

# 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 14<sup>th</sup> Edition provides information from January 2016 to March 2016, 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.](#)

## SPECIAL NOTE

[The EU Heads of State and Government met with Turkey](#) for the third time on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2016 and in view of the implementation and progress made under the [EU-Turkey Action Plan](#), discussed the Commission's [Next Operational Steps in EU-Turkey cooperation in the field of migration](#). In particular, they agreed to return every irregular migrant crossing the Aegean Sea from Turkey into Greece, and, for every Syrian returned to Turkey, the EU committed to resettle in Europe a Syrian from Turkey. Moreover, Turkey committed to adopt measures to prevent irregular land and sea crossing to Europe. Finally, it was agreed that, once the irregular crossings were reduced, a Voluntary Humanitarian Admission Scheme would be implemented.

The [European Council Conclusions](#), released on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2016, reiterated that the next steps for the EU would be to make all hotspots operational, to support Greece in returning irregular migrants to Turkey and in coping with the humanitarian situation, and to accelerate the relocation from Greece. To follow up on these Conclusions, the Commission proposed a [Council Decision](#) (which amends a [Council Decision](#) dated 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2015). The amendment foresees that 54,000 places, out of 120,000 originally reserved to relocation, would be available for resettling Syrian refugees from Turkey.

In relation to the EMN activities, the **2016 EMN Annual Conference was held in the Netherlands** on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2016. The purpose of the event was to discuss the latest developments in the area of migrant smuggling and to identify good practices and measures to be activated at the national and EU levels to fight smuggling in a holistic way. The main [Conclusions](#) of the Conference were the following:



- ★ Enhance police and judicial response (criminal investigations, focusing also on financial investigations linked to migrant smuggling);
- ★ Improve gathering and sharing of information in particular between law enforcement and judiciary stakeholders;
- ★ Make use of existing networks for the exchange of information and strengthen these, instead of creating new platforms;
- ★ Enhance prevention of smuggling and assistance to vulnerable migrants;
- ★ Strengthen cooperation with third countries in order to enhance information and intelligence exchange.

## 1. GENERAL POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

### EU DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

- ★ On 16<sup>th</sup> March 2016, the Commission adopted the [Next Operational Steps in EU-Turkey cooperation in the field of migration](#), in view of the aforementioned meeting scheduled on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2016, with the aim of “replac[ing] the current mass irregular flows of migrants by a controlled and legal process”. The Commission’s document outlined the legal, operational and financial details of the deal discussed on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2016 and elaborated six principles to further develop the EU-Turkey cooperation.
- ★ On 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2016, the [Council of the European Union](#) agreed on the financing details of the 3 billion euro for the **Refugee Facility in Turkey**, proposed by the Commission on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2015. The aim of the Facility is to provide humanitarian assistance (access to education and healthcare in particular) for refugees and their host communities in Turkey. However, the funds will be conditional to Turkey’s compliance with the [EU-Turkey Action Plan](#), which will be monitored by periodical [implementation reports](#).
- ★ On 13<sup>th</sup> January 2016, the [College of Commissioners](#) met to review the migration [measures adopted in 2015 and to set the priorities for 2016](#) to tackle the refugee crisis. On **refugees**, the Commission urged to fully implement the actions already agreed upon, in particular the relocation decisions, the resettlement schemes and for the non-active hotspots in Greece and Italy to become operational (8 out of 11). On **return**, the Commission prioritised the increase in the number of returnees, by fully implementing the [Return Action Plan](#) and by moving forward with the readmission agreements. On **borders’ management**, the Commission stated Schengen’s usual functioning should be put in place again in 2016 and urged the Parliament to conclude the negotiations on the [EU Border and Coast Guard](#). As **new initiatives**, the College of Commissioners agreed to present in March 2016 the revision of the Dublin system, a legal migration package and measures on integration, followed, by the end of 2016, by a package on migrants’ smuggling.

#### WHAT IS THE EUROPEAN MIGRATION NETWORK (EMN)?

A network co-ordinated by the European Commission, assisted by a Service Provider, in co-operation with National Contact Points (EMN NCPs) established in each Member State plus Norway. Its purpose is to provide up-to-date, objective, reliable and comparable information on migration and asylum, with a view to supporting policymaking in the European Union in these areas, as well as to the wider public. More information, as well as all EMN outputs, is available on the [EMN Website](#).

### NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- ★ **Germany:** On 5<sup>th</sup> February 2016, the essential parts of the ‘*Law for the improvement of the registration and the exchange of data for purposes relating to the right of residence and the right of asylum*’ came into force. This federal law is now the basis for the recording of personal data of asylum seekers, persons who irregularly crossed the border into Germany and irregular persons staying in Germany. The law additionally provides that further pieces of information shall also be recorded in the ‘*central system for the recording of key data*’ with regard to people in need of protection for their the purpose of rapid integration into society and labour market. All data recorded in the central key data system will be made available to the authorities in order to fulfil their tasks. After their registration, asylum seekers will be given a proof of their arrival in form of an official paper with integrated forgery-proof elements.
- ★ **Slovak Republic:** As a result of the parliamentary elections held on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2016, the party SMER-SD won elections and formed a new four-party government with the Slovak National Party (SNS), MOST- HÍD and SIEŤ. Robert Kaliňák (SMER-SD) was re-appointed as the Minister of Interior of the Slovak Republic.

## 2. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMON EUROPEAN ASYLUM SYSTEM

### EU DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

- ★ On 6<sup>th</sup> April 2016, the Commission made its first step in the process of reforming the Common European Asylum system by adopting the Communication “[Towards a reform of the Common European Asylum system and enhancing legal avenues to Europe](#)”. It presented five priorities to reform the asylum system: creating a fair and sustainable system for determining the Member States responsible of asylum seekers, reinforcing the Eurodac system, achieving greater convergence in the EU asylum system, preventing secondary movements, and giving a new mandate to EASO.
- ★ On 16<sup>th</sup> March 2016, the Commission published the [First Report on relocation and resettlement](#), describing the trends and the actions taken by the Commission and the Member States with regard to the resettlement and relocation schemes decided upon in September 2015 ([Council Decision \(EU\) 2015/1523](#) and [2015/1601](#)).

- ★ During the reporting period, the Commission announced the provision of different **emergency funds** for Greece to support the Member State with its current migration influx. These included: **1.36 million euro**, from the Internal Security Fund (ISF), for the purchase of 90 fingerprinting devices connected to the central EURODAC system to share information and to ensure migrants are properly identified on the Greek soil; **12.7 million euro from the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)** to support the establishment of at least 8,000 reception facilities on the Greek mainland; and **3.5 million euro** (also from (ISF)) to support the work of the First Reception Centres in Kos, Lesvos, Samos, Chios and Leros with additional specialised staff to shorten the length of the registration procedures. Finally, on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2016, the **EU Civil Protection** delivered to Greece two tracks of needed goods to tackle the refugee crisis.
- ★ On 10<sup>th</sup> March 2016, **Member States reached** an agreement on the **Emergency Assistance Instrument**, **proposed by the Commission**. The latter aimed at providing Member States facing humanitarian crisis (like the large influx of refugees) with a supplementary emergency response. The initial budget was set at 700 million euro for the 2016-2018 period to be allocated for the provision of food, shelter, medicine and other basic necessities.
- ★ On 4<sup>th</sup> March 2016, the Commission announced the first projects to be carried out under the **Facility for Refugee in Turkey**, **agreed on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2016**. The projects- worth 95 million euro- aim at providing access to formal education for school-children Syrians and humanitarian aid.

#### Judgment of the European Court of Justice Case C-695/15.

In its judgement of 17 March 2016, the Court of Justice made clear that Article 3(3) of the Dublin III Regulation (604/2013) gives a right to the Member State to send an applicant for international protection to a safe third country also after that Member State has accepted that it is responsible for examining the application for international protection. This right may be exercised also when the applicant left the Member State before a decision on the substance of his first application for international protection had been taken.

Moreover, sending of an applicant for international protection to a safe third country is not precluded by the fact that the Member State carrying out the transfer of that applicant to the Member State responsible has not been informed, during the take-back procedure, either of the rules of the latter Member State relating to the sending of applicants to safe third countries or of the relevant practice of its competent authorities.

#### LATEST RELEVANT STATISTICS

- ★ According to the **latest Eurostat data**, the total **number of applications for international protection lodged in the EU remained stable in Q4 2015 (439,035), compared to the previous quarter (440,040)**. The applications reached the highest monthly number in October 2016 (171,765) and then dropped to 108,695 in December (see figure 1a in Annex). **As shown in figure 1b**, in Q4 2015, **97%** of the total applications for international protection **were first time applications** (426,025). During the fourth quarter 2015, the top three countries of origin of asylum seekers were **Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq**.
- ★ A total number of **208,030 first instance asylum decisions were issued in the EU and Norway in Q4 2015**. Total positive decisions for this period amounted to **122,365**, while negative decisions were **82,570** (see Figure 2 in the Annex). The largest number of first instance asylum decisions was issued in **Germany**, followed by **Italy** and **Sweden**.
- ★ EASO published its **Quarterly Asylum Report** for the third quarter 2015. According to the report, the number of asylum applications reached 459,975, the highest quarterly number registered so far. Syrians accounted for the largest number of asylum applicants with 148,000 applications, followed by applicants from Afghanistan, Western Balkans (mostly Kosovo and Albania), Iraq and Pakistan. **Germany** and **Hungary** remained the main countries of destination, receiving together half of the total of asylum applications registered in the EU, Norway and Switzerland.

#### NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- ★ **Austria:** A legislative proposal of a federal act amending the Asylum Act 2005, currently under discussion at the Parliament, provides that asylum seekers may be granted integration assistance, if the recognition of the international protection status is very probable. The Austrian Constitutional Court also lifted a provision of the Asylum Act according to which appeals against decisions rejecting applications for international protection as inadmissible had to be brought within the period of one week, which is shorter than the general period for filing appeals of four weeks (Decision 23/02/2016, no. G574/2015).

Due to the continuous high migratory flow, on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2016 Austria introduced daily quotas at the southern border in order to safeguard public security and safety. The maximum quota for asylum applications was set to 80 and the quota for border crossings of persons seeking asylum in a neighboring country at 3,200. On 20<sup>th</sup> January 2016 consultations were also held amongst the federal government, the provinces, cities and municipalities in order to find a common approach to effectively and sustainably reduce refugee and migration flows to Austria. An **agreement** regarding responsibilities, priorities and measures was concluded.

- ★ **Belgium:** On 26<sup>th</sup> February 2016, the Belgian government approved the plan for the distribution of asylum seekers over the different municipalities of the State. The plan concerns 5,000 reception places and will enter into force on

1<sup>st</sup> May 2016. The number of asylum seekers allocated per municipality has been defined taking into account different elements, including each municipality's capacity, as well as current/past efforts for the reception of asylum seekers. The [distribution plan](#) also foresees fines for those municipalities that do not comply with it.

- ★ **Cyprus:** On 11<sup>th</sup> February 2016, six people were relocated from Greece to Cyprus in the framework of the EU relocation scheme. Also, the Administrative Court became operational as of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016. The Court has jurisdiction to examine appeals against administrative decisions, including those concerning the examination of applications for international protection.
- ★ **Czech Republic:** A humanitarian resettlement programme started at the end of 2015, targeting 153 internally displaced Iraqi refugees coming from zones where Daesh is active. The refugees were located in Erbil (121 persons) or Beirut (32 persons). The programme was implemented in cooperation with the Czech Generation 21 Foundation. Whilst 89 refugees arrived in Czech Republic. By March 2016, 89 refugees arrived in the Czech Republic. However, some of the resettled persons decided to leave the Czech Republic after several weeks and renounced to their asylum statuses. As a result, the Government decided the early termination of the programme.
- ★ **Estonia:** The first seven refugees from Greece under the EU relocation plan were accepted on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2016. The relocated persons are an Iraqi family of five members, a single man from Syria, and a single man from Yemen.
- ★ **Finland:** On 4<sup>th</sup> February 2016 the Government submitted its [proposal for amending the Aliens Act](#) to the Parliament. According to the proposal, international protection would only be granted to those fulfilling the requirements laid down in EU and international law. Residence permits would no longer be issued on humanitarian grounds.  
  
Due to the reduction of the flow of asylum seekers and of increased returns, at the end of March 2016 the Finnish Immigration Service decided to [close 33 reception centres](#) and to reduce accommodation capacity in several reception centres. In addition, the fixed-term agreements with 10 centres will expire.
- ★ **Germany:** On 17<sup>th</sup> March 2016, the 'Law for the introduction of accelerated asylum procedures' came into force. The law sets out accelerated asylum procedures to be applied to specific groups of asylum seekers, among others, asylum seekers from safe countries of origin, those who apply a second time for asylum and those who do not cooperate in the asylum procedure. Furthermore, special reception and accommodation centres for these groups of people were established. Other essential provisions are the suspension of the right to family reunification for beneficiaries of subsidiary protection for a period of two years and the reduction of obstacles for deportation due to medical reasons.
- ★ **Ireland:** The European Commission confirmed the [full participation of Ireland in the EU relocation scheme](#). In line with its 'opt in' under the Lisbon Treaty, Ireland notified the Commission on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2015 of its wish to participate in both Council Decisions on relocation and to relocate applicants for international protection from Italy and Greece. The Council Decision of 22 September 2015 on the relocation of another 120,000 applicants now also applies to Ireland.
- ★ **Latvia:** On 19<sup>th</sup> January 2016, the new Asylum Law came into force. As a result, personal interviews of asylum seekers are now conducted by officials of the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs, instead of the State Border Guard. In addition, whilst in the past it was possible to express wish of international protection only before the State Border Guard, the law provides that this can also be done before the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs and the State Police or the Prison Administration. Also, the duration of detention of asylum seekers was reduced from seven to six days.
- ★ **Lithuania:** On 7<sup>th</sup> March 2016, two Syrian refugees were relocated to Lithuania in accordance with the European Union's relocation scheme. Lithuania has earlier agreed to accept 1,105 refugees over two years.
- ★ **Luxembourg:** On 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> March 2016 the Government Council continued with the implementation of the national plan to deal with the reception of an important inflow of applicants for international protection. Also, on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2016, the University of Luxembourg adopted the policy for recognising the academic qualifications of beneficiaries of international protection.
- ★ **The Netherlands:** According to the government, nationals of Albania, Kosovo and Serbia have no need for protection and the process of their return has been accelerated since 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016. Moreover, the Minister for Migration added Ghana, India, Jamaica, Morocco, Mongolia and Senegal to [the list of safe countries of origin](#).

In February, a [new letter was issued to asylum seekers](#) arriving to the registration centre in the Netherlands or crossing the Dutch border. In the letter, the Minister for Migration aims to give a quick and realistic image of what asylum seekers can expect during the procedure. Some elements mentioned are: the expected longer waiting time for the start of the asylum procedure, the sober reception facilities and that, in some cases, personal contribution towards the costs of the reception will be requested. The extension of the expected waiting period may also delay the procedure for family reunification. During the same month, the Dutch municipalities have not been successful in accommodating the planned number of recognised refugees. Of the proposed 3,900 status holders, [2,692 were assigned a house](#).



Amendments to the Dutch Aliens Act Implementation Guidelines (Vreemdelingen­circulaire) were adopted in January- February 2016. The general asylum procedure was extended and the policy regarding rejecting and withdrawing temporary residence permits strengthened. Due to the high influx of the number of asylum claims, the decision period for asylum applications was extended from six to fifteen months. Finally, the 'track policy' was introduced, which will lead to accelerated rejection of asylum seekers from safe third countries and a faster recognition for those from certain countries or belonging to a specific group. This amendment also relates to the returning of documents after checking authenticity.

The Ministry of Security and Justice's [WODC-research "How \(un\)restrictive are we?"](#), undertaken as a reaction to different recognition rates of asylum seekers in European countries, showed that the Netherlands is relatively restrictive. The WODC concludes that the difference in recognition rates between EU Member States shows that the CEAS has margins of improvement.

- ★ **Norway:** On 30<sup>th</sup> March 2016, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security provided the instruction to the immigration authorities to revoke refugee status if changes in circumstances in the country of origin indicate that the refugee is no longer in need of protection. The instruction entails a restructuring of protracted administrative practice. The instruction does not apply to quota refugees or refugees who have already received a permanent residence permit or residence on humanitarian grounds.

Due to the migratory crisis that unfolded during 2015, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security has been working on changes to Immigration law aimed at gaining control of migratory flow and reducing the numbers of foreigners seeking protection in Norway. A proposal introduces austerity measures on asylum seekers who are unaccompanied minors, requirements for family reunification and permanent residence. The bill will be presented to the Parliament in the beginning of April 2016.

- ★ **Poland:** A new report on the results of an [inspection](#) regarding procedures for granting international protection was released by the Supreme Chamber of Control on 15<sup>th</sup> March. According to the report, in general, activities are carried out properly although some irregularities persist.

On 26<sup>th</sup> February 2016, a [bill](#) to amend the Act on the protection for foreigners in Poland was submitted to the Parliament. The amendments introduced, inter alia, longer deadline for security screening for relocation and resettlement procedures.

Resettlement and relocation operational activities to Poland continued in 2016 including, inter alia, establishing a [new Inter-Ministerial Team](#) appointed to provide security in the implementation of the resettlement and relocation programme and drafting a [regulation](#) governing the relocation. Due to the negative reaction of the population to the accommodation of refugees and to several protests of local community, the Office for Foreigners – the body responsible for managing reception centres – is facing serious [challenges](#) in finding new locations for those centres.

- ★ **Spain:** In March 2016, the Spanish Government increased its pledges for relocation. As communicated to the European Commission, Spain will relocate 32 persons from Italy and 150 persons from Greece. As regards resettlement, 285 persons will be resettled from Turkey.

- ★ **Sweden:** On 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016, a new act for an effective and solidarity-based refugee reception system entered into force in Sweden. It foresees that all municipalities within Sweden can be required to receive newly-arrived refugees and other beneficiaries of protection, as well as their family members, for settlement. The assignment of such persons to municipalities will be based on each municipality's respective situation and capacities, the local labour market, characteristics of the population and integration/reception services provided. Previously, the settlement of beneficiaries of protection was based on voluntary agreements between municipalities and the Swedish Migration Agency. This system had however created an unequal distribution of new arrivals across Sweden.

According to a cross-party agreement settled last year, Sweden would gradually increase the number of places in its resettlement programme, the so-called "refugee quota", to 5,000 during the present electoral term (2014-2018). However, after consultations with the Government and the UNHCR, the Swedish Migration Agency recently decided that 1,900 resettlement places will be made available this year. The [refugee quota for 2016](#) will thus be the same as in 2015. About half of the 2016 refugees' quota will be selected through selection missions on the ground. Within the overall quota of 1,900 people, 700 places will be reserved for refugees from Syria, and 450 have been set aside for emergencies.

The announced legislative proposal introducing temporary restrictions to the possibility of being granted international protection statuses was sent out to various stakeholders for consultation on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2016. Among other measures, the proposal foresees temporary residence permits (instead of permanent ones) for beneficiaries of international protection, restrictions to the right to family reunification and the cessation of certain humanitarian protection statuses. Many stakeholders criticised the planned changes, which are scheduled to enter into force during summer 2016.

### 3. UNACCOMPANIED MINORS AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

#### EU AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

- ★ The Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) published its [monthly data collection on the current migration situation in the EU](#) for the month of February 2016, which had a special thematic focus on migrant children.

#### NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- ★ **Cyprus:** An open reception centre for unaccompanied minors became operational, as part of a project co-funded by the Asylum Migration Integration Fund (AMIF). The centre can host up to 45 male unaccompanied minors, aged between 13 and 18 years old and provides for several services, such as: psychosocial and legal support, counselling, integration programmes, education and assistance in the transition from adolescence to adulthood. The project budget is €1,033,367 and the final beneficiary is "Hope for children" UNCRC Policy Centre. The foreseen duration is until November 2017.
- ★ **France:** An [inter-ministerial circular](#) of 25<sup>th</sup> January 2016, from the Ministries of the Interior, Justice, Foreign affairs, Social affairs and Education, encouraged closer links between national services and departmental councils regarding the evaluation process of UAMs and their care arrangements (as well as once they turn 18 years old) in the sectors of school, vocational training and health.

In addition, the [law on the protection of minors](#), published on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2016, aims at reinforcing the geographical distribution of UAMs between the French departments. This law also regulates the use of the bone test medical examination in order to evaluate the age of declared minors.

- ★ **Luxembourg:** On 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2016, the Government announced the establishment of a new housing centre for unaccompanied minors in Troisvierges.
- ★ **The Netherlands:** A recent research about the assistance to unaccompanied minors found that the quality of the protected reception facilities for UAMs needs to be improved. In March, the Minister for Migration requested the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA) to [develop a plan to improve the quality of these reception centres](#) as soon as possible. Besides this, it was suggested that additional security is needed in these receptions to discourage the disappearance of minors.

The House of Representatives agreed on [a motion](#) to separate LHBT'S, Christians and other vulnerable individuals in a special asylum reception.

### 4. LEGAL MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION

#### EU AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

- ★ The Commission's Communication "[Towards a reform of the Common European Asylum system and enhancing legal avenues to Europe](#)" adopted on 6<sup>th</sup> April, stressed the need of ensuring and enhancing safe and legal migration route, by having a smarter and well-managed legal migration policy. The Commission announced that it will propose a reviewed Blue Card Directive, which will further built upon its harmonisation potential, will provide more flexible admission criteria and facilitated admission procedures, as well as enhanced rights. The Commission also stated that it would work on potential common admission for innovative entrepreneurs. In relation to this, the [results of the public consultation on the Blue card directive](#) were also made available on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2016.
- ★ On 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> January 2016, DG Migration and Home Affairs organised the first [European Dialogue on Skills and migration](#). The event gathered together in Brussels high-level representatives of public and private employers as well as experts. It was organised around a plenary sessions and three thematic areas, focusing on intra-corporate transfers, the health care sector and entrepreneurship.

#### NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- ★ **Estonia:** On 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016, amendments to the Aliens Act entered into force and introduced, amongst others a 90-day transition period after the expiry of the residence permit during which a person can apply for a new residence permit; a regulation for agency work; and simple admission procedure for employees working in occupations, where labour shortages exists. The aim of the amendments was to simplify the conditions of entry for those categories of foreigners who would contribute to Estonian economy and society.
- ★ **Finland:** The Ministry of the Interior is [introducing an application fee](#) for residence permit applications lodged by family members of beneficiaries of international protection. The fee is required to sustain the increased costs linked to the record high number of applications made last year.
- ★ **France:** The [law on foreigners' rights in France](#) was published on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2016. The law aims at improving reception and integration conditions for third-country nationals who want to reside in France, introducing a more operational process for providing practical, administrative and legal information to migrants before their arrival and an individual integration pathway. Moreover, more attractive conditions are set up for talents and entrepreneurs, in particular the "talent passport", a residence permit dedicated to foreign talents and new criteria for the change of status from student to salaried employee category. In conclusion, more efficient tools to combat irregular

migration were introduced, in particular: secured house arrest conditions, reinforced fight against fraud, and increased sanctions for obstruction to removal orders.

- ★ **Hungary:** As an integral part of the project "Support to the Silk Routes Partnership for Migration under the Budapest Process", a smaller pilot project was initiated in Pakistan with the aim to raise awareness on migration related questions. Two Migration Information Centres were established, equipped and staffed in Islamabad and Lahore and are fully functional since February 2016. Potential migrants planning to travel abroad for various purposes can get up-to-date information about the legal migration practices, rules and obligations, as well as about the possible dangers of irregular migration and trafficking in human beings. Later in 2016 the centres will also organise training courses and counselling sessions on specific topics.
- ★ **Ireland:** From 1<sup>st</sup> February 2016, changes to Employment Permits Regulations came into effect in Ireland. These amended the [Highly Skilled Eligible Occupations List](#) (HSEOL) and the [Ineligible Categories of Employment List \(ICEL\)](#). Also, a [new Atypical Working Scheme for undocumented workers in the fishing industry](#) - Non-EEA Crew Members (Irish Fishing Fleet) - was introduced in February 2016. Additionally, the Irish Department of Jobs Enterprise and Innovation launched a new [Employment Permits Online Status Up-date Enquiry Facility](#).
- ★ **Luxembourg:** During the month of March 2016, different bills were introduced in the field of integration and legal migration. For example on 15<sup>th</sup> March, the Ministry of Education introduced the bill n° 6967 in order to implement the courses of "Life and Society", which are ethics and value courses that extend to all different religions; on 24<sup>th</sup> March a bill on Luxembourgish nationality was presented in the Parliament. The proposal introduces the territoriality principle (*droit du sol*) and reduces the residence requirement from seven to five years; and on 23<sup>rd</sup> March the bill n° 6974 was introduced to approve the convention on the reduction of stateless persons signed in New York on 30 August 1961, the European Convention on nationality signed in Strasbourg on 6 November 1997 and the Convention of the Council of Europe on the prevention of statelessness in regards to states' succession signed on Strasbourg on 19 May 2006.
- ★ **Poland:** An IT system enabling the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy to prepare up-to-date prognosis of demand for foreign workers became operational in 2016.  
  
Third-country nationals are among beneficiaries of the [new child benefit programme](#) "Family 500+" introducing a monthly allowance of 500 PLN – equivalent to €114 – for children up to the age of 18 (including those already born). The programme was adopted with a purpose to boost natality and consequently economic growth. Also, in February, new [criteria](#) for granting work permits were introduced in Masovian voivodship. In January, a nation-wide [system](#) of free legal assistance was also established, which covers both Poles and foreigners residing in Poland.
- ★ **Slovak Republic:** In February 2016, the Slovak Republic and Japan agreed on a "[Programme of working holidays](#)" which will enter into force on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2016. This Programme will facilitate studying, travelling and working for young Slovaks and Japanese in both countries.  
  
Amendments on the Act on Residence of Foreigners and the Act on Employment Services, entered into force on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016, simplifying the access of third-country nationals to the Slovak labour market. In particular, the maximum possible period of temporary residence granted for the purpose of employment was extended from two to five years.
- ★ **Spain:** As a result of the cooperation between authorities dealing with migration and education, an agreement has been implemented as from January 2016 to encourage the arrival of foreign students, teaching staff and researchers into Spanish universities. The agreement set out best practices and improves the management of administrative processes for issuing visas and residence permits for students, researchers and staff of higher education institutions. This agreement is in line with the aims of further strengthening the Spanish system to attract and retain talent.
- ★ **Sweden:** On 28<sup>th</sup> January 2016, the Swedish Government appointed a special commissioner to analyse and investigate the preconditions for establishing legal routes to the EU for applicants for international protection. According to the Government, legal routes could be opened by making it possible for EU Member States to issue humanitarian visas or other types of entry permissions for people who intend to apply for asylum. The commissioner shall present her results in December 2017.
- ★ **United Kingdom:** On 18<sup>th</sup> January the Prime Minister announced a new English language requirement for family route migrants seeking to extend their stay in the UK. Non-EEA national partners and parents on the family route will need to pass a speaking and listening test at level A2 in order to qualify, after two-and-a-half-years in the UK, for further leave to remain on the five-year partner or parent route to settlement. The aim is to ensure that the person can better engage in everyday conversation and thereby better participate and integrate in everyday life in the community. The new requirement will not be implemented before October 2016.

The government commissioned the independent [Migration Advisory Committee \(MAC\)](#) to advise on reducing economic migration from outside Europe and to look at restricting skilled work visas to genuine skills shortages and highly specialist experts. Following a series of recommendations put forward by the MAC in January, a package of reforms has been published in March which includes: the introduction of an immigration skills charge for each non-EEA worker an employer wants to bring to the UK; a simplification of Intra Company Transfers visas to ensure that international companies only transfer leading senior managers and specialists to the UK.

## 5. MANAGEMENT OF THE EU EXTERNAL BORDERS

### EU DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

- ★ On 6<sup>th</sup> April 2016, the Commission presented the [Borders Package](#), which includes: the [Communication on Stronger and Smarter Information Systems for Borders and Security](#) on the ways in which the current information system could improve external border management and internal security, a [Regulation for the establishment of an Entry-Exit System](#) that will apply to all non-EU citizens admitted in the Schengen area with the aim of improved the management of short stays, and the related proposed amendment to the Schengen Borders Code.
- ★ On 5<sup>th</sup> April 2016, FRONTEX published its [Annual Risk Analysis](#) for 2016, which pointed at three major challenges with regard to the management of the external borders, namely: the unprecedented migratory pressure, the terrorist threat and the increased number of regular travellers. On 27<sup>th</sup> January 2016, the Commission discussed the [Schengen Evaluation Report on Greece](#). The report was not publicly available, but the press release pointed out the conclusion “that Greece is seriously neglecting its obligations and that there are serious deficiencies in the carrying out of external border controls”.
- ★ On 4<sup>th</sup> April 2016, the Commission presented a [Roadmap](#) up to December 2016 **to restore the normal functioning of the Schengen system**, as indicated by the European Council of 18-19 February. The same day, the Commission adopted the second [Visa Progress Report with Turkey](#). The Report highlighted that Turkey had made progress in fulfilling the requirements set by the Roadmap, as agreed upon by the [meeting of the Heads of state and government with Turkey in November 2015](#).
- ★ The **European Parliament** published its recent commissioned study named “[Proposal for a European Border and Coast Guard: evolution or revolution in external border management?](#)”. The study analyses in depth the Commission's proposal on the creation of a European Border and Coast Guard (EBCG) and puts forward some recommendations for how the main challenges in the new EBCG framework might be addressed in the legislative process.
- ★ The EU has signed a visa [waiver agreement with Peru](#) on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2016, whereby EU nationals and Peruvian nationals travelling for short stays (less than 90 days) to each other's countries would not need a visa.
- ★ A meeting was held on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2016 in Warsaw between the [Directors of the Fundamental Rights Agency \(FRA\) and the EU's External Border Agency \(FRONTEX\)](#) to discuss potential collaboration in view of strengthening fundamental rights in the context of the current migratory pressure.
- ★ On 15<sup>th</sup> February 2016, [10 million euro in additional funding were allocated](#) to help the **Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia** to deal with the migration crisis by improving its border and migration management.

### NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- ★ **Belgium:** On 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2016, the Belgian government introduced [temporary border controls](#) between the Province of West-Vlaanderen and France on the basis of article 25 of the Schengen Borders Code. Following several decisions of extension, the border controls were planned to last until the 12<sup>th</sup> April 2016. The measure was taken in the framework of an expected influx of migrants following the closure of migrant camps in the north of France.
- ★ **Finland:** On 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2016, [Finland and Russia agreed](#) that the border crossing points of Salla and Raja-Jooseppi, in Northern Finland, can only be used by Finnish, Russian and Belarusian citizens and their family members. This restriction, which specifies the provisions of the 1994 Agreement on crossing points at the Finnish-Russian State frontier, aims to prevent organised irregular migration. The aim is to enhance the effectiveness of measures taken in Finland and Russia in the past few weeks to combat irregular migration and its facilitation.
- ★ **Greece:** In the framework of the cooperation with Frontex, the “Poseidon Rapid Intervention” operation was approved to enhance the border protection management and fight cross-border crime on the most affected Eastern-Aegean islands (namely Lesbos, Samos, Chios, Kos, Leros, and recently Piraeus). This operation was initially launched on the 28<sup>th</sup> of December 2015 and its first phase of implementation lasted until 26<sup>th</sup> March 2016. After the successful operational results, Frontex decided an extension until 31<sup>st</sup> May 2016. In the framework of this operation, over 700 officers would be deployed on behalf of Greece and the other joining Member States for screening, registration, fingerprinting, border surveillance and debriefing.
- ★ **The Netherlands:** In March, [a Second Border Security Team was sent to Lesbos](#), Greece. The Team will support Greece by installing a EU-hotspot where migrants are screened, identified and registered. The Team is also involved in border control and the implementation of the EU agreement with Turkey. The Second Border Security Team consists of 55 employees of the Royal Military Police, the Royal Land Forces, the National Police and the Ministry of Security and Justice. The First Border Security Team started in January.

In February, the Netherlands also contributed to [reinforce the Border Security Teams](#), guarding EU's borders, with the aim of reaching 250 - 300 people in total in 2016. Moreover, during this year, the Netherlands will provide Frontex with an [additional 20 border guard officials](#) from the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee and the Seaport Police.



- ★ **Poland:** Among its [priorities](#), the newly appointed Minister of Interior and Administration, included strengthening borders protection through the restoration of the Carpathian Border Guard Unit, located in southern Poland, to better address potential impacts of change in migratory routes in the context of migration crisis.
- ★ **Portugal:** Four new digits readers have been installed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> line of the main national air border posts. These readers, along with the new National Visa System components of the Visa Information System (VIS) will allow improvements in checking biometrics data, detect fraudulent situations in the issue /use of Schengen visas and to identify undocumented citizens.
- ★ **Sweden:** On 7<sup>th</sup> April 2016, the Swedish Government decided to [prolong internal border controls](#) again, from 10<sup>th</sup> March up to and including 9<sup>th</sup> April to 8<sup>th</sup> May 2016. The internal border controls were originally introduced on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2015. According to the Government, they were necessary due to the significant increase of refugees trying to reach Sweden, which posed acute challenges to vital functions of society. The Government intends to review whether there is still a need after 8<sup>th</sup> April to further prolong the internal border controls.

## 6. IRREGULAR MIGRATION AND RETURN

### EU DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

- ★ The EU and Pakistan met on 2<sup>nd</sup> February in the Joint Readmission Committee and committed themselves to fully implement the [EU-Pakistan Readmission Agreement](#), which was agreed upon in 2010, and discussed ways to improve the readmission procedure.
- ★ On 13<sup>th</sup> January 2016, the Commission opened the [Public Consultation on Smuggling](#) to gather EU citizens' and organisations' views on the current EU legislation on migrants' smuggling and on possible improvements. The results will underpin the on-going evaluation and impact assessment the Commission is carrying out on the EU legislation on this topic. The Public Consultation closed on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2016.
- ★ During the 2<sup>nd</sup> Europol and INTERPOL Operational Forum on Countering Migrant Smuggling Networks, the Commission launched the new [Europol's European Migrant Smuggling Centre \(EMSC\)](#), which will assist Member States in fighting migrants' smuggling criminal networks.

### NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- ★ **Austria:** On 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016, the Minister of the Interior presented an information campaign in Afghanistan. The aim of the campaign is to reduce migratory movement from Afghanistan, as part of Austria's initiative to limit yearly entries to a maximum of 37,500 persons. The campaign includes posters, online publications, announcements in Afghan newspapers, and publications on the buses such as the use of social media.

On 24<sup>th</sup> February, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Interior of Austria, Croatia and Slovenia participated with the equivalent Ministers of Western Balkan countries in a conference on the topic of "Managing Migration together", held in Vienna. The aim was to increase cooperation on border management and on combating human smuggling, in order to quickly and sustainably reduce the migration pressure on the Balkan route. The issued [declaration](#) contains a political agreement on implementing and promoting a comprehensive approach on the "management of the migration and refugee crisis".

- ★ **Belgium:** On 21<sup>st</sup> March, a [national round-table](#) – organised by the BE EMN NCP - gathered some 40 key experts in the fight against migrant smuggling. The participants discussed the recently published EMN study on migrant smuggling as well as the use of social media in migrant smuggling.

On 1<sup>st</sup> February, the Belgian Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (Fedasil) organised – in cooperation with IOM - a [charter flight](#) from Belgium to Baghdad, to bring back 106 Iraqis who had signed up for a voluntary return programme. Fedasil took this initiative due to the high number of Iraqis applying for a voluntary return to this region in the last months. Belgium is the first European country to organise a charter flight for voluntary return.

- ★ **Czech Republic:** Police officers were deployed to the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and to Slovenia – the countries situated on the so called 'Western Balkan migration route' to the European Union. The main task of the contingent was to support border control to tackle the high inflow of irregular migrants. From mid-December 2015 to the end of January 2016, 20 police officers were present in Slovenia, whilst 25 police officers were sent to FYROM along mid-January to the end of February 2016. Currently, an extension of the missions is underway.

- ★ **Germany:** On 17<sup>th</sup> March 2016, the 'Law for the facilitated expulsion of criminal foreigners and for the expanded exclusion of recognition as refugee relating to criminal foreigners' came into force. The law introduced a serious reason for expulsion when a third-country national is sentenced to prison, or to juvenile offence, for attempting the life, physical integrity or property, for sexual offences, or for obstructing police officers with the use of violence or threatening physical integrity or life, or still if these acts are committed with deceit. The expulsion is to be enforced irrespective of whether the sentence of conviction is suspended on probation. If the sentence to prison or the juvenile offender sentence is equivalent to one year or more, this is regarded as an especially severe reason for expulsion. Asylum seekers sentenced to prison, or to a young offender sentence, of at least one year can be more easily refused international protection status.

- ★ **Luxembourg:** On 25<sup>th</sup> March 2016, the Government council approved the bill amending the law on free movement of persons and immigration and the law on the Detention Centre, allowing the extension of the detention of returnees with minors from 72 hours to seven days.
- ★ **The Netherlands:** As from March 2016, irregular staying migrants from Ukraine are [excluded from the of €1.750 in-cash assistance](#) provided by the International Organization of Migration (IOM) for the support to return. The IOM claims to have evidence of abuses of asylum procedure by Ukrainian nationals.

Since February, the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee will be performing more intensive [Mobile Security Monitoring Checks](#) (so called "Mobiel Toezicht Veiligheid", MTV). MTV checks are used to track down human smugglers, as well as to map migration flows. Also, the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee will no longer operate on the side of the road, but on the road itself.

In January, the Netherlands and Albania agreed to return groups of rejected asylum seekers by State flights. This agreement enables quicker repatriation of Albanians, aiming to ensure swift repatriation of asylum seekers whose asylum applications will most likely be rejected.

- ★ **Portugal:** Between January and March 2016, return escorts received training of Frontex with the purpose of reinforcing the integration of Frontex rapid intervention teams within the EU - Turkey agreement.
- ★ **United Kingdom:** The UK will contribute £17 million to joint work with France to ease migrant pressures in the Calais region and further strengthen the UK border. At the UK-France summit in Amiens on 3<sup>rd</sup> March, the Home Secretary and French Interior Minister reaffirmed their commitment to addressing the issues raised by the migration pressures in Calais and the surrounding area. This contribution will be used for priority infrastructure projects to help the French police protect the road networks around the port of Calais. It will also: fund efforts to give shelter to migrants in facilities in other parts of France, support the running of those facilities, and enable further joint work to return migrants not in need of humanitarian assistance to their home countries.

## 7. ACTIONS ADDRESSING TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

### EU DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATES

- ★ On 8<sup>th</sup> March 2016, **Europol** supported [the German authorities in dismantling a Chinese organised crime group](#) that was involved in trafficking Chinese women forced into prostitution in Europe.
- ★ The European Commission published the final report of the [Study on the gender dimension of trafficking in human beings](#).

### NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- ★ **Greece:** The first session of anti-trafficking training seminars designed for civil servants, school teachers and front-line professionals took place in March 2016. Additional trainings will take place in Athens and Thessaloniki. These training & education programmes are major pillars of anti-trafficking policy and are delivered by the Office of the National Rapporteur on human trafficking in Greece, in close cooperation with the National Centre of Public Administration & Local Government.
- ★ **France:** The National Consultative Committee on Human Rights (CNCDH) published its [annual public report](#) on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2016, dedicated to the evaluation of the National Inter-ministerial Action Plan to combat trafficking in human beings (THB) and, more generally, the public policy related to this issue. Through this report, the CNCDH gives a clear picture of the reality of THB in France and evaluates the resources and schemes provided to tackle it.
- ★ **Luxembourg:** The *Ecole Supérieure du Travail* is organising a training for public servants in order to identify victims of human trafficking. The LU EMN NCP became a member of the coordinating team after a meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2016. A first meeting of coordination was organised also with the INAP (National Institute of Public Administration).
- ★ **Poland:** The second report on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Actions against Trafficking in Human Beings has been submitted. Under the Polish Presidency of the Council of Baltic Sea States, Poland held a meeting of the Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings dedicated to the question of effectiveness of anti-trafficking trainings.
- ★ **Portugal:** At the beginning of 2016, inspectors of the Immigration and Borders Service working on borders control were trained on "Combating human trafficking" based on the Frontex manual. In addition, experts on migration attended several conferences and other European events related to the prevention, combat and punishment of trafficking in human beings, to get a better knowledge of this crime.

## 8. EXTERNAL DIMENSION

### NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

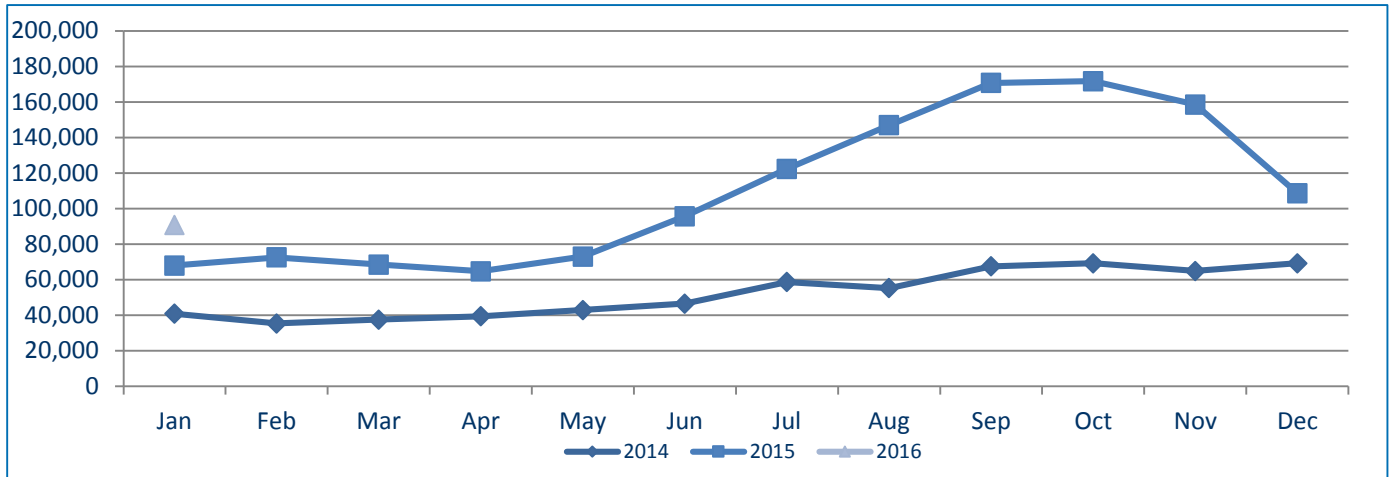
- ★ **Austria:** On 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2016, the Ministry of the Interior seconded seven police officers to Macedonia to support the country with the registration of refugees.

- ★ **Czech Republic:** Acknowledging the very high pressure of mixed migration flows through the Western Balkans migration route, and with consideration of the outlook for the coming weeks, the Government has decided to grant a financial contribution of 20 million CZK (740,000 EUR) to the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). The contribution is under the framework of the Programme on Assistance for Refugees in the Country of Origin and Prevention of Major Migration Movements of the Ministry of the Interior and aims at strengthening the migration and asylum infrastructure and capacity building in FYROM.
- ★ **The Netherlands:** In March 2016, the Netherlands and Ethiopia agreed to work together in various fields to improve the position of migrants and refugees. The cooperation concerns a programme for strengthening the position of women and provides information for people planning to migrate to Europe in order to discourage and combat irregular migration and human trafficking, and in order to offer prospects in the region for local people and refugees.

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

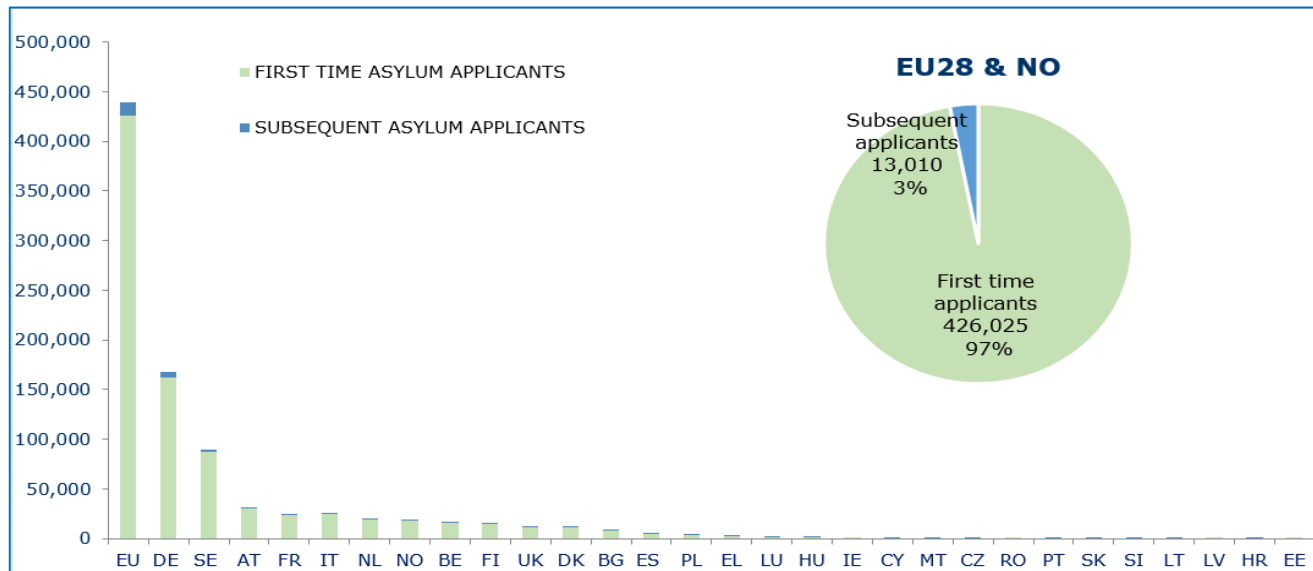
## EU Figures

Figure 1a: Asylum applications in EU-28, January 2014 – January 2016.



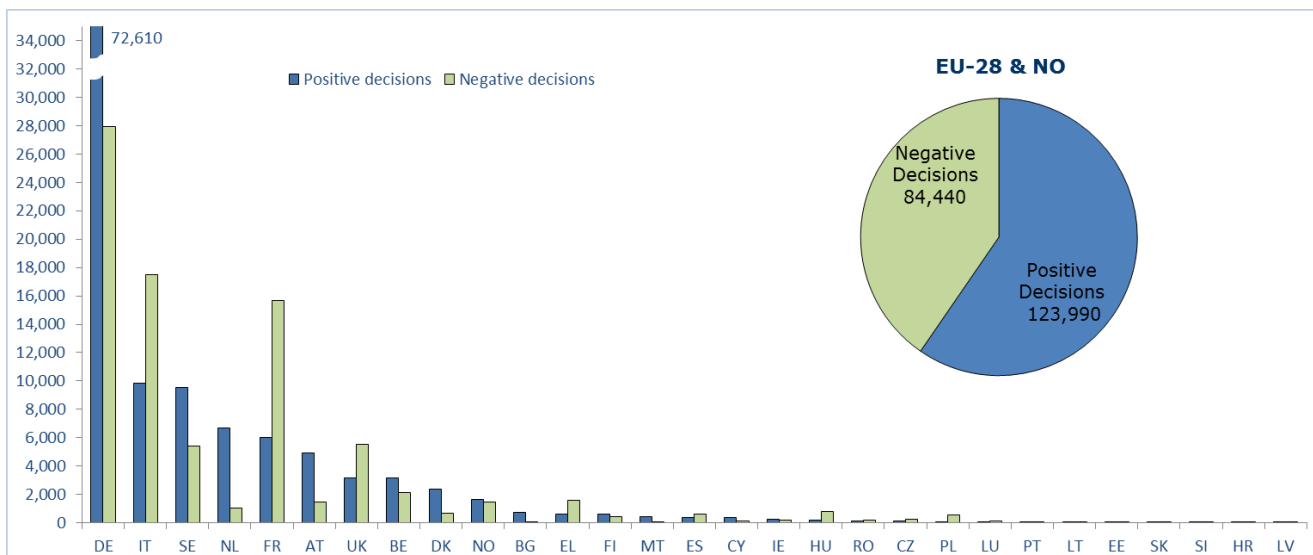
Source: Eurostat [[migr\\_asyappctzm](#)], accessed on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2016. For 2016 data were only available for January, except for DK, ES, CY, LU.

Figure 1b: First time applicants and subsequent applicants (together, total asylum applicants) in Q4 2015 (October-December), in EU-28 and Norway (quarterly data)



Source: Eurostat [[migr\\_asyappctzm](#)], accessed on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

Figure 2: First instance asylum decisions in EU-28 and Norway for non-EU citizens, fourth quarter 2015 (quarterly data)



Source: Eurostat [[migr\\_asydcfstq](#)], accessed on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2016 – Negative decisions include also "Dublin decisions" (according to Art. 4, EC Regulation n. 862/2007).



Figure 3a: Top fifteen nationalities of asylum applicants in EU-28 and Norway in 2015

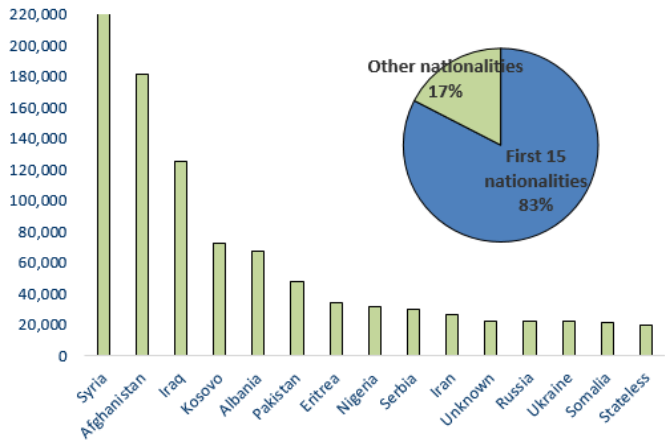
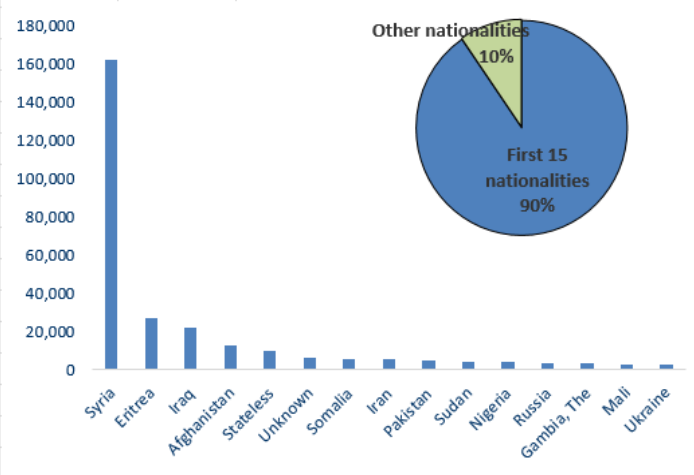


Figure 3b: Top fifteen nationalities of positive asylum decisions in EU-28 and Norway in 2015



Source: Eurostat [[migr\\_asyappctza](#) and [migr\\_asydcfstz](#)], accessed on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2016 – Negative decisions include also “Dublin decisions” (according to Art. 4, EC Regulation n. 862/2007).

Figure 4a: Illegal border crossing – Top nationalities (in %)

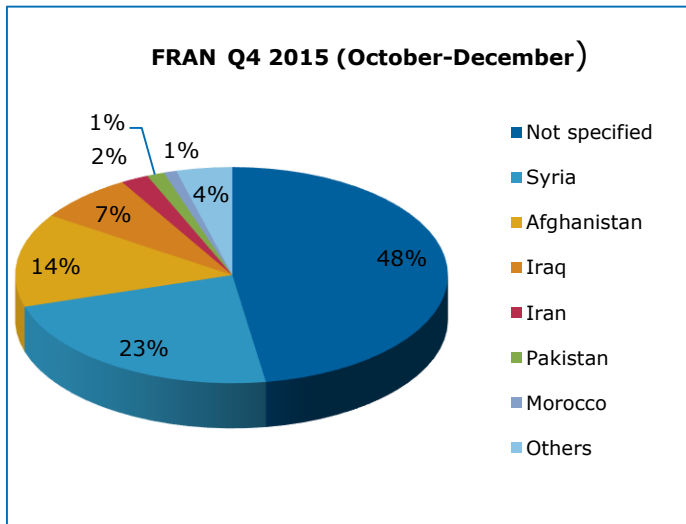


Figure 4b: Refused entry – Top nationalities (in %)

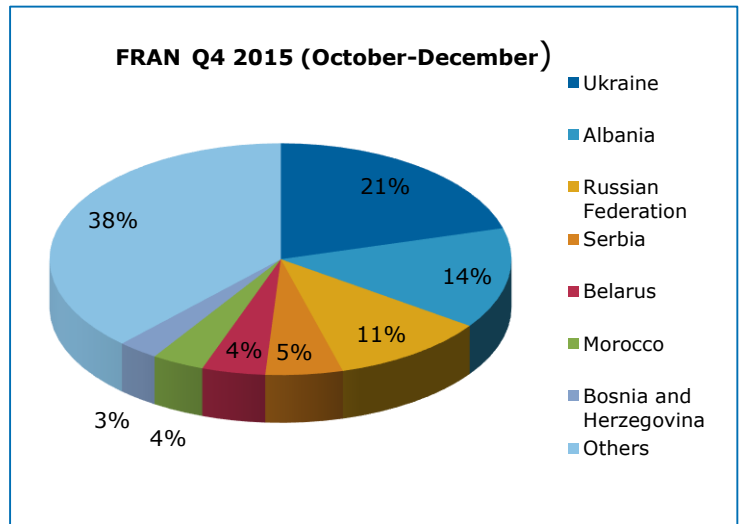


Figure 4c: Illegal stay – Top nationalities (in %)

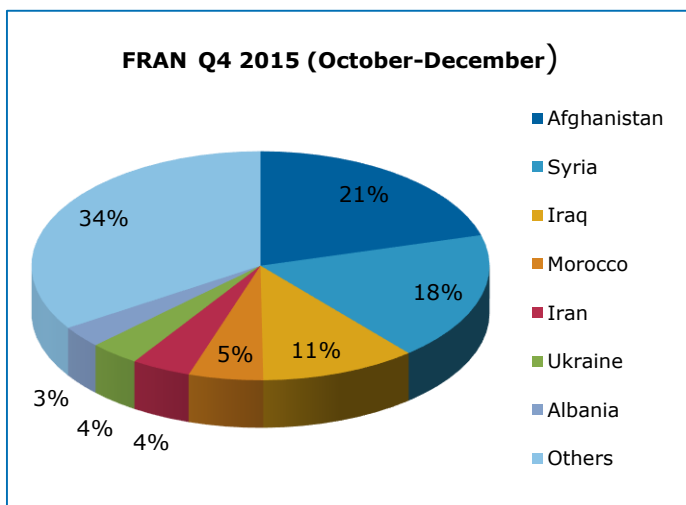
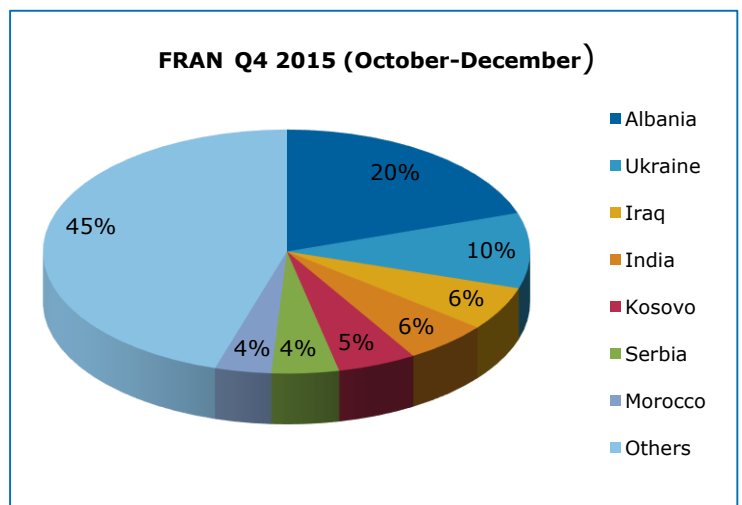


Figure 4d: Effective return – Top nationalities (in %)



Source: [FRONTEx FRAN Q4 2015](#) (October – December 2015)

## Latest available national statistics

### IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMON EUROPEAN ASYLUM SYSTEM

- ★ **Poland:** The Office for Foreigners published yearly [data](#) on asylum. According to them, the number of Syrians submitting asylum applications in 2015 remained low (approx. 2% of all applications).
- ★ **Slovak Republic:** The Migration Office of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic published its [Statistical Report 2015](#) which contains an overview of the number of asylum applications, number of granted asylum or subsidiary protections and granted citizenships in 2015.
- ★ **United Kingdom:** The Office for National Statistics' [Migration Statistics Quarterly](#) (produced with Home Office, Department for Work and Pensions and National Records of Scotland) was published on the 25<sup>th</sup> of February. This provides quarterly data on UK migration flows, visas, asylum and settlement.

### LEGAL MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION

- ★ **Austria:** As of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016, Austria had a population of almost 8.7 million people, which represents an increase of 1.3% compared to 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015. The [share of foreign nationals](#) increased from 13.3% in 2015 to 14.6% in 2016. Among the foreign population, the increase in 2015 was the highest among Syrian, Afghan and Iraqi citizens.
- ★ **The Netherlands:** The influx of asylum seekers to the Netherlands [is changing in terms of composition](#). In 2015 the asylum recognition rate was 70 percent. Syrians and Eritreans were the largest groups coming to the Netherlands. Although Syrians are still the largest group, in the first three months of 2016, about twenty-five percent of the asylum applications were filed by people coming from a country which was declared safe (mainly Albanians, Serbians and Kosovans).
- ★ **Poland:** [Data On Immigration](#) to Poland in 2015 shows that immigration (especially of Ukrainian citizens) has grown significantly: the number of applications for residence permit increased by nearly 65%, compared to 2014, and reached around 109,000. In addition, Poland issued 1,525,516 visas (approx. +2.5% increase, compared to 2014). Moreover, a record-high number was recorded of employers' declarations to entrust work to third-country nationals (almost 783,000, compared to approximately 388,000 in 2014).

### IRREGULAR MIGRATION AND RETURN

- ★ **Greece:** The trends regarding the mixed migratory flows arriving to Greece remained unchanged during the past three-month period. During the first two months of 2016, there was a dramatic increase of the number of detections of irregular migrants in comparison with the same period of 2015. More specifically, during January and February 2016, the number of detected migrants both at land and sea borders reached 125,494 individuals, compared to 4,798 during the same period on the previous year.
- ★ **Poland:** In 2015 the scale of irregular migration to Poland considerably increased. The number of third-country nationals refused entry and of irregular border crossing increased by 92% and 42% respectively, compared to 2014. However, the sharp increase cannot be associated with the ongoing migration crisis in Europe. . In comparison to 2014, more return decision were issued (+26%), but also more third-country nationals were successfully returned (+27%). Also, the execution rate for the return decisions in 2015 remained high, amounting to 93%.
- ★ **Slovak Republic:** 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 2015 which provides data on both legal and irregular migration, including returns.
- ★ **United Kingdom:** Home Office [Immigration Statistics October to December 2015](#) were published on 25<sup>th</sup> February. It provides the latest UK figures on those subject to immigration control, for the period up to year ending December 2015. Topics included: admissions, visas, asylum, settlement, citizenship, detention, removals and voluntary departures.

## Updates on EU legislation transposition

### IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMON EUROPEAN ASYLUM SYSTEM

- ★ **Estonia:** On 16<sup>th</sup> March 2016 the Amendment to the Act on Granting International Protection to Foreigners transposed Directive 2013/32/EU on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection and Directive 2013/33/EU laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection. These amendments will enter into force on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2016. The Amendment Act introduces many significant changes, e.g. that Police and Border Guard Board will draw up a list of safe countries of origin.

### LEGAL MIGRATION

- ★ **Luxembourg:** On 25<sup>th</sup> March 2016, the Government council approved a bill amending the law on free movement of persons and immigration and the law on the Detention Centre, transposing the Directives 2014/36/UE on seasonal workers and 2014/66/UE on inter-corporate transferees. This bill simplified the procedure of certain categories of authorisation of stay such as: independent workers, family members of salaried workers, students and blue card holders. Also, it introduced a new category of authorisation of stay for investors.

### IRREGULAR MIGRATION AND RETURN

- ★ **Luxembourg:** On 24<sup>th</sup> March 2016, the government introduced the bill n° 6976 on the exchange of personal data and police related information, implementing Council decision 2006/960/JHA of 18 December 2006 and n° 2008/615/JHA of 23 June 2008 on strengthening cross-border cooperation in order to fight terrorism and cross-border criminality.

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

- ★ The **EMN Glossary** was updated with almost 250 amendments of existing words (e.g. correcting or updating translations and amending and updating definitions), between the end of 2015 and beginning 2016. As much as 29 new words were added, among which: *access to the procedure for international protection*, *emergency response system*, *evidence assessment*, *forced return*, *gender-based persecution*, *gender-specific violence*, *migration route*, *procedure for international protection*, *reintegration assistance*, and *Smart Borders Package*. The new terms and amendments can be found in the [online version of the Glossary](#).
- ★ **Hungary:** The Final Conference and Workshop of the “Referral of and assistance for victims of human trafficking in Europe,” the so called RAVOT-EUR project took place on 28<sup>th</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup> January 2016 in Budapest. The mission of the RAVOT-EUR project was to clarify and make transparent the transnational referral system for the relevant state and non-state actors coming across victims between Hungary, the Netherlands and Belgium, to contribute to the assistance, referral and safe return of human trafficking victims as well as to facilitate transnational networking and trust building among professionals. The event aimed to present, sum up and evaluate the project results, as well as to build a better understanding of the current situation of the fight against trafficking in human beings in Europe. It provided a great opportunity for experts for consultation on the one hand about the practical return of human trafficking victims through transnational referral mechanism and on the other hand about the organization of the safe return of a Hungarian human trafficking victim based on real cases and with the help of [the website](#) and the [Information Manual](#) of the RAVOT-EUR project.
- ★ **Lithuania:** EMN LT NCP together with the Ministry of the Interior will host a conference “The Migration Situation at EU Borders and Changes in Migratory Routes”, which will be held on 23<sup>rd</sup> May in Vilnius. The aim of the conference is to come to an understanding of and how migration routes may change following the closing of the Balkan route.