

MIGRATION: KEY FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS CONCERNS

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QUARTERLY BULLETIN

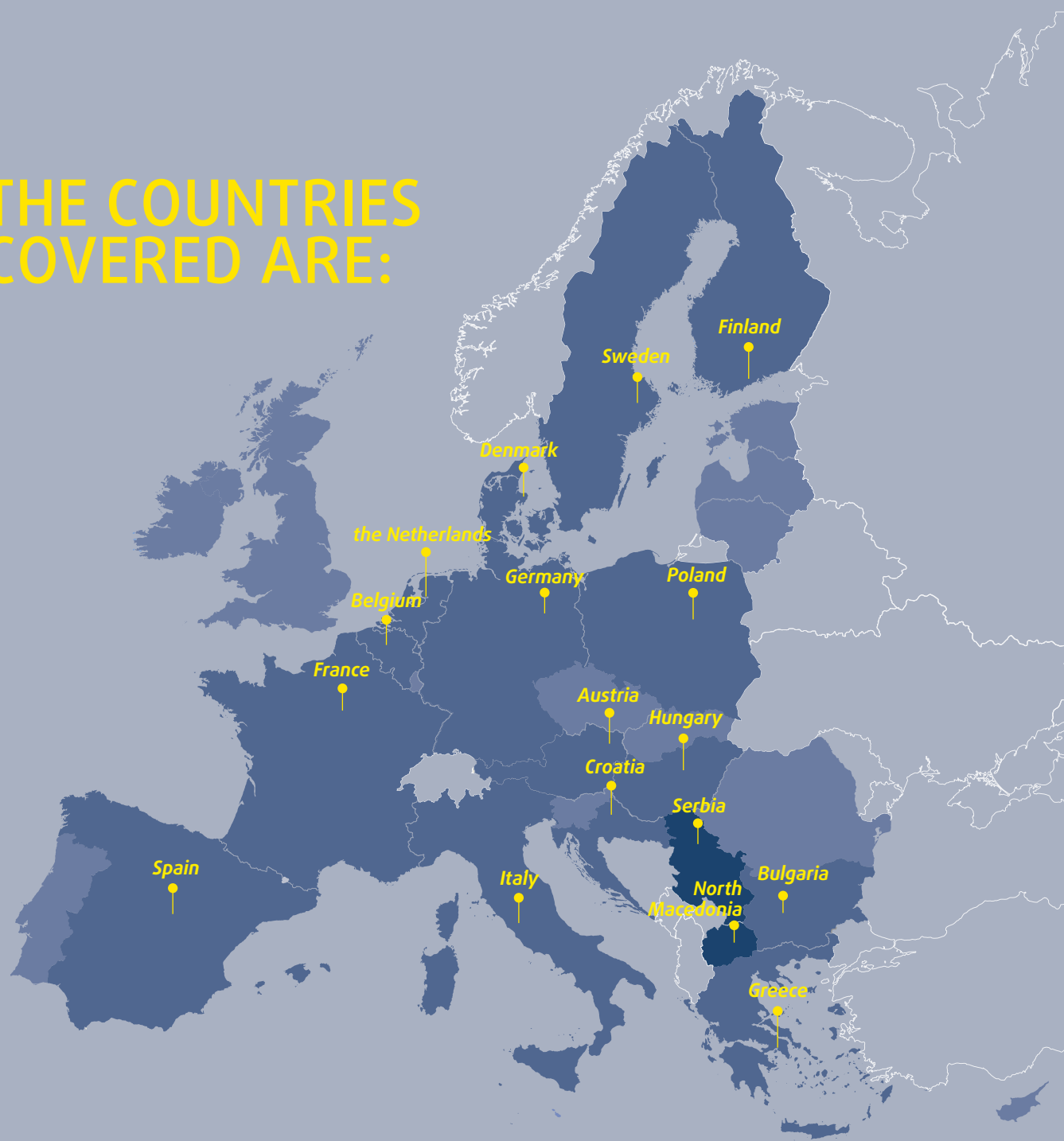
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The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights has been regularly collecting data on migration since November 2015. This report focuses on the fundamental rights situation of people arriving in Member States and EU candidate countries particularly affected by migration movements. It addresses fundamental rights concerns between 1 January and 31 March 2019.

THE COUNTRIES COVERED ARE:



Key fundamental rights concerns

Key emerging fundamental rights concerns

The Ministry of Migration Policy in **Greece** **decided to stop supporting certain categories of recognised refugees** under the Emergency Support to Integration and Accommodation (ESTIA) programme by the end of March. The programme provides housing and cash assistance to asylum applicants as well as refugees, with the support of the EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund. The new measure excludes from housing assistance individuals who were recognised as refugees before 31 July 2017, with the exception of those belonging to vulnerable groups. In the absence of functioning integration-support measures, **NGOs expressed concerns** that this would lead to a rise in homelessness and can negatively affect people's access to services, social benefits and continued access to education for children.

In **Hungary**, the **government decided to close the István Károlyi Children's Home in Fót** (in the vicinity of Budapest) by the end of June 2019. This is the largest home in the country for unaccompanied children who are under 14 years old and who have applied for asylum, are in an irregular situation, or already enjoy international protection. The children will be **relocated to other institutions** in Zalaegerszeg, Kalocsa, Aszód and Budapest. However, it **remains unclear** whether the new facilities will be fully equipped to serve their special needs.

The **Ministry of the Interior** in **Austria** presented new proposals in the area of asylum, including the accommodation in departure centres during the admission procedure; compulsory presence at night; a further acceleration of the asylum procedure to 20 days; steps at European level on the withdrawal of asylum status for certain criminal offences as well as preventative detention for asylum seekers who constitute a threat to national security or public order. The draft law on preventative detention was triggered by the stabbing of a public official in the district administration building in Dornbirn, Vorarlberg, allegedly by a Turkish national who was banned from the Schengen area. Meanwhile, the Federal Minister of Labour, Social Affairs, Health and Consumer Protection **said in a newspaper that refugees should be obliged to work** as harvesters or forestry workers. The **worker's union PRO-GE** called for the minister's immediate resignation.

Access to health care is an emerging concern for irregular migrants and asylum seekers in **Germany**. The Jesuit Refugee Service reported that social services refused to reimburse hospitals for emergency treatments of irregular migrants. The German Caritas Association was concerned about cases where severely ill persons did not receive necessary healthcare and where access to health care was made dependent on the outcome of the asylum procedure. More and more applications of asylum seekers for psycho-therapy were dismissed, according to the Federal Working Group of Psycho-Social Support Centres for Refugees and Victims of Torture, **compromising the right to health**. While at the beginning of 2018, 35 % of applications for psycho-therapy were dismissed, at the beginning of 2019 the quota rose to 45 %. Asylum seekers on average waited for 7.3 months for access to psychotherapy.

Note on sources

The evidence presented in this report is based on interviews with institutions and other organisations as indicated in the Annex. In addition, where sources of information are available in the public domain, hyperlinks are embedded to these sources of information throughout the text.

In **Poland**, authorities, applying administrative procedural law, continued to classify as “secret” several files concerning residence permits and asylum. This allows authorities to deny applicants and their legal representatives access to these documents both in the administrative and judicial-review phases, the Ombudsman as well as the NGOs ‘Rule of Law Institute Foundation’ and the ‘Association for Legal Intervention’ reported in interviews. Only in one case did the Ombudsman gain access to these classified files in court proceedings, as reported in an interview.

In **Belgium**, nine children (from Kosovo, Armenia and Georgia) were temporarily detained with their families during the reporting period, UNICEF reported in an interview. The possibility to detain children together with their parents was reintroduced as a measure of last resort for families who had previously absconded from a return house. **The practice has been used since August 2018.**

The Parliament in **Denmark** passed a bill envisaging that all residence permits for refugees and their family members are granted with a temporary purpose; however, it is still possible to apply for permanent residence after some years. The Danish Institute for Human Rights and **UNHCR have expressed concerns** about these amendments. The bill will also make it possible to limit the number of residence permits on grounds of family reunification, if the number of asylum applications in Denmark ‘increases significantly over a short period’ – without specifying what a significant increase would mean. Lastly, sanctions for persons who violate their duty to stay at a specific asylum centre for rejected asylum seekers and persons on tolerated stay (Deportation Centre) will be increased. **The Danish Refugee Council finds** that there is a disproportionality between the sanction and the violation. For instance, someone whose stay is tolerated, but does not comply with their duty to report the stay at the centres, may be sentenced to 40 days’ imprisonment.

In the run-up to the 14 April 2019 parliamentary elections in **Finland**, immigrant candidates have been subjected to increased racist verbal abuse, threats and harassment compared to earlier elections, according to representatives from multiple parties interviewed by the largest Finnish newspaper, **Helsingin Sanomat**.

In **North Macedonia**, the implementation of the recently adopted **Law on International and Temporary Protection** raised concern. One case received a lot of **international media attention**. An Emirati woman, who fled from her family after they threatened her when she sought divorce from her husband, was arrested and taken to the Gazi Baba immigration detention centre on the grounds that she posed a threat to national security while her asylum application was pending. She has no criminal record and has not been allowed visitors or access to her lawyer. The asylum claim was eventually rejected and, following an **interim measure of the European Court of Human Rights**, the woman was released.

Key persisting fundamental rights concerns

The Reception and Identification Centres on the Aegean islands of Samos, Lesvos and Chios (‘hotspots’) in **Greece remained severely overcrowded**. Samos hosted five times as many people as its capacity; Lesvos held double its capacity; and Chios also accommodated more people than its official capacity. On Samos, the Regional Trade Union Centre, joined by NGOs working there, **organised a 24-hour strike** in February, demanding the closure of the Reception and Identification Centre, the decongestion of the island, and the proper staffing of health services.

Legal corner

In **Sweden**, the government decided to prolong until July 2021 the validity of the 2016 law imposing temporary restrictions on granting residence permits to refugees and limiting family reunification.

The key persistent fundamental rights concern in **Italy** remained the government's policy to not allow rescue boats to dock, delaying the disembarkation of migrants. For further details, please see the section on the situation at the border.

Human smuggling remained a concern in **Hungary**. According to the police, in the reporting period, the authorities placed into custody 27 alleged human smugglers. In several cases, people were smuggled in the **cargo space of trucks or minivans** crossing the borders from Serbia and Romania.

In **Croatia**, the Rehabilitation Centre for Stress and Trauma and the Red Cross noted in written contributions to this report their concern regarding the increasing length of second-instance proceedings on asylum claims before the Administrative Court. The waiting time for a decision increased from up to five to between seven and ten months. The Centre for Peace Studies reported that during its monthly visits to Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as to Serbia, asylum seekers continuously reported police violence and abuse, as well as being denied access to the asylum system in Croatia.

In **Austria**, Caritas Vienna reported in an interview that the quality of second-instance asylum decisions remained a concern. Caritas Vienna stated that the right to be heard is not guaranteed and UNHCR guidelines on Afghanistan are not taken into account.

In **Poland**, many asylum seekers and other migrants continued to end up in immigration detention as a result of poorly functioning identification- and referral- mechanisms. This occurred even though detaining victims of violence is prohibited under Polish **immigration and asylum law**, the Ombudsman and NGOs reported in interviews. Assistance to victims of violence who are asylum seekers or migrants has been primarily provided by private entities (e.g. medical companies) and NGOs, given that there is still no rehabilitation centre for foreigners in the country, according to **the National Prevention Mechanism** established under the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture.

Delays during the asylum procedure as well as access to reception services and the quality of reception conditions remained fundamental rights concerns in **Spain**.

In **France**, living conditions continued to deteriorate for people staying in informal camps in the North of France and in Paris, particularly affecting their health and psychological well-being. Similarly, difficulties in accessing asylum procedures due to the long waiting time to get an appointment, as well as summary returns and the denial of access to the asylum procedure at the alpine border between France and Italy, remained issues, also affecting children. Other persistent problems include the widespread use of immigration detention, including for children, and the lack of alternatives to detention in practice, the Public Defender of Rights and several NGOs pointed out in interviews.

The long waiting time between registration of the application for international protection and the start of the procedure remained a key fundamental rights concern in **The Netherlands**. The Dutch Council for Refugees **reported** that asylum seekers had to wait 16 months before their asylum procedure started in January 2019, and that this is likely to increase to 24 months in the first half of 2019. By contrast, this waiting period totalled eight weeks in early 2017.

UNHCR remains concerned about restrictions upon family reunification and access to legal aid for refugees in **Finland**. Pursuant to these continuing concerns, UNHCR issued **recommendations on strengthening refugee protection**.

A persisting concern in **Sweden** was the situation of young people who have been granted temporary residence permits to finish studies at upper secondary level as a result of the July 2018 amendments to the **law imposing temporary restrictions on granting residence permits to refugees and limiting family reunification**. Both the National Board of Health and Welfare and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions stressed in interviews that the legislation is not detailed enough to be implemented by different actors (municipalities, the Swedish Migration Agency etc.) in a satisfactory and legally secure way. The mental health situation for this group was also a persisting concern, the National Board of Health and Welfare and the Red Cross Sweden reported in interviews.

Collective expulsions continued in **North Macedonia**, the Helsinki Committee of Human Rights of the Republic of Macedonia, the NGO 'Legis', and the Ombudsman reported in interviews. Furthermore, the legal status of the transit reception centres in the country has still not been defined, leaving also the asylum seekers staying there without legal status. The procedure for asylum continued to be ineffective, rarely resulting in a positive decision, and the individual circumstances of each applicant were rarely assessed. For example, no positive asylum decisions were issued during the first three months of 2019. During the same period, there were 69 new asylum applications.

In **Serbia**, despite the overall drop in the number of arrivals, overcrowding in some of the reception facilities for asylum seekers remained a problem, with conditions deteriorating below minimum international standards, according to a **report published by the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture** after a country visit. Other persisting concerns include the government's failure to enact legislation on the issuing of travel documents to recognised refugees; the continuing procedural and administrative burden related to accessing accommodation other than in reception centres; and obtaining a work permit by beneficiaries of international protection, NGOs reported in interviews. Reception conditions also remained problematic at the Belgrade International Airport, where a significant number of people seek asylum and may spend at least a few days in *de facto* detention before being allowed to enter Serbia, according to the **UN Special Rapporteur on Torture**.

Situation at the border

Figures and trends

UNHCR estimates that 15,886 migrants and refugees arrived in Europe by sea and land between January and March 2019 – compared to 19,219 persons in the same period in 2018, representing a 17 % decrease. According to the IOM, 354 persons lost their lives in the Mediterranean from January to March 2019 – 70 % less than during the same period in 2018.

No Name Kitchen, an NGO that reports monthly on the violence at the Croatian-Bosnian border, stated that 63 persons were pushed back from **Croatia** in **January** and 93 in **February**. UNHCR reported that the number of collective expulsions from Croatia to Serbia declined in January compared to December, and reported 241 cases compared to the previous 370.

Risk of *refoulement*

The police in **Hungary** apprehended some 2,000 migrants in an irregular situation during the reporting period (close to the border with Serbia in all cases). According to the data of the National Headquarters of the Police, these persons were escorted back to the outer side of the fence at the Hungarian-Serbian border. Authorities do not register and fingerprint these people prior to escorting them to the southern border, nor do they count them as new arrivals in official statistics.

The police in **Hungary** also prevented 273 people from crossing the border into Hungary via the border fence, the **National Headquarters of the Police reported**. Overall, this represented a slight increase compared to the previous period, although there was a significant drop in numbers in March (with only 49 people prevented from crossing the border fence).

A significant number of migrants in poor physical and mental condition arrived in **Croatia** from Bosnia and Herzegovina, according to the Croatian Red Cross. The Ombudsperson's Office in **Croatia** reported in an interview about receiving continuous complaints from asylum seekers about push backs at the Croatian external borders and limited access to the asylum procedure. The Centre for Peace Studies **published a statement** voicing concern about the inhuman behaviour of Croatian border police at the external borders. Reports by Amnesty International ("**Pushed To The Edge: Violence And Abuse Against Refugees And Migrants Along Balkan Route**") and Meltingpot Europa ("**Stories of ordinary violence from the border between Bosnia and Croatia**") detail police violence and criminalisation of humanitarian assistance to asylum seekers. The mayor of Bihać Šuhret Fazlić **accused the Croatian police** of illegally entering the Bosnian territory and pushing back people to Bosnia. Fazlić's allegations were presented at the Bihać City Council session, the Welcome Initiative reported.

In **Poland**, refusing entry to asylum seekers at the land-border crossing points with Belarus – mainly at Terespol – and with the Ukraine – primarily at Medyka – remained a major concern, UNHCR, the Ombudsman and NGOs reported in interviews. The number of complaints also rose, with **several cases pending** before the European Court of Human Rights.

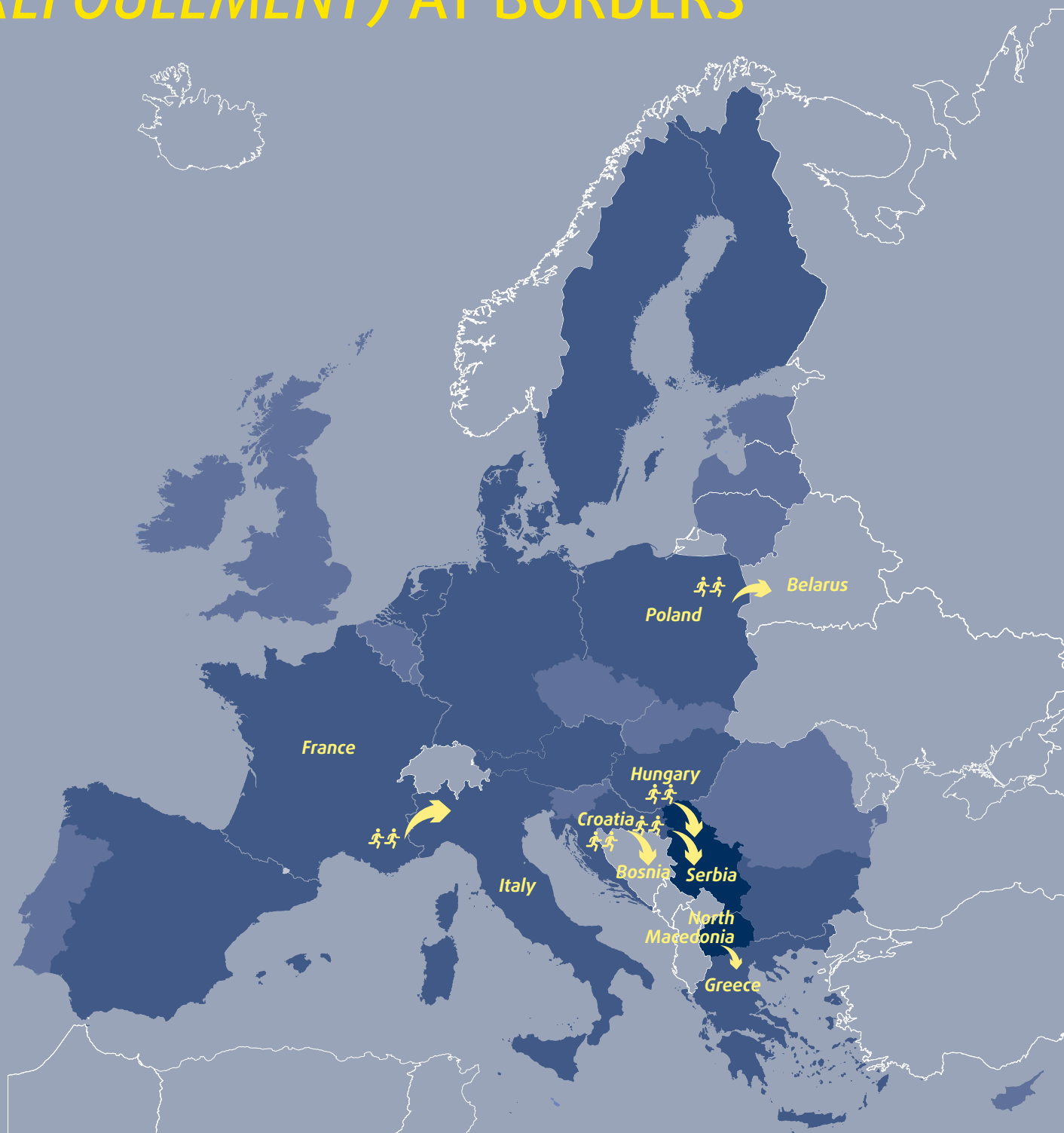
Refoulement practices at the border between **France** and **Italy**, in particular in the French Department of Alpes-Maritimes, persisted, the NGOs 'La Cimade', 'GISTI' and 'ANAFÉ' reported in interviews. A **report published by ANAFÉ** voiced serious concerns about, among others, discriminatory border controls, not

Legal corner

The principle of *non-refoulement* is the core element of refugee protection and is enshrined in international and EU law. Article 33 (1) of the 1951 Refugee Convention and the interpretation of Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) prohibit returning an individual to a risk of persecution, torture, inhuman or other degrading treatment or punishment. EU primary law reflects the prohibition of *refoulement* in Article 78 (1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU) and in Articles 18 and 19 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. The principle of *non-refoulement* also applies when authorities turn back people seeking international protection who have reached the EU's external borders or at high seas.



REPORTED INCIDENTS OF UNLAWFUL REFUSAL OF ENTRY (REFOULEMENT) AT BORDERS



Note: Unlawful refusals of entry at airports are not included.

Source: FRA, 2019

Legal corner

Limiting access to Italy's territorial waters

On 30 January, the Italian Prime Minister declared his intention to introduce a legislative reform limiting the access of international search-and-rescue vessels to Italy's territorial waters.

FRA activity

Update of 2016 Opinion on fundamental rights in Greek and Italian 'hotspots'

In March 2019, FRA published an update of its 2016 opinion to address the fundamental rights shortcomings identified in the implementation of the 'hotspot' approach in Greece and Italy. Despite genuine efforts to improve the situation, many of the suggestions contained in the 21 opinions FRA formulated at the time remain valid. The main persisting challenges in the hotspots are related to international protection, child protection, identification of vulnerable people, security, return and readmissions.

respecting the right to asylum, flawed decisions refusing entry, incidents of *refoulement*, unlawful deprivation of liberty, and physical violence. After NGOs, a senator and a member of the European Parliament initiated legal action, the **Nice Public Prosecutor in February opened a preliminary investigation** into the actions of the Menton Border Police.

The 2018 **annual report of the Ombudsman of North Macedonia** notes that the Ministry of the Interior continued carrying out collective expulsions at the southern border with Greece. The Ministry of the Interior reported that, between January and March 2019, it prevented 3,624 attempts to cross the border in an unauthorised manner – three times more than during the same period the year before (1,284).

Challenges at sea borders

In **Greece**, two young children and a man, coming from Turkey, **died off Samos island** after the boat they were on capsized in rough waters. The Hellenic Coast Guard rescued nine other people. The shipwreck was the first in the Aegean Sea this year.

In **Italy**, **18 organisations** – including the Italian Refugees Council, the Recreational and Cultural Italian Association, the Association for Legal Studies on Immigration (ASGI), INTERSOS, and Emergency – launched a public appeal urging Italian and EU authorities to allow the 'Sea Watch 3' and 'Sea Eye' vessels, which had on board 49 people rescued at sea, to dock in Italy. Following an **interim measure of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR)**, the 'Sea Watch 3' vessel was eventually allowed to disembark in Catania (Sicily) on 30 January after 10 days at sea, according to a **post of Sea Watch on Twitter**.

On 21 February 2019, the Legal Network for Transiting Migrants (*Rete legale per i migranti in transito*) – a voluntary network of NGOs in Italy providing free legal aid to migrants – reported in a **press conference** that the 42 people who had been forced to remain on board the 'Diciotti' vessel for four days filed a complaint with the Ordinary Court of Rome and ECtHR, claiming between € 42,000 and € 71,000 as compensation for the violation of their personal freedom. On 19 March, following an **appeal of several associations – including ASGI** – the Italian humanitarian SAR "Mare Jonio" vessel, which had rescued 49 people in distress, disembarked in Sicily. The **Minister of the Interior deemed the SAR operation unlawful** because, in his view, it constitutes facilitation of human smuggling, and claimed that the disembarking of those on board would represent a threat to public security.

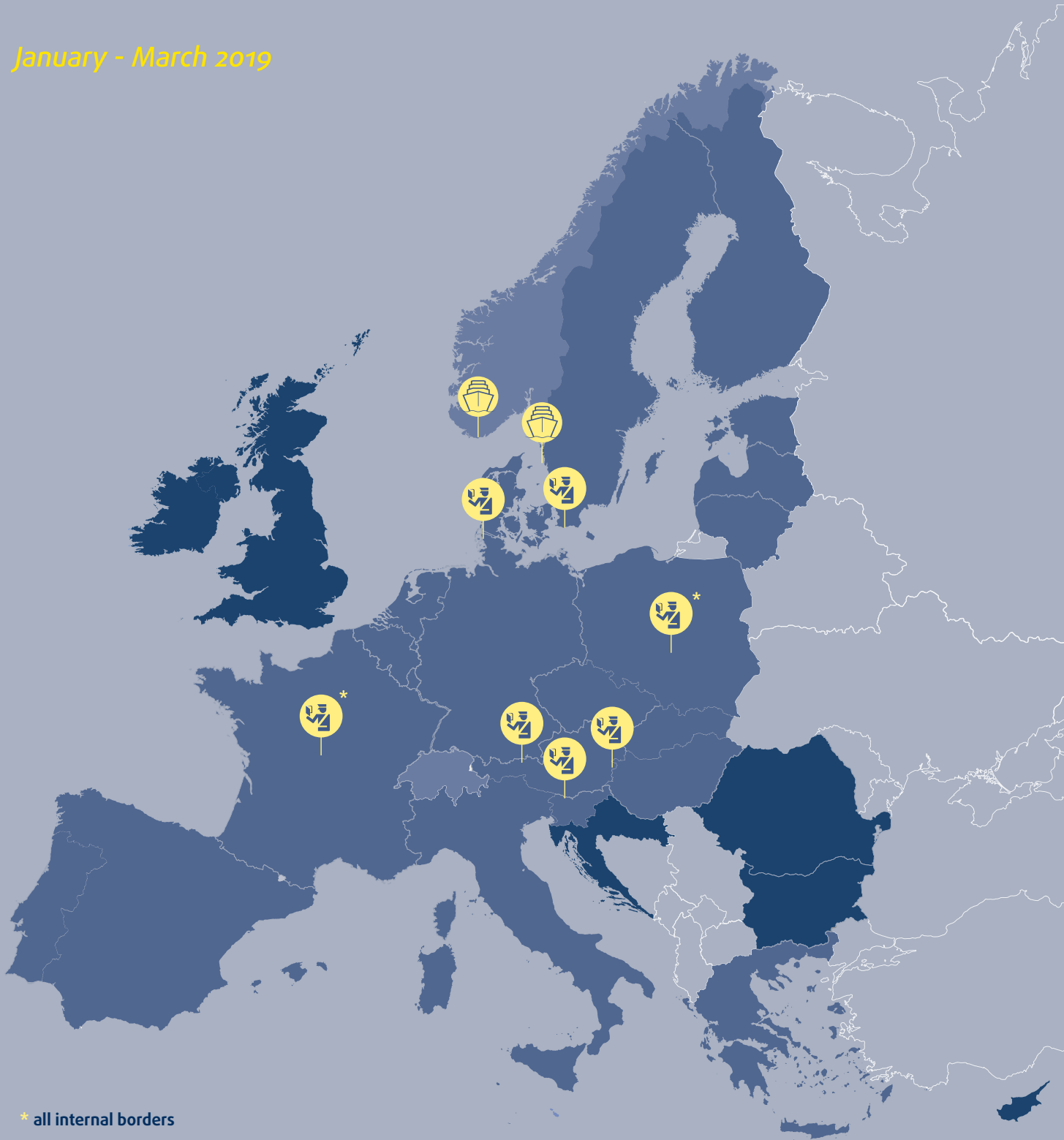
In **Spain**, *Capitania Maritima*, a maritime organisation of the Spanish government, denied the NGO search-and-rescue vessel 'Open Arms' permission to depart from Spanish ports, **according to Spanish media**. The authorities justified their decision by referring to the absence of a European plan to address rescue in the Mediterranean and the closure of Italian and Maltese ports, according to **el diario**. Days later, **media reported** that the Basque vessel 'Aita Mari' had also been denied permission to depart for the same reasons.

Challenges at land borders

The **media reported** that a 29-year-old migrant from Togo died from severe hypothermia when he got stuck in the snow while attempting to cross the French border from **Italy** close to the Col de Montgenèvre.

THE SCHENGEN AREA

January - March 2019



* all internal borders

- Schengen EU Member States
- Non-Schengen EU Member States
- Schengen Non-EU Member States



Controls at land-border crossing points



Controls at ports

In two cases, one in Istria and one in Rijeka, **Croatia**, the police fired at cars allegedly carrying smugglers who were transporting migrants, after they continued driving at high speed when the police tried to stop them using light and sound signals, according to the **media**. In the case that occurred in Rijeka, the chase resulted in an accident that left one child injured, the Welcome Initiative reported in an interview.

In France, approximately 50 to 70 migrants entered the port of Calais in an unauthorised manner and boarded a ferry trying to reach the United Kingdom, the **media** and NGOs reported. According to the **information communicated by the authorities to the press**, approximately 60 people were arrested and placed in police custody in Calais. Some of these people, identified as the instigators, were brought before a court, while others were issued a return decision, the NGO Service centre for migrants in Calais stated in an interview.

The situation at the **French-Spanish** border remained challenging, especially because many people, including women and children, from West Africa and Northern Africa cross Spain to reach France, NGOs reported. This situation **generated tension** between the local and central authorities on the French side of the border. In October 2018, the mayor of Bayonne opened a building to accommodate new arrivals, before asking the government for financial support (€ 70,000 per month), but the prefect of Pyrénées-Atlantiques in January **refused to provide such help**, arguing that “it is completely impossible for the State to grant any assistance at all to a structure which facilitates the movement of people in irregular situation in the country”.

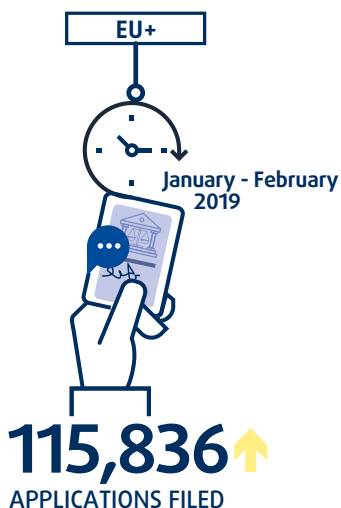
Migrants aiming to move from **Belgium** to the United Kingdom and camping in Brussels at the Maximilian park faced various issues, such as a lack of information about their rights and about the asylum procedure in Belgium; no access to proper housing, food or medical care; and numerous cases of mental-health problems, **two reports** published by a group of NGOs supporting migrants found.

The **Schengen evaluation report on the management of the external borders in Sweden** found that border-control activities were not compliant with the relevant Schengen acquis on several accounts. Key shortcomings included understaffing, lack of proper training, and the staff’s lack of access to the right databases to conduct searches. To remedy these, the Swedish Police requested an additional € 57,5 million from the government, **media reported**.

In **Finland**, the **Government** announced the entering into force of a package of legislative amendments. **These amendments** grant the Finnish Border Guard strengthened powers to intervene in the face of hybrid threats, i.e. when the State is subject to pressure through intentional means such as influence through information, attacks against information networks, or terrorist or criminal activities, which threatens state security. Moreover, the amendments include new obligations for passenger carriers to provide the Border Guard passenger lists in advance if, in exceptional situations, border controls are introduced at the internal borders. In practice, this would restrict passengers travelling without identity documents, such as asylum seekers, from boarding the carriers.

Temporary reintroduction of border controls

Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, and **Sweden** prolonged or kept **internal border controls in the Schengen area**. **Poland** reintroduced controls at all internal borders from 10 February 2019 to 16 February 2019, for the Ministerial Conference to Promote a Future of Peace and Security in the Middle East.



In numbers

The number of asylum applications filed in **Austria** in December 2018 was the lowest since April 2010.

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In **France**, the Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons' official data for 2018 show that the total number of asylum applications rose by almost 22 % compared to 2017 (with a total of 122,743 asylum claims in 2018).

Asylum procedure

Figures and trends

According to **EASO**, 115,836 applications were lodged in the EU, Norway and Switzerland (EU+) between January and February 2019. This number represents a slight increase compared to the 100,661 applications lodged during the same period last year, and the 105,788 applications lodged during November and December 2018.

The number of **asylum applications filed in Austria** in December 2018 was the **lowest since April 2010**: 871, compared to 1,031 in November 2018. Compared to December 2017, the number decreased by 45 %. Almost 6,000 proceedings regarding the withdrawal of protection statuses were initiated in 2018, which is four times more than in 2017, according to a **parliamentary question**.

Spain received 54,065 asylum applications in 2018, making it one of the five countries in Europe with the highest number of applications.

In the reporting period, a total of 1,549 persons, including 124 unaccompanied children, expressed their intention to seek asylum and to submit an asylum application in **Serbia**, according to the data of the Ministry of the Interior. This represents an 10,5% increase compared to the same period in 2018. However, in the first quarter of 2019, only 93 persons actually submitted asylum applications. During the same period there were only 21 older applications positively decided, 11 individuals received refugee status and 10 individuals got subsidiary protection.

Access to asylum procedures

In **Greece**, the **Greek Council for Refugees published its annual report of 2018** zooming in on the impact of immigration detention on access to asylum. Last year, the NGO recorded cases of people who, after repeated unsuccessful attempts to secure an appointment with the Asylum Service to lodge an asylum application, were arrested because they lacked documents and then detained for the purposes of removal. Delays were also recorded in relation to the lodging of asylum applications (between one and four months) submitted from detention.

In **Italy**, on 9 February 2019, four associations – **ASGI, ARCI, Action Aid, and Indiewatch** – sent a letter to the **Ministry of the Interior**, the Prefect of Messina, and the Police Headquarters (*Questura*) of Messina, urging them to officially clarify the status of people hosted in the hotspot of Messina. According to the signatories of the letter, since 31 January 2019, 32 people were detained in the hotspot of Messina and not given the opportunity to apply for asylum as their relocation to other EU Member States was being negotiated. Moreover, the persons were detained for three days without being issued a detention order.

According to the data provided by the Office of Immigration and Asylum in interviews, roughly one asylum applicant per working day was admitted to each transit zone in **Hungary**. The data continue to show that daily access to asylum in Hungary is extremely limited, which has been the case **since the end of January 2018**. In the country, people in need of international protection can only lodge asylum applications in the transit zones. Since July 2018, once an asylum application is lodged, authorities systematically deny international protection to those who arrived via Serbia, declaring these applications inadmissible under the **new rules in force since then (according to which an asylum application is to be considered inadmissible if the person arrived from a country where he/she was not subject to persecution)**.

In **Poland**, the lack of free legal assistance to asylum seekers in detention centres and open reception facilities remained an issue of concern, the Ombudsman, UNHCR and multiple NGOs pointed out in interviews. To remedy this situation, the Ministry of the Interior and Administration **announced a call for tenders to provide legal assistance** under their national programme of the EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund. The selected projects will be implemented between September 2019 and September 2022.

Significant delays to access the asylum procedure in **Spain** remained. CEAR **criticised** the delay to access the asylum interview. The Barcelona Centre for International Affairs has **reported** that the period between the start of the asylum procedure and the decision ranged between three months to three years in 2018.

In **France**, the telephone system introduced in the Île-de-France region in May 2018 to register asylum claims and get appointments at the prefecture continued to present difficulties, NGOs reported in interviews. According to the NGO 'La Cimade', this phone number remains very difficult to contact and it takes a long time to get through to someone from the prefecture. The number is not a free-of-charge number and the call stops automatically after 45 minutes of waiting, forcing asylum applicants to call again. Upon an action against this system filed by asylum applicants and NGOs, the **Administrative Court of Paris acknowledged** the existence of "virtual queues", and **instructed the administration** to increase staff in charge of this telephone system. The Public Defender of Rights raised similar concerns in his report entitled "**Digitalisation and inequalities in access to the public services**". The report also found that the digitalisation of access to prefectures can in particular be a source of discrimination for asylum seekers, given that they might not have access to the internet, or do not speak French well enough to be able to use the tools on offer.

In **Finland**, the **UNHCR Regional Representation for Northern Europe (RRNE)** **reviewed** the Finnish Immigrations Service's written negative asylum decisions with reference to internal flight and generally found decisions to be well structured. Nevertheless, the RRNE also identified many shortcomings and recommended that the Immigration Service, in its decisions, should pay closer attention to, among others, the availability of state protection, the existence of support networks, past experiences of persecution, and the human rights situation.

According to a 2018 U.S. State Department **Country Report on Human Rights Practices** in **North Macedonia**, migrants detained in the Transit Centre for Foreigners were impeded from accessing asylum. An asylum application by a person held in the closed reception centre in Gazi Baba would only be possible after the person gave a statement before the court, in criminal proceedings, against their smugglers. According to the NGO 'Legis', the reason for rejecting asylum claims was on many occasions "danger to the national security" and "protection of public order and national security". The only evidence for such grounds is a confidential official note issued by the Security and Counter-Intelligence Directorate, which is, due to its unknown content, difficult to appeal.

Relocation

In **Greece**, the Ombudsman published a **report on the implementation of the EU relocation programme for asylum seekers**. According to the Ombudsman, the program suffered from procedural defects and imperfections, as well as the lack of genuine political will for its implementation. The report made recommendations towards a permanent mechanism for the allocation of asylum seekers as an integral part of the Common European Asylum System, since such a mechanism could ensure sustainability; fair sharing of responsibility under the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU; respect for the right to asylum; and restrain unauthorised secondary onward movements.

Reception

Reception capacity

Sufficient reception capacity was available in **Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, North Macedonia** and **Poland**. **Italy** does not record any statistics on reception capacity.

Reception facilities in **France, Greece, The Netherlands, Spain** and **Serbia** remained overcrowded.

In **Spain**, according to the Barcelona Centre for International Affairs **report 2018**, while more reception capacity has been provided to address the high number of arrivals in 2018, both material and human resources remain insufficient.

The reception system's capacity in **France** remained unable to provide accommodation for all asylum seekers in the country, various NGOs reported in interviews. Besides informal camps in the North of France (with an estimated **450 people living near Calais**), thousands of people, **including recognised refugees**, were living in camps scattered across Paris, **NGOs and the media reported**. The authorities, witnessing the return of previously dismantled camps, continued to **carry out regular evacuations**.

In **The Netherlands**, the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (*Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers*) was **still looking for 2,500 additional reception places**, which are immediately needed.

In **Serbia**, the reception centres in Principovac and Adaševci remained overcrowded (operating at 134 % and 126 % of their capacity, respectively), according to the Belgrade Centre for Human Rights based on the statistics provided by UNHCR.

Reception conditions

In the 'hotspots' in **Greece**, psychologists employed by **Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)** mentioned the **housing situation** of their patients as their biggest challenge, also causing mental health issues. MSF Greece **stated in a report** that three years on, authorities still failed to provide dignified and humane living conditions and proper medical care to those staying in the Greek 'hotspots'. In Vathy, on the island of Samos, more than half the camp's population lived in summer tents, surrounded by rubbish.

The Prefecture of Milan (Lombardy), **Italy** published a call for tenders aimed at activating reception facilities for asylum seekers throughout the municipal territory. According to **Law No. 132 of 1 December 2018**, international protection applicants are no longer entitled to be accommodated in second reception facilities – i.e. the SPRAR system, now renamed 'Protection System for International Protection Status Holders and Unaccompanied Children' (*Sistema di protezione per titolari di protezione internazionale e per minori stranieri non accompagnati*). **ASGI harshly criticised the call for tenders** due to the reduction in financial resources for integration and reception services.

In numbers

The Ministry of the Interior launched a call for tenders for new reception facilities in **Italy** that foresees paying, on average, a daily amount of € 21.35 per person (down from € 32) for a reception centre with a maximum capacity of 50 people. Instead of one professional social worker for every 10 persons, there will be one for 50 people.

Bright spots

The **Italian** Refugees Council – in cooperation with the Refugees Welcome network – launched a promising practice called ‘Welcome Home’, funded through citizens’ voluntary contributions devolved from their annual income tax return. The project aims to propose pilot and innovative reception measures for refugees, involving Italian citizens who are willing to participate, thus fostering integration and social inclusion.

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According to a **representative study** of 7,430 adult asylum seekers and refugees in **Germany**, a vast majority significantly improved their language skills within one year.

In **Hungary**, there were new cases where the authorities denied food to rejected asylum seekers staying in the transit zones located along the country’s southern borders with Serbia. According to the Hungarian Helsinki Committee, there have been eight cases (involving 14 asylum seekers) since August 2018 where the NGO successfully secured interim measures from the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), in application of Rule 39 of the Rules of the Court, in order to stop the practice. In the most recent case in March, an Afghani mother and her adult son were not provided with food for two and a half days. Since the **ECtHR issued its interim order** on 15 March 2019, the mother and her son have received food again.

According to an interview with the Jesuit Refugee Service, finding apartments in **Croatia** has become harder for refugees, especially for single men. This is due to both the reluctance of owners to rent apartments to foreigners and to increasing prices in Zagreb.

The **Ministry of the Interior** in **Austria** renamed the initial reception centres (*Erstaufnahmezentren*) to “departure centres” (*Ausreisezentren*). This new concept aims to combine accommodating asylum seekers, processing their asylum claim, as well as their return.

In **Spain**, the **Barcelona Centre for International Affairs report 2018** stressed the need for a long-term policy strategy and financial mechanism to ensure that policies relating to reception are no longer based on ‘emergency reception’.

In **Belgium**, despite sufficient reception capacity, almost 1,600 newly arrived asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection have been waiting for months to attend the integration course that is mandatory for migrants in Flanders, **media sources reported**.

In **Sweden**, the **Association of Local Authorities and Regions highlighted the negative impact of the shortened duration of temporary residence permits** on persons seeking family reunification. If a beneficiary of international protection has a residence permit valid only for 13 months, their family members’ residence permits are likely to be valid for less than one year. This is problematic since persons without at least one-year long residence permits are not registered in the population register and thus are not able to access many forms of welfare support and services.

In **Serbia**, where five permanent asylum centres and 11 temporary reception centres were operating, reception conditions in most centres were very basic and only a few of them offered appropriate accommodation for an extended stay. Such conditions placed asylum seekers at risk of being exposed to inhumane reception conditions, as the latest **country report of the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture** confirmed. Although asylum applicants are entitled to stay in private accommodation, there were only 10 asylum seekers staying in private apartments at the end of the March, UNHCR reported in an interview.

Vulnerable persons

The **NGO ‘Oxfam’ published a report** on the challenges concerning vulnerability assessment in Lesvos, **Greece**. According to the report, for much of the last year, there was only one government-appointed doctor in Lesvos responsible for screening as many as 2,000 people arriving each month. As a result, many victims of sexual violence and other trauma continued to live in the hotspot, where fights broke out regularly and where two thirds of residents said they never felt safe. Oxfam called on the Greek government and the EU member states to deploy more expert staff, including doctors and psychologists, and to improve the vulnerability screening system on the Greek islands.

The Prefecture of Milan (Lombardy), **Italy**, published a call for tenders aimed at activating reception facilities for asylum seekers with no reference to the necessity to provide psychological support services. **ASGI harshly criticised the call for tenders.**

There were still no appropriate mechanism for the identification of torture victims in Croatia, the Rehabilitation Centre for Stress and Trauma noted. In the report “**Nearing a point of no return? Mental health of asylum seekers in Croatia**”, Doctors of the World highlighted the importance of preventative measure to avoid long-term damage to asylum seekers’ mental health. The aim of the study was to examine the level of psychological distress, anxiety, depression and post-traumatic symptoms of asylum seekers staying in the Reception Centre for Asylum Seekers in Zagreb, Croatia. The analysis showed that most asylum seekers have considerable symptoms of anxiety (58 %) and depression (67 %).

In numbers

58 % of asylum seekers in **Croatia** have considerable symptoms of anxiety and 68 % have symptoms of depression.

In **Spain**, according to the Chair of Refugees and Forced Migrants of Comillas, the number of places for vulnerable people in the Spanish reception system increased from 20 to 150 places. However, there is no standardised procedure for the vulnerability assessment, so many vulnerable asylum seekers are not identified as such.

The Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers **issued a press release** stating that specialised professionals were needed in reception centres in **The Netherlands** to take care of groups of asylum seekers with addiction or psychiatric problems and to support the staff. According to the agency, the two reception centres with additional guidance and supervision (*Extra begeleiding en toezichtlocaties*) are not suited for this group of asylum seekers. The **investigation report** of the Inspectorate of Justice and Security into the death of an Algerian asylum seeker in one of those centres in Hoogeveen showed that staff are not sufficiently equipped and lack legal and practical means to address difficult behaviour of residents.

The Immigration Service Reception Unit in **Finland** has, according to an interview, employed 15 new crisis and family workers at reception centres to address increasing mental health problems caused by uncertainty and prolonged waiting periods.

In **North Macedonia**, the Macedonian Young Lawyers Association published a policy brief on “**Gender Aspects of Migration**”, recommending that the country put an end to the unlawful detention of women and children together with men, improve accommodation conditions, and develop gender-sensitive migration policies and services. Other worrying problems include the insufficient legal basis for detention, the lack of documents explaining the reasons for or duration of the detention, and lack of access to legal assistance, which increases the vulnerability of the detained women.

Child protection

Figures and trends

As of 31 March 2019, according to the **National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA)**, 3,774 unaccompanied children were estimated to be in **Greece**, including 239 separated children (who have been separated from both parents, or from their primary caregiver, but not necessarily from other relatives). This marks a slight increase compared to the end of January. Only 959 were in appropriate and long-term accommodation (shelters and semi-independent living apartments); 883 were in temporary accommodation ('safe zones' and emergency hotels); 654 stayed in Reception and Identification Centres; 82 in 'protective custody', mainly at police stations; 134 in open temporary accommodation facilities; 605 reported as homeless; 307 in informal housing arrangements; and for 150, no location was reported. The total number of available long-term accommodation places for unaccompanied children in all of Greece was 1,121; for temporary accommodation, the number was 960.

According to the **Ministry of Labour and Social Policies**, on 28 February 2019, 8,537 unaccompanied children were officially registered in **Italy**. According to the **Ministry of the Interior**, as of 15 April 2019, 111 unaccompanied children had arrived in Italy since the beginning of the year. In 2018, the overall number of unaccompanied children disembarked on Italian shores was 3,536.

According to **UNICEF**, in 2018, 13,012 unaccompanied migrant children were registered in **Spain**. This number represents a rise of 103 % from the 6,414 registered at the end of 2017. The children mainly originated from Morocco (68 %), Guinea Conakry (8,4 %), Algeria (5,2 %) and Ivory Coast (3,5 %).

The National Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking together with the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control released a **report** on the status of child trafficking in **Finland**. Between 2006 and 2018, the national assistance system supported 55 children (under 18) and 141 young persons (aged 18 to 21). The abuses, i.e. sexual abuse, forced criminal activity and forced marriages, had occurred in Finland, in the country of origin, or en route to the EU.

In **Serbia**, a total of 484 unaccompanied children were staying at the seven centres accommodating such children in the beginning of March, the Commissariat for Refugees and Migrations reported in an interview.

Reception conditions for children

The International Commission of Jurists and the European Council for Refugees and Exiles **lodged a collective complaint** against **Greece** before the European Committee on Social Rights for violations of migrant and asylum-seeking children's rights, both with families and unaccompanied, under the **revised European Social Charter** on several accounts. The alleged grievances include the non-compliance with the right to housing; the right of children and young persons to social, legal and economic protection; the right of the family to social, legal and economic protection; the right to protection of health; the right to social and medical assistance; and the right to education.

The **Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights** sent a **formal letter to Italy**, expressing concerns about the situation of the children living in the facility of Castelnuovo di Porto not far from Rome, and recommending that the Italian government guarantee the fundamental rights of the people accommodated in the Italian reception system, especially vulnerable persons and children.

Bright spots

In **Italy**, the Milan-based NGO 'Naga' – a non-profit volunteer association providing healthcare support, legal counselling, and social assistance to foreign citizens, whether regular or irregular – published **guidelines concerning the right of unaccompanied children living without a regular administrative status to access the healthcare system**. The guidelines have been translated into several languages (Arabic, English, French, Spanish, and Romanian).

The **annual report of the Ombudsman in Bulgaria** highlighted as a promising practice the effective referral mechanism for unaccompanied children after initially being placed in a pre-removal detention facility. In the majority of such cases, a social worker visits the facility within 24 hours and protection measures are immediately undertaken.

The Public Prosecutor's Office in **Austria** initiated criminal investigations against the competent provincial commissioner for alleged abuse of office for detaining children without a legal basis, according to **Der Standard**. The commissioner had ordered the relocation of 14 asylum-seeking children to an asylum shelter in Drasenhofen, which was surrounded by fences and barbed wire and guarded by security personnel with dogs. They were only allowed to leave the accommodation accompanied and for limited time periods.

Bright spots

In **Belgium**, the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons opened special child-friendly interview rooms for asylum-seeking children, both unaccompanied and with families. As the Belgian Asylum Authority explained in an interview, each interview room is equipped with tools to help the children explain their story more easily and in a more relaxed way; drawings and toys are also used during the interviews.

In North Rhine Westphalia, **Germany**, children continued to be admitted into regular schools only once assigned to a municipality, according to the German Caritas Association. This can lead to the suspension of compulsory schooling for up to 24 months, during which children only receive education in mixed-age classes not tailored to their needs and education levels.

In **Denmark**, a special unit to fast-track the initial processing of newly arrived unaccompanied children living in the streets has been established to transfer them to adequate accommodation centres.

Authorities in **North Macedonia** apply Standard Operating Procedures for Dealing with Unaccompanied and Separated Children so that the few children arriving in the country were appointed a guardian in due time and without any problems. Most children, however, as several NGOs stated in interviews, continued to leave the country in irregular ways as soon as they could. UNHCR noted a need for access to education for children, regardless of the length of their stay in the country.

According to the **Report of the Croatian Ombudsperson** for Children (March 2019), centres for social work are still appointing guardians for unaccompanied children from the circle of adults that arrive with the child. This contravenes the directions given by the government as well as the **new protocol adopted in 2018**.

Guardianship for unaccompanied children

In **Hungary**, due to **legislative changes introduced at the end of March 2017**, the authorities continued to assign guardians only to unaccompanied children under the age of 14, who are placed in a children's home near Budapest (in Fót). Unaccompanied children over 14 years of age were still placed in the Rösztke transit zone until their asylum claims are decided upon. Under **Hungarian law**, they are considered to have full legal capacity as soon as they are 14 years of age, so they are assigned a formal legal representative only for the asylum procedure (an "ad hoc guardian"). Given their low numbers, such ad hoc guardians are only able to meet the children sporadically, and **their consent is not required** if a child decides to leave the transit zone through the one-way exit to Serbia.

In an interview, the Ombudsman for Children in **Poland** highlighted the persistent shortcomings in the guardianship system. For instance, the guardian's powers only last for the duration of the asylum procedure, limited to this specific procedure, and there are no criteria set out in law to appoint guardians for unaccompanied children. In practice, appointing a guardian is extremely burdensome, because it is only allowed under Polish law **once parents are officially deprived of parental authority**.

Safeguards and specific support measures

A number of refugee and migrant children and adolescents residing mainly on the Aegean islands in **Greece** were still not enrolled in formal education or struggle to keep up with school, mainly due to language barriers, combined with their long-term absence from school due to multiple displacement.

The **Council of Refugee Women** in **Bulgaria** continued its donation campaign "Give Warmth!" („Подари топлина!") aimed at collecting winter clothing and shoes for asylum seekers, especially children. As a result, about 300 persons were provided with clothing, shoes and blankets. In the framework of the "We Play and Learn" („Играем и учим") project, **Caritas Sofia** continued to provide Bulgarian language, geography, biology and art classes to asylum-seeking children and to assist those going to school with preparing their homework.

The Refugee Council Berlin and the German Caritas Association criticised that there are no special protection safeguards in **Germany** to ensure that children are not traumatised during forced-return operations. The Refugee Council Berlin is aware of cases where children were returned in the middle of the night wearing pyjamas, without anything to eat or drink, and traumatised after having witnessed their parents being handcuffed.

Several shortcomings persisted in the child-protection system for migrant children in **France**, the Public Defender of Rights pointed out in an interview. These include significant delays in access to care and inadequate reception conditions. The situation continued to deteriorate in certain areas of the country, mainly in Île-de-France. 27 NGOs and trade unions addressed an open letter to the French Red Cross, voicing criticism of the excessively lengthy age-assessment procedure (which can last up to 18 months), only after which an unaccompanied child is placed into the child-care system – until then, such children may live in the streets.

Due to the closing down of accommodation facilities in several areas in **Sweden**, asylum-seeking children who have been moved around during the asylum process must change schools and have to recreate a new social context, Red Cross Sweden reported in an interview.

Also in **Sweden**, due to diminishing state reimbursement to municipalities that accommodate unaccompanied children, such municipalities receive only 700 SEK (€ 67.1) daily per person; the actual cost is estimated to be around 1000 SEK (€ 95.8), according to a report published by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions.

In **Serbia**, the Asylum Office began to rely on the opinion of external experts, in particular with respect to establishing asylum-seeking children's state of mental health, a psychologist reported in an interview. Furthermore, the special needs of unaccompanied children were taken into account in the latest practice of the Asylum Office in order to determine whether the third countries they had previously transited and that were otherwise regarded as safe could not be considered safe in their individual circumstances.

Age assessment

In **Spain**, according to a UNICEF report on 'Rights of Unaccompanied Children in the Southern frontier', age-determination procedures at the southern border are automatically applied to every child, even when the child has documentation or there are no reasonable doubts about their age. Some of the medical age-assessment procedures are invasive, not carried out by a medical expert, and applied without the consent of the child. Children are not informed about this procedure nor are they provided with legal representation during the process.

FRA activity

In April 2018, FRA published a **report on age assessment and fingerprinting of children in asylum procedures**. It provides important insights into the implications of collecting children's biometric data and conducting age assessments.

A municipality in **Sweden** pressed criminal charges against 17 unaccompanied children and young adults (aged 16-22), whose age assessment showed that they were not children. As unaccompanied children, they were placed under the municipality's care. The municipality accused them of financial fraud and demanded reimbursement of the costs associated with providing care for them. However, according to **media reports**, the case was dismissed by the prosecutor, who held that the benefits were not given directly to these individuals, but to the accommodation facilities and guardians.

Missing children

As of 1 March 2019, 455 missing children with non-EU citizenship were registered in SIS II in **Austria**; of these, 96 were between the ages of 0 and 14, and 359 between the ages of 14 and 18, according to the Federal Ministry of the Interior.

According to the "**Missing people report**" of the Ministry of Interior of **Spain**, out of 12,330 unresolved cases of missing children, 96 % were third-country nationals (11,811). Most of the missing foreign children are Moroccan (68 %) and 5,084 (52 %) are children who ran away from protection centres.

An **investigation** of the British newspaper 'Observer' and 'Argos Radio' revealed that, during the past five years, **60 unaccompanied children from Vietnam have disappeared** from protected shelters in **The Netherlands**.

In **Sweden**, 286 asylum-seeking and migrant children went missing during the reporting period, according to the Swedish Migration Agency.

Family reunification

Following the implementation of the **legislation on family reunification for persons under subsidiary protection** allowing for a monthly quota of 1,000 residence permits for the purpose of family reunification in Germany, some 36,000 persons under subsidiary protection requested an appointment to apply for family reunification in January, according to **the Federal Foreign Office**. Between August and December 2018, diplomatic missions issued 2,612 entry visas; in January 2019, they issued a total of 1,096. Such visas allow the person concerned to apply for a residence permit in the country.

According to an interview with the Finnish Human Rights Centre, the Parliament in **Finland** approved a **report issued by the Employment and Equality Committee** following the Ombudsman for Non-discrimination's report. In line with the Ombudsman's recommendations, the committee requests the government to draft legislative amendments concerning refugees' and subsidiary protection status holders' family reunification. The committee suggests the removal of the income requirement currently applied to these family reunification applications.

Immigration detention

Detention capacity

According to the data of the Hellenic Police, the number of migrants and asylum seekers in immigration detention (pre-removal detention and asylum detention) in **Greece**, islands included, was 3,597 in March 2019; of these, 75 were unaccompanied children. The number of persons in immigration detention during February 2019 was 3,218, including 63 unaccompanied children. All this represents a slight increase since the previous months. The majority of the detainees originated from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan.

Between January and March, 287 persons were apprehended at the borders or within the territory of **Bulgaria**, according to the **Ministry of the Interior**. Every third-country national who is apprehended while trying to cross the border in an unauthorised manner is detained. Those who apply for international protection are immediately released and sent to the reception centres. Adults who do not apply for asylum can be detained for up to 12 months, accompanied children for up to three months. Unaccompanied children cannot be detained.

In **Hungary**, 59 people were placed in pre-removal detention during the reporting period (a slight increase compared to the previous period), according to the data of the Office of Immigration and Asylum and the National Headquarters of the Police. Meanwhile, asylum detention (in facilities other than the transit zones) was applied to only two Dublin transferees, according to the data of the Office of Immigration and Asylum. Given that the transit zones at the border with Serbia remain the only location to lodge an asylum application and all migrants in an irregular situation who have been apprehended on Hungarian soil are escorted back to the other side of the border fence, the designated pre-removal and asylum detention centres continued to be almost empty, according to the Office of Immigration and Asylum.

In **Sweden**, 487 migrants in an irregular situation, including 24 women, were in pre-removal detention at the end of the reporting period, according to the data of the Swedish Migration Agency.

Eight adult migrants were detained in the Reception Centre for Foreigners "Gazi Baba", **North Macedonia**, as of 1 April 2019.

Conditions of detention

The Council of Europe Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) **published the report on its ad hoc visit to Greece** carried out in April 2018. It found detention conditions "grossly sub-standard" in some of the police and border guard stations visited and the provision of health care services inadequate, with a chronic lack of health care staff and an absence of even the most basic medical equipment and medication. The pre-removal centre in Fylakio was so severely overcrowded that single men, families, children and pregnant women were kept together for several weeks or months with little more than 1 m² of living space per person. The CPT reiterated its recommendations that the Greek authorities increase significantly the number of dedicated open (or semi-open) shelters for unaccompanied children. The CPT recommended ending immigration-related detention of unaccompanied children, be it in Reception and Identification Centres, pre-removal centres, special holding facilities for irregular migrants, or police stations. The CPT also called for an end to the routine detention of children with families in police establishments upon their arrival in the country.

Legal corner

In **Poland**, a draft amendment to the Asylum Act seeks to introduce an asylum procedure at the border. This would provide for the detention of virtually all applicants for international protection and would fail to ensure the right to an effective remedy before a court in the asylum procedure, NGOs claimed.

The **Ordinary Court of Palermo, Italy**, ruled that a police order imposing immigration detention must be in writing and in a language the person can understand; it must include reasons why the person is to be detained and information about the right to legal review. **Borderline Sicilia** reported that migrants detained in a detention facility of Caltanissetta (Sicily) demonstrated against the detention conditions and return operations. **LasciateCIEntrare** (a campaign organised by several associations and NGOs monitoring detention conditions) publicly denounced that an unaccompanied child was detained in Trapani (Sicily) even though the detention of children is forbidden under **Italian law**. **Il manifesto** reported that a migrant detained in Turin (Piedmont) had been on hunger strike for 12 days in order to demonstrate against the detention conditions experienced in the centre. His allegations are consistent with a report of the **Authority for the Protection of People who are Detained or Deprived of their Personal Freedom** of October 2018. In Italy, the procedure to lodge an asylum application might take several days. In the meantime, the person is not officially an asylum seeker yet and might be forcibly returned to his or her country of origin.

In **Croatia**, following a complaint by the Ombudsperson in Croatia, the Ministry of Interior announced that it would lift the restrictions on the Ombudsperson's staff to access the detention centre, the Ombudsperson's Office reported in an interview.

The **annual report of the Ombudsman in Bulgaria** identified poor living conditions, insufficient food, not enough time spent outdoors, the lack of special premises for families and the lack of qualified interpreters as the key concerns relating to immigration detention. The report also notes some positive developments, such as English- and Arabic-language classes for the staff working in the detention facilities.

Pre-removal detention of families with children and unaccompanied children aged 15-18 years continued in **Poland**, the Ombudsman for Children and the NGO 'Association for Legal Intervention' reported in interviews. Psychological assistance in immigration-detention centres did not work properly, not even for the purposes of releasing someone from detention, the NGOs 'Association for Legal Intervention' and the 'Rule of Law Institute Foundation' reported. **A case concerning the detention of an asylum-seeking family under the Dublin regulation** was referred to the European Court of Human Rights, on account of their unlawful detention (one of the children suffered from serious mental health issues) and violations of procedural safeguards during detention.

In a report prepared for the Council of Europe Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT), the **Danish Refugee Council** described harsh conditions in the deportation centres "Kærshovedgård" and "Sjælsmark", and urged the CPT to visit these centres during their visit in Denmark. In addition, the Danish Refugee Council has drawn attention to the fact that asylum seekers in detention are not always transferred to the Closed Camp Ellebæk, but are sometimes kept in ordinary prisons if they have previously served time there due to a criminal offence.

In **The Netherlands**, according to a letter from the State Secretary for Justice and Security informing the House of Representatives, unaccompanied children are detained for an average of 21 days, exceeding the maximum allowed period by seven days.

The National Ombudsman in **The Netherlands** expressed concerns in an online video that the **Bill for the Return and Aliens Detention Act** will enable the Director of the Institute for Migration Detention to place detainees in solitary confinement as a punitive measure.

In **Belgium**, the **Standing Police Monitoring Committee of the Federal Parliament** published a report on the control and detention of migrants by the police during mass checks on persons. The report, covering the period of September 2017 to December 2018, identified a number of shortcomings. These include the following: incidents going beyond the maximum permitted length of initial arrest by the police (24 hours); not respecting the obligation to inform detainees of their rights, mostly due to language barriers; unaccompanied children were frequently handcuffed for no apparent reason (e.g. during transport in police vehicles); and consent forms for seizing and inspecting mobile phones were only provided in Dutch or English, sometimes without any additional oral information.

Immigration detention remained widespread in **France**, including for families with children, several NGOs stated in interviews. For instance, the NGO 'ANAFÉ' reported the case of a 10-year-old Cuban girl, who **was held with her parents in the waiting area of Roissy Charles de Gaulle Airport** for 16 days, along with 65 other people. As a result, she reportedly stopped talking during detention and suffered from insomnia. In addition, the **press reported** suicide attempts in pre-removal detention centres, including three in March in the same centre (in Coquelles).

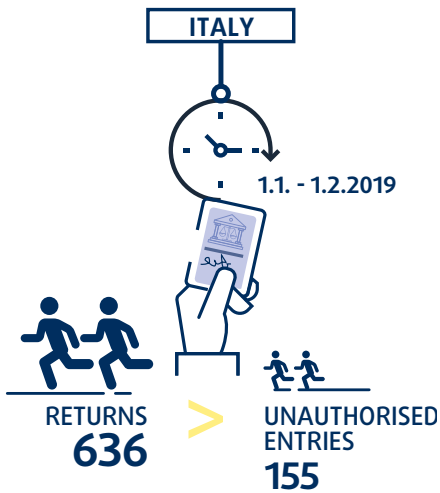
Also in **France**, following visits in 2017 and 2018, the **Controller General of places of deprivation of liberty found in its report**, published in February, that "access to medical examination remains random" upon arrival in pre-removal detention centres and difficult thereafter; detainees cannot move freely inside the facilities and their access to the medical unit "depends on the representatives from the police". The Controller General also considered the use of "isolation rooms" unacceptable in case of people suffering from psychological disorders. The **Bastia Court of Appeal organised a judicial hearing by videoconference** in the pre-removal detention centre in Toulouse in a case prolonging a returnee's deprivation of liberty, a group of NGOs reported.

The Parliamentary Ombudsman's office reported to FRA that it had carried out an unannounced inspection of the National Preventative Mechanism in the Joutseno detention unit in Eastern **Finland**. In its report, the Ombudsman's office noted improvements since its last visit in 2017, e.g. as regards the possibilities to spend time outdoors and exercise. The Ombudsman detected no cases of alleged maltreatment based on the interviews it carried out with the detained asylum seekers. However, the Ombudsman raised concerns regarding, in particular, the protection of privacy of detainees held in isolation due to the technical supervision of the unit's sanitary facilities. The report also noted that, reportedly, several incidents of self-destructive behavior and one death by suicide had taken place during 2018. The Ombudsman's office recommended that the Immigration Service review its suicide prevention materials and increase training.

According to the **Annual Report of the Ombudsman in North Macedonia** for 2018, the Reception Centre for Foreigners does not meet international standards and the decisions imposing detention, issued by the Ministry of Interior, do not contain clear and elaborated information on the legal grounds for detention. The right to spend time outside was not respected, and there is no complaint system. In the first half of 2018, UNHCR recorded 71 persons held in immigration detention. With the exception of one unaccompanied child and three women, all detainees were adult men.

Return

Figures and trends



The police in **Greece** carried out 862 removals in the reporting period, including **37 readmissions** to Turkey in application of the EU-Turkey Statement. The vast majority of returnees were from Albania, who were sent back to their home country. As reported in interviews, IOM Greece conducted 1,201 assisted voluntary returns, including almost 180 children with families, primarily to Georgia, Iraq, and Pakistan.

According to the **Ministry of the Interior of Italy**, as of 1 February 2019, 155 migrants had entered Italian territory irregularly in 2019, while 636 irregular migrants have been returned to their countries of origin during the same period.

Between January 2019 and February 2019, the **Federal Ministry of the Interior in Austria** reported in an interview, 782 voluntary returns and 1,046 forced removals occurred. In 2018, a total of 12,611 voluntary returns and forced removals took place. This means that forced removals in 2018 rose by 47 % compared to 2017, whereas voluntary returns rose by only 9 %.

In **Germany**, the use of force during returns increased, according to the **Federal Government's response to a parliamentary question**. In 2018, 23,617 persons were returned from Germany. Handcuffs, shackles and bonds were used in 1,231 of these cases. In 2015, the number of returns was 20,888, and handcuffs, shackles and bonds were used in 135 cases.

In **Finland**, the **Ministry of the Interior** raised from € 2,500 to € 5,000 the maximum value of in-kind assistance for voluntary returnees to Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia for the year 2019. Despite the use of various measures aimed at increasing the number of voluntary returns, such returns have been decreasing. In terms of removals, the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman reported in an email of having monitored 10 removals from the country during the current reporting period. In total, 31 persons were returned to the following countries: Iraq, Turkey, Iran, Greece, Belgium, Afghanistan, Colombia and the Dominican Republic.

In **Sweden**, according to the data of the Swedish Migration Agency, the number of voluntary returns during the reporting period was 1,483, including 325 children. The top three countries of destination were Afghanistan, Georgia, and Iraq. In the same period, the Swedish authorities carried out some 780 forced removals, including 29 children and 101 removals to Afghanistan (the latter represents a one-third increase compared to the previous period).

Fundamental rights concerns related to return

In **Hungary**, rejected asylum seekers subject to a return decision (which is combined with the negative asylum decision) either remained in the transit zones or were transferred to closed detention centres pending their removal – at the Budapest International Airport in case of removal by air and otherwise in the facility at Nyírbátor, the Ministry of the Interior stated in an interview. The Békéscsaba facility has no longer been used for the purposes of pre-removal detention since January, the Office of Immigration and Asylum stated in an interview.

A **survey among 800 persons in Austria** revealed that 45 % of the general public was in favour of a right to stay for rejected asylum seekers who are completing an apprenticeship, even after they have finished their apprenticeship. 22 % were in favour of returning them once they finalised their apprenticeship, and 27 % favoured immediate return of rejected asylum seekers even if they have not yet finished their apprenticeship.

The **Spanish Ombudsman** received a complaint by migrants who applied for asylum in Spain while on board of a vessel. The vessel left Spain (allegedly to Poland) before their applications were decided upon. The Spanish Ombudsman recommended that the Ministry of Interior ensure that the port authority does not allow vessels with asylum seekers to leave the port before their asylum applications are decided upon.

In **The Netherlands**, **news releases** issued by the Dutch Council for Refugees and the **Dutch section of Amnesty International** report that a court in Bahrain imposed life-long imprisonment on a rejected asylum seeker in an allegedly unfair trial and withdrew his citizenship. Both the **Dutch section of Amnesty International** and the **Dutch Council for Refugees** had criticised the lack of thoroughness with which the Immigration and Naturalisation Service had handled his case. After an initial rejection, the State Secretary for Justice and Security **has promised to commission an independent investigation of the deportation.**

Legal responses

Case law

Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU)

Following a request for a preliminary ruling by the Higher Administrative Court in **Germany**, **the CJEU** held that in order to fulfil the definition of “absconding” in the context of Dublin requests, it is sufficient if the applicant leaves the accommodation without notice, if the authorities have informed the applicant of the obligation to give notice. This is not the case where the applicant can prove that he/she had a valid reason to leave the accommodation and did not have the intention to abscond. A transfer to the responsible Member State can be non-compliant with the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and thus illegal if there is a real risk for the applicant to live in extreme material poverty.

In response to a request for a preliminary ruling by the Federal Administrative Court in **Germany** on a series of joined cases, **the CJEU interpreted** the margin for Member States to consider inadmissible an application for international protection when another Member State has already granted protection. The court held that EU law does not preclude Member States from rejecting an application for refugee status by an applicant who has previously acquired subsidiary protection status in another Member State, unless the living conditions in the protection-granting Member State would expose the applicant to a substantial risk of suffering inhuman or degrading treatment.

Following a request for a preliminary ruling from the **Dutch** Council of State, **the CJEU ruled that** Member States can withdraw the long-term resident status of a third-country national or their family members if it was granted based on falsified documents. That the person did not know of the fraudulent nature of the documents does not preclude the Member State from doing so. However, in the case of family members, the competent authorities need to first carry out a case-by-case assessment of the situation by making a balanced assessment of all the interests in play.

Following a request for a preliminary ruling from the District Court at The Hague, **the CJEU held that** an application from an Eritrean beneficiary of subsidiary protection in **The Netherlands** to reunite with her nephew could not be rejected only because the applicant did not provide official documentary evidence. The Family Reunification Directive precludes national authorities from dismissing arguments regarding the inability to produce such evidence merely based on general country information. On the contrary, it places a particular obligation on national authorities to conduct a case-by-base assessment, taking into account a number of factors, and attaches particular importance to the best interests of the child.

Following a preliminary ruling of the Court of Appeal of Montpellier, **the CJEU held** that the Return Directive applies to a situation where a third-country national irregularly crossed an internal border to which checks had been reintroduced on account of serious threats to public policy or internal security. In this case, a Moroccan national was intercepted just after having irregularly crossed the Spanish-French border. The court noted that the applicant was not subject to a refusal of entry, but rather checked by the national authorities near the border. The court ruled that the option for Member States to not apply the Return Directive (Article 2 (2) (a)) to third-country nationals who are apprehended just after irregularly crossing the border only applies to external borders.

Case law of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR)

The ECtHR held that **France** violated the prohibition on inhuman or degrading treatment (Article 3 of the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR)) when French authorities failed to place an unaccompanied child living in the informal camp of Calais with the child welfare department, forcing the child to live in conditions unsuitable for children for several months. Given the child's limited knowledge of French and vulnerability as a child, the child could not be expected to search for sustainable reception and care on his own.

In the case of **H.A.**, the ECtHR found that **Greece** also violated Article 3 of the convention by placing unaccompanied children in protective custody in police stations. The court noted that the detention conditions represented degrading treatment, as detention on the premises could have caused them to feel isolated from the outside world, with potentially negative consequences for their physical and moral well-being. Additionally, the court found that the applicants' placement in border posts and police stations could be regarded as an unlawful deprivation of liberty.

In the case of **O.S.A. and Others**, the ECtHR examined the detention conditions and access to legal remedies for four asylum applicants in the Vial centre in Chios (**Greece**). The court found that Greece had violated their right to take proceedings on the lawfulness of their detention (Article 5 (4) of the ECHR). The applicants had not had access to remedies in practice, as the expulsion and detention decisions indicating the remedies were only in Greek and the Government had not provided them with sufficient information about how to access legal assistance. The court thus held that, while the remedies could potentially have been effective, the applicants in the specific case did not have access to them and could not have exercised them.

Also in relation to **Greece**, the ECtHR, applying Rule 39 of the Rules of the Court, **indicated interim measures** in the case of two unaccompanied girls seeking international protection, and ordered the Greek authorities to transfer them immediately from the pre-removal detention centre for adults to an accommodation facility dedicated to unaccompanied children. The Greek authorities complied with the interim measure in the following days.

A judgment from the ECtHR against **Spain** became final. The ECtHR found that Spain had not adequately balanced the family interests at stake when issuing expulsion decisions to two Moroccan long-term residents in Spain following their convictions for criminal offences. The court highlighted that the Spanish authorities had failed to assess the nature and seriousness of the criminal convictions and other criteria established by ECtHR case law to assess the necessity of expulsion, such as the length of the applicants' residence in Spain, and the cultural, social and family ties to Spain and Morocco.

National case law

In **Italy**, the **Court of Cassation** ruled that the legislative reform triggered by **Law No. 132 of 1 December 2018** does not affect asylum applications lodged before its entry into force; pursuant to Italy's procedural rules, it entered into force on 5 October 2018, pending parliament's approval in December 2018.

In **Hungary**, the immigration detention of Ahmed H., who was convicted for acts of terrorism due to his involvement in the "**Horgos battle**" on 15 September 2015, when the Hungarian authorities closed the southern borders of Hungary and an angry crowd of asylum seekers attempted to break the border fence,

was extended by an additional two months until mid-May by the District Court of Nyírbátor (*Nyírbátori Járásbíróság*). Ahmed H. was **sentenced to five years of imprisonment** in September 2018. He was released from prison in March, based on his good behaviour and given that he had already served two thirds of his sentence – counting the period he had spent in pre-trial detention. The sentencing court also ordered his expulsion, which the authorities intended to execute right after the Syrian man's release from prison. However, this has proved to be impossible, given that in absence of valid travel documents, neither Cyprus (the country where his family resided at the time of the conviction), nor Germany (the country where his family currently resides) were willing to admit him, as **reported in the media**.

Also in **Spain**, the **National High Court deemed discriminatory** the difference in requirements for registration in a municipal register for Spanish children and third-country national children. For the former, it was sufficient to show proof of identification with a family book or a birth certificate, while for the latter authorities requested a Spanish national identification document (NIE) or their passport. This requirement made it more difficult for them to be identified and thus to access basic healthcare, education and social services in practice. As there was no reasonable justification for the different treatment, the court ruled that the formal requirements were contrary to the principle of equality.

In **France**, the Constitutional Court (*Conseil constitutionnel*) **ruled that X-ray bone tests** determining the age of young unaccompanied migrants are constitutional. Although the court confirmed the constitutional character of the principle of the best interests of the child, it held that the existence of a margin of error does not make the use of the bone test unconstitutional.

The Administrative Jurisdiction Division of the **Dutch** Council of State (*Afdeling Bestuursrechtspraak van de Raad van State*) ruled in case **201804801/1/V1** that there were serious reasons to believe that an asylum-seeking supporter of the Gülen movement would be at risk of suffering degrading treatment, contrary to Article 3 of the ECHR, if returned to Turkey.

In **Belgium**, the Council for Alien Law Litigation – the Belgian administrative court competent for handling appeals against administrative decisions in the field of migration – **granted subsidiary protection** to four unaccompanied Afghan children (all brothers), overturning the negative decision of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons. **According to the ruling**, the questions asked in the asylum procedure by the administration were not age appropriate and did not take into account the brothers' inability to express themselves as adults.

The Supreme Administrative Court in **Finland** ruled in case **KHO 2019:23** that returning the claimant, a Kurdish asylum seeker, to Turkey, where he had been convicted of terrorism, would pose a risk of an unreasonably severe punishment amounting to persecution. With reference to several similar cases in the case law of the ECtHR, the Supreme Administrative Court quashed the earlier judgment of the administrative court and sent the case back to the Finnish Immigration Service.

In **Sweden**, the **Administrative Court of Appeal in Stockholm upheld the ruling** by the Stockholm Administrative Court allowing a municipality to terminate the house rental contracts for newly arrived beneficiaries of international protection after the two-year introduction period. According to the appeals court, the **Settlement Act** as well as the law's purpose as stated in the preamble do not prohibit municipalities from offering only temporary housing options.

National legislation

In **Bulgaria**, changes to the **Asylum and Refugees Act** (*Закон за убежището и бежанците*) will lead to unaccompanied children no longer being placed in specialised institutions, but instead in foster families or residential services.

In **Austria**, the Ministerial Council adopted the **Basic Act on Social Aid**, which envisages limiting subsidiary protection status holders' entitlement to core measures of social aid and entitling refugees to the entire amount only if they have a good knowledge of German (B1). If they do not, 35 % of the maximum amount of social aid can be deducted and may be replaced by in-kind benefits, such as language courses or job-qualification measures. The nine Austrian provinces have discretion regarding how to implement this law. **UNHCR criticised the initiative**, arguing that the rules will push migrants, in particular children, below the poverty line. **UNHCR also raised concerns** regarding a planned **law reorganising legal advice in the field of asylum**. The bill provides that legal advice for asylum seekers and return counselling should be organised by the state and directly through an agency of the Federal Ministry of the Interior. This has prompted concerns that the reorganisation could lead to a lack of independence, transparency and control, as well as to a higher error rate.

Several new legislative initiatives in **Germany** will have implications for the rights of asylum seekers and refugees, if adopted. The **Draft Legislation on the Removal of a Time Limit of the Integration Law** (*Entwurf eines Gesetzes zur Entfristung des Integrationsgesetzes*) reiterates the duty for beneficiaries of international protection to remain in the same federal state for three years after status recognition. The **Draft Legislation on a Second Law for the Improved Registration and Data Exchange regarding Asylum and Immigration Purposes** (*Entwurf eines Zweiten Gesetzes zur Verbesserung der Registrierung und des Datenaustausches zu aufenthalts- und asylrechtlichen Zwecken*) aims to integrate data gathered by the Youth Welfare Services, the Federal Agency for Justice, and the Federal Foreign Office into the Central Register for Foreign Nationals (*Ausländerzentralregister*). With the **Draft Legislation on Toleration tied to Apprenticeship and Employment** (*Entwurf eines Gesetzes über Duldung bei Ausbildung und Beschäftigung*), the legal situation of rejected asylum applicants in vocational training shall be clarified. The **Draft Legislation on Immigration of Specialist Workers** (*Entwurf eines Fachkräfteeinwanderungsgesetzes*) aims to increase immigration by specialised professionals. Finally, the **Draft Legislation on Improved Enforcement of the Duty to Return** (*Entwurf eines Zweiten Gesetzes zur besseren Durchsetzung der Ausreisepflicht - Geordnete-Rückkehr-Gesetz*) establishes a number of provisions aiming to enforce returns of rejected asylum seekers. **ProAsyl criticised the draft legislation** for its extensive grounds for detention and the possibility to impose immigration detention without a judge's decision.

In **France**, a **government decree** entered into force in January. It sets up a national biometric database for unaccompanied children (storing their fingerprints, facial images and further personal information, such as phone numbers), despite a **request by the Public Defender of Rights** to withdraw the proposal. The decree implements the new law "for controlled immigration, an effective right to asylum and successful integration". The **aim of the database** is "to better guarantee the protection of children and to fight against irregular entry and stay". However, **according to a number of NGOs**, the main purpose of the measure is to facilitate the removal of such people, since the decree makes it possible to return unaccompanied children from France without waiting for a court decision on placing them under care. A **legal action was also filed before the Council of State** (*Conseil d'Etat*) to obtain the suspension of the law.

Bright spots

In light of the deteriorating situation in Venezuela, the Asylum and Refugee Inter-ministerial Committee of the Ministry of Interior in **Spain** and UNHCR jointly developed a **policy proposal to provide residence permits on humanitarian grounds to rejected Venezuelan asylum seekers who had submitted their applications for asylum between January 2014 and February 2019**. The permit grants residence and work authorisation in Spain for one year.

Belgium approved a **new list of safe countries of origin** in February, which currently includes Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, India and Georgia. Protection seekers coming from one of these countries are presumed not to be in need of international protection, unless they can prove that, in their individual case, their country cannot be considered safe.

In **The Netherlands**, the Council of Ministers **drafted a new bill**, which, if approved by the House of Representatives, will reduce the validity of the initial temporary asylum residence permit from five to three years, renewable for two additional years. Those who still fulfil the requirements for refugee status after these two temporary permits will be granted a permanent residence permit. The Dutch Council for Refugees **has criticised** the impact that the bill will have on integration efforts of refugees in the Netherlands, and considers it costly and unnecessary, as withdrawing a residence permit is already possible within five years.

Finland's Parliament and President approved a government bill that tightens the criteria for submitting subsequent applications. Pursuant to **the amendments**, subsequent asylum applications will be admissible only if the applicant presents new grounds or reasons that would significantly increase the likelihood of her/his need of international protection. For a subsequent application to be admissible, the applicant will have to have been unable to present these reasons previously due to no fault of her/his own. In interviews, the Finnish section of Amnesty International and the Finnish Refugee Advice Center criticised these amendments, fearing that they will increase the risk of *refoulement*.

Policy responses

The Ministry of Migration Policy in **Greece** **announced a set of actions to support beneficiaries of international protection** in accessing gainful employment and social assistance as part of their integration process. The measures are part of Greece's ongoing efforts to operationalise the **2018 National Integration Strategy** and include integration activities for 5,000 newly recognised refugees and a separate vocational training programme for 3,000 refugees, which will be implemented through the Ministry of Labour.

Also in **Greece**, the **National Integration Strategy** was adopted, covering asylum seekers, beneficiaries of international protection, unaccompanied children and migrants regularly staying in the country. The strategy takes into consideration the rights to work, education, access to health care and social welfare, as well as Greek language training. The integration model is adapted to the Greek reality, while aiming to combat racism and xenophobia. At present, there are some 551,000 foreigners legally staying in Greece, of whom the majority came from Albania, the former Soviet Union and some Asian countries. Most of them live in Athens, Thessaloniki and other urban areas.

In **Poland**, the setting up of a **Migration Analytical Centre** was in the last stage of preparation. It is part of a joint project of the Visegrad Group (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia). This joint project, called "**Migration Crisis Response Mechanism**", aims to create new links and strengthen existing ones between government institutions responsible for migration within the Visegrad Group.

Also in Poland, the **first inter-agency coordination meeting took place** between various authorities in charge of the implementation and running of the new large-scale EU IT systems, namely the Entry/Exit System and the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS). The Border Guards also **procured two manned aircrafts** for border surveillance purposes.

The Ministry of the Interior in **Italy** announced that it would spend **€ 943,000 on training the Libyan coast guard** engaged in sea patrolling, curbing irregular migration and human trafficking, as well as in carrying out search-and-rescue operations. The **Italian ambassador and members of the Libyan Ministry of the Interior** and of law enforcement agencies met in Libya to discuss the reinforcement of the Libyan authorities' ability to control and counter migration flows and human-trafficking networks, as well as search-and-rescue operations at sea.

The interior ministers of **France** and the United Kingdom **concluded a new action plan in January**, which aims to reinforce joint efforts to combat irregular migration across the English Channel, especially to avoid unauthorised crossings by small boats. This renewed action plan, building upon a similar arrangement concluded in December 2018, envisages, in particular, **financial support from the United Kingdom** (some € 7 million) for surveillance equipment for the French authorities along the coast and stronger coordination of the French and British maritime patrols.

Also in **France**, the **Minister of the Interior announced** the financing of 3,500 additional accommodation places for asylum seekers in 2019.

As of January 2019, relatives of Somali residents in **Belgium** seeking to reunite with them are only able to file visa applications for family reunification at the Belgian embassy in Nairobi (Kenya), as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided that applications for family reunification filed at the diplomatic posts of **Kampala** (Uganda) or **Addis Ababa** (Ethiopia) are no longer accepted.

As a result of an agreement reached by the governing coalition in **The Netherlands**, hundreds of asylum applications by children and their families previously rejected under the Children's Amnesty policy scheme are going to be reviewed. The agreement abolished the Children Amnesty Regulation (*Definitieve regeling voor Langdurig verblijvende kinderen*) and replaced it with a new Final Regulation for long-term resident children (*Afsluitingsregeling langdurig verblijvende kinderen*). The new regulation changes the criterion that was tightly applied in practice, as a result of which **many of the asylum applications did to qualify for the amnesty**. The new criterion requires the applicant to be "available" in the context of departure – instead of to be "cooperative" in the process – to qualify. The **Immigration and Naturalisation Service indicated** that 1,070 children have applied for a permanent residence permit under the new Final Regulation for long-term resident children. Meanwhile, the Netherlands **decreased the resettlement quota** from 750 to 500 refugees. This decision was **criticised** by several non-governmental organisations.

In **Finland**, the National Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking trained approximately 750 current and future police officers and border guards in issues relating to trafficking in human beings in 2018, **the Finnish Immigration Service indicated**. Training events were arranged at 11 police departments, four administrative units of the Border Guard, the Police University College, and the Border and Coast Guard Academy. The training events will continue during 2019. They are part of the **IHME project** financed by the EU Internal Security Fund.

According to an interview, IOM Finland has been conducting counter-trafficking-related training of social and health workers with funding from the Centre for Social Welfare and Health Organisations.

The National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment in Finland published a free, web-based training package on mental health and well-being of refugees for professionals and students working with refugees. The training package was produced in the framework of the PALOMA training project. Furthermore, THL cooperated in preparing the Action Plan for the Prevention of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. The action plan indicates that approximately 10,000 girls and women have undergone FGM and 650 to 3,080 girls are at risk of becoming victims of FGM in Finland. The risk of genital mutilation is recognised as a ground for asylum under certain circumstances.

Responses by civil society, local and political actors

In Greece, UNICEF, together with the European Commission, launched a new information campaign in January entitled “*Together, for all children*”. It targets the general population and presents the positive results of providing a comprehensive education to refugee and migrant children.

In Italy, some 600 members of the Italian Psychoanalytical Society (*Società Psicoanalitica Italiana, SPI*) sent a letter to the President of the Italian Republic to complain about the legislative reform of Law No. 132 of 1 December 2018, as it increased the rate of third-country nationals in an irregular administrative situation, mainly due to the abolishment of the humanitarian status. The fact that asylum seekers are no longer allowed to be accommodated in the system of Protection for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (*Sistema di protezione per richiedenti asilo e rifugiati, SPRAR*) and are forced to live in large-scale Emergency Reception Centres (*Centri di accoglienza straordinaria, CAS*) is expected to have a severe impact on people’s psychological wellbeing and mental health.

Hate speech and violent crime

In Greece, some 70 local residents in March attacked a hotel in Vilia (wider Attica region) where refugee families were sheltered in the context of a program implemented by the International Organization for Migration, **media reported**. The **municipal council had previously adopted a decision** banning the hosting of refugees in the area. The crowd protested outside the hotel and then started throwing stones, breaking the entrance’s window. The NGO ‘Racist Crimes Watch’ **filed a report against racist violence with the local police**, asking for the initiation of criminal proceedings against the participants. The Prosecutor of the Supreme Court also ordered preliminary investigations into whether charges of racism can be brought in connection with this incident, the **media reported**.

Also in Greece, in mid-March, a **group of hooded offenders attacked unaccompanied children** hosted in Konitsa (in Epirus, near the Albanian border) at a facility run by the Association for the Social Support of Youth (ARSIS) while

the children were playing basketball. One of the children was taken to hospital for first aid. When the children went to the local police station to denounce the attack, they were mocked, according to **ARSIS**. One day later in Athens, a group of 7 or 8 individuals attacked and beat up an interpreter for the Greek Council for Refugees, a recognised refugee, the **NGO 'Racist Violence Recoding Network' reported**.

The media and NGOs reported numerous hate crime incidents in **Italy**. The Child Neuropsychiatric Service of the Local Health Authority (*Azienda sanitaria locale, ASL*) of Bolzano (Trentino-Alto Adige/Südtirol), required secondary-school teachers to fill in a form asking about the racial group of their students. The teachers refused to reply to this specific question, and reported the incident to **the local newspaper**. The **media reported** that, on the wall of the house of a family with an adopted child of Senegalese origins in Milan, unknown perpetrators wrote that the “nigger” should be killed and sprayed a Nazi symbol. The **press also reported** that a primary-school teacher in Foligno (Umbria) had forced a black pupil to stand with his back turned to his classmates, and described him as “too ugly to be looked at in the face”. Nobody intervened when a 47-year-old Ivorian woman working in the catering industry was **violently attacked in Bari (Apulia)**.

The **'Alterego – Fabbrica dei diritti'** association reported a number of episodes of racial profiling in Rome's public transport network. According to witnesses, police officers more and more often get on public buses to conduct checks only of dark-skinned passengers. A **black Italian lawyer reported** that, while standing in the line for EU citizens at passport control at the airport in Rome, an employee of the security service repeatedly told her to move to the line for non-EU citizens, as – considering the colour of her skin – she could not be an EU citizen. A 44-year-old white Italian man **attacked a woman of African origin** in the main square of Parioli, a rich district of Rome, as she was holding two small children. The man tried to make her fall and then, while shouting at her “Black woman, get out”, kicked and punched her face and buttocks. The intervention of an off-duty policeman saved the woman and the children. The man was arrested by the police and charged with racial discrimination, outrage, violence and threats to a public official and refusal to provide indications on his identity, according to **La Repubblica**.

In **Hungary**, anti-migrant rhetoric prevails in the European Parliament elections campaign. The **Prime Minister stressed** that “pro-immigration forces led by George Soros” aimed to turn Europe into a coalition of “immigrant nations” with “mixed populations”. He positioned himself and the Hungarian government as the leaders of the movement for “no-mixed nations” in Europe.

Also in **Hungary**, in the context of the campaign for the municipal elections later this year, the mayor of Kunszentmárton (a town in the south-eastern part of the country) stressed in a citizens' forum that “migrants can only come to Kunszentmárton through my body”, according to **media reports**.

Local policemen near the border police station in Cetingrad, **Croatia** forced migrants sitting on the floor next to a police patrol car to shout the name of Zagreb's football club as well as the Nazi-fascist regime's salute “Ready for the Homeland”, as a **video** published on various media sources revealed. Disciplinary procedures were initiated against the policemen.

In an **answer to a parliamentary question** in **Austria**, the Federal Minister of Constitutional Affairs, Reforms, Deregulation and Justice reported that Austria does not systematically collect statistical data of criminal acts with right-wing,

racist, anti-Semitic, Islamophobic and/or xenophobic background. The only **data the ministry could provide** was that 1,005 criminal proceeding concerning hate speech (*Verhetzung*) and 1,328 criminal proceeding concerning the law banning National Socialist activities (*Verbotsgesetz*) were initiated in 2018. Between 1 January and 31 March 2019, the Antidiscrimination Office Styria documented 28 islamophobic insults (in particular against women wearing headscarves); 11 insults based on ethnicity, and seven on skin colour; as well as five bodily attacks (one based on ethnicity, four on religion) in the region of Styria.

According to a **study on legal awareness and equal treatment published by the Ombudsman in Poland**, some of the most common grounds of discrimination were race, ethnicity or nationality, with **Muslims being amongst the least tolerated groups** in the country.

In **Spain**, according to a **media report**, a group of neighbours in the municipality of Canet de Mar in Catalonia staged a public protest in front of a youth centre hosting unaccompanied children in government custody, accusing them of delinquency in the municipality. Five days after the event, a man holding a large knife reportedly entered the same centre. Some days later, **the media reported that 35 hooded young persons threw stones** at a centre in Castelldefells hosting unaccompanied migrant children, injuring two staff members and one child, who had to be hospitalised. These events have caused concern among **civil society organisations**, which have stressed that these attacks are unprecedented and show a rise of racism towards unaccompanied children in the region.

Eight train security guards at Plaza Catalunya metro station in Barcelona beat a young migrant who did not have a ticket and pushed him to the ground, **the media reported**. The rail operator Renfe has taken the eight officers off duty and has opened an investigation into the case.

During the fourth quarter of 2018, **the police in Germany registered 31 incidents** where a reception centre for asylum seekers was either the target or the scene of a hate crime incident. 29 of these hate crimes had a right-wing political background. During the same time period, there were 271 politically motivated offences targeting asylum seekers and refugees outside of reception centres. 263 of these offences were connected to a right-wing political background. In 2018, 315 individuals were injured as a consequence of violence in or against reception centres for asylum seekers; 14 were children. According to "**Courage against right-wing violence**", an alliance formed by several anti-racism and anti-discrimination actors, five attacks on asylum seekers and one attack on a reception centre for asylum seekers, resulting in nine cases of bodily injury, occurred in Germany between 1 January and 8 March 2019.

In **Belgium**, the Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism received complaints regarding anti-immigration posts on the **Facebook page of the political party Vlaams Belang**. In one of the posts, the party called for a radical change in policy to stop immigration to protect Belgian people. In another one, the party shared a link to a news article reporting on a young woman who was assaulted by a foreign bus driver, saying: "Criminal foreigners do NOT belong here anymore! A normal society protects its citizens and we want to ensure that. Time for a HARD approach." After receiving the complaints, all posts were removed from the party's Facebook page.

The National Police Board shared in a phone interview that, in **Finland**, attitudes towards immigrants have hardened in the city of Oulu in northern Finland after the revelation of a series of cases of sexual abuse perpetrated by refugees and asylum seekers. Vandals attacked a Muslim prayer room in Oulu by throwing a smoke bomb at a window on 26 February 2019, according to the National Police Board. This is the ninth time someone has shattered the windows of the prayer room within one year, reports the **Finnish Broadcasting Company**. Meanwhile, the Supreme Administrative Court granted the Nordic Resistance Movement leave to appeal in a case originally filed by the National Police Board to ban the activities of the organisation. The court simultaneously imposed a temporary ban upon the Nordic Resistance Movement. The ban enables the police to take appropriate measures against all activities of the group, according to an interview with the National Police Board.

The Finnish Section of Amnesty International, in an interview, criticised as disproportional and problematic the emphasis on asylum seekers in the framework of recent government action against sexual crimes. **The government** published an **action programme** to prevent and counter crimes perpetrated by asylum seekers and sexual crimes. As a part of the preventive measures aimed at addressing sexual crimes and crimes perpetrated by foreigners, the **Ministry of the Interior** announced the introduction of a test measuring asylum seekers' knowledge of Finnish society at the reception centres. The obligation to participate in the basic course offered to all asylum seekers will be tightened and the contents of the course expanded.

Asylum seekers and refugees were the target of some candidates during the presidential election campaign in **North Macedonia**. For instance, one of the presidential candidates said in an **interview for a Slovenian newspaper** that "migrants need to return home and our young people need to stay in our country."

COUNTRY	STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED
AUSTRIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Federal Ministry of the Interior, Department III/9 (<i>Bundesministerium für Inneres, Abteilung III/9 Grundversorgung und Bundesbetreuung</i>); → Federal Ministry of the Interior, Department III/5 (<i>Bundesministerium für Inneres, Abteilung III/5 Asyl und Fremdenwesen</i>); → Federal Ministry of the Interior, Criminal Intelligence Service, Competence Centre for Missing Children (<i>Bundesministerium für Inneres, Bundeskriminalamt, Kompetenzzentrum für Abgängige Personen</i>); → Federal Agency for State Protection and Counter Terrorism (<i>Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz und Terrorismusbekämpfung, BVT</i>); → Austrian Ombudsman Board (<i>Volksanwaltschaft</i>); → Antidiscrimination Office Styria (<i>Antidiskriminierungsstelle Steiermark</i>); → Red Cross Austria (<i>Rotes Kreuz Österreich</i>); → Caritas Vienna (<i>Caritas Wien</i>); → Caritas Styria (<i>Caritas Steiermark</i>); → Austrian Red Cross (<i>Österreichisches Rotes Kreuz</i>).
BELGIUM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Immigration Office (<i>Dienst Vreemdelingenzaken/Office des Etrangers</i>); → Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (<i>CGVS – CGRA Commissariaat-generaal voor de Vluchtelingen en de Staatlozen – Commissariat General aux refugies et aux apatrides</i>); → MYRIA – Federal Migration centre (<i>Federaal Migratiecentrum/ Centre Fédéral Migration</i>); → FEDASIL – Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (<i>Federaal agentschap voor de opvang van asielzoekers/ Agence Fédérale pour l'accueil des demandeurs d'asile</i>); → UNIA – Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities (<i>Interfederaal Gelijkekansencentrum/ Centre interfédéral pour l'égalité des chances</i>); → National Commission on the Rights of the Child (<i>Nationale Commissie voor de Rechten van het Kind/ Commission nationale pour les droits de l'enfant</i>); → UNICEF; → Cire NGO; → Federal Judiciary Police.
BULGARIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → State Agency for Refugees (SAR) (<i>Държавна агенция а бежанците, ДАБ</i>); → Ministry of the Interior, Directorate General Border Police (Mol – DGBP) (<i>Министерство на вътрешните работи, Главна дирекция „Гранична полиция“, МВР – ГДГП</i>); → Ombudsman of the Republic of Bulgaria, National Preventive Mechanism and Fundamental Human rights and Freedoms Directorate (<i>Омбудсман на Република България, Дирекция „Национален превантивен механизъм и основни права и свободи на човека“</i>); → State Agency for Child Protection (SACP) (<i>Държавна агенция за закрила на детето, ДАЗД</i>); → Ministry of the Interior, Directorate General National Police (Mol – DGNP) (<i>Министерство на вътрешните работи, Главна дирекция „Национална полиция“, МВР – ГДНП</i>); → UNHCR Bulgaria; → Bulgarian Red Cross, Refugee Migrant Service (BRC – RMS) (<i>Български червен кръст, Бежанско-мигрантска служба, БЧК – БМС</i>); → Center for Legal Aid Voice in Bulgaria (<i>Център за правна помощ – Глас в България</i>).

COUNTRY	STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED
CROATIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy (<i>Ministarstvo demografije, obitelji, mladih i socijalne politike</i>); → Ombudsperson's Office (<i>Ured pučke pravobraniteljice</i>); → Children's Attorney (<i>Pravobraniteljica za djecu</i>); → Croatian Government's Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities (<i>Ured za ljudska prava i prava nacionalnih manjina Vlade Republike Hrvatske</i>); → Croatian Red Cross (<i>Hrvatski Crveni Križ</i>); → Croatian Law Centre (<i>Hrvatski pravni centar</i>); → Centre for Missing and Abused Children (<i>Centar za nestalu i zlostavljanu djecu</i>); → Jesuit Refugee Service (<i>Isusovačka služba za izbjeglice</i>); → Rehabilitation Centre for Stress and Trauma (<i>Rehabilitacijski centar za stress i traum</i>); → Association for Psychological Support (<i>Društvo za psihološku pomoć</i>); → Doctors of the World (<i>Liječnici svijeta</i>); → Initiative Welcome (<i>Inicijativa Dobrodošli</i>); → Centre for Peace Studies (<i>Centar za mirovne studije</i>).
DENMARK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Danish Ministry of Justice (<i>Justitsministeriet</i>), including the Danish National Police (<i>Rigspolitiet</i>); → SOS against Racism (<i>SOS mod Rasim</i>); → Danish Immigration Service (<i>Udlændingestyrelsen</i>), including the Statistical Unit, the Office for Finances and Accommodation, the Centre for Asylum and the Office for Accommodation Conditions; → Danish Refugee Council (<i>Dansk Flygtningehjælp</i>); → Danish Red Cross (<i>Dansk Røde Kors</i>). → Asylum center for children and families driven by the municipalities (<i>Asyl-syd and Børnecenter Tønder</i>); → UNHCR Regional Representation for Northern Europe.
FINLAND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Amnesty International Finnish Section; → Central Union for Child Welfare (<i>Lastensuojelun keskusliitto/Centralförbundet för Barnskydd</i>); → Finnish Human Rights Centre (<i>Ihmisoikeuskeskus/Människorättscentret</i>); → Finnish Immigration Service (<i>Maahanmuuttovirasto/Immigrationsverket</i>); → Finnish Refugee Advice Centre (<i>Pakolaisneuvonta/Flyktingrådgivningen</i>); → IOM Finland; → National Police Board (<i>Poliisiylhallitus/Polisstyrelsen</i>); → Parliamentary Ombudsman (<i>eduskunnan oikeusasiamies/riksdagens justitieombudsman</i>); → Ombudsman for Children (<i>Lapsiasiavaltuutettu/Barnombudsmannen</i>).
FRANCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ministry of the Interior (<i>Ministère de l'Intérieur</i>); → Public Defender of Rights (<i>Le Défenseur des droits – DDD</i>), General authority and Department for the Protection of the Rights of the Child; → Comptroller General of places of deprivation of liberty (<i>Contrôleur général des lieux de privation de liberté</i>); → Doctors of the World – France (<i>Médecins du Monde</i>); → National Association of Border Assistance for Foreigners (ANAFÉ) (<i>Association nationale d'assistance aux frontières pour les étrangers</i>); → La Cimade NGO (<i>Inter-Movement Committee for evacuees – Comité inter mouvements auprès des évacués</i>); → The Immigrant Information and Support Group (<i>Groupe d'information et de soutien des immigrés – GISTI</i>); → Service centre for migrants in Calais (<i>Plateforme de service aux migrants à Calais</i>).

COUNTRY	STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED
NORTH MACEDONIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ministry of the Interior (<i>Министерство за внатрешни работи</i>); Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (<i>Министерство за труд и социјална политика</i>); → Ombudsperson – (<i>Народен Правобранител</i>); → Agency for Audio and Audio-Visual Services (<i>Агенција за аудио и аудиовизуелни услуги</i>); → International Organization for Migration (Skopje Office); → United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (Skopje Office); → Macedonian Young Lawyers Association (<i>Македонско здружение на млади правници</i>); → Legis NGO (<i>Легис</i>); → Helsinki Committee of Human Rights of the Republic of Macedonia (<i>Хелсиншки Комитет за човекови права на Република Македонија</i>).
GERMANY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Jesuit Refugee Service (<i>Jesuiten Flüchtlingsdienst – JRS</i>); → German Caritas Association (<i>Deutscher Caritasverband – GCA</i>); → Commissioner for Inclusion of the City of Pforzheim (<i>Inklusionsbeauftragter der Stadt Pforzheim</i>); → Staff of the Youth Welfare Services of the City of Pforzheim (<i>Sachbearbeiterin des Jugendamtes der Stadt Pforzheim</i>); → Berlin refugee Council (<i>Berliner Refugee Council</i>); → Federal Association for Unaccompanied Minor Refugees (<i>Bundesfachverband Unbegleitete Minderjährige Flüchtlinge e.V. – BumF</i>); → United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Berlin Office; → Migration Commission of the German Bishops Conference (<i>Migrationskommission, Deutsche Bischofskonferenz – DBK</i>); → Federal Working Group of Psycho-Social Support Centres for Refugees and Victims of Torture (<i>Bundesweite Arbeitsgemeinschaft der psychosozialen Zentren für Flüchtlinge und Folteropfer – BAfF</i>).
GREECE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Greek Asylum Service (<i>Υπηρεσία Ασύλου</i>); → The Greek Ombudsman (<i>Συνήγορος του Πολίτη</i>); → Hellenic Police Headquarters (<i>Αρχηγείο Ελληνικής Αστυνομίας</i>); → Racist Violence Recording Network (<i>Δίκτυο Καταγραφής Ρατσιστικής Βίας</i>); → International Organisation for Migration (<i>Διεθνής Οργανισμός Μετανάστευσης</i>); → Doctors Without Borders Greece (<i>Γιατροί Χωρίς Σύνορα-Ελληνικό Τμήμα</i>); → Greek Council for Refugees (<i>Ελληνικό Συμβούλιο για τους Πρόσφυγες</i>); → ARSIS - Association for the Social Support of Youth NGO (<i>Κοινωνική Οργάνωση Υποστήριξης Νέων</i>).
HUNGARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ministry of the Interior (<i>Belügyminisztérium</i>); → Ministry of Human Capacities (<i>Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma</i>); → National Headquarters of the Police (<i>Országos Rendőr-főkapitányság</i>); → Immigration and Asylum Office (<i>Bevándorlási és Menekültügyi Hivatal</i>); → Migration Aid; → UNHCR Hungary; → Migrant Solidarity Group of Hungary, MigSzol (<i>Migráns Szolidaritás</i>); → Hungarian Association for Migrants (<i>Menedék Migránsokat Segítő Egyesület</i>).

COUNTRY	STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED
ITALY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ministry of Labour and Social Policies; → Ministry of Interior; → Public Security Department of the Ministry of the Interior – Central Direction for Immigration and Border Police (<i>Ministero dell’Interno Dipartimento della Pubblica Sicurezza - Direzione Centrale dell’Immigrazione e della Polizia delle Frontiere</i>); → National Commission for the Right of Asylum (<i>Commissione Nazionale per il Diritto d’Asilo</i>) of the Ministry of the Interior; → Authority for the Protection of People who are Detained or Deprived of their Personal Freedom (<i>Garante nazionale per i diritti delle persone detenute o private della libertà personale</i>); → Authority for the Protection of Childhood and Adolescence (<i>Autorità Garante per l’Infanzia e l’Adolescenza</i>); → National Office against Racial Discrimination (<i>Ufficio Nazionale Antidiscriminazioni Razziali, UNAR</i>); → Association for Legal Studies on Immigration (<i>Associazione per gli studi giuridici sull’immigrazione, ASGI</i>); → Italian Refugees Council (<i>Consiglio Italiano per i Rifugiati, CIR</i>); → NGO ‘Doctors for Human Rights’ (<i>Medici per i diritti umani, MEDU</i>); → United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); → ‘Melting Pot Europa’ project; → ARCI (<i>Italian Recreational and Cultural Association – Associazione Ricreativa e Culturale Italiana</i>); → Chronicles of Ordinary Racism (<i>Cronache di ordinario razzismo</i>).
NETHERLANDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ministry for Justice and Security (<i>Ministerie van Justice en Veiligheid</i>) - central information point, providing information on behalf of: Immigration and Naturalisation Service, Aliens Police, Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (all members of the so-called ‘Alien Chain’); → Defence for Children the Netherlands; → Dutch Council for Refugees (<i>Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland</i>); → Amnesty International – Netherlands; → Netherlands Institute for Human Rights (<i>College voor Rechten van de Mens</i>); → Stichting LOS NGO; → UNICEF the Netherlands; → NIDOS (independent family guardian organization, fulfilling the guardianship task for Unaccompanied Minor Asylum Seekers); → MiND – the Dutch Reporting Point for Discrimination.
POLAND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Association for Legal Intervention (<i>Stowarzyszenie Interwencji Prawnej, SIP</i>); → United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees, Office in Poland (UNHCR); → Ombudsman (<i>Rzecznik Praw Obywatelskich – RPO</i>); → Head of the Office for Foreigners (<i>Szef Urzędu do spraw Cudzoziemców – UDSC</i>); → Police, Police Headquarters (<i>Policja</i>); → Border Guard, Border Guard Headquarters (<i>Straż Graniczna, SG</i>); → Ombudsman for Children (<i>Rzecznik Praw Dziecka – RPD</i>); → Rule of Law Institute Foundation (<i>Instytut na rzecz Państwa i Prawa, FIPP</i>).

COUNTRY	STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED
SPAIN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Asylum and Refugee Office of the Spanish Ministry of the Interior (<i>Oficina de Asilo y Refugio del Ministerio del Interior - OAR</i>); → Spanish Ombudsman (<i>Defensor del Pueblo</i>); → UNHCR (<i>Oficina de la Agencia de la ONU para los Refugiados en España - ACNUR</i>); → Spanish Committee of UNICEF (<i>Comité español de UNICEF</i>); → Spanish Observatory for Racism and Xenophobia (<i>Observatorio Español del Racismo y la Xenofobia, OBERAXE</i>); → Spanish Refugee Aid Commission (<i>Comisión Española de Ayuda al Refugiado - CEAR</i>); → porCausa Foundation; → Chair of Refugees and Forced Migrants of Comillas ICAI-ICADE, INDITEX (<i>Cátedra de Refugiados y Migrantes Forzados de Comillas ICAI-ICADE, INDITEX</i>).
SERBIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Asylum Office; → Commissariat for Refugees and Migrations; → UNHCR Serbia; → Shelter for Foreigners; → Border Police Directorate; → IOM Serbia; → Social Welfare Centres.
SWEDEN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → National Board of Health and Welfare (<i>Socialstyrelsen</i>); → Swedish Police (<i>Polisen</i>); → Swedish Migration Agency (<i>Migrationsverket</i>); → Swedish Migration Agency, Detention (<i>Migrationsverket</i>); → Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (<i>Sveriges kommuner och landsting</i>); → Save the Children Sweden (<i>Rädda barnen</i>); → Swedish Red Cross (<i>Röda korset</i>); → Amnesty International Sweden.



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