

**December 2021**

Welcome to the EMN Bulletin Flash, our selection of the key developments in the areas of migration and asylum from **July to September 2021**.

**The full PDF version of the EMN Bulletin can be found [here](#).**

If you know someone who would be interested, please share this [link](#) so they can subscribe to the newsflash.

## EMN news



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

[International protection](#)

[Unaccompanied minors](#)

[Legal migration and integration](#)

[Return](#)

[Human trafficking](#)

[Border management](#)

## Recent EMN publications and events

- **EMN inform:** ‘Innovation in migration: Exploring legal pathways and new types of financing (public/private) to fill labour market needs’
- **Country Factsheets 2020** provide an overview of key developments in each Member State, Norway, Georgia and Moldova.
- **EMN study:** ‘Responses to long-term irregularly staying migrants: practices and challenges in EU Member States and Norway’
- **2020 Annual Report on Migration and Asylum Statistical Annex** is now available.
- **EMN-World Bank footprint series roundtable:** ‘Circular Migration for Low- and High-Skilled: A New Paradigm?’ covering circular migration schemes with a diverse set of speakers from Canada, Germany, Morocco, New Zealand, Nigeria, and the United States.

[Back](#)

## News from the EU

### EU actions on Afghanistan

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on Afghanistan declaring solidarity and called on the Commission and Member States to “pursue a humane asylum policy in which the EU shoulders its moral responsibility in reception and integration in full compliance with the 1951 Geneva Convention”. The European Parliament welcomed the High-level Resettlement Forum dedicated to the situation in Afghanistan. DG HOME Commissioner Ylva Johansson attended the UN General Assembly in New York (20-23 September) to discuss ongoing efforts with EU partners and neighbouring country representatives.

### Actions against smuggling

The EU adopted a renewed EU action plan against migrant smuggling (2021-2025). The action plan has four key pillars:

1. Improving the law enforcement and judicial response to migrant smuggling.
2. Gathering and sharing information.
3. Improving the prevention of migrant smuggling and the assistance to vulnerable migrants.
4. Reinforcing cooperation with partner countries.

### World Day Against Trafficking in Persons

On World Day Against Trafficking in Persons, held on 30 July 2021, Ghada Waly (Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) and Ylva Johansson (European Commissioner for Home Affairs) delivered a joint statement on the EU-UN cooperation and coordination on the matter. The EU’s **Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings 2021-25**, published on 14 April 2021, is currently being implemented. It identifies key priorities aiming to combat trafficking in human beings more effectively and proposes concrete actions. It also aims to support Member States and non-EU partner countries in

the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Trafficking in Persons Protocol, to which the EU and its Member States are parties.

### **Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund**

The European Parliament adopted the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) consisting of € 9.88 billion to support asylum and migration policies. The Fund will aim to strengthen the EU's common asylum policy, by taking into consideration the needs of Member States, support the integration of third-country nationals, and help to combat irregular migration.

[Back](#)

## **News from the EU Member States**

### **Member States and response to COVID-19**

COVID-19-related travel restrictions continue to have an impact on all EU Member States, especially for individuals arriving from third countries or high-risk Member States. The Irish Government published its plan for the next phase of response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which contains details of plans for reopening across Q3 and Q4 2021 whilst Georgia added additional categories of foreigners into the national immunisation programme, allowing vaccination against COVID-19, free of charge.

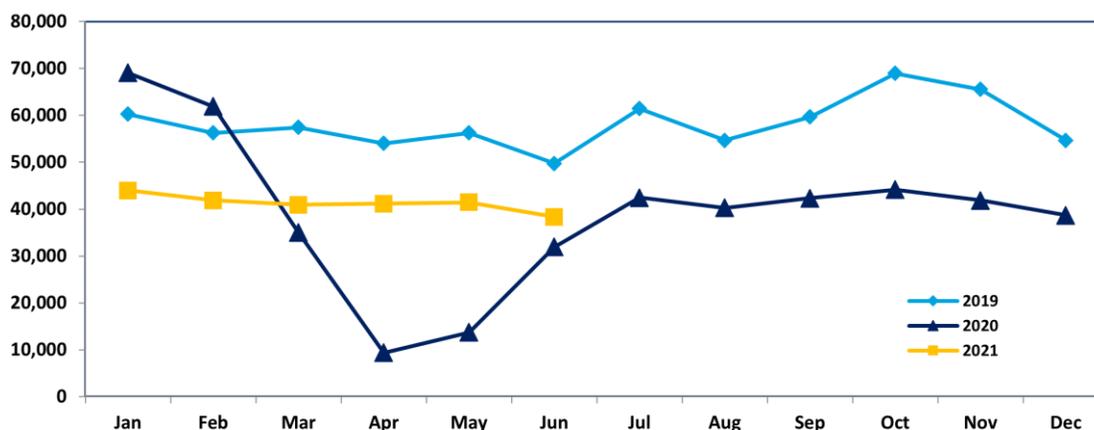
### **New laws and policies**

- **France:** France adopted a new law that introduces a specific provision on polygamy.
- **Germany:** Germany's new Act to ensure the quality of the e-recruitment of care workers came into force
- **Slovak Republic:** The Slovak Republic adopted its new Migration Policy of the Slovak Republic, 2021-2025 as the main strategic document in the area of migration and integration of foreigners in the Slovak Republic, it sets the goals, directions and principles of the policy.
- **Georgia** has supported the evacuation of up to 5 000 people (including around 1 500 minors) from Afghanistan through the regional transit hub set up at Tbilisi Airport.

[Back](#)

## **International protection including asylum and vulnerable groups**

**Figure 1: Asylum applications in the EU-27, Q2 2021 (April-June)**



Source: Eurostat [[migr\\_asyappctzm](#)], total asylum applicants, extracted on 26 October 2021.

According to Eurostat, in the second quarter of 2021, the number of first-time asylum applicants in the EU-27 increased by 9% compared with the previous quarter, and 115 % compared with the same quarter in 2020. Among accepted asylum applications, the top three nationalities were Syrian, Afghan and Pakistani.

During the reporting period, Member States reported on evacuations from Afghanistan, including **Belgium** (864), **Finland** (414), **France** (2 700), **Hungary** (540), **Italy** (5 001), **Lithuania** (176), **Luxembourg** (33 up until 31 August 2021), **the Netherlands** (1 900), **Poland** (1 138), **Portugal** (198), **Spain** (2 206), **Sweden** (1 130). **Estonia** has offered to grant protection to a total of 30 Afghan nationals evacuated by other countries, and in August and September, 14 of these people reached Estonia. **Germany** has been supporting the coordination and reception of local staff evacuated from Afghanistan and their family after their arrival. **Finland** will provide € 3 million through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to help Afghan refugees. **Ireland** decided to accelerate the processing of international protection applications from Afghanistan. In **Poland**, 3 484 applications for international protection were lodged, 1 530 of which were from Afghanistan. **Luxembourg** decided to suspend decision-making on applications for international protection by Afghan nationals, particularly in the interests of asylum applicants whose applications would otherwise have been refused. **Finland**, **Germany**, **the Netherlands** and **Sweden** are among those countries that suspended return decisions to Afghanistan, and **Belgium** reported a partial suspension.

In **the Netherlands**, a country-specific asylum policy was introduced for Palestinians in Lebanon for the first time.

[Back](#)

## Unaccompanied minors and vulnerable groups

Several countries reported action plans to address unaccompanied minors and vulnerable groups.

**France** published an action plan to address vulnerabilities of asylum seekers and refugees, after consulting with partners and institutional actors active in the field.

**Italy** has expanded the reception places for unaccompanied foreign minors.

**The Netherlands** adjusted its procedure for minor third-country nationals with a residence permit, making them eligible for family reunification.

**Portugal** provided training sessions for host institutions on the initial reception, accommodation, and integration of unaccompanied migrant children.

**Georgia** approved an action plan on statelessness that includes activities to improve their legal status and increase access to procedures.

[Back](#)

## Legal migration and integration

Family reunification was addressed in some policy developments during the reporting period.

**Estonia's** Supreme Court concluded that it would be unconstitutional to not grant a third-country national a temporary residence permit for settling with registered same-sex partners with a residence permit.

**Luxembourg** amended its immigration law to simplify administrative procedures for family reunification.

High-skilled and labour migration management actions were further developed in some countries.

**Belgium** adopted legislation that allows international students who graduate in Belgium, or who graduated abroad but studied for a period of time in Belgium within the framework of a mobility program, to remain for one year after graduation to look for work or engage in self-employed activities. Finland submitted a request to Parliament to introduce long-term visas that would promote labour migration, and also published a roadmap for education-based and work-based immigration for specialists, entrepreneurs, researchers and students.

**Finland** is also planning to recruit more people to mission abroad, on a temporary basis, to respond to the increase of residence permit requests, ensuring the availability of skilled labour in the country.

**France** modernised the online service available for foreign users, with the possibility to apply for long-stay visas, talent passport residence permits, visitor residence permits, duplicate residence permits or notify a change of address directly online. Georgia approved a study program 'Study in Georgia' that would facilitate enrolment of foreign students in higher education institutions.

Several Member States also presented a variety of courses for the purpose of integration. **Malta's** main professional vocational education and training institution organised an online debate on multiculturalism and **Portugal** developed an online course on migration and health in collaboration with IOM Portugal.

**Italy** concluded a sports tournament aimed at integrating unaccompanied foreign minors by promoting interaction amongst peers.

**Georgia** has also seen an increase in foreigners enrolled in the entry-level state language courses and integration program.

[Back](#)

## Return

In line with the European Commission's action plan, some Member States emphasised the suspension of returns for Afghan citizens, including **Finland, Germany, the Netherlands,** and **Sweden.**

In some cases, Member States expanded or joined EU-wide coordination efforts on returns. **Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta,** and **Spain** released a joint statement that called for a 'common European participation in returns' with the active involvement of EU organisations. **Italy** continued to develop the EU-wide Return Case Management system that will simplify the issuing of return decisions. Italy also joined the European Return and Reintegration Network (ERRIN) and is developing strategies on reintegration. Officers from **Malta** attended ERRIN Train-the-Trainers sessions for return counsellors in Berlin.

[Back](#)

## Addressing human trafficking

Member States addressed human trafficking through action plans, surveys, and studies. **Austria** adopted a national action plan to combat trafficking in Persons. **Italy** launched its first national survey to assess housing conditions of migrant workers in the agricultural sector in order to map all situations of precariousness and housing hardships. **Malta** studied social differences on vulnerabilities under the 'Victims Voices lead the Way' campaign. **Poland** is updating its guidelines for labour inspectors, focusing on forced labour and launched a survey on public awareness on trafficking. **The Slovak Republic** promoted networking and awareness-raising activities to identify potential victims of human trafficking, which included field workers, operators of emergency systems, and employees of centres for children and families.

[Back](#)

## Border management and irregular migration

Regarding the situation in Belarus, EU Member States have been addressing requests for asylum, provisions for material and support. The European Court of Human Rights requested that **Latvia** and **Poland** provide Iraqi and Afghan refugees at the border with Belarus with basic necessities, without requiring them to enter into their territory.

In **Lithuania**, migrants stranded in Belarus can submit their asylum requests to the embassy in Minsk. **Estonia** is supporting Lithuania in the framework of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and Frontex joint operations.

**Lithuania** and **Poland** declared an emergency situation in certain provinces and is constructing a fence at the border with Belarus. **Lithuania** has allocated funds for the construction of a physical barrier on the border with Belarus, and local authorities have registered a total of 2 962 irregular migrants, of which 2 804 have applied for asylum.

**Poland** has lodged 718 applications for international protection from Belarus during the third quarter of 2021; a fence is also under construction at the border with Belarus. **The Netherlands** announced it will provide provisional material and expert support to Lithuania to assist with the increased migration.

Developments in cross-border management procedures took place in the reporting period. **Cyprus** is re-evaluating its external management procedures in a proposal that will be submitted to the Council of Europe and the Committee of Permanent Representatives in the European Union.

**Italy** has established an operational contact point for direct communication between Italy and Tunisia with the aim of exchanging information more rapidly and reducing cross-border crimes along the migration route.



**Publisher: European Commission, DG Migration & Home Affairs**  
[Unsubscribe](#) | [Modify your subscription](#) | [Legal notice](#)

The European Commission is committed to personal data protection. Any personal data is processed in line with the Regulation (EU) 2018/1725. All personal information processed by the Directorate-General for Migration and Home affairs is treated accordingly.