

38th EMN Quarterly Flash: January-March 2022

May 2022

Welcome to the EMN Quarterly Flash, our selection of the key developments in the areas of migration and asylum from January to March 2022. **The full PDF version of the EMN Quarterly can be found [here](#).** If you know someone who would be interested, please share this [link](#) so they can subscribe to the quarterly flash.

EMN news



As well as finding out about the latest publications and events, you can scroll to key thematic areas using the buttons below.

[General developments](#)

[International protection](#)

[Legal migration and integration](#)

[Return](#)

[Human trafficking](#)

[Border management](#)

Recent EMN publications and events

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- EMN inform on [The state of progress in 2020 of the European Commission communication on the protection of children in migration from 2017](#)
- EMN-OECD inform on [Skills mobility partnerships exploring innovative approaches to labour migration](#)
- EMN inform on [Preventing, detecting, and tackling situations where authorisations to reside in the EU for the purpose of study are misused](#)
- On 10 February 2022, the EMN and OECD jointly organised a roundtable event on [Digitalisation and AI in Migration Management](#) which built on the related [EMN-OECD inform](#)
- 24 May 2022 was published the EMN study on [Detention and alternatives to detention in international protection and return procedures](#)
- On 31 March 2022, the EMN held a launch event for the EMN study [on third-country national victims of human trafficking in human beings: detection, identification, and protection](#)

Stay tuned for upcoming EMN publications and events:

- EMN inform on Bilateral return agreements: inventory, characteristics and effectiveness
- EMN inform on Lawful secondary movements of beneficiaries of international protection
- EMN inform on Mapping of mental health services for refugees and migrants
- 2021 EMN Annual Report on Asylum and Migration. Join the online launch event, scheduled on the **15 June at 10am CET**. Please register [here](#). Major trends and developments in the migration field will be presented and placed into the context of recent developments, notably the conflicts and subsequent high numbers of refugees fleeing Afghanistan and Ukraine.
- EMN Conference: Assisted voluntary return and reintegration: strategy of EU Member States and European coordination, on 21 June 2022. This conference will be dedicated to the issue of assisted voluntary return and reintegration, focusing on EU Member States approaches and European coordination. Please register to attend in person (number of places limited to 300 persons), by sending an email to emn-pfue-dgef@interieur.gouv.fr.

Note on information regarding Ukraine

The outbreak of the war in Ukraine during the reporting period was reflected in policy developments reported by Member States. Developments included the application of temporary protection following the adoption of Council Decision (EU) 2022/382 of 4 March 2022, defining the scope of temporary protection, and applying leniency in immigration procedures to other persons affected by the war. Furthermore, Member States reported on measures taken regarding initial registration and reception, as well as mid-term and long-term plans regarding the provision of education, healthcare and accommodation. Provision of information for beneficiaries of temporary protection and to volunteers, through websites and helplines, was also reported throughout the Member States.

While EU-level developments are presented, contributions regarding Ukraine for each country are not included in this Quarterly to avoid giving only a partial view of ongoing developments. In the meantime, more information regarding Ukraine may found for each EMN member and observer country on our [website](#).

[Back](#)

News from the EU

Strong solidarity measures to those fleeing war in Ukraine. In the face of Russia's unprovoked and unjustified military invasion of Ukraine, the EU announced, early March, a set of measures to help people fleeing war in Ukraine, as well as the EU countries receiving them. The assistance includes direct humanitarian aid, emergency civil protection assistance, support at the border, as well as a clear legal status allowing those fleeing the war to receive immediate protection in the EU. This also marks the first time that the [Temporary Protection Directive](#) was activated, with the aim to bring clarity and security to people in need, including rights to welfare support and access to the job market and education. The 'Solidarity Platform' facilitates Exchange of information between Member States.

In addition, on 28 March 2022, the Council of the European Union released a [10-Point Plan](#) on stronger European coordination aimed at welcoming people arriving from Ukraine.

EASO becomes EUAA as new mandate enters into force. On 19 January 2022, the new European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) started work with its enforced mandate, expanding on its previous work as the European Asylum Support Office (EASO). The reinforced mandate will allow the EUAA to contribute to increasing the efficiency of asylum systems, improving assistance through its reserve of experts, consolidating decision-making, enhancing monitoring and reporting, supporting capacity building in non-EU countries, and has establishing a complaints mechanism to ensure that asylum applicants' rights are protected.

Update on Afghanistan. On 10 January 2022, the EUAA released its Country of Origin Information report on Afghanistan. It provides information regarding the takeover of the Taliban from 15 August 2021 to 8 December 2021 and connects issues of international protection with the policy development and implementation under Taliban rule.

[Back](#)

News from the EU Member States

General developments

On 22 February 2022, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between **Cyprus** and the European Commission for the management of migration flows. The Memorandum was also co-signed by the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), Frontex and Europol.

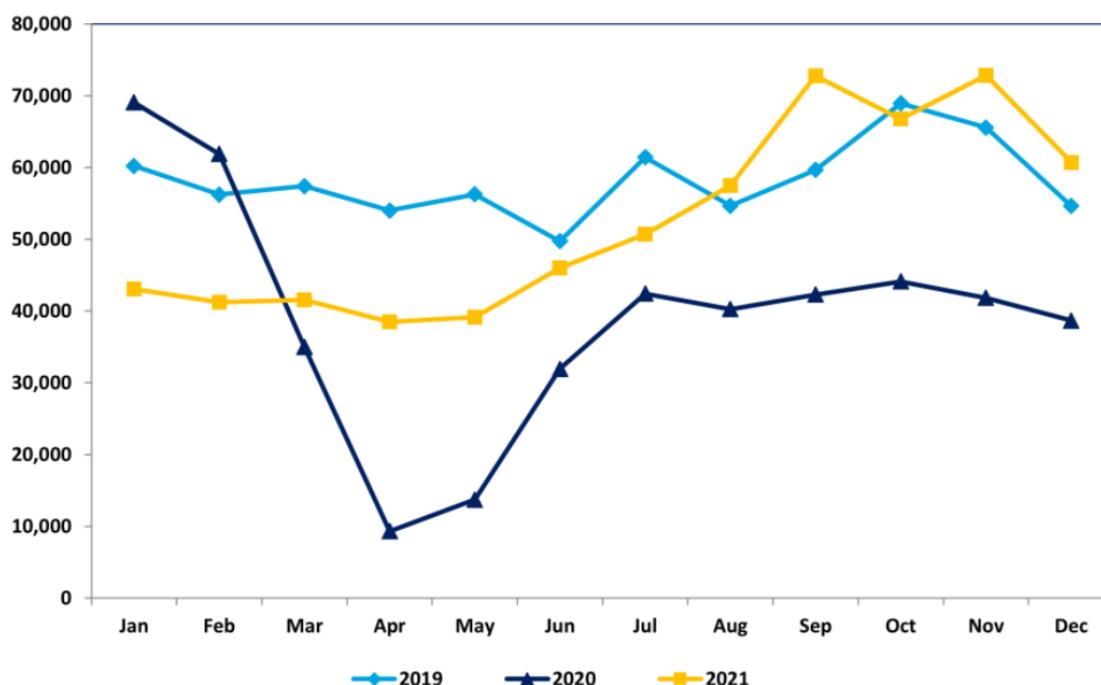
Other developments included a new government in **the Netherlands** (since 10 January), with Mr. Eric van der Burg as the new Minister for Migration. **Finland** was preparing draft legislative amendments to support preparedness for a possible mass influx of migrants, as a follow-up to the government proposal from last year. Meanwhile, in **Latvia** a new law came into force on measures to reduce extreme energy prices, allowing the entitlement of monthly aid from € 20 to € 50 to specific groups of vulnerable persons (disabled, elderly, children) or their providers of support for four months (January to April).

The new Action plan of the Migration Strategy of Georgia includes 105 activities to be implemented.

[Back](#)

International protection including asylum and vulnerable groups

Figure 1: Asylum applications in the EU-27, Q4 2021 (October-December 2021)



Source: Eurostat [[migr_asyappctzm](#)], total asylum applicants, extracted on 9 May 2022.

According to Eurostat, in the fourth quarter of 2021 increased by 66 % compared with the same quarter of 2020 and 13% when compared with the third quarter of 2020. Among accepted asylum applications, the top three nationalities were Syrians, Afghans and Iraqi.

Evacuations from **Afghanistan** continued. **The Netherlands** announced that a new group of approximately 180 evacuated Afghans who arrived there on 25 February would

undergo a shortened asylum procedure, as was the case for 2 000 evacuated Afghans in December 2021. Member States continued increasing support to protect and sensitise vulnerable migrants and support their regularisation in some cases. During the reporting period, a regularisation scheme for long-term undocumented migrants opened in **Ireland**, followed by the opening of an additional strand, for international protection applicants, for people who have been in the international protection process for a minimum of two years. In **Poland**, 3 021 applications for international protection were lodged between January and March 2022.

In **Austria**, the *Regulation on the Implementation of the Asylum Act 2005* was amended, creating regulations for the design of an ID card for displaced persons.

Several countries reported actions to address unaccompanied minors (UAM) and vulnerable groups. **France** and **Croatia**, among others, reinforced their measures for the protection of UAM: the French government enriched the Law on the Child Protection in February whereas in Croatia, an Interdepartmental Commission for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors was decided.

[Back](#)

Legal migration and integration

Member States stepped up their efforts to offer improved access to employment services and national labour markets for legal migrants. Finland, for instance, set up a new high-level working group to drive the achievement of the goal to significantly increase the immigration of skilled labour, and Ireland made changes to working arrangements and immigration permissions for third-country doctors. The Slovak government adopted a regulation that grants a national visa to highly qualified foreign workers with university degree from non-EU countries.

Several countries reported new types of residence permits, or extensions in the duration of the existing permits. In **the Netherlands**, the standard validity period of various permits for employment was extended from one to a maximum of three years, whereas **Slovenia** started issuing new forms of residence permits to third-country nationals and residence registration certificates for EU / EEA citizens, laying down a uniform format for residence permits for third-country nationals. But the situation in Ukraine also triggered measures to suspend the issuance of visas or residence permits for Russian (or Belarusian) citizens in some countries.

Efforts to integrate foreigners living and working in the Member States included skills development and training as well as targeted outreach. In **Austria**, the duration of the compulsory Orientation and values course was extended from one to three days. **France** published the annual instruction for 2022 for prefects setting out the main guidelines for the integration of newly arrived foreign nationals. **Luxembourg** engaged municipalities initiate dynamic projects to support the integration and reception of foreigners. Luxembourg additionally conducted a study on racism and discrimination to identify the dominant public perceptions and societal domains that are directly and indirectly related to racism and discrimination in the country.

A study was completed also in **Finland**, concluding that integration programmes and language training increase employment of immigrants, whereas an active labour market

policy is most effective for people who have greatest difficulty in securing employment. The study found that financial sanctions are likely to work best for the highly educated. Legal amendments in the fields of settlement, residence and integration took place in **Austria, Latvia and the Netherlands**. **Greece** also amended the provisions regarding seasonal work of third-country nationals entering its territory.

[Back](#)

Return

Outreach activities, collaboration with external partners such as Frontex, and incentives for voluntary return were some of the measures reported by Member States.

In **Lithuania**, a € 1 000 payout was re-introduced to irregular migrants agreeing to return to their countries of origin voluntarily until 21 May 2022. Since the beginning of the irregular migration flows organised by the Belarus regime, Lithuania reported 510 returns. **Georgia** participated in three Collecting Return Operations coordinated by Frontex. As a result, 122 Georgian citizens were returned from EU Member States to Georgia within the reporting period.

The Maltese Returns Unit started organising outreach activities on voluntary return in different migrant frequented localities around **Malta**.

The Netherlands extended by six months the decision and departure moratorium for persons from Afghanistan. On 28 February 2022, a six-month moratorium was also implemented for persons from Ukraine, and on 24 March 2022 for certain refugees from Sudan. As a result, temporarily no returns will be carried out for these groups.

[Back](#)

Addressing human trafficking

Member States launched capacity-building events and partnerships to fight against trafficking in human beings. In March, **Slovenia** signed an agreement on cooperation in the fight against trafficking in human beings and child abuse with the Republic of Northern Macedonia, whereas **Croatia** held a regional conference on reporting trafficking in human beings, resolving compensation to victims and identifying other related issues, with the financial support of the Embassy of the United States of America. **Portugal** launched a project to improve prevention, assistance, protection and (re)integration for victims of sexual exploitation.

In March, a bill was adopted in the **Belgian** parliament on the decriminalisation of sex work. While it's estimated that the law may have a positive impact on the detection of victims of human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, it may also limit their access to the protection status of victims of trafficking. **Poland** reported on the implementation of their National Action Plan that was sent to the team counteracting trafficking in human beings in the Ministry of Interior.

According to a review of the assistance system for victims of human trafficking, published in **Finland**, the number of minors referred to the Assistance System has doubled compared to previous years.

[Back](#)

Border management and irregular migration

Hungary reported a significant amount of migrant smuggling with migrants hiding in trucks, typically involving Turkish transport companies. Around 40% of the lorries checked result detection. Following agreement on 6 December 2021 by both parties, Turkey offered to send 50 Turkish guest officers to Hungary to facilitate the border crossing of Turkish citizens and trucks.

In **Italy**, Operation 'Skalinos' was launched on 19 January 2022 to air patrol over the eastern Mediterranean Sea route. In **Latvia** [amendments of the State Border Guard Law](#) came into force on 16 March 2022, defining elements for the establishment of patrol and surveillance zones, border markers at the external border, and more. **Cyprus** made new steps towards becoming a full member of the Schengen area.

Poland signed agreements on 4 January 2022 to construct a dam on the Polish-Belarusian border to block unregulated crossings.

[Back](#)



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