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The EMN Quarterly provides policymakers and other practitioners with updates on recent migration and international protection policy developments at EU and national level. The 43rd edition provides information from April-June 2023, including the (latest) relevant published statistics.

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

TEMPORARY PROTECTION DIRECTIVE

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SPECIAL NOTE

This edition contains only national level updates. In June 2024, the EMN launched an updated version of the newsletter - EMNews - covering updates from the first quarter of 2024. EMNews will provide more focused and concise information covering EU and national level developments in the field of migration and asylum.

Recent EMN publications:

- EMN inform on [Accompanied children's right to be heard in international protection procedures](#)
- EMN inform on [Displacement and migration related to disasters, climate change and environmental degradation](#)
- EMN inform on [Statelessness in the European Union, Norway and Georgia](#)
- EMN inform on [Resettlement, humanitarian admissions and community sponsorship](#)
- [EMN Annual Report on Migration and Asylum \(ARM\), Statistical Annex](#) and [Country Factsheets](#)

Stay tuned for upcoming EMN publications:

- EMN study on the Integration of international protection applicants in the labour market
- EMN inform on the Analysis of irregular migratory routes to the EU

- EMN inform on the Digitalisation of identity and residence documents issued to third-country nationals
- EMN inform on Family reunification of beneficiaries of international protection

TEMPORARY PROTECTION DIRECTIVE

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Austria: On 1 June 2023, Statistics Austria [announced that in 2022 Austria recorded a net migration of +136 979 persons](#) (+ 161% compared to 2021), which was higher than in 2015 (net migration: +113 067 persons). Half of the net migration in 2022 was due to migration from Ukraine (the net migration of Ukrainian citizens was +67 353 persons).

Croatia: Since temporary protection has been extended automatically twice by six months (until 4 March 2024), Croatia has also extended residence permits until 4 March 2024. Displaced persons from Ukraine under temporary protection had to go to the police administration/police station in-person according to their place of residence in order to verify if an extension were possible. Since 8 799 displaced persons did not apply for the extension of the temporary protection card before the original deadline of 30 April 2023, the [deadline was extended to 23 June 2023](#). Displaced persons who apply for an extension of temporary protection [after the deadline will not lose their temporary protection status](#) in Croatia and will continue to have the rights and obligations arising from the status.

On 26 April 2023, [19 wounded persons from Ukraine came to Croatia](#). Following the Government decision on 16 March 2023 regarding the provision of assistance for the treatment and rehabilitation of wounded persons from Ukraine in Croatia, an inter-ministerial working group was established that is responsible for the implementation of the Decision that is coordinated by the Ministry of Croatian Veterans. During treatment and rehabilitation, all 19 wounded persons and nine of their accompanying family members received temporary protection status, including the right to receive the same healthcare as Croatian citizens. The Civil Protection Directorate is responsible for the accommodation of family members.

Cyprus: On 24 May 2023, a new [rent subsidy](#) was introduced for beneficiaries of Temporary Protection who continue to stay in hotels or other accommodation designated by the Republic of Cyprus and have not secured any other place of residence.

Finland: On 16 May 2023, the Centre of Expertise in Immigrant Integration of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment [commissioned a report](#) to study the labour market position and employment service use by Ukrainians with temporary protection. The study aims to find out how employment and integration services should be developed to better promote the employment and integration of beneficiaries of temporary protection.

On 1 June 2023, children and young persons under 18 who have fled the war in Ukraine may be entitled to social assistance, if they are permanently resident in Finland and their parents cannot provide for them and they have no other means of securing a living. The adult who cares for the child is entitled to child benefits. [Read more.](#)

France: On 23 June 2023, internal multi-annual guidelines for the reception and integration of displaced persons from Ukraine (2023-24) were published. The guidelines set out five priorities to promote the integration of beneficiaries of temporary protection (BPT): 1) improving access to accommodation and housing, health care and social rights; 2) mobilising language training schemes; 3) mobilising public employment service to facilitate access to the labour market; 4) improving the reception of Ukrainian pupils in education; and 5) improving the steering of the national reception scheme for displaced persons from Ukraine.

Greece: Between 1 April and 30 June 2023, 1 995 displaced people from Ukraine were registered under the Temporary Protection Directive framework. Most of the cases were managed by the Regional Asylum Service

Offices of Attica, Rhodes and Thessaloniki, serving 74% of total beneficiaries (38%, 20% and 16%, respectively). Eight out of ten beneficiaries were women (80%, 1,597).

Latvia: On 3 June 2023, amendments to the [Law on Assistance to Ukrainian Civilians](#) came into force, stipulating that accommodation support for Ukrainians fleeing the war, currently staying in Latvia, has been extended until the end of 2023.

On 21 April 2023, amendments to came into force. The aim of the amendments is to determine the procedure after a Ukrainian civilian is excluded from an educational institution, to clarify the conditions for the organisation of additional training and post-tests in the 2022/2023 school year and enable the achievement of the results as set in the educational standards for a civilian of Ukraine.

More than one million euros has been channelled to Ukrainian refugee children for the organisation of various informal educational activities. The [support programme is planned to be implemented](#) by 1 December 2023, involving approximately 3 500 children and young people. The support measures are being organised to reduce psycho-emotional tension caused by war events for Ukrainian children and young people, as well as to strengthen the ethnic identity and community of Ukrainian children with the Ukrainian community living in Latvia.

On 25 April 2023, amendments to the [Cabinet order "About the Action Plan for providing support to Ukrainian civilians in the Republic of Latvia for 2023"](#) came into force. The amendments supplement the section of the event plan "Social assistance, financial support, services" with a new measure: the provision of a psychological support course for officials of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine. The implementation of the measure is planned for the period from 5 June 2023 to 22 December 2023.

Lithuania: On 8 May 2023, in Alytus, the last remaining Foreigner's Registration Centre established following the outbreak of Russia's war against Ukraine [was closed](#) as the flow of Ukrainian refugees coming to Lithuania reduced significantly. Following this closure, Ukrainians arriving in Lithuania need to go directly to any Migration Department office to register.

Luxembourg: On 21 April 2023, the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs [published a communication](#) informing beneficiaries of temporary protection in Luxembourg of the possibility to apply for a residence permit. More specifically, the Ministry announced that the holders of a certificate of temporary protection in Luxembourg valid until 4 March 2024 who are exercising a salaried activity on the territory with a monthly salary equivalent to at least the monthly rate of the minimum social wage of an unskilled worker, as well as their family members, can apply to the Directorate of Immigration to obtain a residence permit.

Netherlands: On 8 June 2023, the [Minister for Migration informed](#) the House of Representatives that third-country nationals with a temporary residence permit in Ukraine who are in the Netherlands could make use of the remigration policy of the Return and Departure Service (DT&V) between 1 June and 1 August. Under strict restrictions, they would receive support and a financial contribution upon departure. On 4 September 2023, the Temporary Protection Directive for non-Ukrainian third-country nationals with a temporary residence permit in Ukraine expired.

In the near future, Ukrainian beneficiaries will be able to [receive support from Ukrainian psychologists](#) who have also fled their country. The Dutch government has designated two organisations, Empatia (a collaboration between VluchtelingenWerk Nederland, OPORA Foundation, and PsyGlobal) and the Ukrainian Displaced Persons Psychosocial Support Desk (LOOP), to organise this assistance. Engaging Ukrainian psychologists will improve access to mental healthcare for those in need and ease the strain on the Dutch labour market.

Poland: On 29 May 2023, the President signed the Act on Changing the names of state service universities supervised by the minister competent for internal affairs (which made amendments to the Act on the Police, the Act on the Border Guard, the Act on the State Fire Service and certain other acts). The Act [extended the](#)

[period of legal stay](#) of Ukrainian citizens and the family members of Ukrainian citizens holding the Pole's Card, who arrived legally in Poland between the outbreak of the armed conflict on 24 February 2022 and 4 March 2024. In addition, Ukrainian citizens or family members who hold the Pole's Card will have their legal stay extended until 31 August 2024, or 30 September 2024 if on 4 March 2024 they are attending pre-school education or are fulfilling their compulsory education under the Polish educational system or studying in a kindergarten or school functioning in the Ukrainian education system using distance learning methods and techniques. This also applies to the parents or guardians of these persons, if they are minors.

Sweden: On 29 June 2023, the [Minister for Migration Maria Malmer Stenergard hosted a round table discussion](#) based on the conclusions of a report produced by IOM. The report assessed findings from a survey about [how Ukrainians view their life in Sweden](#). The Minister emphasised the importance of the civil society representatives invited and the need to support Ukrainians residing in Sweden.

Montenegro: Following the adoption of [amendments to the Decision on Granting Temporary Protection to Persons from Ukraine](#), with the aim of extending temporary protection to persons from Ukraine until 11 March 2024, the Government of Montenegro carried out procurement procedures in order to provide accommodation for persons fleeing Ukraine. In the northern and central region, 45 people can be accommodated, and 120 people can be accommodated in the southern region. The period for which the accommodation facilities are provided follows the period of the extension of temporary protection.

During the reporting period, 817 requests for granting temporary protection for persons from Ukraine were received. Of these, 606 applicants were granted temporary protection status, while the remaining requests were being processed.

1. GENERAL POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Austria: On 9 May 2023 a [Regulation by the Minister of the Interior was promulgated](#) according to which, in order to ensure public peace, order and security, between 12 May 2023 and 11 November 2023 the internal borders with the Republic of Slovenia and Hungary may only be crossed in land traffic at border crossing points.

Cyprus: On 15 June 2023, the Council of Ministers decided on the [establishment of a Deputy Ministry of Migration and Asylum](#). The relevant Bill has been submitted to Parliament for voting. The establishment of a dedicated Deputy Ministry will contribute towards more effective management of all migration and asylum issues in Cyprus.

Estonia: On 17 April 2023, [the President of Estonia officially nominated the 53rd Government in office](#), led by Prime Minister Kaja Kallas. The Government consists of 13 ministers from the Reform Party, Eesti 200 and the Social Democratic Party. Lauri Läänemets from the Social Democratic Party was appointed as Minister of the Interior.

Finland: On 4 April 2023, the report of [the preliminary study project for the comprehensive reform of the Aliens Act was published](#). The project assessed the effectiveness of the Act, identified key development needs and outlined the implementation of the reform. A key observation of the project's monitoring group was that it is essential to launch a comprehensive reform of the Act during the next government's term.

On 16 June 2023, the [outcome of the negotiations](#) in the government formation talks led by Petteri Orpo (National Coalition Party, the Prime Minister of the new government) was published. The Government's target is "to build a strong and committed Finland – a well-functioning, safe and just society where opportunities for success and wellbeing are secured across generations and throughout Finland. The Government will safeguard the future of the welfare society, ensure adequate services for all and promote the balanced development of the national economy."

On 20 June 2023, [the President of the Republic appointed Finland's 77th Government](#), led by Prime Minister Petteri Orpo. The Government consists of 19 ministers: eight from the National Coalition Party, seven from the Finns Party, 2.5 from the Swedish People's Party and 1.5 from the Christian Democrats. Mari Rantanen from the Finns Party was appointed as Minister of the Interior.

Germany: On 7 July 2023, the German Bundesrat (Federal Council) [approved the new Skilled Worker Immigration Act](#) to further facilitate the immigration of skilled workers by removing existing hurdles and lowering the earnings limit for the Blue Card. The main legislative body (Bundestag) passed the law on 23 June 2023. With this reform, a new system will be introduced to make moving to Germany easier for foreign skilled workers, counteracting the shortage of skilled labour. The new law is expected to come into force on 1 March 2024. Beginning from this date, qualified workers from third countries will be able to enter Germany for work purposes under facilitated conditions. An "Opportunity Card" (Chancenkarte) with a point system will be introduced, which will allow citizens of non-EU countries to enter Germany and stay for up to one year to find employment. The criteria for an "Opportunity Card" include qualifications, knowledge of German and English, professional experience, personal ties to Germany and the potential of a spouse or partner. Once the newly adopted law fully enters into force, asylum seekers will benefit from the facilitated conditions to get employed too. Asylum seekers who entered Germany before 29 March 2023 and meet the application requirements will be able to withdraw their asylum application and apply for a work and residence permit.

Greece: On 27 June 2023, [a new Presidential Decree \(P.D. 77, G.G. A' 130\) was issued](#), amending the organisational structure of Ministry of Migration and Asylum. In particular, the Special Secretariat for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors was abolished and its competencies were transferred to the newly-established General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection. Also, the Special Secretariat for the Coordination of Stakeholders was abolished and its competencies were transferred to the General Secretariat for the Reception of asylum seekers of the Ministry.

Ireland: On 30 May 2023, the Central Statistics Office [released summary results from Census 2022](#). Ireland's population has increased by 8.1% since 2016 to reach 5 149 139, with positive net migration contributing to the increase. This is the first time the population has exceeded five million since 1851.

Italy: On 5 May 2023, [a significant new law was approved](#), amending several aspects related to the management of migration, both regular and irregular. The main substantive changes are given in the relevant sections of the Quarterly.

Lithuania: On 5 April 2023, the Government approved an initiative of the Ministry of Justice to take legal action to hold the Belarusian regime accountable for the smuggling of migrants at the Belarus-Lithuania border. The Ministry of Justice [will lodge a complaint against Belarus](#) for non-compliance with the provisions of the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air.

On 26 April 2023, the Government [approved the proposal](#) by the Ministry of Interior to amend the Law on Crisis Management and Civil Protection. The proposal aims to establish new criteria for declaring an extreme situation in cases of the instrumentalisation of migration.

On 12 June 2023, the Minister of Interior [decided to establish an inter-institutional working group](#) to evaluate the ruling of the Constitutional Court of Lithuania, which found that the provisions of the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners introduced in response to Belarus' regime instrumentalization of migration and relating to the temporary accommodation of asylum seekers in foreigners' registration centres [conflicted with Constitution](#). The working group will assess the provisions of this Law and will make proposals on how the provisions should be improved.

Luxembourg: On 4 April 2023, the law of 29 March 2023, amending the electoral law [came into force](#) providing that third-country nationals in possession of a legitimisation card can exercise their active or passive right to vote in municipal elections. This provision supplements the law of 22 July 2022 which specified that residents of third countries should be in possession of a card or a residence permit in Luxembourg.

Poland: On 16 June 2023, the regulation of the Minister of Health that cancelled the state of epidemic emergency in Poland came into force. Pursuant to it, [the state of epidemic emergency in connection with COVID-19 was revoked](#) as of 1 July 2023. No longer in an official state of emergency, foreigners were given 30 days to settle their situation, if they had benefitted from special solutions for extending their stay introduced in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Portugal: On 2 June 2023, [Decree-Law 40/2023](#) was published, establishing the transitional arrangements for workers in the context of the merger process of the [Portuguese Immigration and Borders Service \(SEF\)](#), regulating the transition of border guards to special careers of the [Portuguese Criminal Police \(PJ\)](#).

On the same day, [Decree-Law No. 41/2023](#), establishing the new “Portuguese Agency for Integration, Migration and Asylum”, was published. According to this Decree-Law, as of 29 October:

- SEF and the [High Commission for Migration \(ACM\)](#) have been merged into a new entity, AIMA, I. P. (“Portuguese Agency for Integration, Migration and Asylum”).
- The task of implementing national and European public policies on migration and asylum regarding entry and stay and the reception and integration of foreign citizens into national territory will now take place within a single administrative body, pursuing a comprehensive approach to its management.
- AIMA, I. P., is to be a public institute integrated in the indirect administration of the State, endowed with administrative and financial autonomy, with jurisdiction and decentralised services throughout the national territory, and subject to the oversight and supervision of the member of the Government responsible for the areas of equality and migration.
- The administrative functions, previously exercised by SEF, in the area of migration and asylum will be carried out by AIMA, I. P., the police functions being transferred to the security forces and services (the Criminal Police, the Republican National Guard and the Public Security Police).
- The Institute of Registries and Notary, I. P. (IRN, I. P.) will assume the powers of SEF to grant and issue the Portuguese electronic passport, as well as renewals of residence permits.

Spain: On 3 May 2023, the Council of Ministers approved the extension of the National Programme for the Resettlement of Refugees in Spain, approved by the Council of Ministers on 21 February 2023.

Sweden: Steps have been taken to tighten Swedish migration policy. On 10 May 2023, an increased maintenance requirement for work permits was proposed by the Government. A labour migrant would have to have a wage of at least 80 percent of the median wage to be granted a work permit. Secondly, on 30 May 2023, an [inquiry report on knowledge requirements for a permanent residence permit was presented](#). The Minister for Migration, Maria Malmer Stenergard, declared: “If a person wants to live and work in this country, Swedish language skills and basic knowledge of Swedish society are key.” Finally, on 2 June 2023, the Minister for Migration outlined [measures to strengthen Swedish citizenship](#), at a press briefing. The requirements are in line with the proposal for permanent residence permits with the addition of knowledge of Swedish values.

Georgia: On 27 April 2023, the National Statistics Office of Georgia (Geostat) [published data on international migration](#) (reference year 2022) and population, as well as the main demographic indicators.

As part of the preparatory work of the General Population Census 2024, Geostat visited various Georgian regions (in April - [Kakheti and Adjara](#); May - [Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti and Guria](#); June - [Imereti](#)) to collect relevant data on the households and buildings.

Montenegro: On 16 May 2023, Minister Filip Adžić and European Commissioner for Home Affairs Ylva Johansson [signed an Agreement](#) between the European Union and Montenegro on operational activities carried out by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency in Montenegro (Frontex). The new Agreement envisages the deployment of Frontex officers at any part of the state border of Montenegro, and not only at the border with the European Union, as was defined in the previous Agreement.



2. INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION INCLUDING ASYLUM

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Belgium: Residents leaving the reception network because they have been granted international protection are finding it increasingly difficult to find suitable accommodation. This is in part because the number of affordable houses and apartments on the rental market is shrinking and rents are rising. As a result, residents stay longer in the reception network, which hinders the inflow of newcomers. For this reason, the federal reception agency [Fedasil](#) published a manual and four [animation videos](#) on 9 June which aim to help recognised refugees find rental accommodation. The videos are already available in Dutch, French and English, and will be published on www.fedasilinfo.be in 14 languages in the autumn.

Bulgaria: In May 2023, a Memorandum of cooperation between the State Agency for Refugees with the Council of Ministers (SAR) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees – Bulgaria, was signed. The document will provide an opportunity for an even better partnership between the two organisations through joint activities and increased capabilities of the protection system.

In April 2023, an activity on performing training sessions within the project “Increasing the administrative capacity of the competent authorities in the field of asylum and migration” was launched. The project is financed under the Norwegian Financial Mechanism. To date, a total of 14 training sessions have been held.

Croatia: On 1 April 2023 [amendments to the Law on international and temporary protection came into force](#). One of the most important amendments is that the time needed to acquire the right to work was shortened from 9 months to 3 months from the day of lodging the application for international protection.

Cyprus: In June the first construction works by IOM Greece have commenced at the First Reception Centre ‘Pournara’ in the framework of the upgrading of the Centre according to the agreed Masterplan.

At the end of June the first phase on the upgrade of the Accommodation Centre for applicants of international protection in Kofinou has been completed. It is expected that its capacity will increase from 450 accommodation units to 700. A total of 102 prefabricated houses have been installed (including 3 office units, 92 accommodation units, 3 sanitary spaces and 4 kitchens).

On 11 April 2023, [126 applicants of international protection have been relocated to Germany](#). Transfers in the framework of the Voluntary Solidarity Mechanism continued to take place from Cyprus to other Member States. As of June 2022, 860 applicants have been relocated to a number of EU countries such as Germany, France, Finland, Bulgaria, Romania and Norway.

On 2 June 2023 an [amendment](#) on the Law on the Establishment and Operation of the Administrative Court of International Protection has been put in force. According to the law amendment, the Supreme Council of Judicature may temporarily appoint a person who has the qualifications to be a judge, to perform the duties and exercise the powers of a judge of the Administrative Court of International Protection.

France: On 19 April 2023, [guidelines for 2023 regarding the accommodation offers](#) for asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection were published. This document also details the actions to be conducted in 2023 to implement the government’s priorities in terms of accommodation for asylum seekers: improving reception and accommodation conditions, optimising accommodation capacities and making them more fluid.

On 23 May 2023, [an instruction was published](#) detailing the guidelines of the reception policy for resettled refugees for 2023 and highlighting four priorities: the proportion of housing mobilized in the private sector must reach 40% of the housing allocated to the reception of resettled persons; the opening-up of rights of these particularly vulnerable groups; providing alternative solutions for the online application of residence permits; strengthening the management and steering of this programme.

Greece: Guidelines were provided for the examination of subsidiary protection, in relation to applications for international protection submitted by Sudanese nationals.

Ireland: On 21 June 2023, the [Department of Justice launched a new website](#) with information about international protection in Ireland which contains statistics, descriptions of the types of protection and explanations of the asylum process.

Italy: On 5 May 2023, a law was issued that amended the reception conditions for asylum seekers and persons under international protection. Asylum seekers (with the exception of vulnerable individuals and persons arriving through humanitarian corridors, resettlement and evacuations) are no longer eligible for second accommodation services in centres; and services in extraordinary reception centres have been reduced. The institution of special protection (national protection of a complementary nature that incorporates the principle of non-refoulement and protects private and family life) has been modified, and it will no longer be granted solely based on the socio-economic integration path in Italy.

Malta: On 17 May 2023, the International Protection Agency (IPA) suspended the examination of applications for international protection lodged by Sudanese nationals and stateless persons whose country of former habitual residence is Sudan. This allowed the IPA to better assess the situation in Sudan and the protection needs of the aforementioned individuals. The suspension was set until the end of August 2023.

Netherlands: On 7 June 2023, the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (*Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers*, COA), the Red Cross and the Ministry of Justice and Security [signed](#) a declaration of intent on durable cooperation. In coordination with COA, the Red Cross will continue to run the daily reception of asylum applicants at certain, often smaller, reception facilities, but on a more structural basis. Where possible and necessary, the Red Cross will expand its commitment. COA will continue to run the residents' administration and retains final responsibility.

Portugal: Between April and June 2023, 537 asylum applications were registered.

During the reporting period, evacuations from Afghanistan were ongoing. An additional group of 136 Afghans were brought to Portugal, which totals 1 135 Afghan arrivals since mid-August 2021.

Slovenia: During the reporting period, there was an increased number of applications for an extension of subsidiary protection by nationals of Ukraine and the continuation of the increasing trend of applications for international protection by single Moroccan males. The vast majority of them have already applied for international protection in another EU Member States, which has led to an increased number of procedures to determine the responsible EU Member State for the examination of the international protection application under Regulation (EC) 604/2013.

Georgia: On 21–23 May 2023, representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia (MIA) participated in a visit to North Macedonia organised by the Asylum Capacity Support Group in collaboration with UNHCR. Participants shared experience and discussed developments related to the registration of asylum claims, the status determination procedure, the use of country-of-origin information, and quality assurance in the asylum procedure.

On 21 June 2023, the National Refugee Forum [was held in Georgia](#). The event was organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of Georgia and the local office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), with the support of the Tbilisi City Council.

Representatives of the different state agencies and the Public Defender's Office of Georgia informed participants on the steps taken to implement pledges made on refugees and statelessness at the Global Refugee Forum in 2019. The participants also had an opportunity to learn first-hand the stories of representatives of the refugee community, including those displaced from Ukraine, and to listen to representatives of civil society, the private sector and academia, who spoke about their efforts to help refugees in Georgia.

Montenegro: During the reporting period, a total of 756 persons seeking international protection approached the office for the reception of foreigners seeking international protection. All persons were provided with

accommodation, food, the right to health care, psychosocial assistance and support, information and legal help where relevant.

During the reporting period, there were 39 official requests for international protection.



3. UNACCOMPANIED MINORS AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Austria: On 29 June 2023 a press conference was held by the [chairwoman of the former Commission on the Best Interests of the Child](#), demanding that every refugee child who arrives in Austria without parents must be provided with a guardian from the first day of the asylum procedure.

Belgium: On 25 May 2023, which is International Missing Children's Day, the Belgian [authorities presented a guide](#) which aims to prevent and resolve the disappearances of unaccompanied minors. This guide provides services like the police, reception facilities and field workers with practical guidelines on actions to build a trusting relationship and prevent disappearances, and what to do if a minor goes missing.

Greece: In May 2023, two "face-to-face" trainings on the reception of vulnerable persons took place with the participation of Reception and Identification Service (RIS) staff, and organised, in cooperation with EUAA. In June, another two "face-to-face" trainings on the reception of vulnerable persons took place, where 34 RIS staff participated. Also in June, two trainings were organised in cooperation with Metadrasi NGO, focusing on Victims of Torture (with the participation of 19 and 22 RIS staff respectively).

On 24 June 2023, [a Joint Ministerial Decision was issued](#) (nr. 330659), which modified the previous Decision, regarding the Standard Operating Procedures and Licensing Framework of the Accommodation Centres for Unaccompanied Minors (G.G. B' 4154).

In the [new "Migration Code"](#) (L5038/23), Article 161 was introduced, specifically guaranteeing the right to grant a ten-year residence permit to adult third-country nationals or stateless persons who entered Greece as unaccompanied minors and have successfully completed at least three secondary education classes of Greek school in Greece before reaching the age of 23.

Italy: On 5 May 2023, a law was issued on the residence permits that an unaccompanied minor might obtain upon reaching the age of 18, which can be issued for the maximum period of one year.

On 13 June 2023, the Ministry of the Interior [provided funding](#) up until 28 July 2023 for 61 projects financed by AMIF funds, concerning reception services for unaccompanied minors.

Latvia: On 16 May 2023, [amendments](#) to the Law on the Protection of Children's Rights came into force, which normatively strengthen issues related to the operation of the "Barnahus", as well as strengthen the legal framework for the operation of the Honorary family certificate information collection and analysis system, to clarify the legal regulation of intercountry adoption, the conditions for obtaining the status of a guest family, as well as the terminology in the field of the rehabilitation of abused children.

Netherlands: On 6 June, the Senate (*Eerste Kamer der Staten Generaal*) [adopted](#) the new Statelessness Determination Procedure Act. According to UNHCR and the Advisory Council on Migration (*Adviesraad Migratie*) the Netherlands had lacked a good procedure to determine statelessness. This act introduces a new procedure, enabling persons residing in the Netherlands but who are not sufficiently documented to have their statelessness established.

On the same day, the Senate [passed](#) an amendment of the Netherlands Nationality Act (*Rijkswet op het Nederlanderschap*, RWN) and Passport Act (*Paspoortwet*), which, among other things, allows irregularly staying minors, born stateless in the Netherlands to obtain Dutch citizenship via the so-called 'Optie' procedure after 5 years of stable residence with the understanding that no other nationality can be reasonably obtained. The amendment applies to minors who are younger than 21 years, who are born stateless in the Kingdom of the Netherlands and who do not have lawful residence.

Portugal: During the reporting period, five unaccompanied minors applied for asylum in Portugal. Under the framework of the Voluntary Solidarity Mechanism, Portugal made the commitment to receive 70 unaccompanied minors from Greece.

Georgia: On 21 June 2023, a representative of the Migration Department of MIA participated in the multi-agency seminar on “Protection of the Rights of Unaccompanied and Separated Children on the Move” organised by the United Nations Children's Fund.

Montenegro: During the reporting period, there was a total of six unaccompanied minors in two Montenegrin reception centres – four males and two females. They were all treated in accordance with the Law on International and Temporary Protection of Foreigners and were granted special procedures with regard to personal characteristics and circumstances.



4. LEGAL MIGRATION

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Austria: On 21 April 2023, an amendment to the [Act Governing the Employment of Foreign Nationals](#) entered into force, resulting in this law not applying to beneficiaries of temporary protection. In addition, the level of German proficiency to be proven for registered employees was lowered from A2 to A1, and when issuing the Red-White-Red Card, five points each can be awarded for the languages French, Spanish and Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian, in addition to German and English.

On 5 June 2023, the [Seasonal Quota Regulation 2023](#) was amended by increasing quotas in the branches of tourism as well as agriculture and forestry.

On June 12 2023, the [Regulation Governing the Employment of Foreign Nationals](#) was adapted and the exceptions to the scope of the Act Governing the Employment of Foreign Nationals were expanded to exclude foreign teaching staff for schools, among others, from its scope.

Cyprus: On 2 May 2023, the Ministry of Interior of Cyprus introduced the [revised investors' residence permit scheme](#) including four main changes to the existing programme. The main changes concern the eligibility of parents' investors and/or the parents of their spouses to receive permanent residence permit under the new scheme as dependent parents; the required annual income of the investor and their family has been increased, a clean criminal record has been set as a prerequisite for all interested parties and finally a Control Mechanism has been introduced.

On 23 May 2023 a procedures, set some new eligibility criteria, on the preexisting requirements, including an additional declaration on financial income and the sufficiency of stable resources as well as requiring medical examination certificates for the applicant.

Czech Republic: At the end of June, the Czech government [approved two new economic migration programmes](#). One is aimed at a group of highly skilled and top IT workers - the so-called digital nomads, who will be able to apply for a residence permit in the Czech Republic and this residence permit application will be processed within 45 days. The second will allow 300 students from selected Indonesian polytechnics to work in the Czech Republic for two years.

Finland: On 12 April 2023 the Ministry of the Interior granted a total of around € 10.4 million in [AMIF-funds for 17 projects](#) and operational activities. The funding will be used to develop the asylum and reception system, promote legal immigration and integration, and support return efforts.

On 4 June 2023, the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare [published a study](#) which states that immigrants' access to a doctor has weakened significantly over the past four years. Currently, one in three immigrants feel that they do not receive enough doctor's services for their needs. Mental stress has become more common especially among those who immigrated to Finland from Russia and the former Soviet Union, as well as European (excluding Estonia) and Southeast Asian countries.

France: On 12 June 2023, [an instruction was published](#) strengthening France's attractiveness to foreign talent: this instruction favours the issuance of a multi-annual residence permit "passport talent – internationally renowned" for foreign e-athletes and coaches (for electronic and video games) whose national or international reputation is established or who is likely to contribute in a significant and sustainable way to the country planning and economic development of France or to France's influence.

On 25 April 2023, [a decision updated the list of diplomas and certifications](#) attesting knowledge of French required for the delivery of a residence permit, a permanent residence permit or an EU long-term residence permit, to an A2 level (of the Common European Framework of References for languages) and above.

Greece: On 1 April 2023, [the "Migration Code" was adopted](#) by the Hellenic Parliament. Its main provisions (valid from 1 January 2024) include a reform of the current legal framework for the admission of third-country nationals in Greece, transposition in national legislation of Directive 2021/1883 (on highly skilled employment), inclusion of all residence titles in a single text, reformation of the invitation process of third-country nationals for employment, possibility of change within the country of residence purpose, use of digital developments for issuing residence permits, and a reduction in the required supporting documents.

On 3 April 2023, [a joint ministerial decision was issued](#) regarding the determination of a maximum number of residence permits for third-country nationals (for the purpose of employment, seasonal employment and highly skilled employment) for the years 2023 and 2024.

On 25 May 2023, [a decision of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum was issued](#) regarding the "Extension of the deadline (until 30 October 2023) for submitting applications for the granting of residence permits issued to nationals from Bangladesh, in accordance with the provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Hellenic Republic and the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh on migration and mobility."

Ireland: On 26 June 2023, [a public consultation was launched](#) on the review of the Critical Skills Occupations List and the Ineligible Occupations List for employment permits.

Italy: On 5 May 2023, a law was issued that introduced amendments to the issuance and renewal of residence permits: 1) it introduced the possibility of extending renewals of residence permits for permanent employment, self-employment and family reunification for up to 3 years; 2) some national residence permits (special protection, natural disaster, medical treatment) are no longer convertible to work permits; 3) it introduced administrative changes for the simplification and acceleration of procedures for the issuance of work authorisation for obtaining work residence permits.

Latvia: On 27 April 2023, Amendments to the [Visa Regulations](#) came into force, which optimise the procedures and costs related to the storage of visa applications, to reduce the administrative burden on individuals by providing the possibility to submit visa applications to the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs electronically or by mail, as well as to specify the notes to be included in visa stickers in accordance with [Directive \(EU\) 2016/801](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2016 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of research, studies, training, voluntary service, pupil exchange schemes or educational projects and au pairing (recast).

Lithuania: On 14 June 2023, the [Migration Department reported](#) that as of 1 July 2023, foreigners who are not in Lithuania will only be able to apply for national visas through an external service provider. Previously, such applications were accepted by Lithuanian diplomatic missions, consular offices, or visa centres.

Luxembourg: On 7 June 2023, the Directorate of Immigration of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs published a communication announcing that residence cards and permanent residence cards for third-country nationals, family members of a citizen of the Union issued in the form of a card printed on secure paper with a photo affixed, [ceased to be valid](#) on 3 August 2023. The changes are linked to Regulation (EU) 2019/1157 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on strengthening the security of identity cards of Union citizens and residence documents issued to Union citizens and family members

exercising their right to free movement. The format of residence documents for third-country nationals, family members of a Union citizen was adapted and since 1 June 2021, residence cards and permanent residence cards have been issued in Luxembourg in the form of biometric smart cards.

Poland: As of 5 May 2023, [a new form of application](#) for the entry of an invitation in the invitation registry is in effect. The current form is determined by a regulation of the Minister of the Interior and Administration of 16 March 2023.

Portugal: On 2 June 2023, [Decree-Law No. 41/2023](#) was published. Besides establishing the Portuguese Agency for Integration, Migration and Asylum, this legal document allowed for the amendment of 27 other legal instruments, including the legal regime for the entry, stay, exit and removal of foreigners from the national territory. Articles 28 and 29 of this decree-law relate to the transposition of the Blue Card Directive into the Portuguese Legislation.

Slovakia: On 6 April 2023, a [government decision](#) on the interest of the Slovak Republic to grant a national visa to specific groups of third-country nationals came into force. The fast-track scheme enables third-country nationals from selected countries to access the labour market by obtaining a national visa to be employed as bus drivers and drivers of heavy trucks and wagons (in-country and international transportation), which have been identified as labour shortage professions from a long-term perspective. The national visa can be granted for one year without the possibility for it to be prolonged, up to a maximum number of 5 150 visas in 2023.

Slovenia: On 22 March 2023, a [new act on the transnational provision of services was adopted](#). The new act regulates the procedure for issuing an A1 language certificate for employees and self-employed persons who perform their employment or self-employment activities in at least two EU Member States in addition to the already regulated issuance of the A1 certificate for posted workers. The new Act also amended Article 144 of the Pension and Disability Insurance Action to equalize the rights of all employees (equal basis for calculating contributions) regardless of the place of work (abroad or in the Republic of Slovenia).

On 16 June 2023, [the Employment, Self-employment and Work of Foreigners Act was amended](#). Key changes included: foreigners changing employers and employment by several employers will no longer require a decision of the administrative unit, only the consent of the Employment Service. Due to the shortage in staff in health and social services sectors, provisions of the Act will not apply to foreigners who are to be employed in the state or public sector. Lastly, applicants for international protection can exercise the right to free access to the Slovenian labour market three months after filing the application.

On 27 April 2023, an [amendment to the Foreigners Act entered into force](#), which removed administrative obstacles and enables faster management of the procedures for issuing and serving residence permits and EU residence registration certificates. An amendment maintains the requirement for a level of knowledge of the Slovenian language (A1/A2 levels) for family members of third-country nationals and third-country nationals who wish to obtain a permanent residence permit. The new effective date for this condition is 1 November 2024 (instead of 27 April 2023).

On 17 May 2023, the Ministry of Interior [conducted a training](#) for administrative units regarding the implementation of the Foreigners Act. The trainings are conducted with the aim of harmonising administrative practices and providing inputs to questions from practice, as well as presenting legislative changes.

Sweden: On 12 May 2023, the Director-General Mikael Ribbenvik together with the Minister of Migration Maria Malmer Stenergard, presented the decision of the Swedish Migration Agency to introduce a [new model for handling working permit cases](#) and to establish international recruitment units. Besides contributing to a more competitive Sweden, the aim of the model is to reduce the processing times for highly qualified workers.

Georgia: On 24-27 April 2023, in the framework of an EU funded Project implemented by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), [a study visit on residence and visa regulations was held](#) for the representatives of the Public Service Development Agency (PSDA) in Ljubljana, Slovenia. During the meeting, Georgian and Slovenian colleagues shared best practices and lessons learnt related to residence and visa regulations. Particular focus was given to residence permit application review, the inspection procedure, a case study and the decision-making process, visa policy and the further development of the electronic database.

On 8 June 2023, the PSDA [hosted a delegation](#) of the General Inspectorate for Migration of the Republic of Moldova. The aim of the meeting was to share Georgian experience on overall migration management, as well as on citizenship and residence permit related issues, including the relevant distance services of the PSDA.

Montenegro: Following the Decision on determining the annual quota of permits for temporary residence and work of foreigners for the year 2023 ("Official Gazette of Montenegro", number 138/22), a total of 14 185 permits for temporary residence and work were issued between January and May, which is about 30% more than in the same period of the previous year.

STUDENTS AND RESEARCHERS

Cyprus: On 12 June 2023 the Civil Registry and Migration Department revised the [procedure for issuing entry and residence permits](#) for interested applicants in the education sector. The revision sets into full effect the national law, which incorporates the relevant European Directive.

France: On 19 May 2023, [the law on the Olympics and Paralympics 2024 Games stated](#) that a holder of a valid residence permit under the category of student may be employed to undertake private security activity. The time worked in this context will not be taken into account in the calculation of maximum working hours, set at 60% of the annual work time.



5. INTEGRATION

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Austria: On 27 April 2023, the report "[Social Cohesion and Segregation - A Review of Integration and Disintegration in Austria](#)" was published. The goal of this report is to identify segregation tendencies as well as their causes and mechanisms, enabling a factual discourse and scientifically based approaches to counteract these tendencies.

Croatia: On 23 May 2023, the City Assembly of City of Zagreb adopted the "Action plan of the City of Zagreb for the implementation of the Integrating Cities Charter for 2023 and 2024." The general goal of this document is to encourage and implement the integration of persons who have been granted international protection into society in the area of the City of Zagreb and to contribute to the development of the overall migration policy in the Republic of Croatia. Funds for the implementation of measures and activities are provided in the Budget of the City of Zagreb for 2023 and within an EU project financed by AMIF.

On 21 June 2023, at the 229th session of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, a Decision on amending the Decision on the Establishment of the Permanent Commission for the Implementation of the Integration of Foreigners into Croatian Society ("[Official Gazette](#)", number 68/23) was adopted.

Cyprus: On 21 June 2023, the Council of Ministers approved a Proposal of the Ministry of Education to with migratory background in primary education by employing more teachers in more schools to cover current needs.

Finland: On 14 April 2023 the President of the Republic approved the bill of [comprehensive reform of the Integration Act](#), which will enter into force in 2025. It will improve integration and strengthen the inclusion of immigrants in society. The reform will facilitate the path of immigrants towards employment and improve

the access of immigrant women and others outside the labour force to services. The reform will increase the municipal responsibility for promoting integration.

Greece: During the reporting period, [the HELIOS integration programme](#) (Hellenic Integration Support for Beneficiaries of International and Temporary Protection) continued to be implemented by IOM and the Ministry of Migration and Asylum. The programme initiated in 2019, was originally funded by AMIF. Since the end of 2021, through a programmatic agreement between IOM and the Ministry of Migration and Asylum (last amended in June 2023), it has continued being implemented through [direct funds from the Ministry](#) until 30 September 2023, and meanwhile there are plans for it to be funded by ESF+ funding.

On 16 June 2023, [the MULTAKA project](#), designed by the Social Integration Directorate of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum and funded by AMIF, was completed. Through the project, migrants, refugees and persons with migrant background were trained as “intercultural guides” and performed intercultural tours in four museums and archaeological sites in Athens, in Greek, Arabic, Farsi, English and French.

During the reporting period, the Social Integration Directorate, in collaboration with the UNHCR, formulated a [“Guide for Beneficiaries of International Protection”](#) concerning their everyday life in Greece (such as employment, education, healthcare and welfare) to provide them with access to useful, valid, and reliable information. Since June 2023, the guide has been available on-line, in Greek and English, and will soon be available also in other languages.

Ireland: On 2 May 2023, the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration, and Youth [launched the Ireland Against Racism Fund](#) which makes €1 million available for projects supporting the implementation of the National Action Plan Against Racism.

On 21 April 2023, the Department of Justice announced [new guidance](#) for the naturalisation of applicants who now only need to provide a certified colour copy of the biometric page of the passport rather than a full certified copy.

Lithuania: On 24 May 2023, the Government [agreed with the proposal](#) by the Ministry of Interior to amend the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners by establishing an Agency responsible for the reception of migrants. The Agency will be coordinated by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and will ensure the provision of social, accommodation, and other essential services to migrants.

Luxembourg: On 19 April 2023, the Ministry of Family Affairs and Integration presented the results of [the registration of foreigners on the electoral lists](#) for the municipal elections, which took place on 11 June 2023. 50 084 people of foreign nationality out of a total of 252 464 were registered on the lists, a registration rate of 19.8%.

On 26 April 2023, the Minister of the Interior [announced](#) that of the 3 847 candidates in the municipal elections, 379 were of foreign nationality (9.9%).

On 4 May 2023, the Minister of Family Affairs and Integration gave the first five municipalities their [personalised “Citizen’s Guide.”](#) The “Citizen’s Guide” is primarily aimed at the new inhabitants of a municipality. In an informative way, it invites the person to discover the municipality by providing information on its composition, local infrastructure, education, culture, associations and gives an overview of the activities offered. In a second part, the guide offers ideas for engagement and interaction between fellow citizens, in volunteering, learning, language practice or political participation.

On 16 May 2023, the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, the Ministry of Family Affairs, Integration and the Greater Region, the National Reception Office [launched the call for projects](#) within the framework of the “Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund” (AMIF). Three dedicated actions have been defined:

- Identification and support by psychosocial and rehabilitation services for vulnerable people and/or people with specific needs, including, among others, victims of human trafficking;

- Promotion of integration measures and tailor-made support adapted to the needs of the target audience;
- Promotion of exchanges and dialogue between the target public and the host society and awareness-raising actions.

On 21 June 2023, the National Youth Service [presented results](#) of a survey of parents residing in Luxembourg on the linguistic diversity of young children and language practices within families in Luxembourg. The survey reveals the great diversity of languages used within families: a total of 124 different languages were mentioned by parents. The five most mentioned languages in the survey are Luxembourgish, French, German, English and Portuguese.

Malta: On 31 May 2023, Hon. Rebecca Buttigieg, Parliamentary Secretary for Reforms and Equality, together with the Human Rights Directorate launched the Public Consultation document in preparation for a second national integration policy and action plan.

Netherlands: As of 1 April 2023, the Civic Integration Regulations have been [amended](#). The Minister of Social Affairs and Employment has decided to reduce the number of exam attempts per failed examination component from four to three. This allows participants to request a waiver after making at least three attempts per examination component instead of four. This results in less pressure and stress for participants, costs and time are saved, and less use is made of the available (exam) capacity at the Department of Education (*Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs*, DUO) and language education providers.

Portugal: In April 2023, the Portuguese government [approved the creation of the Agency for Integration, Migration and Asylum](#), later publishing Decree-Law 41/2023, of 2 June, which establishes said creation of the Agency and its competencies. The Agency will succeed the High Commission for Migration, implementing public policies on migration and asylum, and the Immigration and Borders Services, whose police functions will be dispersed among other security forces and services.

On 2 June 2023, [the Virtual National Support Centre for the Integration of Migrants was launched](#), an initiative from the High Commission for Migration. Using videoconferencing technology, this new platform links Local Support Centres for the Integration of Migrants (CLAIMs) with specialised offices from National Support Centres for the Integration of Migrants (CNAIMs), allowing face-to-face support and reinforcing CLAIMs' capacities in more technical areas, while sparing individuals from travelling to CLAIMs to specifically access these services.

Spain: On 13 April 2023, [the annual report of the "Forum for the Social Integration of Immigrants" was published](#). Entitled "The situation of migrant population and refugees in Spain in 2022," the report tackles the evolution of the legislative framework and norms affecting the migrant population and refugees, the evolution of integration policies in Spain and the evolution of the situation in terms of employment and education. This is a very relevant report for designing policies and measures addressing migrant and refugee populations.

During the reporting period, the Strategic Framework for Citizenship and Inclusion against Racism and Xenophobia was approved for the period 2023-2027. Its main objectives are to advance the integration and inclusion of migrants and to prevent and combat racism, xenophobia and other related intolerance.

Georgia: Within the reporting period, 204 Ukrainian citizens (who live in Georgia due to the war in Ukraine) were enrolled in the "initial Georgian I" and "Alphabet" courses of the State Language Teaching and Integration programme. Furthermore, eight foreign citizens (asylum seekers/temporary residents) were enrolled in the communicative Georgian course of the same programme.

On 5 June 2023, [amendments were made](#) to the Resolution of the Government of Georgia on "Determining the Rules and Conditions of Financing Vocational Education and Approving the Maximum Amount of Tuition Fees to be Financed by the State for Educational Institutions Implementing Vocational Education Programmes". According to the amendments, studying at Vocational Education and Training (VET) institutions

along with the asylum seekers and persons with refugee or humanitarian status, is now fully funded by the state for VET students with stateless status in Georgia.

6. MANAGEMENT OF THE EU EXTERNAL BORDERS

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Croatia: For the purposes of the work of the border police at the external borders, hand-held X-ray scanners for finding hidden objects and persons and devices for verifying the authenticity of travel documents were delivered to the border crossings during the month of May. The delivery of the acquired operational equipment for border control for the needs of the Entry/Exit system is in progress. Since it is a large amount of equipment, it is being procured and delivered to the border crossings gradually.

Finland: The European Commission carried out a [Schengen evaluation in Finland](#) in May and June 2023. Evaluation teams coordinated by the Commission travelled across Finland to evaluate how the Finnish authorities apply the Schengen acquis in its different areas.

Italy: On 11 April 2023, as a result of the exceptional increase in the flow of migrants entering the national territory through the Mediterranean migration routes, by resolution of the Council of Ministers.

Latvia: On 2 May 2023, the Cabinet of Ministers supported the [extension of the state of emergency](#) on the Latvian-Belarusian border until 10 August 2023 in Ludza, Krāslava, Augšdaugava district and Daugavpils, taking into account the rapid increase in the number of cases of irregular crossings of the Latvian-Belarusian border, as well as the Lithuanian-Belarusian border.

On 14 April 2023, [Amendments](#) to the Regulations on the Samples of the National Border Lane, Border Lane and Borders of the Republic of Latvia, as well as Border, Border Lane, State Border Lane and Patrol Lane Markings and the Procedure for their Installation came to force. The amendments were necessary to determine the location of the patrol lane at a specific stage along the external border to ensure the necessary conditions for the functioning of the border guarding system.

Lithuania: On 30 May 2023, following the recommendation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the [Ministry of Interior blacklisted 15 law enforcement officers](#) of the Russian Federation who were responsible for the sentencing of Russia's opposition figure Vladimir Kara-Murza. The decision came in response to a letter sent by 40 Members of the European Parliament urging EU Foreign Ministers to add these persecutors to the list of undesirable persons.

On 19 June 2023, the [authorities began repairing a patrol path](#) at the Belarus-Lithuania border. In the first phase, repair work is planned in around a 100-kilometer border section. In the future, the repair of the patrol path could continue for an additional 253-kilometre border section depending on available funding.

On 29 June 2023, in response to Russia's continuing aggression in Ukraine and its threat to Lithuanian national security, the Minister of Interior tasked [border guards to strengthen checks on arrivals](#) from the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation (Kaliningrad Oblast). Border guards will carry out closer checks on documents and visas held by persons from these countries in transit through the territory of Lithuania.

Poland: On 18 April 2023, [the construction of an electronic barrier](#) on the Polish-Russian border began. The barrier will be approximately 200 km long and will cover the entire land border with the Kaliningrad Oblast. About 2 000 camera poles, 3 000 video cameras and 700 km of power, transmission and detection cables will be installed on them. The construction of the barrier is scheduled to be completed by 30 September this year.

On 15 June 2023, [the construction of the electronic barrier](#) on the Polish-Belarusian border was completed. The perimetry system now operates along the entire length of the border with Belarus, e.g. 206 kilometers. The barrier is equipped with 3 000 day-night and thermal imaging cameras. The electronic barrier also covers those sections where there is no physical barrier, e.g. in the border waters.

From 1 June 2023, until further notice, [goods border traffic at border crossings](#) with the Republic of Belarus for trucks, tractor units, trailers, including semi-trailers, and vehicle combinations registered in the territory of the Republic of Belarus or the Russian Federation has been suspended.

During the reporting period, Frontex shared a draft Technical and Operational Strategy for European Integrated Border Management (EIBM) for 2023-2027 for consultation, along with an Action Plan. The document, together with the [European Commission's Communication](#) establishing a multi-annual strategic policy on EIBM, announced on 14 March 2023, will be the basis for the development of a new National Strategy for Integrated Border Management or an update of the 2019 Strategy.

Georgia: Based on the Entry/Exit Law requirements, within the reporting period 782 citizens of Georgia intending travel to the EU/Schengen area were refused permission to depart from the country.

On 25-26 April 2023, representatives of the Patrol Police Department of the MIA participated in a meeting of the Heads of Coordination Points organised by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex).

On 23-24 May 2023, representatives of the MIA participated in the 6th meeting of the Third Country Air Borders Risk Analysis Network organised by Frontex. The meeting aimed at assessing air border risks and the enhancement of international cooperation of respective agencies.

Within the reporting period, immigration-border controllers of the MIA Georgia were placed in the airports of several EU/Schengen countries in the framework of the MIA-Frontex cooperation. Six officers participated in Joint Operations (JO) held in Latvia (Riga), Poland (Warsaw and Krakow), France (Paris) and Italy (Rome). Moreover, in the framework of JO Staff Exchange Land 2023, Georgian Patrol Police officers were placed at the Border Check Points of Estonia (Narva), Poland (Terespol), Moldova (Palanca and Gurgulest) to exchange best practice and share experience.



7. IRREGULAR MIGRATION

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

France: On 22 May 2023, the Minister of Labour, Full Employment and Integration [presented a national plan to fight irregular work for the 2023-2027 period](#), including 34 measures aiming to coordinate the action of the State services across two axes: on the one hand, to “control better” by targeting, prioritising and strengthening the controls on illegal work, and on the other hand, “sanction better, recover better and repair better the prejudices resulting from illegal work.”

Italy: On 5 May 2023, a law abolished the automatic mechanism of intimation (issuing removal decisions) to leave the national territory within the period of 15 days as a result of the refusal/withdrawal of the residence permit. Persons affected by this measure, if the conditions are met, will be placed in assisted return programmes.

Luxembourg: On 12 May 2023, legal amendments regarding the free movement of persons and immigration [came into force](#). The law brings several clarifications concerning the conditions for granting authorisations to stay for private reasons, including for irregularly staying third-country nationals whose situation is exceptional, particularly in view of the links they have forged with Luxembourg.

Georgia: Within the reporting period, 49 employees of the Patrol Police Department of the MIA were trained on the issues of irregular migration, migrants’ smuggling, human behaviour, fraud document identification and investigation methodology. The training was conducted within the ["Prometheus II" project](#) funded by the EU.

Montenegro: On 25 May 2023, a kick-off meeting was held in Podgorica regarding the EU action “Individual Measure to Strengthen Integrated Border Management Capacities in Montenegro.” The project will be implemented jointly with IOM with the aim of contributing to effective, efficient and coordinated border management and strengthening respect for the human and fundamental rights of migrants in Montenegro. It aims to contribute to the achievement of the strategic goals set by the Integrated Border Management

Strategy and the Schengen Action Plan, with an emphasis on: the construction of a new building for the Border Police Sector, the improvement of border police capacities in the field of electronic surveillance of the state border, the establishment of an operational and logistical base on Lake Skadar and Adriatic Sea, connecting border crossings with an optical network, implementing a system for identification and registration of migrants.

8. RETURN

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Estonia: On 20 June 2023, the Supreme Court of Estonia made a [decision](#) and declared unconstitutional and invalid the provision in the Regulation “Internal Rules of Detention Centre” that concerned prohibiting mobile phones for all residents in detention centres. The Court ruled that it should be a discretionary decision whether the mobile phone is allowed or not based on personal and other relevant circumstances. On the one hand the security of the detention centre and the rights of the persons staying there and on the other hand the fundamental rights of the foreigner staying in the detention centre should be considered.

Finland: On 23 May 2023, the UN Committee against Torture [issued a decision](#) on a complaint against Finland concerning the return of an asylum seeker to the Russian Federation. In its decision, the Committee considered that the return of the complainant to the Russian Federation would constitute a violation of Article 3 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. In its decision, the Committee found that the complainant, who is of Chechen ethnicity, would face a foreseeable, real and personal risk of being subjected to torture if returned to the Russian Federation. According to the decision, Finland must reconsider the complainant’s asylum application.

Greece: On 25 April 2023, a Joint Return Operation took place, in which the Asylum Service and the Directorate of Returns and Withdrawals of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum participated. 40 third-country nationals from Pakistan and ten from Georgia departed to their countries of origin via charter flights.

Counselling was provided to administratively detained third-country nationals against whom a return decision had been issued, to motivate them to depart voluntarily. The counselling was provided through the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration/AVRR programme under IOM Greece, to a total of 65 beneficiaries, none of whom departed voluntarily to their country of origin.

From 1 April to 30 June 2023, according to IOM Greece, 541 third-country nationals departed voluntarily to their country of origin. According to the Hellenic Police, 778 forced returns were carried out during April, May and June. Finally, 198 third-country nationals also departed voluntarily to their country of origin according to Art.22 of L.3907/11.

There were no significant changes regarding the Joint EU-Turkey statement. Turkish Authorities are not accepting readmission operations to date.

Italy: On 5 May 2023, a law provided amendments on the detention of asylum seekers: there are two new types of detention, for migrants in the “Dublin” procedure and for applicants for international protection in the “accelerated” procedure. The order denying the application for international protection also states that return is mandatory for the migrant. Some changes have been introduced regarding validation/extension of detention hearings in detention and return facilities and it is possible to extend the maximum period of detention beyond 120 days. It is foreseen that an irregular migrant will be subject to a re-entry ban in Italy.

On 15 June 2023, the National Authority for the Rights of Persons Deprived of their Freedom, a national authority monitoring forced returns, [presented its Annual Report](#) to Parliament, pursuant to Directive (EU) 115/2008. Regarding detention, the Authority has drawn the attention of the Italian Parliament to the negotiations concerning the new Pact on Migration and Asylum. While highlighting the positive aspect of seeking shared responses and courses of action, concerns remain about the extension of border detention in locations characterised by formal extraterritoriality and the possibility of forced transfer of migrants to

transit countries, regardless of the person's connection to the territory and without being bound by adherence to the Geneva Convention.

On 30 June 2023, the last two ongoing projects on Assisted Voluntary Repatriation, "Ermes3" and "The Way of Future," facilitated migrants' departures to their countries of origin.

Luxembourg: On 12 May 2023, the law of 21 April 2023 amending the amended law of August 29, 2008 on the free movement of persons and immigration [came into force](#). This law aims to structure the different categories of removal measures in a clear and coherent manner in order to better manage the phenomenon of irregular residence of third-country nationals in Luxembourg.

Poland: As a result of the amendment of the provisions of the Act of 12 December 2013 on foreigners, the Commander-in-Chief of the Border Guard took over the tasks performed by the Head of the Office for Foreigners in their entirety and is now the only authority responsible for organising assisted voluntary return (AVR).

In addition, as a result of the amendment of the provisions of the Act on foreigners, the catalogue of foreigners entitled to receive assistance in voluntary return was expanded. Such assistance may now be provided to a foreigner:

- to whom a return decision with a period for voluntary departure was issued,
- to whom a forced return decision was issued but he or she was not subject to detention due to his or her state of health,
- to whom a negative asylum decision was issued or the proceedings were discontinued or the application was left unprocessed, or
- who has been recognized as an alleged victim of trafficking in human beings.

Portugal: During the reporting period, Portugal adhered to Frontex programmes related to voluntary return: the Return Mobility Programme and the Joint Reintegration Counselling.

During the reporting period, the Portuguese Immigration and Borders Service (SEF) developed contacts with the [Portuguese Red Cross](#) and with [Caritas Portugal](#) to implement the Return Mobility Programme, which also includes future expert exchange between Portugal, the Netherlands, Estonia and Sweden.

Spain: On 12 June 2023, cases where minors are accompanied by only one parent were [introduced in the manual](#) of voluntary returns. When the non-present parent is in the country of origin or is a lost contact, the guardian traveling with the minor signs a responsibility declaration saying that the other parent is not in Spain. If the parent is in Spain and can be found, an authorisation or power of attorney is needed.

Sweden: On 29 June 2023, the government tasked the Swedish Migration Agency to set up [reception centres for return](#). The Minister for Migration, Maria Malmer Stenergard, explained that: "There are many advantages to people with return decisions staying in a reception centre for return. It sends a clear message that the asylum process is over and that return should be the main focus."

Georgia: On 1 May 2023, "the Agreement between the Government of Georgia and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on the Readmission of Persons Residing without Authorisation" entered into force.

On 1 June 2023, "the Agreement between Georgia and Iceland on the Readmission of Persons Residing without Authorisation" entered into force.

Within the reporting period, the Migration Department of the MIA participated in eight Collecting Return Operations coordinated by Frontex. As a result, 362 Georgian citizens were safely returned from EU Member States.

Within the reporting period, expulsion decisions for 83 foreigners were issued and 46 foreigners left Georgia based on expulsion decisions.

Montenegro: During the reporting period, there were 21 returnees to Montenegro. Every returnee has filled out the questionnaire and they were all provided with both Individual and Family Reintegration Plans. 20 returnees came back from Germany and one returnee came back from France.

9. ACTIONS ADDRESSING TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Austria: In June 2023, the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum updated its internal guidelines for officials responsible for making decisions according to the Dublin III Regulation to include a chapter on trafficking in human beings. The new chapter details protection obligations for state authorities, including the need to undertake an individual assessment of each case to determine whether a transfer would pose a serious risk of re-traumatisation or re-trafficking.

Belgium: On 31 May 2023, the special Commission for the evaluation of the legislation and policies on trafficking in human beings and smuggling closed its work with the [adoption of 100 recommendations](#). The Commission was set up in February within the Belgian Chamber of Representatives, tasked to take stock of and assess the current fight against trafficking in human beings and smuggling, the applicable legal provisions for both the prosecution of perpetrators and the protection of victims, and to evaluate and examine international cooperation in the fight against trafficking.

Croatia: On 27 - 28 April 2023 the Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities of the Republic of Croatia in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs of the Republic of France, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Sweden and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), [organised an international conference](#) in Dubrovnik entitled "Improving the response to human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, especially women and girls, by combating the demand in Southeast Europe."

Cyprus: On 30 June 2023 and [for the first time in Cyprus, a person was convicted](#) under the latest Anti-trafficking Law, for receiving sexual services from a victim of trafficking.

Estonia: On 1 April 2023, the new [Victim Support Act](#) came into force. In the Act, the status of the presumed victims is changed, but the services for the target group who are not identified as victims of trafficking in human beings, but are linked to other related crimes, will remain. In practice, if the Social Insurance Board or Labour Inspectorate suspect the case to be a trafficking case, then services will be provided without the investigation period for 14 days. If the victim is a third-country national, the reflection period by the Aliens Act will be given to the person, as well as services, until the deadline set within the reflection period. For the first time, the provision of psychosocial assistance is provided as a service in the Act.

Finland: On 12 May 2023, the SEIVE project against trafficking in human beings funded by the Ministry of Justice [published a report](#) on the cases and situations of victims of trafficking in human beings who have experienced sexual violence and have been clients of Victim Support Finland (the description sheet/abstract is available in English). The report states that a person who has become a victim of trafficking in human beings can best be supported in recovery and return to everyday life only through multi-sector and flexible network cooperation. The report contains 13 recommendations for the authorities and other parties dealing with victims of trafficking in human beings.

On 23 May 2023, a [study](#) "Report on reflection periods given to victims of human trafficking and suspicions of trading in sexual services as grounds for denial of admittance or stay" commissioned by the Ministry of the Interior was published (the description sheet/abstract is available in English). The study examined the reflection periods granted to victims of trafficking in human beings during which the victims can decide whether to cooperate with the authorities in apprehending those suspected of trafficking in human beings. The study also examined how suspicion of trading in sexual services was applied as grounds for denial of admittance or stay. More information in English is also available in the Ministry's [press release](#).

Greece: On 4-5 May 2023, six RIS staff of Lesbos' CCAC participated in a training organised by the General Secretariat for Demography and Family Policy and Gender Equality, in cooperation with the Research Center on Equality Issues and UNHCR. The training was focused on Gender Based Violence (GBV), including trafficking in human beings. In the training, a Case Management staff member deployed in the Headquarters of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum participated as a presenter on the management of GBV survivors in the Greek Reception Procedure.

On 12 June 2023, the Department of Procedures and Training of the Directorate of Support of RIS, of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, in cooperation with the EUAA, organised a training on Trafficking of Human Beings, where 14 RIS staff participated.

On the 3, 5 and 11 May 2023, in a continuation of the European project AMELIE (Enhancing mechanisms of identification, protection and multi-agency collaboration through transnational and multi-sectoral actors' engagement) the Social Action and Innovation Centre organised a workshop aiming to strengthen the cooperation among actors and professionals that may come into contact with a potential victim of trafficking in human beings. A Case Management staff member deployed in the Headquarters of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum participated with a presentation on the identification of a potential Victim of Human Trafficking by RIS staff.

Hungary: In May 2023, the Hungarian Parliament amended the Victim Support Act, which mandates the government to expand the referral mechanism for victims of trafficking in human beings to third-country nationals. With this amendment national referral mechanisms will be unified. Third-country nationals can now also receive assistance from the victim support system alongside Hungarian citizens and persons with the right of free movement and residence. With this addition, Hungary fulfils an important requirement that was recommended by several international evaluation bodies (GRETA, USA TIP Office).

Italy: During the reporting period, the Ministry of Defence carried out capacity-building tasks in support of local foreign forces, particularly in missions in Libya (participation in Operations MEDITERRANEAN SAFE, EUNAVFORMED IRINI, EUBAM LBY, and participation in the MINISTRY-led SIBMMIL project), Niger (MISIN, EUMPM Niger, and EUCAP Sahel Niger).

Regarding countering migration, the Ministry of Defence has established closer cooperation with Tunisia (Border Programme for the Maghreb Region), building on the bilateral cooperation plan and taking into account local ownership. Current cooperation with Libya should also be considered in this perspective.

Luxembourg: On 20 June 2023, the Minister of Justice, Sam Tanson received His Excellency Ambassador of the United States to Luxembourg, Thomas Barrett, who officially [presented the results](#) of the International Assessment Report on Human Trafficking. As in previous years, Luxembourg maintained its ranking at the "Tier 1" level, the highest possible level.

Malta: On 12 June 2023, the Human Trafficking Monitoring Committee, the Commissioner for Children and the relevant stakeholders combatting child trafficking, together with a group of Experts from the Council of Europe were invited to join the 3rd Anti-Human Trafficking Inter-Ministerial Committee to discuss the targeted revision of the Directive (EU) 2011/36 on Preventing and Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings and Protecting its Victim.

On 13-15 June 2023, a series of meetings were held as part of its Joint EU/Council of Europe Project attended by the technical experts from the European Council, the Commissioner of Police and specialised Squads, the Attorney General, the CEO of the Court Services Agency and Policy officers from the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry for Home Affairs, Security, Reforms and Equality, to discuss the legal amendments required for the implementation of the GRETA Recommendations in Malta.

Netherlands: On May 18 2023, following a ruling by the Court of Justice of the EU on 20 October 2022 (C-66/21, ECLI:EU:C:2022:809) the Minister for Migration [introduced a policy amendment](#) regarding the provision of a reflection period for victims of trafficking in human beings. Henceforth, all third-country nationals presumed to be victims of trafficking in human beings will receive a reflection period of 90 days. An

exception applies to victims who have previously sought asylum in another EU country, as they will now be granted a reflection period of 30 days. Previously, the reflection period was only offered to presumed victims without lawful residence in the Netherlands. This procedure is temporary and a permanent policy change will be communicated to the House of Representatives by the end of 2023.

Poland: On 13 June 2023, a one-day seminar on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings for the Purpose of Labour Exploitation was held in Warsaw. The event was organised by the Council of Europe with the help of the Polish Ministry of the Interior and Administration.

On 27-28 June 2023, the Sejm of the Republic of Poland together with the UK All Parliamentary Group on Human Trafficking Foundation and Office of the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings held a two-day workshop in Warsaw on strengthening the legislative response to human trafficking risks for Ukrainian refugees.

The Polish authorities continue to monitor crimes related to trafficking in human beings, in particular in the context of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Furthermore, Poland provided comments to [GRETA's third evaluation round report](#) on Poland which was published on 9 June 2023. During the 32nd meeting of the Committee of the Parties to the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (16 June 2023) GRETA's report on the implementation of the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Poland (third evaluation round) was examined and the recommendations in respect of Poland were adopted.

The Department of International Affairs and Migration at the Ministry of the Interior and Administration [published a report](#) on the situation regarding trafficking in human beings in Poland for 2022 (which will soon also be available in English). The report includes information on legal changes, activities carried out in 2022 and statistical data.

Portugal: On 12 April 2023, the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG) developed a Training Action for the Portuguese Institute of Registries and Notary (IRN). The main objective was to present the public policy connected to Trafficking in Human Beings and the National Referral Mechanism.

Between 13 and 14 June 2023, the Observatory on Trafficking in Human Beings [hosted a technical visit](#) from a Delegation from Kosovo, organised by the Council of Europe/Directorate-General for Democracy, Anti-Trafficking Division | Cooperation Unit – Project “Enhancing Anti Trafficking Actions.” The visit focused on data collection and on the exchange of experiences and practices between various national entities.

On 14 June 2023, [SEF concluded Operation El Dourado](#), flagging 47 victims of human trafficking in football (36 minors).

On 19 June 2023, with the support of the Diplomatic Institute and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Observatory on Trafficking in Human Beings and the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality conducted a Training Action on Child Trafficking for Portuguese Embassies/Consular Posts, Ministry of Home Affairs Liaison Officers, and Immigration Liaison Officers. The Action was based on the "National Referral System for children (presumed) victims of Trafficking in Human Beings".

On 20 June 2023, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) jointly with the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG) developed an in-country discussion on specific OSCE recommendations in Lisbon, including the ways they are implemented and the challenges observed so far. The purpose was to identify positive practices as well opportunities for enhancing certain aspects of anti-trafficking prevention and response in the context of the war in Ukraine and the respective flows of people.

Slovenia: On June 28, 2023, the National Assembly adopted an amendment to the Act on Compensation to Victims of Crime. The amendment eliminates the formal condition of citizenship of Slovenia or another EU member state for obtaining compensation under this law and provides for obtaining compensation from the state scheme regardless of the victim's citizenship. This is particularly important in the context of the fight against trafficking in human beings, as the victims usually do not have a fixed permanent residence or citizenship. The second amendment introduces the possibility for the beneficiary of compensation to waive legal protection and thus to receive compensation faster.

On May 31, 2023, the delegation of the Ministry of the Interior attended the meeting of the informal Network of Anti-Trafficking Coordinators of Southeast Europe (NATC SEE) in North Macedonia, Skopje. At the meeting, the participants reported on implemented and planned activities of the members of the network in the field of combating trafficking in human beings and discussed current trends and challenges in the region.

Spain: The Directorate General of Humanitarian Attention and Social Inclusion of Immigrants carried out different actions addressing trafficking in human beings:

- The launch of a call for grants in the area of migration co-financed by European Union funds which aims to defend migrants' human rights and to promote social cohesion. Its main objective is to stop and prevent trafficking in human beings. The most significant programmes are DESACTIVA LA TRATA and NOVICOM.
- The adoption of an information protocol aimed at harmonizing information on essential aspects of reception, access to international protection, the human rights of migrants, and administrative status as well as the crime of trafficking in human beings.
- The development of a protocol on vulnerabilities aimed at establishing a common procedure for the prevention and mitigation of risks as well as the identification, assessment and response to the special needs of vulnerable people in the Humanitarian Attention programme.
- The promotion of training activities designed with the European Agency for Asylum for a greater knowledge of the professionals of the centers and the ones who carry out the management of the Humanitarian *Atencion* programme in the General Directorate.
- The development of the Second Human Rights Plan.

The referral of questions raised in the report of the last follow-up round of the GRETA Varsobia Convention.

Georgia: On 24-29 April 2023, with the support of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) an official visit of a governmental delegation from Tajikistan was held in Georgia. The aim of the visit was to learn Georgian experience in the fight against Trafficking in Human Beings (THB).

On 25 April 2023, the Ministry of Justice of Georgia (MoJ) organised a meeting in Tbilisi to [review recommendations](#) of the Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA). The representatives of the relevant state agencies, international and local non-governmental organisations discussed the recommendations of the evaluation report issued by GRETA.

On 20-21 May 2023, the Ministry of Justice of Georgia [organised a training](#) on trafficking in human beings for medical staff within an EU funded project implemented by ICMPD. Around 25 representatives from the medical institutions participated in the training.

Montenegro: On 16 June 2023, an appraisal mission was held in Podgorica regarding the new EU Action "Support to the Prevention and Combatting of Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking in Human Beings in the Western Balkans." The event aimed to assess the needs of Montenegrin authorities, present the project to local actors and partners in Montenegro, encourage partnership, collect the views of institutions and start a discussion about how this project can effectively respond to their needs and aspirations.

10. EXTERNAL DIMENSION

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Italy: On 9 June 2023, the "Strategic Guidelines on the Migration-Development Nexus" were presented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The document identifies five strategic objectives:

1. To improve the "governance" of migration with partner countries;
2. To enhance the contribution of regular migration to the development of partner countries;
3. To integrate migration as a cross-cutting issue in development cooperation policies and activities;

4. To ensure assistance and protection for people in vulnerable conditions;
5. To promote a responsible and informed storytelling on migration.

Within the framework of international cooperation in migration affairs, the implementation by the Central Directorate of Immigration and Border Police of the following projects continues:

- Turkey: implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding concerning standard operating procedures for the secondment of experts from the General Directorate of Security of the Turkish Ministry of Interior to Italy.
- Côte d'Ivoire: CIVIT project (Renforcement des capacités opérationnelles des autorités Ivoiriennes en charge de la gestion des frontières et des migrations): preparatory activities are underway to identify areas where four border posts can be built. The field study was conducted by the local IOM office.
- Egypt: International Training at the Egyptian Police Academy.

Netherlands: By law it was decided that the Netherlands would [join the International Centre for Migration Policy Development \(ICMPD\)](#). The law entered into force on 5 April 2023. ICMPD supports its member states in developing and implementing innovative, integrated and sustainable migration policies.

On 30 May, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation [presented the Dutch Africa Strategy 2023-2032](#) in the House of Representatives. One of the goals of this strategy is to reduce irregular migration. The Netherlands remains committed to invest in its bilateral relationship with key countries of origin and transit.

Portugal: On 22 and 23 June 2023 a hybrid meeting gathered delegations from the [Members of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries \(CPLP\)](#) online and at the CPLP premises in Lisbon, to share their respective experience concerning document security. This meeting aimed to identify gaps, best practices and shortcomings leading to a better cooperation and eventually laying the foundation to a future common document security policy, further strengthening the efforts towards safe and secure mobility between CPLP Member States.

Georgia: On 27 May 2023, a [Forum dedicated to Diaspora Day](#) entitled "Strong Diaspora for Georgia's Unity, Peace and European Future," was held in Tbilisi. The annual Diaspora Forum aims to deepen relations with compatriots living abroad, ensure their constant connection with their homeland and active involvement in the country's development. Within the forum, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia hosted the awarding ceremony for the winners of the diaspora grant competition. The MFA implements three grant programmes: 1. "Be a Young Ambassador of Your Country" - (16 winners); 2. "Supporting the Diaspora Initiatives"- (20 winners); and 3. "Supporting the Georgian Folk Dance and Song Ensembles Abroad"- (16 winners). Moreover, on 28 May 2023, the Young Ambassadorial held within the framework of the Diaspora Forum appointed young ambassadors introduced their plans and goals for the upcoming mandate.

UPDATES ON EU LEGISLATION TRANSPOSITION

Bulgaria: The interinstitutional working group that was established in January 2023 to support the transposition of Directive (EU) 2021/1883 has been dissolved. A draft law amending and supplementing the Law on Foreigners in the Republic of Bulgaria has been elaborated. It is to be submitted for public consultations.

Poland: In June 2023, draft amendments to the Act on Foreigners in terms of, among other things, the implementation of Directive (EU) 2021/1883 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2021 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purpose of highly qualified employment, and repealing Council Directive 2009/50/EC have been forwarded for consultations within the Ministry of the Interior and Administration.

On 7 April 2023, the provisions to ensure the application of Regulation (EU) 2018/1860 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 November 2018 on the use of the Schengen Information System for the

return of illegally staying third-country nationals (OJ EU L 312, 07.12.2018, p. 1, as amended) came into force in national legislation. The amendment regulates return alerts in the Schengen Information System (SIS) and consultation procedures derived from the aforementioned regulation.

On 7 April 2023, the provisions to ensure the application of Regulation (EU) 2018/1861 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 November 2018 on the establishment, operation and use of the SIS in the field of border checks, and amending the Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement, and amending and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1987/2006 (OJ EU L 312, 07.12.2018, p. 14, as amended) came into force in national legislation, in the area of entry and stay of third-country nationals in the territory of the Republic of Poland and other Schengen States.

The new Article 440a of the Act on Foreigners introduces a decision on refusal of entry and stay of a foreigner on the territory of the Schengen States, issued by the Head of the Office for Foreigners. This is the decision referred to in Article 24(1)(a) of Regulation No 2018/1861. The data of a foreigner to which the decision relates will be transferred to the Schengen Information System for the purpose of refusal of entry and stay on the basis of modified Article 443(1)(3) of the Act on Foreigners of 12 December 2013.

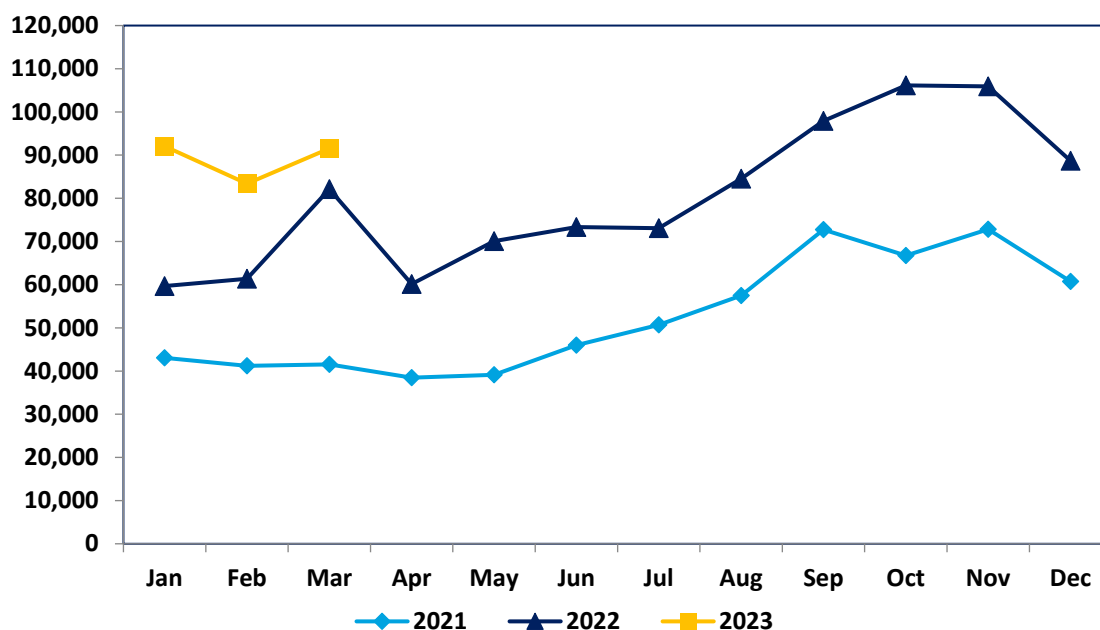
This corresponds to the existing premise of placing the foreigner's data on the list of foreigners whose stay on the territory of the Republic of Poland is undesirable and in the Schengen Information System for the purpose of refusal of entry referred to in Article 435(1)(4) of the Act on Foreigners of 12 December 2013, i.e. in a situation where it is required due to reasons of defense or state security or protection of public security and order or the interest of the Republic of Poland.

Portugal: On 2 June 2023, [Decree-Law No. 41/2023](#) was published. Besides establishing the Portuguese Agency for Integration, Migration and Asylum, this legal document enables the amendment of 27 legal instruments, including the tenth amendment to Law no. 23/2007, of 4 July, which approves the legal regime for the entry, stay, exit and removal of foreigners from the national territory. Articles 28 and 29 of this decree-law relate to the transposition of the Blue Card Directive into the Portuguese Legislation. (see also Point 4. LEGAL MIGRATION).

Slovenia: On 22 March 2023, a [new act](#) on the transnational provision of services was adopted. The [Transnational Provision of Services Act](#) transposes Directive (EU) 2020/1057 with regard to special rules for posting drivers in the road transport sector. In this regard, specific new definitions delineating different types of transport set out in EU regulations were introduced into the Act. The conditions for the transnational provision of services in international transport, the obligations of employers and self-employed persons, holders of independent economic activity, are set out in the field of compliance with the rules for the transnational posting of workers; moreover, the Act lays down sanctions for violations of the rules.

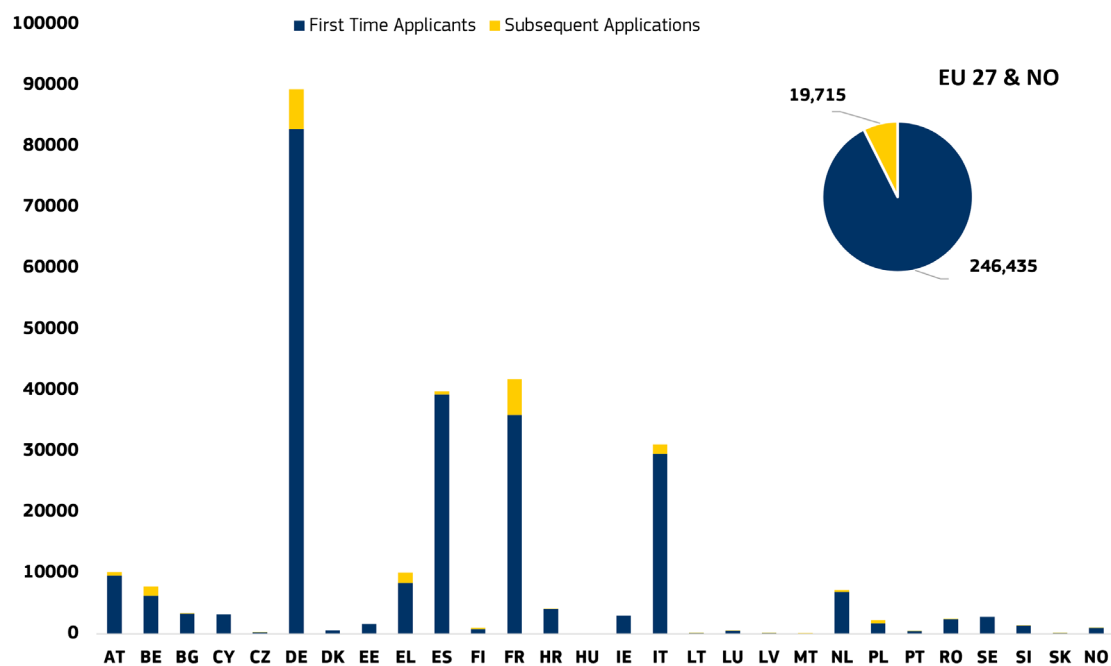
11. ANNEX: EU & COMPLEMENTARY STATISTICS, ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, OTHER EMN OUTPUTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

Figure 1: Asylum applications in the EU-27, January – March 2023



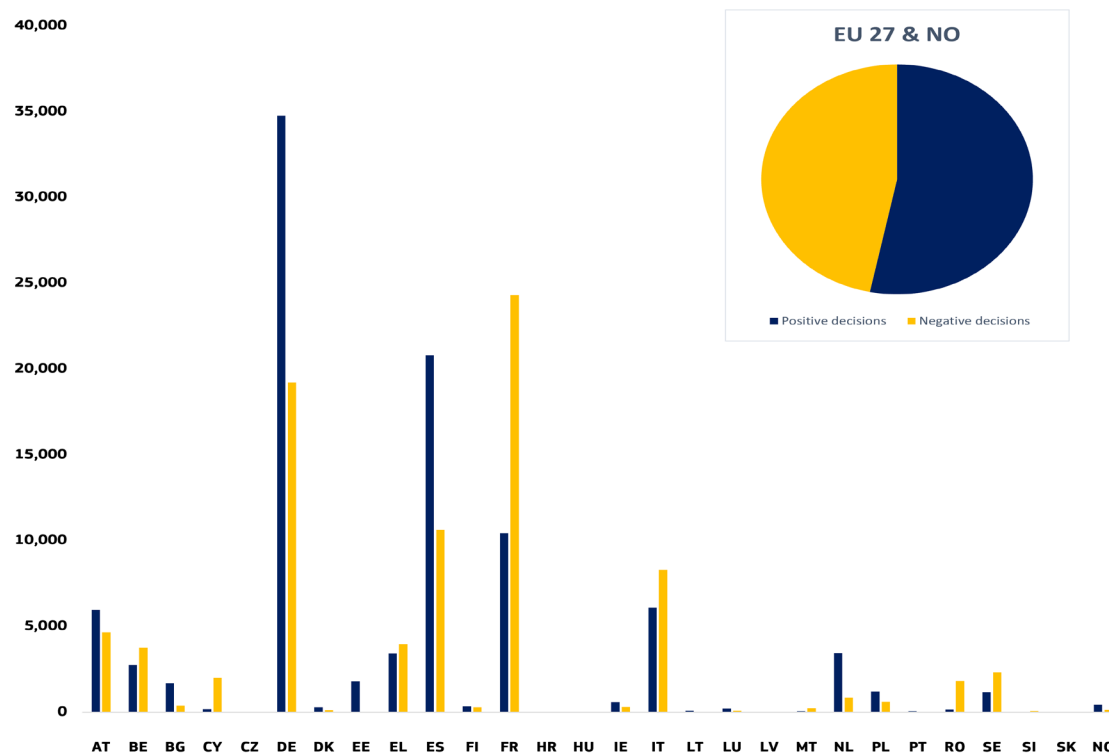
Source: Eurostat [[migr_asyappctzm](#)], total asylum applicants, extracted on 17 August 2023.

Figure 2: First time asylum applicants and subsequent applicants (together, total asylum applicants) in the EU-27 and Norway, Q1 2023 (quarterly data)



Source: Eurostat [[migr_asyappctzm](#)], accessed on 17 August 2023.

Figure 3: First instance asylum decisions in EU-27 and Norway for non-EU citizens, Q2 2022



Source: Eurostat [[migr_asydcfstq](#)], accessed on 17 August 2023.

Updates on EU legislation transposition

No new developments.

EMN National Contact Points: National Events and Publications

Recent National EMN conferences:

- **EMN Austria:** [EU Migration Talks](#): Prospects for displaced persons in non-EU first reception and transit countries. On the occasion of the publication of the EMN [inform “Prospects for Displaced Persons in Non-EU First Reception and Transit Countries,”](#) EMN Austria, in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of the Interior, organized a panel discussion on 8 May 2023. EMN Austria, with support of EMN Germany and EMN Luxembourg translated the EMN Inform into German.
- On 26 September 2023, the national conference ‘Opportunities and Challenges in the Management of EU’s External Borders’ will take place in Vienna.
- **EMN Belgium:** On Tuesday 30 May and Thursday 1 June 2023, the team of EMN Belgium organised [two lunch & learn sessions](#) at the Immigration Office. Around 70 practitioners from the Immigration Office participated. The sessions aimed to inform the participants about the EMN and its outputs, to invite them to actively participate in the national network, and to explore concrete cooperation opportunities.
- **EMN Estonia:** On 25 May 2023, EMN Estonia held a national conference “Activation of the TPD – Retrospect and Ways Forward.” The [recording](#) of the conference as well as the [presentations](#) and the [summary](#) are available on the national webpage.
- **EMN Finland:** [Annual Report on Migration and Asylum – Finland 2022](#): the report gives an overview of the developments in immigration and asylum policy that have taken place in Finland in 2022. The

report goes through developments in legislation, policy and practice. The report also contains a wide array of immigration statistics.

- [Key Figures on Immigration 2022](#): EMN Finland has compiled a statistical review from the statistics of the Finnish Immigration Service, Police and Finnish Border Guard as well as the International Organization for Migration (IOM).
- **EMN Italy**: On 21 June, an online conference entitled "Preventing and Combating Violence Against Foreign Minors" was held. The event was organised by the Central Directorate for Migration Policies, Asylum, Migration Integration Fund Authority of the Civil Liberties and Immigration Department of the Ministry of the Interior, as the Italian EMN National Contact Point.
- **EMN Luxembourg**: On 25 April, the 2023 EMN [inform "Statelessness in the European Union, Norway and Georgia"](#) was published under the responsibility of EMN Luxembourg. This inform is the latest output prepared as part of the activities implemented by the EMN Platform on statelessness. It is an updated inform with contributions from EMN Member and Observer Countries (Norway and Georgia). In addition, information relating to the United Kingdom **was** removed (the United Kingdom is no longer a member country of the EMN).
- On 15 May 2023, EMN Luxembourg [hosted a national networking event](#) to celebrate long standing relationships with different national network partners and to mark the 15-year anniversary of the establishment of the EMN by Council Decision n° 2008/381/EC. EMN Luxembourg brought together people who have substantially supported work of the contact point over the years. Either with contributions to the studies, reports, ad-hoc queries or by their active participation in different events and activities organised by the contact point.
- On 22 June 2023, EMN Luxembourg and the European Committee on Legal Cooperation (CDCJ) of the Council of Europe [organised a technical meeting](#) "Access to nationality for stateless persons." The main aim of the meeting was to provide networking opportunities to national experts working with issues of nationality and statelessness. The need for information and experience sharing was identified as highly important between experts during the last technical meeting hosted in Tallinn, Estonia on 7 December 2022. Secondly, this meeting served as an opportunity to share good practices on national approaches to provide access to nationality for stateless persons.
- **EMN Poland and EMN Luxembourg**: On 20-21 September 2023, the 5th Workshop of Representatives of Detention centres in the EU took place in Poland.
- **EMN Sweden**: the EMN Swedish Presidency Conference on displacement and migration related to disasters, climate change and environmental degradation took place on 11–12 May 2023 in Stockholm. The aim of the conference was to explore the impact of climate change on global migration patterns. It also discussed what could be done in the future to address the impacts of climate change on displacement and migration, both in terms of foreign and development policies and in relation to policy frameworks for migration. The recording of the [EMN Swedish Presidency Conference](#) as well as the presentations and event summary report are available on the national webpage.
- **EMN Georgia**: On 7 June 2023, an [international conference](#) was held in Tbilisi, Georgia entitled - "A Commonly Understood Language as a Tool in Migration Management: the EMN Asylum and Migration Glossary," organised by the EMN's Georgian and Latvian National Contact Points. The purpose of the hybrid conference was twofold: highlighting the essence of the EMN Glossary and its meaning for the EU and beyond (EMN Observer Countries, other users); and providing a wider discussion platform, where representatives of the EMN NCPs, academic circles and migration practitioners from different countries shared the knowledge and experience on their own approaches to the application of migration related terminology and the challenges arising when dealing with translation or adjustment of certain terms to national professional vocabularies.

- **EMN Montenegro:** organised a [conference](#) on Migratory Challenges on the Western Balkans Route. The event was held in hybrid format and it took place in Podgorica, on 06 June, 2023. This event addressed key challenges in the field of human trafficking and migrant smuggling, readmission and return, as well as the challenges that European countries faced after the massive influx of refugees from Ukraine. The conference discussed and proposed next steps of action at both national, regional and EU level.

Upcoming EMN National Conferences

- **EMN Cyprus:** On 26 October 2023, a conference on 'Hate Speech and Xenophobia' will take place.
- **EMN Spain:** On 16-17 November, the EMN Spanish Presidency Conference on labour migration will take place in Madrid.
- **EMN Germany:** On 23-24 November 2023, a national conference on Resettlement, humanitarian admission and complementary pathways in refugee protection will be held in collaboration with UNHCR, Caritas and Diakonie.
- **EMN Luxembourg:** On 23 November 2023, the national conference will present results from the "Children in Migration 2021-2022" report.