organisations offering support and other services to refugees, opened a new support centre in Tallinn. The centre will host workshops and other events held in the centre with the aim to support the integration of the beneficiaries of international protection.

- ★ **France:** In the week of 18th December, France resettled the first groups of refugees from Niger and Chad. In a statement of 28th August 2017, the President of the Republic announced plans to carry out protection missions to resettle refugees from Sahel countries to the EU. The resettled refugees will benefit from a sustainable accommodation after a period of four months so as to foster adaptation to life in France and integration.

On 10th October, a new [automated data processing system for personal data information for visa applications](#), 'France-Visas', was implemented in France. The 'France-Visas' portal aims at processing visa applications and improving the conditions of issuance of visas by providing a web portal and a teleservice designed to inform the applicants and enable them to apply for a visa online. It also aims at fighting against the irregular entry and stay of aliens on the territory, by preventing documentary frauds, identity frauds and abuses of procedure.

On 2nd October, the French government [announced](#) plans to develop the accommodation system for asylum seekers and refugees. The aim is to create 3,000 additional places in temporary accommodation centers in 2018 as a response to the increase in the number of vulnerable people having been granted protection status. An information note of 4th December specifies the actions to be conducted in 2018 in order to adapt the accommodation system for asylum seekers and refugees to the migration crisis and to the faster processing time. The objective is in particular to reinforce the readability, the efficiency and the fluidity of the accommodation system and to create additional dedicated accommodation places.

- ★ **Ireland:** On 22nd November, the [Irish Government proposed a framework for access to work for International Protection Applicants](#). The Irish Government Cabinet has agreed to accept the recommendations of the Inter-Departmental Taskforce, set up to examine the implications of the Irish Supreme Court judgment in [N.V.H. v Minister for Justice and Equality](#) on access to the workforce for International Protection applicants.

On the same day, the Government also announced that it has decided to opt into the EU (recast) [Reception Conditions Directive \(2013/33/EU\)](#). This provides a framework that will enable international protection applicants to access the work-force in circumstances where their application for international protection status has not received a first instance decision within the timeframe set by the Directive.

Judgment of the European Court of Justice – Case [C-201/16 Shiri](#)

In its judgment of 25th October, the Court of Justice ruled that the [Dublin III Regulation](#) must be interpreted as meaning that, where a transfer under that Regulation does not take place within the six-month time limit, the responsibility of processing an asylum application automatically shifts to the Member States that is seeking that return. The Court also found that it is not necessary that the responsible Member State has refused its obligation to take back the individual. In addition, the Court interpreted Article 27 of the Dublin III Regulation to mean that an applicant for international protection must have access to an effective and timely remedy, either through an appeal or a review against the transfer decision. Such remedy must enable the applicant to rely on the expiration of the six-month period.

- ★ **Italy:** In mid-December 2017, the Minister of the Interior met with the King of Jordan, Abdallah bin al Hussein, to discuss and exchange information on migration flows and asylum seeker reception, amongst other topics. During the encounter, Jordan's extraordinary commitment to receiving asylum seekers was underlined. The Minister also met with Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad.
- ★ **Lithuania:** In October, the government granted the possibility for beneficiaries of international protection to receive compensation for part of the rental payment. It is expected that this will encourage landlords to rent housing and will ease the financial burden on beneficiaries of international protection during the integration period.
- ★ **Luxembourg:** On 5th December, a Grand ducal regulation added Georgia to the list of safe countries of origin.
- ★ **The Netherlands:** As of 16th November, the government may [restrict the freedom](#) of asylum seekers who caused problems during or after their asylum procedure, at the reception centre. Such restriction implies that the asylum seekers is obliged to remain near a special location with extra supervision and surveillance ([EBTL](#)) of the Central Organ for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA). The EBTLs are reception centers with strict surveillance where asylum seekers (only 18+) can be placed if they have caused nuisance at the reception center where they previously stayed. People staying there are obliged to take part in a daily program to achieve a change of behavior and they do not receive financial allowances (only food and other necessary products in kind).

As of November, the government's country policy for Pakistan and Russia changed. Converts and apostates from [Pakistan](#), as well as political activists and journalists who are critical towards the government in [Russia](#) are now considered groups at risk. This means that this group only needs to show minor indications in order to be considered persecuted. Furthermore, LGBT's from Chenchnya are now considered to be systematically persecuted and will be generally granted a residence permit. In addition, [West-Darfur](#) is now considered as a region with circumstances as provided in article 15(c) of the recast Qualification Directive (serious harm due to indiscriminate violence). Lastly, human rights activists are now considered as a group at risk in Sudan; this lowers the burden of proof for this group.

The total capacity of the central reception of asylum seekers has been [scaled down](#) from 48,700 places (in April 2017) to 31,000 places (end of 2017) due to the decrease in the number of asylum seekers arriving in the Netherlands.

- ★ **Sweden:** On 17th December, an [enquiry](#) about the preconditions for creating legal pathways to the EU to seek asylum presented its final report. The enquiry, which had been appointed by the Swedish government in January 2016, found that there are few legal routes to Europe for asylum seekers, and that the number of asylum seekers is very unevenly distributed across the EU. The enquiry argues that the EU treaties provide support for a new legal instrument in the EU that would create a system of entry permits, to be issued for the purpose of seeking asylum. The report also states that the European Commission should examine whether it is possible to propose such a system as a complement to existing resettlement frameworks in the EU and spontaneous, territorial asylum applications.

[Relocation and Resettlement](#)

- ★ **Croatia:** Between October and December 2017, three persons were relocated from Italy to Croatia, while 40 persons were resettled from Turkey on 28th November 2017. In total, the Croatian government made 356 pledges for relocation from Italy and Greece and 150 pledges for resettlement from Turkey. On 5th October, the Government [adopted](#) a Decision on the resettlement of third-country nationals or stateless persons who are eligible for international protection. This entails the resettlement of an additional 100 third-country nationals or stateless persons.
- ★ **Finland:** On 20th December, Finland [confirmed](#) its commitment to resettle 750 Syrian refugees from Turkey and Congolese refugees from Zambia in 2018. As a result of the ongoing conflict and humanitarian crisis in Syria, millions of people have been forced to leave their homes. About 33,000 Congolese refugees have fled to Zambia because of long-standing violence. Most of these refugees are women and children. As in previous years, Finland is also prepared to resettle 100 emergency cases.
- ★ **Italy:** On 22nd December, the first group of vulnerable people arrived in Italy from Libya through a humanitarian corridor, thanks to an agreement between Italy, Libya, the United Nations and the Italian Episcopal Conference (CEI). A total of 162 vulnerable people, mostly women and children, left Libyan reception centres for Italy, where they will be granted protection.

The opening of a humanitarian corridor between Libya and Italy is a move further in the fight against irregular migration through the creation of legal migration channels for people in need of international protection.

- ★ **Lithuania:** By 21st December, Lithuania has relocated and resettled 468 persons from Italy, Greece and Turkey.
- ★ **Luxembourg:** With the resettlement of 65 Syrian beneficiaries of international protection from Turkey on 4th October, Luxembourg [fulfilled its commitment](#) in the context of the [EU-Turkey Statement](#) of 18th March 2016. This group of Syrian refugees was joined by two individuals from Iraq and Iran who were also resettled from Turkey.

Over the considered period, Luxembourg also [fulfilled its commitments](#) in the context of the relocation mechanism and the decisions made by the JHA Council in September 2015. On 25th October, 30th November and 20th December, 90 people were [relocated](#) from Italy. On 19th December, 29 people were relocated from Greece.

- ★ **Spain:** The relocation and resettlement processes continued to be carried out, leading to a total of 1,328 relocations and 1,360 resettlements to Spain as of 12th December 2017.

3. UNACCOMPANIED MINORS AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

EU DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

- ★ No recent developments.

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- ★ **Austria:** In October, the first care centre in Austria, which focuses exclusively on women with refugee background, was [opened](#) in Vienna. It offers individual counselling on language acquisition, education or contraception as well as group offers, such as a women's café.
- ★ **Finland:** On 7th November, the Finnish Immigration Service [announced](#) the launch of a special project called "The Let's Talk about Children method in reception services – psychosocial support for families with children and the vulnerable". This project aims to support the well-being and development of asylum seeker families and unaccompanied minors and will first be piloted in a number of reception centres for adults and families, and in units for minors. Subsequently, training sessions will be provided to introduce the operating model throughout the reception system.
- ★ **Luxembourg:** On 20th November, the Ombuds Committee for the Rights of the Child published its ["Report 2017 to the Government and Parliament"](#). The report focuses on children's rights in a society that is becoming increasingly international and multi-faceted and issues recommendations on a range of issues, notably on children applicants for international protection, child victims of human trafficking and unaccompanied minors.

Amongst other things, the [law of 7th November 2017](#) places the Centre for Equal Treatment (CET) under the authority of the Parliament, previously working under the aegis of the Ministry of Family, Integration and the Greater Region. The government programme of 2013 foresaw the creation of a House of Human Rights, grouping the services of the mediator, the Consultative Commission on Human Rights, the Ombuds Committee for the Rights of the Child and the Center for Equal Treatment, and its attachment to the legislative power. This institutional change can thus be understood in this context and allows the CET to highlight its independence from the Government and to group itself with other services active in the domain of protection and promotion of human rights. This law also modifies the [Labour Code](#) by adding the criteria of nationality to the list of motives of prohibited discriminations, while detailing that the provisions apply without prejudice to the application of Chapter I of the EU regulation n°492/2011 and the rules on entry, stay and employment of third-country nationals in Luxembourg. Nationality is also added as a prohibited motive for discrimination to the amended laws fixing the general status of [civil servants](#) and of [municipal civil servants](#), stipulating that the prohibition of this discrimination applies without prejudice to the provisions regulating access to civil service.

- ★ **Portugal:** During the reporting period, an internal study was conducted in order to define the term “unaccompanied minor”, listing all the steps to be taken and contacts to be made (especially with the Juvenile Court and Social Security) from detection until institutionalisation. The adoption of conclusions depends on a higher decision.
- ★ **United Kingdom:** On 7th December, it was [announced](#) that the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) for unaccompanied minors would be extended to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The scheme helps ensure there is a more even distribution of caring responsibilities and that all children get the care and support they need. The NTS is a voluntary scheme, meaning that local authorities which are caring for a disproportionate number of unaccompanied children can transfer children to another council with capacity. The scheme was introduced in England in July 2016. Local authorities are currently providing support to over 4,500 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

4. LEGAL MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION

EU DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

- ★ On 21st November, the [Regulation \(EU\) 2017/1954](#) amending Council Regulation (EC) 1030/2002 laying down a uniform format for residence permits for third-country nationals came into force. The amending regulation establishes a new common design for the residence permit card, with a view to improving its security features in order to prevent forgery. This amendment follows serious incidents of counterfeiting and fraud of the current residence card, which has been in circulation since 1997.

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- ★ **Austria:** Recent [population forecasts](#) of Statistics Austria show that migration to Austria will not rise as fast as had been expected. The year 2015 was an “exceptional year”. In 2015, the population grew by 113,100 people due to migration, compared to only 64,700 in 2016. Nevertheless, it is migration that ensures long-term population growth in Austria. Until 2020, Austria’s population will grow by 46,000 every year due to immigration.
- ★ **Belgium:** As of 2nd November– when the Royal Decree of 8th October 2017 entered into force - family members of foreign nationals who obtained a long term resident status in another Member State and reside in Belgium [are exempted from the requirement of obtaining a work permit](#) if the long term residents are exempted from this requirement themselves.
- ★ **Croatia:** On 27th November, a new [Action Plan](#) for Integration of Beneficiaries of International Protection for the Period 2017-2019 entered into force. Unlike the previous action plan, which encompassed all third-country nationals, the proposed measures of the Action Plan only apply to beneficiaries of international protection.
- ★ **Estonia:** A new ‘Work in Estonia’ action plan was [approved](#) by the government. The plan foresees attracting 8,000 skilled migrants to Estonia by 2020, out of whom 2,000 will be employed in the ICT Sector.

A special working group was established by the Parliament to propose a new population policy for Estonia to tackle the demographic crisis in the country. The document is expected to establish fundamental principles on the matter for the period of 2018-2035 and lay a groundwork for further action plans and strategies in the future. Topics covered by the document also include migration and integration. The document should be completed by the Estonia’s centenary in February 2018.

- ★ **Finland:** The number of [residence permit applications](#) from foreign students has fallen significantly in Finland. Between 1st January and 30th September 2017, a total of 4,355 students applied for a residence permit in Finland. This is a 23% reduction compared to the corresponding period in 2016. The main reason for the decreasing number of applications is likely to be the introduction of tuition fees to higher education students from outside the EU/ETA area.

Between 1st January and 30th September 2017, Iraqis [submitted](#) a total of 1,359 first applications for a residence permit on the basis of family ties, making it the largest group of applicants currently applying for residence permits on the basis of family ties. In 2016, the corresponding figure was 665.

On 14th December, new legislation on seasonal workers and intra-corporate transfers was [approved](#). This will facilitate seasonal work and the mobility of managers, specialists and trainee employees transferring within a company from one EU Member State to another. The acts entered into force on 1st January 2018.

On 20th November, the Finnish Immigration Service [announced](#) the launch of a campaign to encourage women and girls to handle their own permit matters with the authorities. The campaign is a part of the 100 Acts for Gender Equality project included in the official programme of the centenary of Finland's independence in 2017.

★ **France:** On 18th December, the association 'Alliance française' [launched](#) a MOOC project (Massive Online Open Courses) dedicated to online French language learning. This project was selected by the Directorate for the Reception and Support for Foreigners and Nationality (DAAEN) within the Ministry of the Interior.

★ **Ireland:** From 11th December, the registration certificate known as the 'GNIB card' has been replaced by a new registration certificate called the [Irish Residence Permit](#) (IRP). The new Irish Residence Permit is based on EU standards. An Irish Residence Permit (IRP) indicates immigration permission to stay in Ireland has been registered and identifies the type of immigration permission. The IRP is not an identity card and is not valid for any reason except to certify that a holder is registered with immigration in Ireland.

On 14th November, the launch of a new [Family Reunification Humanitarian Admission Programme \(FRHAP\)](#) was announced to support refugees from UNHCR-recognised conflict zones to come to Ireland. The programme will welcome up to 530 family members of asylum seekers who are granted refugee status in Ireland, into the State over the next two years. The new scheme will operate under Ministerial discretionary powers and will be in addition to the family reunification provisions provided for in the International Protection Act 2015. Sponsors will be asked to prioritise a small number of family members for admission to Ireland.

★ **Italy:** In line with the [National Integration Plan for Beneficiaries of International Protection](#) (presented on 26th September 2017), a total of 3.000 young beneficiaries of international and humanitarian protection will have the opportunity to participate in civil service projects in 2018, together with other young volunteers, so as to promote values of inclusion.

In mid-December 2017, the Minister of the Interior signed a Memorandum with the Mayor of Naples, the President of the Region of Campania and the local branch of the Association of Italian Cities (ANCI), to foster the integration of asylum seekers and beneficiaries of protection at the local level, by hiring them in the Pompeii Excavations and surrounding museums. The objective is to use migrants' various skills and professions to help keep the sites in order while giving migrants the opportunity to familiarize with Italy's historical patrimony and culture. The programme is worth 30 million euro to hire about 9,000 migrants thanks to the provision of bonuses and fiscal facilitations for participating cities.

Judgment of the European Court of Justice – Case [C-165/16](#) Toufik Lounes V Secretary of State for the Home Department

In its judgment of 14th November, the Court of Justice confirmed that the free movement [directive](#) does not confer any autonomous right on family members of an EU citizen who are non-EU nationals, but only rights derived from the rights which the EU citizen concerned enjoys as a result of having exercised his freedom of movement. However, the Court found that a non-EU national may be eligible for a derived right of residence based on Article 21(1) [TFEU](#) where the grant of such a right is necessary to ensure the effective exercise, by the EU citizen concerned, of his freedom of movement and of the rights which Article 21(1) TFEU affords him. Hence, citizens must be able to continue to enjoy that right in the host Member State, after they have acquired the nationality of that Member State in addition to their nationality of origin, and must be able to build a family life with their third-country national spouse.

With its [judgment](#) rendered on 24th November (No. 28153), the Supreme Court of Cassation confirmed that the burden of proof to obtain the status of stateless person lies with the applicant. The latter is to prove he/she is not a citizen of any state but also that he/she is not entitled to citizenship in the state with which he/she has major ties (residence, work, etc.). Therefore, failure to demonstrate birth or residence in a state's register does not suffice to be granted the status of stateless person. It must also be demonstrated that the applicant would not be able to obtain citizenship in the country he/she has significant ties with.

In November, the Ministry of the Interior and the International Organisation for Migration launched the [Mentorship project](#), which aims to provide Italian students with specific competences to accompany students who are beneficiaries of international protection. It also aims to facilitate social and cultural integration through the allocation of scholarships by the Ministry of the Interior.

- ★ **Latvia:** On 22nd November, amendments to the Immigration Law were adopted, which enable third-country investors to make the 5,000 euro payment for renewed residence permits in instalments. The applicants would have to pay the first instalment, worth 1,000 euro, upon filing their request for a new residence permit, and to pay 1,000 euro annually as they register their residence permit.
- ★ **Lithuania:** In October, the online platform www.WorkInLithuania.lt (WIL) was launched. This platform will provide useful information and job listings for highly qualified foreign residents who are exploring the possibility of working in Lithuania.
- ★ **Luxembourg:** On 7th December, the Minister for Family, Integration and the Greater Region presented the first participation certificates of the first phase of the new ['guided integration trail'](#). This first phase was launched in September 2017 and 129 applicants for international protection participated in language courses and courses presenting life in Luxembourg. The same day, the minister also presented certificates to approximately 50 people having achieved the [Welcome and Integration Contract](#), a programme that aims to encourage non-Luxembourgish residents' integration into Luxembourgish society.

On 6th December, the Council of Government approved a [project of a new public European school offer](#) in three of Luxembourg's secondary school. This project will "fundamentally broaden Luxembourg's public school system" in order to improve the response to the country's multilingualism and the heterogeneity of its pupils.

The [Grand Ducal Regulation of 5th December](#) 2017 defines the economic sectors eligible to investment in the context of the new investor visa. These are sectors that are [actively promoted by the government](#), consistent with the push towards further diversification of Luxembourg's economy, as well as major projects in the trade and hotel sector that will create or preserve a substantial amount of jobs.

- ★ **The Netherlands:** Since 1st December, the [policy](#) concerning the stay of minors with their grandparents changed. From now on, the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) recognises family life if the facts and circumstances suggest that genuinely close personal ties exist. Before, family ties between minors and their grandparents could only be established if these went beyond emotional ties.

On the same day, new [rules](#) concerning the 'lack of documentary evidence' for family reunification with a beneficiary of international protection came into force. The IND will now include indicative documents (non-official documents) earlier on in its assessment of an application for family reunification. The IND will also propose to conduct a DNA analysis in an earlier stage. Moreover, cohabitation is no longer an absolute requirement in cases of family reunification with a beneficiary of international protection. Hence, an application cannot be rejected merely on the basis of the fact that the spouses and partners concerned did not cohabit in the country of origin.

Since October 2017, the "participation declaration" has become a compulsory part of the integration program. This aims to introduce newcomers to the Dutch core values from an early stage after their settlement in the Netherlands and stimulate rapid integration. The participation declaration process is mandatory for both asylum permit holders and migrants admitted to the Netherlands for family formation and family reunification. In case newcomers are unwilling to sign the participation declaration, a penalty of maximum 340 euros can be imposed.

Next to the participation declaration, the [social counselling](#) that municipalities provide for asylum permit holders and their families has been incorporated in the Civic Integration Act. Social counseling includes guidance on practical matters and on the integration and active participation in Dutch society. Municipalities are mostly free to determine how to execute this guidance and to align it with local needs.

- ★ **Slovenia:** In 2017, the Ministry of Labour set up a list of occupations that are chronically deficit on the Slovenian labour market. Prior labour market tests are not necessary for these professions, facilitating the access to the Slovenian labour market for foreigners undertaking these professions.
- ★ **Sweden:** On 1st December, a minor [amendment](#) to the existing rules for labour immigration from third countries entered into force, following a government-commissioned enquiry report on improving the situation of labour migrants. The amendment aims at tackling the problem that labour immigrants may lose their right to stay and work in Sweden if their employers commit minor mistakes regarding, for example, the provision of insurances for their employees, the payment of salaries, or the correct registration of employees' absence from work. According to the new amendment to the Aliens Act, a residence permit does not have to be withdrawn by the authorities if an employer corrects any such mistake on his/her own initiative, i.e. without previous notification or interference by migration authorities.

As of 1st January 2018, beneficiaries of international protection and other newly arrived immigrants in Sweden can be required to take part in an educational program or vocational training. According to the Swedish government, the Swedish labour market is strong, and there is a substantial demand for workers, while at the same time, newly arrived migrants often find it difficult to find a job if they do not possess sufficient skills or qualifications. The new concept of "[compulsory education](#)" (*utbildningsplikt*) means that all newly arrived migrants that participate in integration-related programmes as offered by the Swedish employment service can be asked to apply for, and participate in, an education or training. If a migrant does not comply, they may receive a warning and/or lose their integration-related benefits. The Swedish government also plans to make additional funding available for education- and labour-market related purposes.

5. MANAGEMENT OF THE EU EXTERNAL BORDERS

EU DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

- ★ On 24th November, the European Commission [awarded](#) 39.92 million euro in emergency assistance to support Italy in better managing the migratory flows from the Central Mediterranean Route. This support comes as a follow-up to the Commission's Action Plan of July 2017 and will contribute to improving services provided to migrants and asylum seekers including medical assistance, interpretation and inter-cultural mediation in the hotspots and other arrival areas. Furthermore, funds will be directed towards specialised equipment for security checks and equipment to address smuggling and trafficking in human beings.
- ★ On 20th November, the Council [adopted](#) the regulation for an entry-exit system, as well as the regulation amending the Schengen border code in relation to the entry-exit system. The purpose of this system is to register information related to the entry, exit and refusal of entry of third-country nationals crossing the external borders of the Schengen area. This should reduce border check delays, ensure reliable identification of overstayers, in addition to strengthening internal security and the fight against terrorism.
- ★ On 8th November, the Council [endorsed](#) a mandate for negotiations on three regulations on the use of the Schengen Information System (SIS): firstly, in the field of policy and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, secondly, in the field of border checks, and thirdly, for the return of illegally staying third-country nationals. These address potential gaps and introduce several changes to the current SIS. On the basis of this mandate, negotiations with the European Parliament will commence shortly.

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- ★ **Austria:** On the sidelines of a meeting of the EU's Ministers of the Interior in Luxembourg on 13th October, Austria's former Minister of the Interior, Wolfgang Sobotka [declared](#) that border controls need to be extended for another six months due to the dense security situation.

In 2017, Austria [supported](#) the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, FRONTEX, by contributing 32 new staff of the executive branch to the FRONTEX pool, four new buses with infrared cameras for border surveillance and eleven joint operations. By now, 225 Austrian staff are working for FRONTEX.

- ★ **Estonia:** In November, the Narva-2/Ivangorod (Parussinka) pedestrian border crossing on the Estonia-Russia border was reopened after major renovations. The crossing had been closed since 2015.
- ★ **Ireland:** On 30th November, automatic border control '[e-gates](#)' were introduced at Dublin airport. The e-Gates are open to Irish and EU e-passport holders over the age of 18. It is planned that their use will be extended to other categories of passengers as the programme develops.
- ★ **Sweden:** On 10th November, the **Swedish** government decided to prolong the temporary controls on travellers at some of Sweden's intra-Schengen borders. These border controls were originally introduced in reaction to the extraordinary refugee situation in autumn 2015. The recent [decision](#) to prolong the border controls is based on the assessment that there are deficits regarding the control of the EU common external borders, which may make it possible for potential terrorists to enter the Schengen area undetected. As previously, the border controls will be carried out on the Öresund bridge, which links Denmark and Sweden, as well as in some ports in the South and West of Sweden, until 11th May 2018.

6. IRREGULAR MIGRATION AND RETURN

EU DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

- ★ According to the European Commission's [Progress Report](#) of 15th November, 1.969 returns have taken place so far under the EU-Turkey Statement and under the Greece-Turkey bilateral protocol. The average [return rate](#) of EU Member States in 2016 was 45.80%.

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- ★ **Austria:** In November, Austria, Germany and Italy [agreed](#) upon trilateral inspections of freight trains on the Italian side of the Brenner. The aim of the common approach is to catch migrants already on Italian ground in order to prevent illegal entry to Austria and Germany.
- ★ **Belgium:** In December 2017, the Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons was asked by the Belgian government to carry out an [independent enquiry](#) on the fate of the Sudanese nationals who were recently returned to their country of origin. At the end of 2017, following an identification mission by a Sudanese delegation in Belgium, several irregularly staying Sudanese nationals were returned to their country of origin. Claims were made that several returnees allegedly suffered maltreatment upon their return. This situation led to criticism from certain politicians and NGOs and extensive debate at the national level.

Judgment of the European Court of Justice – Case [C-636/16](#) López Pastuzano

In its judgment of 7th December, the Court of Justice ruled that a decision to expel a third-country national who is a long-term residence may not be adopted for the sole reason that he or she has been sentenced to a term of imprisonment of more than one year. According to the [directive](#) concerning the status of third-country nationals who are long-term residence, Member States may take a decision to expel long-term residents solely when they constitute an actual and sufficiently serious threat to public policy or public security. Before taking such a decision, Member States have to regard a number of factors, such as the consequences for the person concerned and family member members, as well the link with the country of residence.

The law of 19th September 2017 - which was [published](#) in the Belgian Official Gazette on 4th October 2017 and modifies the Civil Code, the Immigration Act, the Judicial Code and the Consular Code - introduces preventive and repressive measures to fight against false declarations of parenthood. Among others, registrars will be able to postpone or refuse a declaration of parenthood. The law also introduces - as is already the case for marriages and partnerships of convenience - sanctions for a false declaration of parenthood, as well as the possibility to annul a declaration of parenthood. The date of entry into force of the law still has to be determined (no later than April 2018).

- ★ **Finland:** The Finnish Border Guard has [completed](#) a pre-trial investigation of offences concerning people unlawfully smuggled to Finland on-board a recreational boat. The pre-trial investigation established that a group of criminals led from Russia arranged the transportation of at least 70 people to Finland, during seven different journeys on 10th July 2016 – 6th June 2017, some of whom further travelled to other destinations in Europe. The Finnish Border Guard suspects that said group of criminals unlawfully brought to Europe citizens of Yemen, Turkey, Afghanistan, Syria and Egypt, and some individuals without a nationality.

- ★ **France:** On 15th December, the French Minister of the Interior [signed](#) with his Albanian counterpart an agreement on the fight against irregular migration. Most significantly, the agreement provides for the deployment of Albanian police officers in France to strengthen the police force in areas where the majority of Albanian asylum seekers are concentrated.
- ★ **Germany:** Between 1st December 2017 and 28rd February 2018, voluntary returnees can apply for additional reintegration assistance for housing under the Federal programme “[StarthilfePlus](#)”. This temporary addition to the programme is called „Dein Land. Deine Zukunft. Jetzt!“ (“Your country. Your future. Now!”) and is available to applicants from those countries of origin covered by the [GARP](#) programme.

Families who apply for this temporary assistance can receive up to 3.000 euro of housing assistance for up to twelve months after returning to their country of origin. Individuals can receive up to 1.000 euro. All aid is provided in-kind, meaning that Germany will cover actual costs incurred, such as the cost of renting a home after returning. “StarthilfePlus” exists since February, 2017 and is financed by the German Government and implemented by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). Its goal is to offer financial incentives for asylum applicants with no or very low prospect of staying in Germany under the Asylum Law to return to their countries of origin voluntarily. Since December 2017 a new stage (S) for people who have been granted protection status according to German law has been added to the programme.

As a result of the completion of the pilot project “Early information and counselling on return at the arrival centres and branch offices” in June 2017, uniform, neutral, open and unbiased information on return to the country of origin will now be provided to adults when they personally submit their asylum applications at all locations of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees nationwide. The aim is to provide asylum applicants with a basic understanding of the possibilities relating to voluntary return at an early stage of the asylum process. The early information on return issues enables asylum applicants to reach fully informed decisions on these matters.

- ★ **Lithuania:** The Lithuanian State Border Guard Service (SBGS) monitored an increased number of citizens of Tajikistan under the Dublin III Regulation. By the end of 2017 more than 110 Tajikistan citizens were transferred to Lithuania: 102 from Germany, 8 from Austria, 2 from Sweden, 1 from the Netherlands, 1 from Poland. After assessing this increased number, the SBGS started consultation on issuing Schengen visas to citizens of the Republic of Tajikistan.
- ★ **Luxembourg:** On 21st November, the [first assessment of the Detention Centre](#) was presented to the Commission of Foreign and European Affairs, of Defense, Cooperation and Immigration of Parliament. The report gives an overview of the Centre and its daily life, the care given to the detainees, as well as of the personnel and workings of the Centre. The report is the result of a [motion](#) voted in the context of the extension of permitted period of detention for families with children from the 72 hours to 7 days that took place in February 2017.

On 16th October, a [bill](#) approving the “partnership agreement on the relations and the cooperation between the EU and its Member States, of the one part, and New Zealand, of the other part”, was introduced into Parliament. In the agreement, its parties reaffirm their engagement to cooperate and exchange views in the various domains of migration (including irregular migration, trafficking of human beings, asylum, integration, mobility and development of the workforce, visas, security of documents, biometrics and border management). The parties to the agreement commit to cooperate with the aim of preventing and controlling irregular migration and to study the possibility of concluding a readmission agreement between New Zealand and the European Union.

On 3rd October, a [bill](#) approving the “Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, of the other part”, was introduced into Parliament. The agreement foresees cooperation in the domain of migration, based on the [‘Joint Way Forward on migration issues between Afghanistan and the EU’](#) adopted in early October 2016.

- ★ **The Netherlands:** on 21st November 2017, the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) [announced](#) that it would sharpen its surveillance and enforcement tasks concerning employers who are recognised sponsors. It is one of the tasks of the IND to oversee and monitor these recognised sponsors, including most importantly au-pair bureaus and educational organisations that act as sponsors for third-country nationals. This came as a reaction to a critical report by the Inspectorate of Justice and Security.

7. ACTIONS ADDRESSING TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

EU DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

- ★ On 4th December, the European Commission [published](#) a list of concrete action to support the fight against trafficking in human beings. Against the background of recent migratory, economic and security challenges, as well as the 2012-2016 [EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings](#), the Commission has identified key areas requiring immediate action from the EU and its Member States to disrupt trafficking networks, strengthen victims' rights and foster internal and external efforts.

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- ★ **Austria:** On the occasion of the EU Anti-Trafficking-Day on 20th October, the Austrian Task Force on Combating Human Trafficking held a [conference](#) on the topic of "Human Trafficking in Conflict and Crises Situations" in cooperation with the OSCE Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, the Vienna Institute for International Dialogue and Cooperation (VIDC) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).
- ★ **Belgium:** On 16th November, the Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings ([GRETA](#)) published [the second evaluation report on Belgium](#). The report stresses the progress made in further developing the legal and institutional framework for combating human trafficking, adopting a new national anti-trafficking action plan and providing training to a range of professionals, including those working with unaccompanied foreign children. The report also commends the criminal justice response to human trafficking in Belgium, which has resulted in a considerable number of convictions accompanied by confiscations of perpetrators' assets. At the same time, Belgian authorities are urged to enhance their efforts to proactively identify child victims of trafficking and to address the problem of unaccompanied children disappearing by providing suitable safe accommodation and appointing legal guardians and adequately trained supervisors or foster parents.
- ★ **Italy:** In late December, Italy's President of the Council Paolo Gentiloni announced the Council of Ministers' approval for the deployment of Italian troops in Niger. The objective is to train Niger's forces in order to allow them to better combat human trafficking and terrorism. Such deployment shall be proposed to the Parliament before the operation can start.

In November, Italy and Albania signed a [bilateral agreement](#) to reinforce collaboration between the two countries on the fight against terrorism and human trafficking. The two countries are to organise operational cooperation based on the exchange of information, experiences and training.

On 9th December, the Italian Minister of the Interior met the Libyan Chairman of the Presidential Council in Tripoli and signed an agreement to create a joint committee to combat trafficking of human beings. Libyan officials will work with their Italian counterparts in order to coordinate intelligence activities and operations to combat human trafficking.

- ★ **The Netherlands:** As of 2018, two million euro will be made available to invest in the combat against human trafficking. This will include special training for the police to quickly recognise the signals of human trafficking. In addition, more policemen will be trained to become certified 'human trafficking detectives'.
- ★ **Portugal:** Between October and December, SEF's dedicated trafficking unit participated in the 1st meeting for the preparation of the National Plan against trafficking in human beings (THB). An online training plan was drawn up to provide border inspectors with a list of procedural questions to follow after detecting evidence of the practice of the crime of THB when carrying out border controls. In the same period, 43 border inspectors were trained on THB indicators.

Additionally, the Observatory on Trafficking Human Beings (OTSH) participated in several events and presentations on issues such as Prostitution and Trafficking in Human Beings, Child Trafficking detected in Transit, and Assisting Victims of Human Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation.

Since November, the OTSH has integrated the Operational Group of the "Safety Security Contract – Serpa". In cooperation with the THB Specialised Team from Alentejo, a draft for 2018 training has been developed, aimed at professionals on THB.

8. EXTERNAL DIMENSION

EU DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

- ★ On 6th December, as part of the EU's efforts to address migration challenges in the Mediterranean, three new programmes worth 29.6 million euro were [adopted](#) in the framework of the EU Trust Fund for Africa. These aim at further strengthening the protection of migration, supporting sustainable reintegration and providing assisted voluntary return, as well as contributing to fight criminal networks across the region.
- ★ On 1st December, the Council and European Parliament [agreed](#) to an increase of the European Investment Bank's lending to projects outside the EU that address migration issues. An additional 3.7 billion euro will be earmarked for projects addressing the long-term economic needs of refugees, migrants and host and transit communities, as well as providing a strategic response to the root causes of migration. In total, the financing limit under the EU guarantee will be increased by 5.3 billion euro.
- ★ In the framework of the [EU-Africa Summit](#) on 29th-30th November, African and European leaders [issued](#) a Joint statement on the migrant situation in Libya. They strongly condemned the inhumane treatment of African migrants and refugees by criminal groups in Libya, and expressed their intention to work together for an immediate end to these criminal practices and ensure the wellbeing of refugees and migrants. Moreover, efforts will be increased to widely inform the youth about the dangers of such hazardous journeys and against the trafficking networks.
- ★ On 17th October, the EU [announced](#) that one million refugees in Turkey have now been reached by the EU's Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) programme. This programme is implemented by the World Food Programme and the Turkish Red Crescent in collaboration with the Turkish government, and funded by the EU through the [EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey](#). A total of 348 million euros has been made available in the form of monthly transfers to the most vulnerable refugees.
- ★ On 8th October, the European Commission [announced](#) an additional 4 million euro in humanitarian aid for Serbia, with the aim of assisting the high number of refugees and asylum seekers in the country. The new projects will finance food distribution in reception centres and education-related activities, as well as providing protection to the most vulnerable populations, particularly during the winter period. The Commission's humanitarian aid to Serbia now amounts to 25 million euro since 2015.

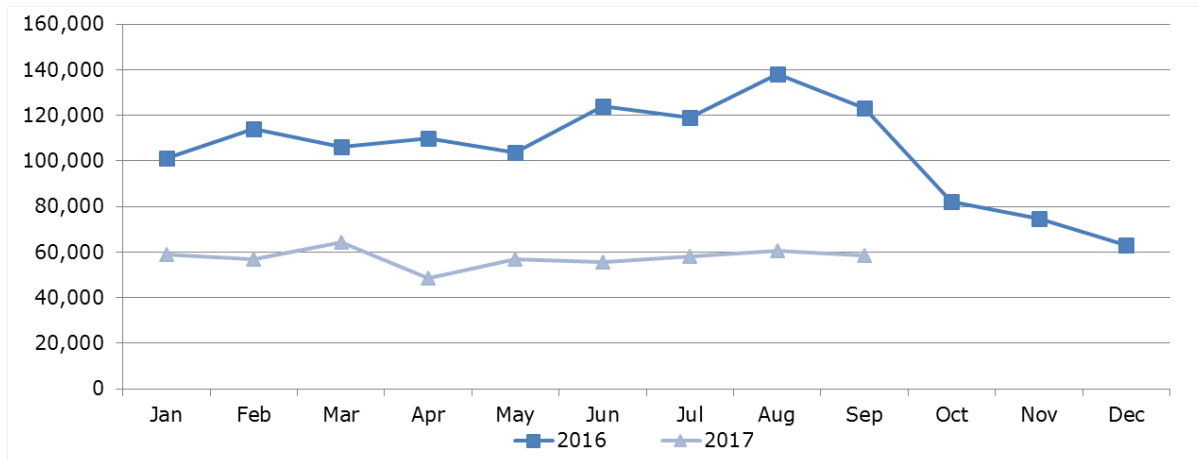
NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- ★ No recent developments.

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

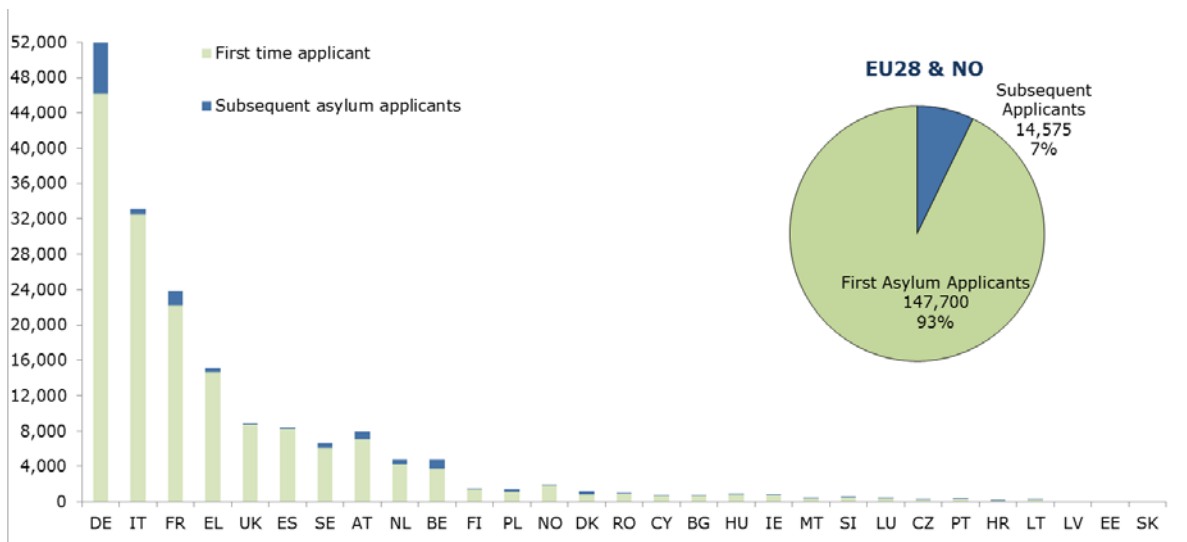
EU Figures

Figure 1a: Asylum applications in the EU-28, January 2016 – September 2017.



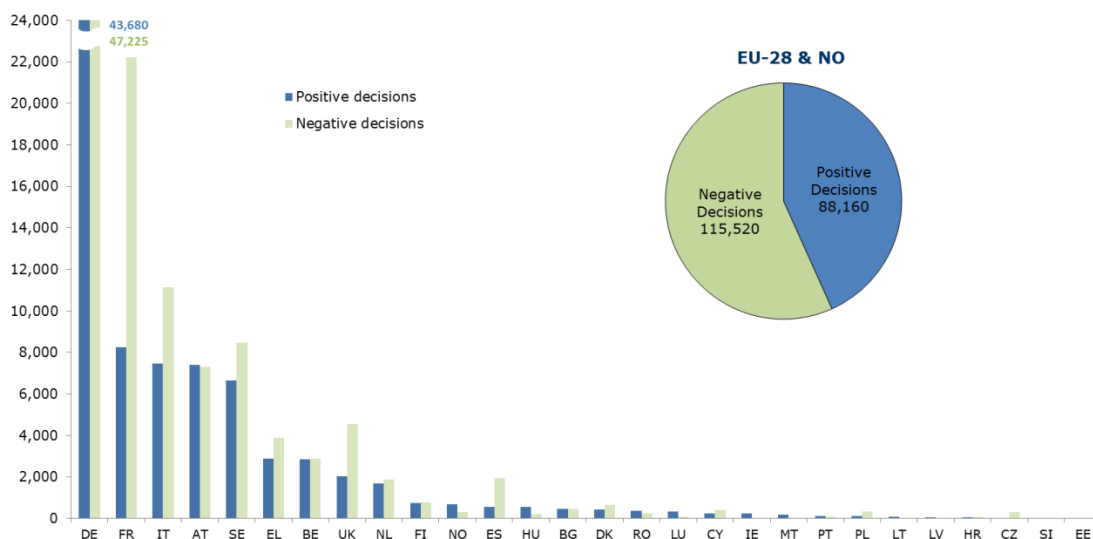
Source: Eurostat [[migr_asyappctzm](#)], total asylum applicants, accessed on 16th January 2018.

Figure 1b: First time asylum applicants and subsequent applicants (together, total asylum applicants) in the EU-28 and Norway, Q3 2017 (quarterly data)



Source: Eurostat [[migr_asyappctzm](#)], accessed on 16th January 2018.

Figure 2: First instance asylum decisions in EU-28 and Norway for non-EU citizens, third quarter 2017



Source: Eurostat [[migr_asydcfstq](#)], accessed on 8th January 2018.

Figure 3a: Illegal border crossing– Top nationalities (in %)

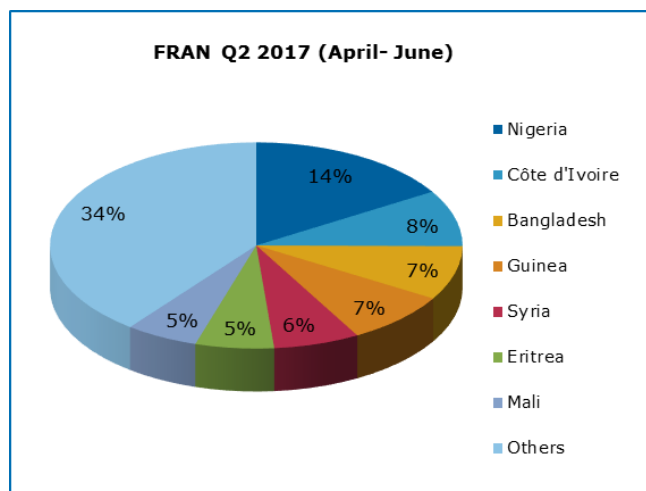


Figure 3b: Refused entry–Top nationalities (in %)

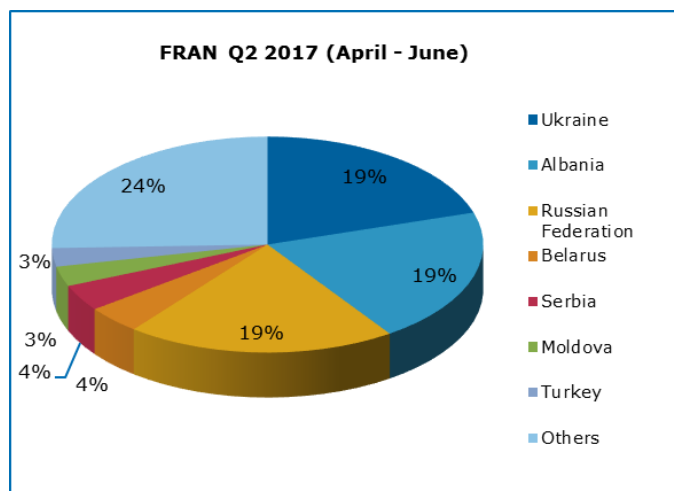


Figure 3c: Illegal stay – Top nationalities (in %)

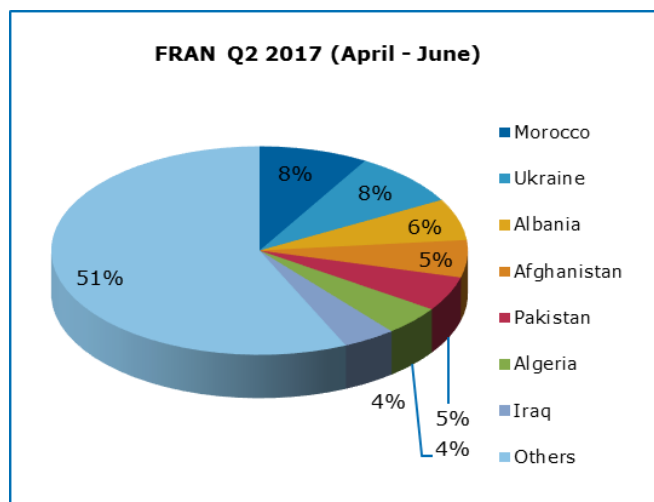
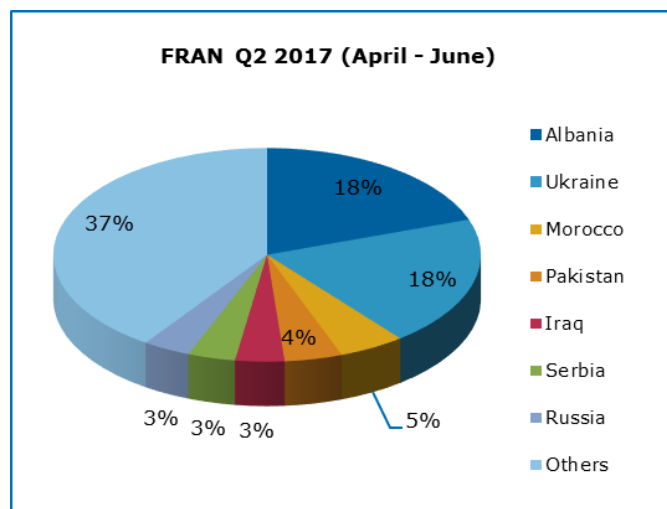


Figure 3d: Effective return–Top nationalities (in %)



Source: [FRONTEx FRAN Quarterly Report Q2 2017 \(April - June 2017\)](#)

Latest available national statistics

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMON EUROPEAN ASYLUM SYSTEM

- ★ **United Kingdom:** The Home Office "[Immigration Statistics July to September 2017](#)" was published on 30th November. It provides the latest UK figures on those subject to immigration control, for the period up to year ending September 2017. Topics included: admissions, visas, asylum, settlement, citizenship, detention, removals and voluntary departures.

On the same day, the Office for National Statistics' "[Migration Statistics Quarterly](#)" (produced with Home Office, Department for Work and Pensions and National Records of Scotland) was published. This provides quarterly data on UK migration flows, visas, asylum and settlement.

Updates on EU legislation transposition

LEGAL MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION

- ★ **Croatia:** In October 2017, Croatia amended the "[Ordinance on the Status and Work of Third-country nationals in the Republic of Croatia](#)". This Ordinance defines the method of determining the conditions for residence and work of third-country nationals, inter alia, for the category of ICT professionals and seasonal workers.
- ★ **Slovenia:** In October 2017, Slovenia amended its Employment, Self-Employment and Work of Aliens Act (ZZSDT), thereby transposing the Seasonal Workers' Directive [2014/36/EU](#) and the Intra-Corporate Transfers Directive [2014/66/EU](#). The Act regulates and protects the Slovenian labour market and determines the conditions for the employment, self-employment and work of third-country nationals. Adopted amendments provide some novelties for seasonal workers and intra corporate transferees (ICT) as following; i) the issue of a single permit for seasonal work which is longer than 90 days is regulated; ii) capital-tied companies are allowed to make the best use of their human resources and make it easier to move them within a group of affiliated companies. Other changes are partially editorial in nature or they eliminate certain deficiencies identified during the implementation of ZZSDT. It also introduces certain exceptions in the legislative framework, which will facilitate the employment or work of certain categories of foreigners (for example, for employing athletes, workers posted for training).

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

- ★ The EMN published the Synthesis Report of the 2017 EMN Study on "[Challenges and Practices establishing the identity of third-country nationals in migration procedures](#)". This presents an overview of the challenges faced by national authorities in their efforts to reliably establish and verify the identity of third-country nationals within the context of various migration procedures – namely those related to asylum, return and legal migration channels (including both short-stay and long-stay visas and residence permits) – and of national practices to address those challenges. This study updates and supplements the 2013 EMN Study "Establishing Identity for International Protection: Challenges and Practices".³
- ★ **Belgium:** The Belgian Contact Point of the EMN organised two national events at the end of 2017: a half-day conference on 5th October in order to discuss the irregular employment of third country nationals in Belgium (the presentations are available [here](#)); and a national conference on 5th December, which focused on the main developments in the field of migration and asylum in Belgium in 2017 (the presentations and some pictures are available [here](#)).
- ★ **Ireland:** On 27th November, the Irish EMN NCP held its annual national conference on "[Migrant family reunification: policy and practice](#)". The conference brought together a range of speakers on the issue of family reunification in order to provide international context, to discuss and compare the family reunification policy frameworks in other EU Member States, and to provide insights on the Irish system from national policymakers and IOs/NGOs working in the field.⁴

³ EMN, Study on Establishing Identity for International Protection: Challenges and Practices (2013), at https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/docs/emn-studies/establishing-identity/0_emn_id_study_synthesis_migr280_finalversion_2002013_en.pdf

⁴ See [conference summary](#) for more information.

★ **Portugal:** On 14th December, the Portuguese EMN National Contact Point organised its national EMN Conference “Return – the European challenge” in Lisbon. This conference aimed at debating return, mainly assisted return and reintegration, detention facilities, as well as good practices in removal procedures. The conference was attended by more than 60 participants including experts from the European Commission, IOM, Frontex, Portuguese Inspectorate General of Home Affairs and the Portuguese Immigration and Borders Service.