

# EMN BULLETIN

APRIL 2019

The EMN Bulletin provides policymakers and other practitioners with updates on recent migration and international protection policy developments at EU and national level. The 26<sup>th</sup> Edition provides information from January 2019 to March 2019, including the (latest) relevant published statistics.

**The Bulletin is organised by policy theme. You can directly access your area of 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 EU 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.](#)

## SPECIAL NOTE

On 6 March, the European Commission published a [progress report](#) on the Implementation of the European Agenda on Migration. The report summarised the progress made over the past four years during which the EU faced large migration inflows. As a result, the EU adapted its migration management and border protection policies in order to offer support and protection to individuals arriving in Europe while tackling with irregular migration. The progress report also set out the measures still required to address immediate pressing issues and future migration challenges. Lastly, the report highlighted the need for a comprehensive approach on migration that is based on united action and joint efforts between Member States, the EU and non-EU partners.

## 1. GENERAL POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

### EU DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

- ★ On 19 February, the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs adopted [the European Parliament Rapporteur's report](#) on the European Commission Proposal that established the Asylum and Migration Fund (AMF). During the period 2021-2027, the fund will provide support to Member States in efficient management of migration and return policies with a total of € 10 415 000 in financial assistance.

### NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- ★ **Austria:** The Austrian Ministry of the Interior has a new Directorate General for Aliens Affairs. The directorate is responsible for citizenship and residence affairs, borders and aliens police, as well as asylum and return. The competences also include the EMN.
- ★ **Czech Republic:** From 10-15 March, the Czech Republic went through the evaluation of the implementation of the Schengen acquis on the basis of the Schengen Evaluations Regulation (1053/2013).<sup>1</sup> Experts of the European Commission, Member States authorities and the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights visited the Ministry of Interior, selected offices of the Aliens Police Service and detention centres. The overall picture of the return situation was complemented by presentations by the Ombudsman's Office (forced return monitoring), the International Organization for Migration

<sup>1</sup> EU Council Regulation 1053/2013 on the establishment of an evaluation and monitoring mechanism to verify the application of the Schengen acquis in the field of return of third-country nationals

(voluntary returns) and the Refugee Aid Organization (legal counselling). No major shortcomings were outlined during the evaluation, but the draft assessment report will be available in mid-April.

- ★ **Estonia:** On 3 March, parliamentary elections were held in Estonia. The Reform Party won the elections with about 29 % of the votes followed by the Centre Party with 23 % of the votes. Meanwhile, the Conservative People's Party of Estonia (EKRE) came a close third.
- ★ **Latvia:** On 23 January, the Parliament gave a vote of confidence to the new Cabinet of Ministers headed by Prime Minister Krišjānis Kariņš. Latvia has a new Minister for the Interior, Mr Sandis Girģens.
- ★ **Sweden:** Following the general elections in Sweden in September 2018, a new national government took office on 21 January 2019. As during the previous electoral term, Sweden is governed by the Social Democratic Party and the Green Party, but unlike before, the new government also relies on an agreement with the Centre Party and the Liberal Party to cooperate on the state budget and the direction of policy in several areas. Mr Stefan Löfven was elected Prime Minister again, and Mr Morgan Johansson was appointed Minister for Justice and Migration.

According to the [Statement of Government Policy](#) that the Prime Minister made in Parliament in January, several reforms are planned as regards immigration and asylum policy. Among other issues, a temporary law on restrictions to protection and family reunification (adopted in 2016) will likely be prolonged but also amended, and the government intends to introduce a language requirement for foreigners to become Swedish citizens. According to the Prime Minister, the right of asylum must be safeguarded in Sweden, in Europe and internationally, and the government intends to work to establish a common asylum system in the EU that distributes the reception of refugees fairly and proportionately. He also said that those with grounds for protection must rapidly become a part of society, and those without such grounds must return promptly.



## 2. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMON EUROPEAN ASYLUM SYSTEM

### EU DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

- ★ No relevant updates.

#### *Relocation and Resettlement*

- ★ **Spain:** The relocation and resettlement processes continued to be carried out.

### LATEST RELEVANT STATISTICS

- ★ On 14 March, Eurostat [published statistics](#) on asylum seekers in 2018. In particular, in 2018, 580 800 first-time asylum seekers applied for international protection in the EU, which marks a decrease of approximately 11 % compared to the previous year. Almost 30 % of all first-time applicants were citizens of Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq (80 900, 41 000 and 39 600 first-time applicants respectively). Germany accounted for 28 % of all first-time applicants in the EU Member States followed by France (110 500, or 19%) and Greece (65 000, or 11 %).

### NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- ★ **Austria:** On 25 February, the Federal Minister of the Interior [presented](#) a five-point package of measures in the area of asylum, which are implemented as of 1 March 2019. The measures include: 1) accommodation in departure centres during the admission procedure; 2) nocturnal compulsory attendance; 3) a further acceleration of the asylum procedure to 20 days; 4) steps at European level on the withdrawal of asylum status for certain criminal offences; and 5) preventive detention.
- ★ **Belgium:** At the end of 2018, the resigning Minister of Asylum and Migration approved the opening of 1 500 additional reception places due to the increase in the number of asylum applications (+ 19 % in 2018, compared to 2017). In January and February 2019, two temporary reception centres opened in addition to the reception centre that was opened in December.
- ★ **Croatia:** The Ministry of Interior granted financial resources to the Croatian Law Centre for the implementation of the project "Providing legal advice in the process of granting international protection", from AMIF. The purpose of the project is to continuously provide legal advice to applicants for international protection during the first instance decision-making process on applications for international protection.
- ★ **Cyprus:** The continuous flow of migrants in need of international protection in Cyprus during the past year placed a significant burden on both the asylum procedure and the reception capacity. According to EUROSTAT data, there was an increase of 70 % in applications for international protection in 2018 in Cyprus compared to 2017. Cyprus ranked first in the recording of registered first-time applicants in 2017 relative to the population of each Member State. During the first three months of 2019, the new applicants

for international protection registered in Cyprus reached a record number of approximately 1 000 per month.

- ★ **Finland:** On 28 March, the Government submitted the amendments to the Aliens Act for approval. The Aliens Act will be [amended](#) to prevent misuse of subsequent asylum applications, for example by specifying the criteria for the processing of subsequent asylum applications.

At the request of the Finnish Immigration Service, the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) [has reviewed](#) in February asylum decisions in which the immigration service has applied the internal flight alternative. Internal flight refers to an assessment of whether an asylum seeker who has fled the area of origin can find protection elsewhere in the home country.

- ★ **Luxembourg:** On 5 February, [the government introduced bill n° 7403](#) in parliament which will change the competence for the reception of international protection applicants from the Ministry of Family and Integration to the Ministry of Immigration and Asylum. This administrative reorganisation is motivated by the fact that applicants for international protection should have a single point of contact for the entire duration of the application process and for all aspects of reception. Furthermore, the government aims to increase both the quantity and the quality of housing structures for applicants for international protection, to create housing structures adapted to applicants with special reception and protection needs, such as unaccompanied minors and vulnerable applicants, and to take the necessary measures enabling a progressive empowerment of applicants for international protection.

#### Judgment of the European Court of Justice – Case [C-221/17](#)

On 12 March, the Court of Justice ruled in the case C-221/17 that when the genuine link between a citizen of an EU Member State that possess a second nationality of a non-EU country and that Member State is durably interrupted, EU law does not preclude the loss of the nationality of a Member State and, consequently, the loss of citizenship of the EU. In addition, in the case of minor citizens of a second non-EU nationality, they lose the nationality if one of the parents loses that nationality.

- ★ **The Netherlands:** The Netherlands [established](#) the Transitional Arrangement Regulation for Long-term Resident Children. In 2013 a regulation was established for minor foreign nationals who have been staying in the Netherlands for many years without any prospect of a residence permit due to conducting long procedures and the failure to cooperate in the departure process. After public and political debates, the Dutch government made an arrangement which qualifies these young persons to a residence permit under certain conditions. This arrangement was implemented in 2013. The status of children who did not qualify for a residence permit on the basis of this regulation remained a topic of public debate. This debate has resulted in the decision by the government to establish a transitional arrangement, which made the regulation less strict. Applications rejected solely on the basis of failure to cooperate in the departure process will be reevaluated. People who did not previously submit an application under the former regulation also had the chance to do so until 25 February 2019. As part of the deal between the coalition parties to establish the transitional arrangement, the original regulation has been terminated on 29 January 2019.

#### **Relocation and Resettlement**

- ★ **Croatia:** On 12 February, the Government adopted a new decision on the resettlement of third-country nationals or stateless persons who fulfil the conditions for international protection (Official Gazette 16/2019), which obliges to accept up to 150 third-country nationals or stateless persons.  
From 18-22 February, the Ministry of Interior and its partners conducted a selection mission in Turkey with the aim to resettle 100 refugees. An introduction to the cultural orientation for Syrian refugees was also held to inform them about life in Croatia and their rights and obligations. At the end of March, the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), one of the partners, with the support of the Ministry and Jesuit Refugee Service Croatia (JRS), organised a three-day Cultural Orientation Programme providing information on rights, obligations and cultural values, that all accepted refugees need to attend.
- ★ **Ireland:** The Department of Justice and Equality launched a new pilot [Community Sponsorship Ireland initiative](#) for refugee families. The Community Sponsorship Ireland (CSI) is an alternative resettlement stream to the traditional state-centred model of resettlement. Under the CSI programme, private citizens and community-based organisations are invited to welcome and integrate refugee families into their community. Refugees will arrive in Ireland following selection by UNHCR and a vetting process overseen by Irish Refugee Protection Programme.
- ★ **Lithuania:** On 27 March, two migrants - citizens of Guinea-Bissau and Senegal - were relocated to Lithuania from Italy. By the beginning of 2019, Lithuania transferred 486 persons from Italy, Greece and Turkey: mostly Syrian, Iraqi, Eritrean citizens and stateless persons.

- ★ **Luxembourg:** On 7 February, six applicants of international protection of Eritrean, Somalian and Soudanese nationality were relocated to Luxembourg in the context of an [ad-hoc relocation](#). Luxembourg, alongside eight other EU Member States, responded to a solidarity appeal by the Republic of Malta, following the arrival of several vessels at the port of Valetta in December 2018.
- ★ **The Netherlands:** On 29 January, the Government [decided](#) to reduce the number of resettled UN recognised refugees. During the period 2019-2021, 500 instead of 750 refugees will be resettled on an annual basis.



### 3. UNACCOMPANIED MINORS AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

#### EU DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

- ★ No relevant updates

#### NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- ★ **Belgium:** On 27 March, the Interior Committee of the parliament adopted an amendment that will make the issuance of humanitarian visa more transparent due to parliamentary debates on visas' transparency. A report on inter alia humanitarian visa will be presented to the parliament on an annual basis.
- ★ **Czech Republic:** The Department for Asylum and Migration Policy of the Ministry of Interior launched a pilot project regarding the age determination of unaccompanied minors by psychological assessment. In addition to the non-medical method, standard assessment through the medical method will be carried out concurrently during this project. After the completion of the project, an evaluation will take place to determine the preferable method.
- ★ **Greece:** Since 1 January, the transition programme regarding the guardianship of unaccompanied minors has been operational. This will last until the end of August 2019, when the guardianship system is expected to be fully undertaken by state authorities.

#### Judgment of the European Court of Justice – Joined Cases [C-297/17](#), [C-318/17](#), [C-319/17](#), [C-438/17](#)

In its judgement of 16 March, the Court of Justice ruled that an asylum seeker may be transferred to the Member State that is responsible for processing his/her application or that has previously granted him/her subsidiary protection. Exceptions apply if the living conditions in that Member State would expose the asylum seeker to a situation of extreme material poverty that does not allow him/her to meet the most basic needs and that undermines his/her physical or mental health or puts him/her in a state of degradation incompatible with human dignity.

- ★ **France:** On 21 March, the French Constitutional Council [approved](#) bone tests to determine the age of young migrants. The Council affirmed that the procedure complies with the French Constitution, while reminding that these tests could only be done with the approval of the judicial authority and the consent of the person concerned. The decision also stressed that these tests alone could not determine the age of a person – the margin of error inherent to these examinations has to be indicated in the conclusion of the tests.

On 31 January, the government [published](#) the decree n° 2019-57 on the modalities for the assessment of persons declaring to be unaccompanied minors and for the creation of a database gathering their personal data. This tool allows departmental councils entrusted with the age and isolation assessment to check the information given. This scheme was tested in three regions and is now being set up nationwide.

- ★ **Croatia:** On 28 February, the Governmental Inter-Agency Committee for the Protection of Unaccompanied Children was established, consisting of representatives of state bodies, international organisations and non-governmental organisations. The aim of the Committee is to promote and inter-agency cooperation between competent authorities and other stakeholders involved in the protection of unaccompanied children.

On 1 January, the new Foster Care Act (Official Gazette 115/18) entered into force, which provides for the possibility of unaccompanied children staying in a foster family.

- ★ **Italy:** The commitment of Italian government relating to the Humanitarian Corridor linking the African continent to Italy, continues to operate. According to data provided by the Ministry of Interior, 100 unaccompanied minors are arrived in the first trimester of 2019.

Due the decrease of arrivals of unaccompanied minors, on 28 February 2019 the project SAVE (Support Action for Vulnerability Emergence) has been closed.

Moreover, AMIF allocated € 30 million to support municipalities that promote actions in favour of migrants in vulnerable conditions, such as family of third country nationals who do not enjoy reception and third country nationals with mental disorders or alcohol and drugs dependence.



## 4. LEGAL MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION

### EU DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

- ★ On 30 March, the European Commission [published](#) the second report on the implementation of the [Long-Term Residence Directive \(2003/109/EC\)](#). According to the report, the implementation of the Directive in Member States has progressed. However, the EU long-term resident status has not been actively promoted across the EU. Furthermore, despite the fact that Member States have implemented the intra-mobility provisions of the Directive, only a small number of long-term residents have exercised their right to move across the EU.
- ★ On 29 March, the European Commission [published](#) a report on the [Single Permit Directive \(2011/98/EU\)](#). According to the report, all Member States have stepped up their efforts to establish a 'one-stop-shop' mechanism. However, some legal and technical issues still need to be clarified such as visa and labour market test requirements, equal treatment coverage and issues related to the format of the permits.
- ★ On 29 March, the European Commission [published](#) a report on the implementation of the [Family Reunification Directive \(2003/86/EC\)](#). This report revealed that Member States continued their efforts in order to fulfill the requirements of the Directive. Nonetheless, Member States still have to address some challenges concerning the implementation of the Directive, specifically regarding visa facilitation, autonomous permits, more favourable provisions for refugees, the best interest of the child and legal redress.

### NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- ★ **Austria:** On 25 March, the Austrian government [issued](#) the Brexit Accompanying Law 2019, adapting among others the Act Governing the Employment of Foreigners, the Settlement and Residence Act and the Integration Act. The law introduced transitional provisions, such as giving UK nationals the possibility to apply for residence titles from within Austria and simplifying the issuance of residence titles. These changes will only become effective in case of a "no-deal Brexit". Moreover, on 27 March, the Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs [issued](#) a regulation excepting British nationals from obligations stipulated in Art. 9 and 10 Integration Act that are normally tied to the issuing of specific residence titles. These changes will only become effective in case of a "no-deal Brexit".

On 2 January, the Austrian Regulation for Skilled Workers entered into force, stipulating the annual [list](#) of shortage occupations for which foreigners might be accepted as skilled workers according to the Act Governing the Employment of Foreigners. The 2019 shortage occupations include, for example, roofers, carpenters, and motor mechanics.

On 31 January, the Austrian Federal Government set a contingent for resident titles subject to a quota. In 2019, 6 035 residence titles may be issued, with specific quotas allocated to the nine Austrian provinces. Furthermore, 4 000 work permits for temporarily employed foreigners and up to 600 work permits for harvest workers may be issued in 2019.

The Republic of Austria [amended](#) the existing agreements with the Czech Republic, Hungary and the Slovak Republic on the mutual representation in the process of issuing visa. The duty station in Dakar (Senegal) was removed from the respective annexes with effect of 1 January 2019. As of 1 March 2019, Hungary [represents](#) the Republic of Austria at the duty station Tripoli (Libya) to owners of service or diplomatic passports of the internationally recognised Libyan government and only after prior notification by the Austrian embassy in Tunis.

On 2 January, the Austrian Federal Minister of Labour, Social Affairs, Health and Consumer Protection [defined](#) eight professions that allow for the issuing of resident permits for highly qualified workers according to Art. 12 Act Governing the Employment of Foreigners. These professions include *inter alia* medical doctors and graduate engineers for power engineering.

- ★ **Croatia:** On 12 March, the Draft Plan on accommodation of persons granted international protection has been adopted and has been sent to the State administration bodies for comments. The aim of this Plan is to help facilitate the process of accommodation of the persons who have been granted international protection in Croatia into the state-owned or private housing units across the country.
- ★ **Cyprus:** On 14 February, a grant agreement was signed for drafting and monitoring "Cyprus national plan on integration of legally residing third-country nationals for the years 2020-2022". The action plan will update Cyprus' integration policy and will consist of two main parts: the priorities of Cyprus' integration policy along with specific actions that could or should be implemented within the specified time framework. Furthermore, the new action plan will involve more than ten focus groups, with the participation of national and local authorities, international organisations, local NGOs, academia and migrants associations. The project has a total budget of € 150 000 and is co-funded by AMIF and Cyprus.

Six other grant agreements for co-funded under AMIF projects were signed with local authorities and NGOs in February. The projects have a total budget of € 1 400 000 and concern integration actions such Greek lessons for both adults and minors, an awareness-raising campaign, as well as labour market integration for the years 2019-2020.

- ★ **Estonia:** In February, the parliament passed [the law](#) that regulates the conditions for residing in Estonia after Brexit for the citizens of the United Kingdom and their family members. The Act provides a solution in case the United Kingdom leaves the EU on the basis of withdrawal agreement as well as in case of “no-deal Brexit”.

The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications [changed the conditions](#) of applying for the foreign recruitment grant. If previously the grant was aimed at supporting recruitment of foreign information and communication technology (ICT) specialists to help alleviate shortage of ICT specialists, now it is also possible to use the grant for hiring top specialists in the field of science and engineering.

In January, the first [Estonian Language Houses](#) were opened in Tallinn and Narva offering various language learning possibilities and providing information to facilitate settling in Estonia and integration.

The Minister of the Interior and head of the Police and Border Guard Board signed an [agreement](#) for issuing e-residency digital identity cards also in San Francisco and Tokyo in the near future.

- ★ **Finland:** On 29 March, a [special act](#) protecting the right of residence of UK citizens after Brexit was approved.
- ★ **France:** On 1 March, the new language and civic [trainings](#) of the Republican Integration Contract were launched, in line with the measures adopted by the Interministerial Integration Committee (C2I) to strengthen the integration of newly-arrived foreign nationals. The initial 200-hour language training was expanded to 600 hours, and a specific training module for non-writers and non-readers was added. The new training also includes the opportunity for the participants to obtain a certification of an A1 level as well as the possibility to enroll for an extra 50 or 100 hours to reach the A2 or B1 level. The new civic training was extended from 12 to 24 hours and new innovative and educational tools were incorporated.

On 17 January, [an instruction](#) concerning the 2019 agenda for the French reception and integration policy was published that calls for a more coherent integration policy at national and local level, the search for partnerships with territorial collectivities, and some priorities of action notably regarding language training and professional integration.

- ★ **Hungary:** The Hungarian Parliament adopted a change in the legislation concerning the third-country national family members of Hungarian citizens. In line with the transposition of the Directive 2016/801/EU detailed rules were adopted concerning the approval procedure for entities hosting trainees. The scope of electronic administration has been expanded in alien policing procedures that do not require personal appearance. These modifications entered into force on 1 January 2019.

An Act was adopted by the Hungarian Parliament and published on 26 March 2019 on the amendment of laws upon the “no-deal Brexit”. This Act includes a preferential scheme for British nationals and their family members who are resident in Hungary at the time of the Withdrawal. The new scheme will be in force from the exact date of Withdrawal.

- ★ **Italy:** The Ministry of the Interior has assigned financial resources to 12 projects presented by local authorities for the reception of unaccompanied foreign minors within the SIPROIMI<sup>2</sup> network; the funding will allow the creation of 245 new places in addition to the existent ones amounting to about 3 500. The network may include unaccompanied foreign minors who are currently guests of the structures financed by the Ministry of the Interior or insured by the municipalities, in response to the proposed difficulties of local authorities in managing their reception.

New integration measures have been promoted and, in particular, the following calls for proposals have been launched: On the 22 January 2019, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies has issued a call for proposals which will finance (€ 23 million) actions to prevent illegal practices of brokering, recruitment and organization of labour. On the 23 January 2019, a call has been issued under the AMIF that will finance projects of pre-departure vocational training and civic- language education to promote the entry in Italy for reasons of employment, training and family reunification. And on 27 March 2019, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies launched the call "PUOI - protezione unita a obiettivo integrazione", a project based on the activation of individual paths of social and employment integration for vulnerable people regularly

<sup>2</sup> A new name assumed by the SPRAR as a result of the rules introduced by Decree Law no. 113 of 4.10.2018 converted, with amendments, into Law no. 132 of 1.12.2018.

residing in Italy, or, according to current legislation, citizens holding international and humanitarian protection and citizens who have entered Italy as unaccompanied minors.

★ **Germany:** On 20 February, the inaugural meeting of the Expert Commission on the Framework Conditions for Integration was held at the Federal Chancellery in Berlin. The aim of this commission is to describe the conditions required for integration – in terms of the economy, the job market, society and demographics – and to propose standards that would improve those conditions. To do this, the commission will look at structural issues like the provision of vital services, but also at sociocultural issues like the teaching of values. The commission will also look at the ability and willingness of German society as a whole to receive newcomers. The commission is made up of experts from both academic and practical backgrounds. The commission will be independent and will work without a political agenda. It will seek dialogue with the public via consultations and expert discussions and will use the expertise of local government associations, migrant organisations, charitable organisations, foundations, social partners, and federal states. It will be able to make recommendations and a report will be submitted to the German Bundestag.

★ **Greece:** On 15 February a public consultation process for the National Strategy on Integration for migrants and beneficiaries of international protection was launched.

On 17 January, a Forum was organised by the Ministry for Migration Policy to present the new National Strategy on Integration for migrants and beneficiaries of international protection to all relevant stakeholders.

On 26 March, the new law no 4604/2019 amended the Greek Nationality Act towards a common, homogeneous, transparent and faster regulatory framework. Among others, the new regulation introduced special provisions related to the statelessness issue of Roma people with a long historical presence in Greece, reformulated the interview procedure of the foreigner before the Naturalization Committee as well as the procedure that is followed in cases of determination / controversy over Greek citizenship.

A new Department of Coordination and Documentation was established within the Central Directorate of Citizenship of the Hellenic Ministry of Interior, with the aim, inter alia, of streamlining and simplifying the procedures for the granting of Greek citizenship, developing collaborations with national, European and international bodies, and elaborating studies for citizenship.

★ **Ireland:** The Department of Justice and Equality and Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation [announced](#) that the spouses and partners of Critical Skills Employment Permit (CSEP) holders will now be able to access the Irish labour market without the need to obtain an employment permit. The new arrangements will make it easier for non-EEA spouses and partners of CSEP holders to apply for work in Ireland.

★ **Latvia:** On 21 March, the Latvian parliament passed a [Law](#) on Judicial Cooperation and Protection of Persons' Rights during the Transition Period after the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union. The purpose of the Law is to ensure judicial cooperation and protection of persons' rights during the transition period after the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union.

★ **Lithuania:** On 8 March, the Government of Lithuania [approved the proposal](#) of the Ministry of the Interior on amendments to the Law on the Legal Status of Aliens concerning possible withdrawal process of the UK from the EU. Amendments to the Law primarily seek to regulate the legal status of UK citizens and their family members residing in Lithuania (currently counting up to 400) and to ensure favourable conditions for them to remain and work in the country. A transitional period of nine months will be provided for changing the legal status of affected persons, if the UK leaves the EU without an agreement. To those British citizens who already have the right to permanent residence in Lithuania, permanent residence permits will be issued without examining their knowledge of the state language or the fundamentals of the national Constitution. No state fee will be charged for the procedure.

As of 1 March, citizens of the EU and EFTA countries [are issued a certificate](#) of the right to reside in Lithuania which includes electronically captured biometric data to confirm identity - facial image and two fingerprints and replaces paper certificates.

On March 1, [amendments](#) to the Law on the Legal Status of Aliens on national visas and temporary residence permits came into effect which further simplify the employment of foreigners. Foreigners who come to work in Lithuania for non-highly qualified jobs will no longer need to provide documentation confirming their qualifications; foreign workers who have changed their job duties at the same employer or have changed the employer will not have to obtain a new temporary residence permit; the employment contract concluded with an alien who intends to work in Lithuania will no longer be required to be registered with the territorial office of the Employment Service.

★ **Luxembourg:** On 18 January, the government council [decided](#) on the status of British citizens residing in Luxembourg in case of a "no-deal Brexit". On 8 February, the government introduced [bill n° 7406](#) in parliament to regulate the status of British citizens who are public and municipal servants in the framework of the withdrawal of the UK from the EU.

The bill foresees that by derogation of the general status of public servants of the State or of the municipalities, the British citizens who work before the date of the exit of the UK will maintain their qualities, rights and obligations. In case of ratification of the withdrawal agreement, British citizens and their family members who fall in the application scope of the agreement will have the same rights as EU citizens concerning the access to the employment of the Public Service.

On 19 February, the government introduced a [bill n° 7409](#) in parliament whose overall aim is to transpose into national legislation the repercussions that the withdrawal of the UK from the European Union will have on higher education in Luxembourg, based on the hypothesis of the adoption of the withdrawal agreement. The aim is to include the UK in the list of assimilated countries to Member States in order to continue being eligible to benefit of the financial aid for higher education studies. Moreover, certain legislative dispositions relating to the recognition of professional qualifications need to be modified for the following professions: medical specialist/general practitioner, nurse, dentist, specialized dentist, veterinary doctor, midwife, pharmacist and architect. In particular, the aim is to ensure that qualifications for the aforementioned professions, obtained in the UK after its withdrawal from the EU, will still be eligible for automatic recognition by the Ministry of Higher Education and Research.

On 22 February, the government introduced [bill n° 7412](#) in parliament modifying the Immigration Law of 29 August 2008 in the context of the withdrawal of the UK from the EU. The aim of the bill is to incorporate the withdrawal agreement into national legislation with regard to the right of residence of British citizens and the rights of frontier workers. The bill reiterates the applicability of the withdrawal agreement to British citizens, their family members who are either British citizens or third-country nationals while, at the same time, stressing the clear distinction to be made between citizens which fall under the scope of this agreement - who have the same rights as EU citizens and their family members and keep these rights even after the transition period foreseen in withdrawal agreement - and those who will be considered as third-country nationals. It should be noted that the provisions of this bill will be retroactively applicable only as a consequence of entry into force of the withdrawal agreement. The bill was adopted in parliament on 28 March.

On 5 March 2019, the government introduced bill n° 7421 determining the transitory access modalities of British nationals to the social inclusion revenue (REVIS) and the income for severely disabled, which will apply in case of a withdrawal without an agreement of the UK from the European Union, was introduced in parliament. The bill foresees that all the British nationals who benefit from the REVIS or an income for serious handicapped individuals before the exit date will keep their rights. The bill was adopted in parliament on 26 March.

At the municipal level, several municipalities of the country launched a diagnostic on local integration in order to establish a local integration plan. One [example](#) is the case of the Municipality of Hesperange.

The Luxembourg Reception and Integration Agency supported the implementation of the new website [integratioun.lu](#), developed by ASTI asbl, which is a database on integration and living together and provides a source of ideas and of inspiration for the municipalities, the consultative commissions and local actors in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. This site is structured by topics, the headings show also the resources (contacts, specialized services, associations, interesting website, didactical material, official documents, etc.), good practices and model projects.

- ★ **Malta:** At the end of March, the Integration Unit organised the first 'Migrant Integration Information Session' on "Long-Term Resident Status in Malta," a topical issue of interest to migrants who have been living in Malta for a number of years and are planning to stay. Moreover, the Integration Unit started monitoring the implementation of the Intra-Ministerial Action Plans by Ministries.

In February, the "Turning the Tables" project, an offshoot of the Forum that is organised in collaboration with UNHCR Malta, commenced. The project aims to empower migrant and refugee communities to strengthen their own capacity to enter into policy and legislative processes through four migrant-led dialogues on integration-related topics of importance to migrant and refugee communities.

The 'I Belong' [programme](#) was officially launched on 27 February 2019 through which applicants with migrant background can submit a formal request for integration in Malta.

In January, the first intake of applicants with migrant background started participating in Maltese Language for Integration and Cultural Orientation courses, delivered by the University of Malta. Earlier during the same month, the course educators employed by the University of Malta underwent training on migration issues in Malta, on topics that would be covered during the courses, as well as on teaching methods for groups of an intercultural composition.

- ★ **The Netherlands:** On 7 January, the Minister of Foreign Affairs [announced](#) that in case of a "no-deal Brexit", 45 000 UK citizens and their family members will be allowed to stay in the Netherlands, despite the fact that they will no longer be able to enjoy their right of free movement of persons within the EU on the basis of their EU citizenship.



A transition period of 15 months was agreed, in which UK citizens who were legally residing in the Netherlands before the Brexit will keep their rights to reside, work and study in the Netherlands. British citizens and their family members will be invited by the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) to request a definitive residence permit. With this residence permit, British citizens will keep their right to work. In addition, the government of the Netherlands intends to offer British citizens residing in the Netherlands at the moment the United Kingdom leaves the EU the possibility to study in the Netherlands at the same conditions as other EU citizens.

On 14 February, additional [administrative agreements](#) were reached regarding the earlier decision that municipalities should be given a central role in the process of civic integration. The Dutch government will *inter alia* provide € 20 million in 2019 and € 20 million in 2020 for municipalities to support immigrants in their integration process. Furthermore, Divosa, an organisation active in the social field which aims to let people participate in society, [will receive](#) € 4.5 million in 2019 to support municipalities in the implementation of the new law on civic integration.

On 1 January, the Netherlands and Hong Kong [started](#) an international exchange programme. Annually, up to 100 young persons from Hong Kong between 18 and 30 years old can get to know the Dutch culture on a working holiday of up to one year. The Hong Kong participants in the Working Holiday Programme may join a short course and carry out paid work on an incidental basis to support their holiday financially. They do not need to have a work permit for foreign nationals (TWV).

- ★ **Poland:** The Voivode of Lubuskie launched a 24-hour automatic helpline for foreigners to provide information in Polish, English and Ukrainian language regarding the legalisation of foreigners' stay and obtaining work permits. The helpline is divided into several sections: employment of foreigners, temporary residence other than work, permanent residence, long-term residence of the EU and invitations of foreigners.

- ★ **Portugal:** In January, the ordinance n. 328/2018, defining the certification scheme of companies wishing to hire highly-qualified third-country nationals in Portugal entered into force.

On 29 March, Law n. Lei n. 28/2019 came into force, establishing the presumption of legal entry in the granting of residence permit for the exercise of professional activity, proceeding to the seventh amendment to Law no. 23/2007, which approves the legal regime of entry, stay, departure and removal of foreigners from the national territory.

- ★ **Spain:** In the framework of the European initiative for legal migration pilot projects, a project in Morocco entitled "Young People As Agents Of Change" is under preparation, which will entail a short-term mobility plan between Spain and Morocco for study purposes, allowing Moroccan participants to improve and strengthen their skills and knowledge through studying a Master's Degree in Spain in key socioeconomic sectors for Morocco. Participants must also design a project related with the studies undertaken, which would be implemented in Morocco after completion of the Master's Degree. It is planned for the ten best projects to receive € 10 000 for implementation. The number of participants will be around 100 Moroccan postgraduate students, and it will last for 21 months.

A [pilot project](#) for visas for seeking employment for children and grandchildren of Spanish people in Argentina is currently developed. An initial capacity of up to 500 visas is foreseen for 2019, which may be increased to up to 1 500. These visas will allow entry to Spain to seek employment during a three-month period, and if employment is found, authorisation to work will be obtained quickly. This selection will consider, among other elements, their profile, and cooperation with the Public State Employment Service and the business community will be ensured to guarantee alignment of skills and abilities of candidates and the needs of the Spanish labour market.



## 5. MANAGEMENT OF THE EU EXTERNAL BORDERS

### EU DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

- ★ On 20 February, Member States endorsed the [agreement](#) reached by the European Parliament and the Council on the modernisation of the EU's common visa policy that was [proposed](#) by the European Commission. The new, stronger, more efficient and secure EU visa policy will bring changes on procedures' flexibility, validity of multiple entry visas, cooperation on readmission and return as well as more resources will be allocated for strengthening security.

### NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- ★ **Croatia:** In order to combat all forms of cross-border crime, equipment for measuring material density was obtained, which will be used by police officers at border crossings at the external border in the second line of control.

In order to achieve European standards of border management and strengthen the external borders of the EU and the security situation in the Republic of Croatia, various technical equipment was obtained at the border with Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro.

Police officers have been trained in EU and Schengen laws, fundamental rights and the National Information System for state border management.

- ★ **Poland:** In March, 30 border guards officers departed to missions in the Republic of North Macedonia to support local services in controlling the influx of immigrants, *inter alia* by preventing irregular border crossings and checking the authenticity of documents and registration of international protection applications.

The Border Guard Headquarters signed in March an agreement for the modernisation of the Wide-Area tele-information Network (WAN). The goal of the investment is to build a modern system for sending, analysing and exchanging data on border traffic and the functioning of the Border Guard. On the basis of information obtained from the systems, officers determine whether a given traveller has the right to enter the territory of the country and whether he/she poses threat to public safety and order. In addition, an Entry-Exit system is under construction which is to enable biometric identification of foreigners upon entry and exit and counting their duration of stay in the EU.

In March, the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Polish-Ukrainian Intergovernmental Coordination Council for Interregional Cooperation was held in the Ukraine. The Council acknowledged that in 2018, there was a decrease in traffic on the Polish-Ukrainian part of the state border by 5.5 % compared to the previous year. However, the parties stressed that traffic on the border is still very intense, which is why there is a need to ensure continued cooperation.

- ★ **Slovak Republic:** The Bureau of Border and Foreign Police of the Presidium of the Police Force prepared a new "[National Strategy for Integrated Border Management 2019-2022](#)". The document sets out new tasks for the Slovak Republic in building the European integrated border management for the next period.



## 6. IRREGULAR MIGRATION AND RETURN

### EU DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

- ★ On 20 February, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) [published](#) its annual risk analysis report. In 2018, the number of illegal border-crossings to the European Union decreased by 27 % in comparison to 2017, and by 92 % in comparison to 2015. The Western Mediterranean route was the most used route in 2018: the number of illegal detections in Spain was doubled comparing to the previous year while the number of departures from Morocco was increased significantly. Regarding transit countries, most migrants trying to enter EU soil from Turkey used the central route via Serbia and the route stemming from the Greek- Albanian border section, along the Bosnian and Herzegovinian–Croatian–Slovenian corridor.

### NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- ★ **Belgium:** On 22 February, the Commission for the evaluation of the voluntary and forced return policy presented an [interim report](#) that aims to improve transparency and dialogue on return. The report highlighted the issue of subsequent applications and suggested examining how to prevent abuses of such rules.
- ★ **Cyprus:** A grant agreement was signed to renew Cyprus' Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration programme. The project has a total budget of € 1 100 000 and is co-funded by AMIF and Cyprus.
- ★ **Czech Republic:** From January to March, 91 voluntary return applications were submitted to the return unit of the Ministry of the Interior out of which 73 persons already left the territory of the Czech Republic (28 persons in January, 31 in February and 14 as of 22 of March). Among the returnees, the largest groups were citizens of Ukraine, Moldova and Uzbekistan.
- ★ **Finland:** The Finnish Immigration Service met 32 [voluntary returnees](#) in Iraq, Somalia and Afghanistan to learn about the experiences of voluntary returnees. All of them had previously been asylum seekers in Finland or elsewhere in Europe, but either their application had been rejected or they had themselves withdrawn their application.

### Judgment of the European Court of Justice - Case [C-557/17](#)

On 14 March, the Court of Justice ruled that holders of falsified residence permits for the purpose of family reunification and long-term residence status may be withdrawn regardless if they were unaware of the fraud. However, the Court highlighted that the withdrawal of residence permits obtained for the purpose of family reunification cannot occur automatically. Thus, the national authorities must carry out, beforehand, a case-by-case assessment of the situation.

- ★ **France:** On 1 January, several [provisions](#) of the Law No. 2018-778 of 10 September 2018 for a managed immigration, an effective right of asylum and a successful integration came into effect. These measures reduced the general processing time of asylum applications and improve the functioning of the national reception scheme; they also aim to strengthen the efficiency of the fight against irregular migration.

On 1 March, other measures entered into force and completed the reforms already implemented concerning the right of asylum in order to ensure a coherent and quick processing of residence permit applications by asylum seekers.

- ★ **Croatia:** On 1 January, the implementation of the project 'Monitoring the conduct of the Ministry of Interior police officers in the area of irregular migration and asylum' started. The purpose of the project is to provide insights into the systematic and consistent protection of human rights of irregular migrants and potential applicants for international protection.
- ★ **Italy:** From 1 January to 3 April, approximately 500 migrants arrived in Italy by sea (a decrease of 92% compared to the same period in 2018).

Regarding return projects, the AVRIT project was completed – with 1 080 migrants returned to their country of origin. Funded by the European Commission with the AMIF and implemented by the Italian Ministry of the Interior and by OIM, the project targeted irregular migrants present in Italy and marked by fragility and social exclusion. Upon return, most of them undertook, supported by IOM offices based in the various countries of origin, entrepreneurial activities in particular in commerce, transport and breeding.

- ★ **Lithuania:** A readmission [agreement](#) between the Government of Lithuania and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on the return of citizens was signed in Vietnam in January 2019. In 2018, 331 irregular migrants were identified in Lithuania, of which 149 were Vietnamese citizens.
- ★ **Luxembourg:** On 26 February, the Government introduced [bill n° 7413](#) in parliament approving the Protocol between Ukraine and the Benelux States (Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands) implementing the Agreement between the EU and Ukraine on the readmission of persons in an irregular situation, signed in Brussels on 17 December 2018.

On 1 March, the Government Council adopted the draft bill on the approval of the Protocol between Armenia and the Benelux States implementing the Agreement between the European Union and Armenia on the readmission of persons in an irregular situation, signed in Brussels on 20 June 2018.



## 7. ACTIONS ADDRESSING TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

### EU DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

- ★ No relevant updates.

### NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- ★ **Croatia:** On 28 February, the Government adopted a decision on the adoption of the Protocol on the Integration/Reintegration of Trafficking Victims, which entered into force on 1 April.
- ★ **Greece:** On 1 January, the National Referral Mechanism on identification and referral of victims and presumed victims of trafficking was officially launched. This formal national identification and referral system, supervised by the Office of the National Rapporteur and managed by the National Centre for Social Solidarity (E.K.K.A.), operates as a hub for concerted action and partnership building, among all actors involved in combating human trafficking.

An inter-agency [meeting](#) was convened by the Parliamentary Committee on Trafficking in Human Beings, on February, to discuss national legislation for employment of irregular migrants in the agricultural sector. In light of the European Court for Human Rights judgement '[Chowdury and others v. Greece](#)', the Committee discussed measures taken for their protection and for the prevention of trafficking in human beings and forced labour. Proposals for legislative amendments regarding improvements in working conditions for migrant farm workers were also presented.

- ★ **Finland:** A record number of victims of human trafficking were referred to the National Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking in 2018: 163 new clients were accepted into the Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking while 52 of them were estimated to have become victims of exploitation indicative of human trafficking in Finland. The National Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking trained approximately 750 current and future police officers and border guards in human trafficking issues.

In March 2019, at the Police Academy, a four-day workshop on trafficking in human beings was held for police officers, heads of staff, their assistants, judges and representatives of the State Attorney's Office. The programme of the workshop included theoretical and practical part about child rearing online, legislative framework, indicators and victim identification, victim support, and assistance and protection of victims of trafficking in human beings.

- ★ **Hungary:** On 13 March, the Action Plan on the measures necessary to increase the efficiency of combatting human trafficking was adopted. This action plan is short-term and sets out measures necessary to be taken as a rapid response to certain challenges that require more instant action until the development new national strategy against trafficking in human beings.
- ★ **Latvia:** On 21 and 22 February, the Ministry of the Interior with support of the Permanent Secretariat of the Council of the Baltic Sea States hosted the international conference entitled "Human trafficking – a crime with too few convictions and too many victims" under the Latvian Presidency in the Council of the Baltic Sea States. The conference focused on prosecution of human trafficking cases and victim's rights in legal proceedings.
- ★ **Malta:** From January to March 2019, the Government of Malta: 1) launched an awareness-raising campaign through a series of TV adverts about human trafficking; 2) conducted a study on the vulnerability to human trafficking amongst women and minors in migrant open centres. The study concluded that although no cases of human trafficking could be identified, some of these people were potentially vulnerable to human trafficking; 3) removed the fees related to the issuing of first-time residence and work permits to victims of human trafficking. In addition, the Parliamentary Secretariat for Citizenship, Reforms and Simplification allocated € 32 000 to set up the first exit programme for prostitutes. Moreover, the Parliamentary Secretary for Reforms, Citizenship and Simplification together with the Legal Aid Agency organised training on human trafficking to all legal aid lawyers in March 2019.

In January, the National Commission on Domestic Violence organised a five-day intensive training on human trafficking provided by the London-based International Centre for Parliamentary Studies (ICPS). The training focused on the four Ps of human trafficking: Prevention, Protection, Prosecution and Partnership. It brought together a vast range of stakeholders representing government departments and non-government organisations. The total cost of this training initiative amounts to € 36 500.

- ★ **Poland:** In Bialystok and Lublin, representatives of the Ministry of the Interior and Administration, Polish Police, Border Guards, the LaStrada Foundation and the Salvation Army together with the British Embassy to Poland conducted an educational campaign on modern slavery - human trafficking. The campaign aimed at raising public awareness and protecting potential victims of human trafficking.

On 18 February, pursuant to Regulation No. 6 of the Minister of the Interior and Administration of February 15, 2019, a new Team for Counteracting Trafficking in Human Beings was created. The new Team will take over tasks related to the evaluation of the implementation of programmes aimed at combating and preventing trafficking in human beings, initiating actions aimed at combating and preventing human trafficking and preparing projects of National Action Plans against Human Trafficking, monitoring the feasibility of planned tasks, and preparing annual reports on the implementation National Action Plan.

- ★ **Portugal:** On 19 and 22 February, almost 30 professionals from organisations such as the Supreme Court, Law Enforcement Agencies, Interpol, and NGO's were trained in Bissau. The training was the result of cooperation between the Observatory on Trafficking in Human Beings and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

## 8. EXTERNAL DIMENSION

### EU DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

- ★ On 5 February, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency reached an agreement on operational cooperation with [Montenegro](#) and [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#). Under this agreement, teams of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency can be deployed in these Western Balkan countries with the view to assist them in border management and carry out joint operations.

These agreements are core elements of the Commission's 2018 [strategy](#) for 'A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans' that aims at strengthening cooperation with Western Balkans and at supporting the transformation efforts in areas of mutual interest.

- ★ On 18 February, the Council presidency and the Parliament reached an informal [agreement](#) to strengthen the cooperation and coordination between immigration liaison officers that are deployed to third countries by Member States or the EU to deal with immigration-related issues. New rules were agreed in order to improve liaison officers' effectiveness especially in the areas of returns and combatting migrant smuggling.
- ★ The [Third Brussels Conference](#) on "Supporting the future of Syria and the region" was held from 12 to 14 March. The conference, co-chaired by the European Union and the United Nations, brought together representatives from 57 countries and more than 20 international organisations and UN agencies. The main aims of the conference were to support UN activities in the region as well as to mobilise financial humanitarian aid to Syrians within and beyond Syria.

## NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- ★ **Czech Republic:** On 23 March, a new Decree of the Minister of the Interior on the list of safe countries of origin came into force, adding 12 countries of origin (Algeria, Ghana, Morocco, Senegal, Tunisia, India, Georgia (except Abkhazia and South Ossetia), Moldova (except Transnistria), Ukraine (except Crimea and parts of Donetsk and Luhansk under a control of separatists), Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

On 18 March, the Czech Government approved priorities of two humanitarian programmes of the Czech Ministry of the Interior – MEDEVAC and Aid in Place – for the year 2019. The geographical priorities of both programmes include North and Sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East and Eastern and South-eastern Europe. In 2019 the medical humanitarian Programme MEDEVAC plans to deploy the Czech medical teams to Jordan, Lebanon, Senegal, Ethiopia and Morocco. Trainings of medical staff are planned in Ukraine and Iraq. Priority countries for grants from the Aid in Place Programme include North Macedonia, Jordan, Mali, Niger, Morocco and Libya.

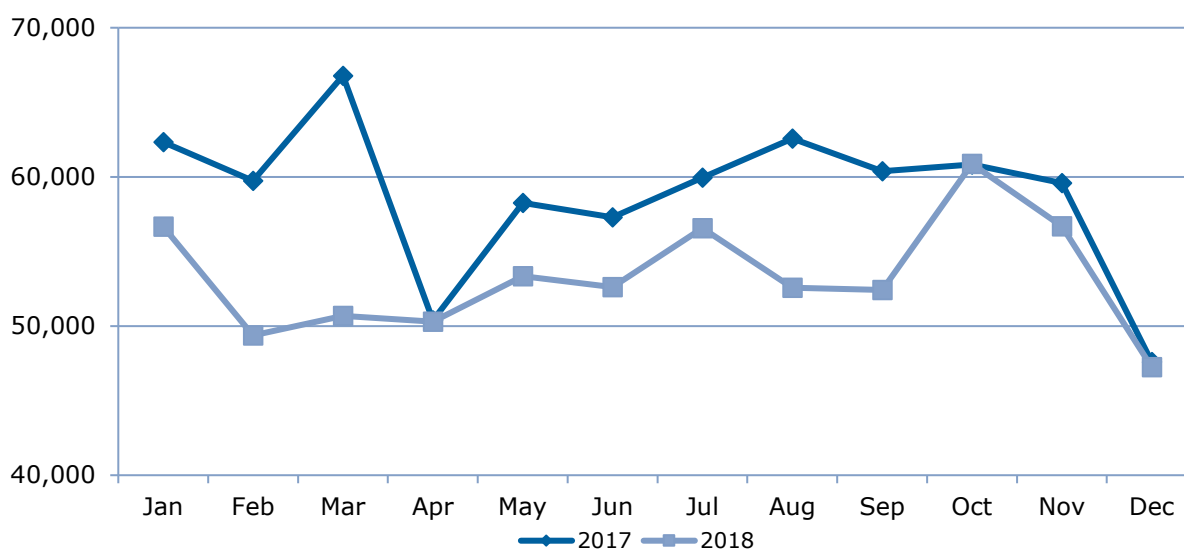
In January, the Czech orthopedics medical team attended a mission to Al Khalidi Hospital in Amman, Jordan. In March, the Czech team of three biomedical engineers visited Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where they trained local technicians in the field of maintaining ophthalmic medical equipment. Furthermore, the first medical mission of Czech doctors to Lebanon took place in close collaboration with the Rafik Hariri University Hospital in Beirut.

- ★ **Slovak Republic:** On 12-13 March, the Directors of Migration and Asylum Offices of the [Visegrad 4 Four](#) (V4) countries [met](#) in Bratislava as part of the Slovak Presidency of the Visegrad Group to discuss upcoming challenges such as withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU and the need to update migration strategies of respective states to reflect the changing situation, with a perspective beyond 2020.

V4 partners also assessed the activities within the Migration Crisis Response Mechanism (MCRM), which since 2017 creates a basis for the cooperation between V4 countries in seeking effective solutions to the migration crisis. It was set as joint priority to focus on countries of origin of migrants arriving to Europe.

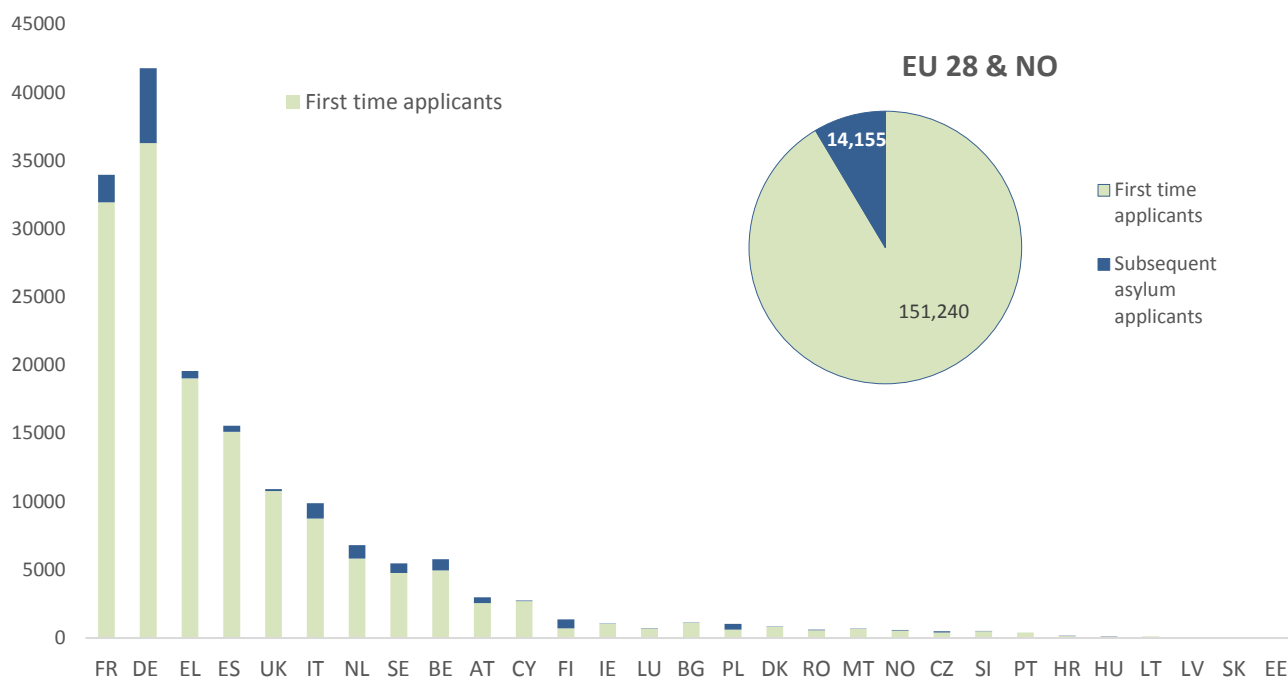
## ANNEX: EU & COMPLEMENTARY STATISTICS, ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, OTHER EMN OUTPUTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

**Figure 1a: Asylum applications in the EU-28, January 2017 – December 2018.**



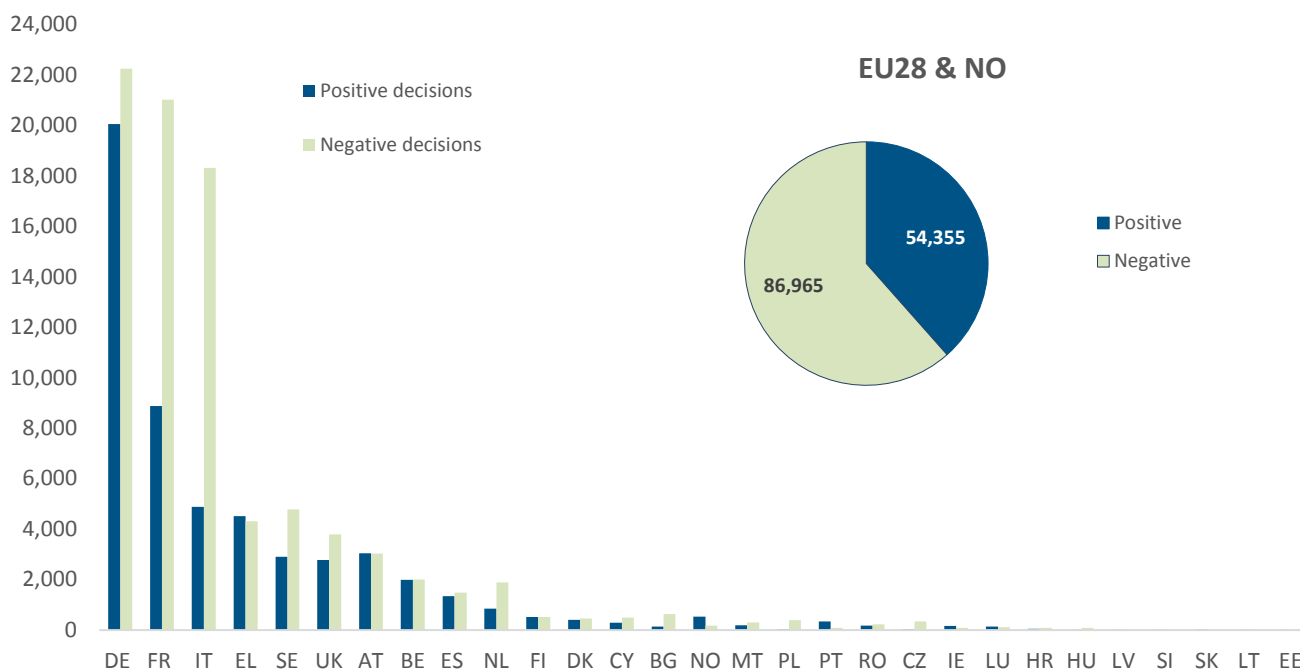
Source: Eurostat [[miqr\\_asyappctzm](#)], total asylum applicants, extracted on 25 March 2019.

**Figure 1b: First time asylum applicants and subsequent applicants (together, total asylum applicants) in the EU-28 and Norway, Q4 2018 (quarterly data)**



Source: Eurostat [[migr\\_asyappctzm](#)], accessed on 25 March 2019.

**Figure 2: First instance asylum decisions in EU-28 and Norway for non-EU citizens, Q4 2018**



Source: Eurostat [[migr\\_asydcfstq](#)], accessed on 25 March 2019.

## Latest available national statistics

- ★ **Austria:** The NGO ZARA published its [annual report](#) on racism in Austria. In 2018, the organisation documented 1 920 racist incidents, depicting a significant rise compared to the 1 162 racist incidents documented in 2017. More than 60 % of the reported incidents in 2018 took place on the internet, while about 15 % occurred in public and generally accessible areas.
- ★ **Finland:** According to the annual statistics of the Finnish Immigration Service, the number of work-based residence permit applications increased clearly compared to last year. In total, 10 805 first residence permit applications were submitted based on work comparing to 8 650 in 2017. In addition, the new Finnish Startup Permit attracted interest particularly from technology professionals during the first year of operation; Business Finland received more than a hundred requests for an eligibility statement. A positive statement was given on 34 of them, and the Finnish Immigration Service has granted 23 Finnish Startup Permits.
- ★ **Slovak Republic:** The Migration Office of the Ministry of Interior published its [2018 Statistical Report](#) which contains among other an overview of the number of asylum applications, number of granted asylum or subsidiary protections and granted citizenships in 2018. The statistical report also includes data on citizenships, ethnicities, age and on unaccompanied minors applying for asylum.

The Bureau of Border and Aliens Police of the Police Force Presidium published the [Statistical Overview of Legal and Illegal Migration in the Slovak Republic for the year 2018](#) which provides data on both legal and irregular migration including returns.

## Updates on EU legislation transposition

### LEGAL MIGRATION

- ★ **Croatia:** On 15 March, the draft proposal of 'The Act on Nationals of Member States of the European Economic Area (EEA) and Their Family Members (EU)' was established and submitted to the Parliament. The Law will regulate the residence of nationals of the European Economic Area Member States and their family members as required by the [Free Movement Directive \(2004/38/EC\)](#). Proposal of the Act also regulated the situation of the United Kingdom and their family members in Croatia in no deal scenario.
- ★ **Cyprus:** On 29 January, two separate laws were published in the Official Gazette of the Republic, transposing the [Students and Researchers Directive \(\(EU\)2016/801\)](#) into national law. The Republic of Cyprus has not incorporated the optional provisions of the Directive with regard to au pairs.
- ★ **France:** On 1 March, the measures of [Law n° 2018-778](#) of 10 September 2018 came into force aiming at promoting the attractiveness of France for international highly-qualified workers, foreign students and researchers, and to transpose the [Students and Researchers Directive \(\(EU\)2016/801\)](#).

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

- ★ In February 2019, EMN [published](#) a study on Labour Market Integration of Third-Country Nationals in EU Member States that provides a comprehensive picture based on information collected from 25 countries.
- ★ In March 2019, EMN [published](#) a study on Impact of Visa Liberalisation on Countries of Destination, providing insights into trends in 25 EU countries and Norway, following visa liberalisation for nationals of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, Republic of North Macedonia, Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine.