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2: **Spain: Migrants' rights must be guaranteed and put at the core of measures taken by the government**

STATEWATCH NEWS

1. EU: **Seven member states call for mandatory relocation in revamped asylum system**

Seven EU member states are in favour of a mandatory relocation procedure as part of a revamped 'Common European Asylum System', according to two recent documents obtained by *Statewatch* - the first, a letter to the European Commission from the Italian, Spanish, French and German governments and the second, a 'non-paper' drafted by Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Spain and Malta.

2. [Refugee crisis: latest news from across Europe](#) (24.3.20-20.4.20) including:

- The impact of the coronavirus pandemic on refugees and migrants in Europe's camps
- The situation in the Greek islands four years after the EU-Turkey statement
- Med: 12 Left to Die and 182 Stranded as EU States Refuse Rescue
- Free the #ElHiblu3
- Privatized Pushbacks: How Merchant Ships Guard Europe

3. FRANCE: **[Protest policing under the microscope: "a dysfunctional maintenance of law and order"](#)**

The organisation *ACAT* (*Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture*) recently published a report on the policing of protests in France, examining the period between November 2018 and January 2020. A summary has now been published in English, highlighting multiple failings of and abuses by French police forces in the policing of protests. The report also sets out the structure of French policing and its formal approach to public order situations.

4. **[Privacy and free expression: new report looks at legal responses to terrorist and extremist content online](#)**

A new report examines how six states - France, Germany, Israel, Spain, the UK and the USA - as well as the EU and UN have adapted their legal frameworks to try to address online terrorist and extremist content and the effects on privacy and freedom of expression. It focuses on blocking and filtering; online surveillance; criminal law; and administrative law.

NEWS

1. **[Malta asks the EU to recognise Libya as a safe port](#)** (Avvenire, link):

"*The follow-up and reactions to the massacre of 12 migrants in the waters between Malta and Libya in the days just after Easter continue to offer surprises. In addition to the phantom fleet of Libyan-Maltese fishing boats used by Valletta to illegally repel the shipwrecked migrants to Libyan prison camps, there is a deliberate plan to obtain money from the EU and have Libya declared a "safe port".*"

See also: **[Malta, the ghost fleet against migrants. Frontex blames the countries](#)** (Alarm Phone, link):

"*A ghost fleet of Libyan ships manoeuvred by Malta to push migrants back. This time, the confirmation comes straight from Valletta, which, after facing NGOs' complaints and the Avvenire's enquiries taken up by the Maltese press, and after the*

open investigation against PM Robert Abela for the death of 12 migrants, has replied speaking of "cooperation with Libyan fishermen to make sea rescue more widespread". This cooperation has been active for months and had never been revealed before."

2. **EU financial complicity in Libyan migrant abuses** (GLAN, link):

"*The EU is financially supporting Libyan and Italian authorities, who are responsible for grave violations of migrant rights, with some 90 million euros. In a complaint submitted to the European Court of Auditors, GLAN and our partners at ASGI and ARCI demonstrate that this support enables Libyan authorities to intercept and return migrant boats to Libyan territory, contrary to fundamental rules of refugee law; and that it is often funnelled into one of the world's most notorious detention systems where migrants are held in deplorable conditions and subjected to extreme violence and in some cases, sold into slavery.*"

See: **Joint statement** (pdf) and: **Complaint to the European Court of Auditors Concerning the Mismanagement of EU Funds by the EUTrust Fund for Africa's 'Support to Integrated Border and Migration Management in Libya' (IBM) Programme** (pdf)

3. UN: **Member States Concerned By The Growing and Increasingly Transnational Threat of Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism** (CTED Trend Alert, pdf):

"*Experts have identified extreme right-wing terrorism - also referred to as far-right or racially and ethnically motivated terrorism - as a unique form of political violence with often fluid boundaries between hate crime and organized terrorism. It is a not a coherent or easily defined movement, but rather a shifting, complex and overlapping milieu of individuals, groups and movements (online and offline) espousing different but related ideologies, often linked by hatred and racism toward minorities, xenophobia, islamophobia or anti-Semitism.*

Although extreme right-wing terrorism is not a new phenomenon, there has been a recent increase in its frequency and lethality, with some individuals, groups and movements pursuing transnational aims in a national context, drawing on international networks, ideas and personalities and seeking to mobilize others, often using the Internet. This has led to multiple large-scale terrorist attacks targeting minorities, including in Christchurch, New Zealand (March 2019), El Paso, United States (August 2019), and Halle (October 2019) and Hanau (February 2020) in Germany. Member States have also foiled several attack plots and face numerous challenges in addressing the surge in this form of terrorist violence."

4. European Data Protection Board: **Guidelines 04/2020 on the use of location data and contact tracing tools in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak** (pdf):

"*The EDPB generally considers that data and technology used to help fight COVID-19 should be used to empower, rather than to control, stigmatise, or repress individuals. Furthermore, while data and technology can be important tools, they have intrinsic limitations and can merely leverage the effectiveness of other public health measures. The general principles of effectiveness, necessity, and*

proportionality must guide any measure adopted by Member States or EU institutions that involve processing of personal data to fight COVID-19.

These guidelines clarify the conditions and principles for the proportionate use of location data and contact tracing tools, for two specific purposes:

- using location data to support the response to the pandemic by modelling the spread of the virus so as to assess the overall effectiveness of confinement measures;
- contact tracing, which aims to notify individuals of the fact that they have been in close proximity of someone who is eventually confirmed to be a carrier of the virus, in order to break the contamination chains as early as possible."

See also: **Contact Tracing in the Real World** (Light Blue Touchpaper, link)

5. **Historic UK-Greece migration action plan signed: The UK and Greece have committed to deepen cooperation on irregular migration in the Eastern Mediterranean** (Home Office press release, link):

"*The joint action plan has been signed by Immigration Minister, Chris Philp, and Greece's Alternate Migration and Asylum Minister, Giorgos Koumoutsakos, today signalling a firm commitment from both governments to increase cooperation as illegal migration into Europe via Greece remains high.*

...Greece is one of the first countries migrants will visit on their route through Europe, and is used by a significant proportion of migrants seeking to reach the UK illegally.

...It will ensure asylum and returns processes are as efficient as possible, enhance the already excellent cooperation between UK and Hellenic law enforcement authorities to dismantle migrant smuggling networks and tackle organised immigration crime, and renew cooperation on search and rescue in the Aegean through the UK's renewed deployment of a Border Force cutter.

The new plan will come into force immediately."

6. UK: **Comment: if MPs won't halt Right to Rent discrimination, the Supreme Court must** (Free Movement, link) by Zoe Gardner:

"*This week, the courts have once again found that the government's Right to Rent checks – which require landlords to verify the immigration status of their tenants – cause discrimination on the grounds of race and nationality where it would not otherwise occur. In line with the conclusion of the High Court in March last year, the Court of Appeal found that ethnic minorities and migrants experience more difficulty than white applicants who are able to show a British passport, and take longer to find housing in the private rented sector.*

...Disappointingly, the judges did not find that this constitutes a breach of human rights legislation or that the discrimination it causes makes the scheme as a whole unlawful."

See: **Right to rent rule 'justified' finds UK appeal court** (The Guardian, link) and: **Court of Appeal judgment** ([2019] EWHC 452 (Admin), pdf)

7. GREECE-BULGARIA: **Weaponizing a River** (e-flux, link) by Ifor Duncan and Stefanos Levidis:

"*On the 10th of March, news reports emerged suggesting that Bulgaria had released water downstream from the Ivaylovgrad Dam on the Ardas, a tributary of the Evros (also Meriç, and Maritsa), and flooded the river border at the request of the Greek government. This intentional flooding of the border was subsequently denounced as fake news by the Bulgarian authorities and remains unverified. Yet due to the increasing severity of spring floods, including as recently as 2018, the release of water from Bulgarian dams has been a subject of friction between Greece, Turkey, and their upstream riparian neighbor. On the 27th of February, Turkey decided to effectively suspend the 2016 EU-Turkey deal and in doing so directed thousands of asylum seekers to the border with Greece. In the context of Greece's military response, the recent reports have revealed a hidden violence designed into the environment of the Evros river. In the weeks since, there have been two confirmed casualties from the use of either live or rubber rounds—Muhammad al Arab and Muhammad Gulzar. The alleged opening of the dam and these shootings are not distinct but are in continuity with the long-term, albeit previously low intensity, weaponization of the river. These exceptional events prove the more insidious use of the Evros as an ecological border infrastructure extending to its entire floodplain.*"

8. ITALY: **CasaPound Italia: Contemporary Extreme Right Politics** (UiO, link):

"*How does a relatively small far right group, with little electoral support, attract international media attention and influence national politics? A recently published book by C-REX researchers Pietro Castelli Gattinara and Caterina Froio uses the example of CasaPound Italia to illustrate the new and often surprising forms that right-wing extremism is taking across the globe.*

...we argue that the success of CPI has to do with the blurring of five main aspects of extreme right politics: ideology, internal structure, activism, mobilization and communication. These five features of CPI politics are blurred as they display elements mediated from different political cultures and from the tradition of both political parties and social movements. Hybridization in these five main aspects of extreme right politics allows attracting quality media attention while also validating extremist views in the public sphere. To corroborate this claim, we triangulated a wide array of qualitative and quantitative data, collected over more than five years of fieldwork in different cities in Italy, integrating open observation during public events, semi-structured interviews, as well as content analytical data from music, news and social media material."

See also: **Symbolism and the Construction of 'Cultural Imaginaries' in Contemporary Far-Right Movements** (European Eye on Radicalization, link)

9. Better late than never? **Two weeks' quarantine if travelling to UK under plans for 'second phase' of coronavirus response - Plan would apply to Britons returning and foreigners arriving at airports and ports** (Sunday Telegraph, link):

"Passengers arriving at British airports and ports will be placed in quarantine for up to a fortnight, under plans for the "second phase" of the Government's response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Officials are drawing up a scheme that mirrors the 14-day "stay home" notices currently issued to Singaporean citizens returning to their country from abroad. It could be rolled out as early as next month, and include large fines for those who fail to remain at the address given to authorities as their place of isolation."

10. **New Lockdown Restrictions – Clarification or Confusion?** (Blackstone Chambers, link);

*"At 11am today, new Regulations came into force that amend the "lockdown" law in England: the **Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 (SI 2020/447).***

These Amending Regulations make various changes to SI. 2020/350, the law giving effect to the lockdown in England. Some of the amendments are of a technical nature and seek to clarify ambiguity in the wording of the Regulations (for example, Amending Regulation 2(5)(a)).

However, without much fanfare and with no Parliamentary scrutiny, Amending Regulation 2(4)(a) has introduced a potentially significant change to Regulation 6, which now reads:

*"**6. – Restrictions on movement***

*(1) During the emergency period, no person may leave **or be outside of the place where they are living without reasonable excuse***…" [Emphasis added]"*

11. **UK making 'impossible demands' over Europol database in EU talks** (Guardian, link):

"Leaked German government report shows Britain has been requesting special access.

The British government is making impossible demands over access to Europol databases in the negotiations over the future relationship with the EU, according to a leaked assessment of the UK's position drawn up by the German government. (...)

According to a German government report on the UK's position in the Brexit talks, seen by the Guardian, Britain wants to "approximate the position of a member state as closely as possible" when it comes to working with Europol, the EU's law enforcement agency."

12. **Institutional racism in the NHS intensifies in times of crisis** (IRR News, link):

"As the government announces that NHS England and Public Health England will lead an inquiry into the disproportionate impact of coronavirus on BAME

communities, a Black health activist warns that the vague social construct of 'race' is being used to explain the mortality and morbidity of diverse populations, and more must be done to hold NHS England and Public Health England to account."

13. Council of the EU: Finnish Presidency paper: **Twenty Years of Europol - what next?** (WK 13266/2019 INIT, 25 November 2019, pdf):

"*Delegations will find attached a note on the "Twenty Years of Europol - what next?" discussed during the*
infonnal COSI meeting on 8-9 July 2019 in The Hague."

The note looks at "future challenges":

1. Technological developments
2. Operational support to Member States
3. Legal basis and cooperation with private partners
4. From data collection to data connection and analysis
5. Pooling of resources
6. Integrated approach to security
7. Balancing tasks and resources

14. **EU commission keeps asylum report on Greece secret** (EUobserver, link):

"*The European Commission is refusing to release a preliminary legal assessment into Greece's decision to temporarily shelve asylum applications.*

Greece froze applications for a month in early March, following Turkey's failed bid to use migrants as political leverage after sending thousands to its side of its shared border with Greece.

...The commission insisted it first needed to study the measure - a position it continues to maintain almost three weeks after Greece lifted the suspension on 1 April and in light of the current pandemic."

15. Germany extends internal border controls due to coronavirus and "reasons of migration and security policy": **Letter from Horst Seehofer to EU** (pdf):

"*I find myself obliged to extend the temporary border control at internal land and air borders with Austria, Switzerland, France, Luxembourg, Denmark, Italy and Spain, as well as the sea border with Denmark, effective from 15 April 2020 for an additional period of 20 days...*

Apart from this, for reasons of migration and security policy, it would be too early to end the temporary internal border checks along the German-Austrian land border already on 11 May 2020. The decline in the number of illegal entries at the German-Austrian land border must not obscure the highly fragile situation at the Turkish-Greek border and the ongoing considerable potential for illegal migration along the Balkan route. On the basis of Articles 25 to 27 of the Schengen Borders Code, I have therefore ordered the temporary reintroduction of internal border control at the German-Austrian land border for a six-month period beginning 12 May 2020."

See: **Temporary Reintroduction of Border Control** (EC, link)

16. **Greece looks for closure in trial on far right** (Politico, link):

"*In April 2015, 69 members of Golden Dawn — including its leader Nikos Michaloliakos and the entire 2013 parliamentary group — went on trial accused of orchestrating murder, arson, assault and weapons possession. The indictment describes a political party that is "working as a cloak [for] a criminal conspiracy" authorizing attacks against political opponents, migrants and anti-fascists, Kampagiannis says.*

(...)

This spring, five years since it started, the trial was supposed to finally come to a close. The coronavirus epidemic, which has brought life to a standstill in all of Europe, has interrupted the proceedings, delaying the verdict and heightening the anticipated sense of closure."

17. UK: **Right to rent rule 'justified' finds UK appeal court** (The Guardian, link):

"*The government has won an appeal over its controversial right to rent scheme, which was last year ruled by the high court to be racially discriminatory.*

The scheme, which is a key element of the Home Office's "hostile environment" for illegal migration, requires private landlords to check the immigration status of tenants and prospective tenants. Those landlords that fail to complete checks can face fines and up to five years in prison."

However: **Court of Appeal agrees that the Right to Rent scheme causes racial discrimination** (JCWI, link): "*But the Court stopped short of finding Right to Rent violated human rights law. They leave it to MPs and the Government to decide whether the racial discrimination is 'greater than envisaged'.*"

See also: **Court of Appeal judgment** ([2019] EWHC 452 (Admin), pdf) and background: **Right to Rent breaches human rights law and fuels racism, High Court rules**

18. Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights: **Challenges to human rights have intensified in Europe** (link)

"*The Commissioner observes that in 2019 as in previous years, there have been growing challenges to human rights standards and principles all over the continent. In some cases, hostility to human rights as universal, indivisible and legally binding has increased, fuelling a corrosive narrative that endangers the principles and standards on which Europe has been built over the past seven decades.*

Five of the topics covered in this report illustrate particularly well the ongoing backlash in Europe: the growing political and societal acceptance of racism; the disregard of the human rights of migrants and refugees; the threats to women's rights; the repression of dissent; and the erosion of judicial independence."

See: **Annual Activity Report 2019** (pdf)

19. BELGIUM: **100 Belgian academics warn government: urgent debate needed on the corona app** (pdf):

"China, Israel, Russia, South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan already started using a specific type of technology in the fight against the coronavirus: the so-called "corona app". In the meantime, this idea has also reached our region. Many of our neighboring countries are already making plans to create such an app and the European Commission has written a recommendation about it. In our country, numerous companies have submitted proposals for an app to Minister Philippe De Backer. Similarly, virologist Marc Van Ranst (member of the governmental expert group on the virus) recently mentioned that Belgium is not far removed from implementing such a technology.

...we hereby appeal to the competent Belgian authorities: be careful with the corona app! Such an app faces not only legal, but also ethical, social, political and technical problems (both in the case of voluntary and mandatory implementation)."

20. **Coronavirus further threatening media freedom, says Reporters Without Borders** (BBC News, link):

"The coronavirus pandemic is further threatening media freedom worldwide, according to the annual World Press Freedom Index.

Compiled by Reporters Without Borders, the 180-country index notes a correlation between a country's ranking and its response to the pandemic.

Both China at 177 and Iran, which dropped three places to 173, censored their coronavirus outbreaks. Norway again topped the index while North Korea came in last."

21. **By surrendering to autocracy in the fight against COVID-19, Hungary poisons European ideals** (euractiv, link):

"The EU must swiftly propose and adopt sanctions against the latest 'democratic backsliding' by the Hungarian government, say leading European politicians, media and civil society leaders in an open letter whose signatories include former Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy, and EURACTIV founder Christophe Leclercq."

22. UK: **Coronavirus and charitability** (Policing the Political, link):

"For charities, 'political activity' is defined as campaigning for changes in the law, and many organisations are likely to want to make demands of government in the coming months. This blog is aimed at charities trying to figure out how their response to coronavirus fits with the framework of 'charitability' – especially small organisations without easy access to legal support. I am not a legal expert, and this shouldn't be taken as legal advice! However, based on my understanding of the legal, practical and political conditions that tend to get charities into trouble for being overly political,

*here are 5 reasons why I think charities **should not feel constrained by charitability** in this moment.*"

23. **Webinar, 21 April 2020: Under surveillance: Monitoring at the border** (Greens/EFA, link):

"*Who is controlling the border control?*

On the 21st of April from 16:00-17:45, Tineke Strik and Apostolis Fotiadis will host an online panel discussion on the human rights monitoring of the EU external border controls. During this webinar, Apostolis Fotiadis will present the findings of his research titled: "Persistent and novel challenges for FRONTEX's monitoring system".

The discussions will focus on both the role of FRONTEX and human rights monitoring bodies. To what extent is the current system functional and does it effectively monitor human rights violations? And what could the future of an effective EU border monitoring system look like, would an independent body be a solution to overcome current problems?"

24. **Open letter: the EU must not sit idly by while a Member State's democracy is in jeopardy** (Transparency International, link):

"*The coronavirus pandemic represents an urgent global challenge. Governments and EU institutions must act decisively to control its spread, protect citizens, and limit economic damage in the European Union.*

However, the crisis must not serve as a smokescreen for anti-democratic activities and the stifling of active civil society, that can exacerbate corruption and undermine Goal 16 of the SDGs: 'Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.'

Exceptional times, of course, demand exceptional measures and it may be legitimate for governments to temporarily use extraordinary powers to manage the situation. Nevertheless, even in a crisis, these measures must be time-limited and proportionate. We cannot allow unscrupulous political actors to use the current climate as a pretext for dismantling democracy and undermining the rule of law. "

25. UK: **Understanding the asylum process: Asylum Navigation Board** (Right to Remain, link):

"*The Right to Remain asylum navigation board is a way to understand each step of the UK asylum system.*

Participants can learn about what people going through the system and those supporting them can do to be in a better position.

As you navigate around the board, participants can pick up "Information Cards" which outline what that stage of the process is, and how it can be navigated.

Many problems can arise during the process of seeking asylum. For each stage on the board, participants can look at Problem cards for that stage of the process (colour coded to match the stage on the board). There are ideas for possible solutions to those problems on the reverse, "Action" side of the card.

*Further information about all the stages, and the problems and potential solutions, can be found in the **Right to Remain Toolkit**.*"

26. **Med: 12 Left to Die and 182 Stranded as EU States Refuse Rescue** (ECRE, link):

"*Twelve people have died after a series of acts of non-assistance by EU and national authorities. Over 50 people have been pushed back to Libya and 182 remain stranded on civilian rescue vessels. The Council of Europe **stresses** that states should ensure rescue at sea and allow safe disembarkation during the COVID-19 crisis.*

*According to the **Libya Office** of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) 51 people have been returned to Libyan detention centres and up to twelve have died after being left in distress at sea for several days without assistance. EU and Member States authorities **reportedly** failed to initiate a rescue despite being repeatedly alerted by the **NGO Alarm Phone**. According to the NGO, the distress case has been known to the European authorities for six days, upon aerial sighting by a Frontex asset on April 10. The boat was finally picked up by a merchant vessel in the Maltese Search & Rescue (SAR) Zone and returned to Libya by a fishing vessel. The survivors were handed over to Libyan authorities and put into Tarik Al Sikka detention centre in Tripoli, known for its inhuman conditions. Maltese authorities reportedly coordinated the push-back.*"

27. Lessons from history: **Family work to clear PM plot suffragette's name** (BBC, link):

"*The family of a woman jailed for a plot to poison a prime minister has lodged an application to review her case. Alice Wheeldon was convicted in 1917 of a conspiracy to kill David Lloyd George as she opposed World War One (...)*

A man called Alex Gordon pretended to sympathise with them, but he was an MI5 spy who claimed they were plotting to kill Lloyd George with a poisoned dart.Wheeldon's great-granddaughter Chloe Mason, who lives in Australia, came to England to deliver the application to the Criminal Cases Review Commission."

See: **Friends of Alice Wheeldon: The Anti-War Activist Accused of Plotting to Kill Lloyd George by Sheila Rowbotham** (Pluto Press) and: Campaign: **Website** (link)

28. **Police launch investigation into officer over threat to fabricate offence** (The Canary, link):

"*Lancashire Police have launched an investigation into an officer caught on camera threatening to fabricate an offence against a young man.*

The police force has also apologised for the unnamed officer's "completely unacceptable" language and behaviour, as shown in a video widely shared online.

But as the Network for Police Monitoring pointed out on Twitter this type of policing is nothing new"

29. **US Intelligence Agencies Haven't Agreed on Any One Theory About How Coronavirus Originated** (Newsweek, link):

"America's intelligence agencies have not come to a conclusion on how the virus known as SARS-CoV-2 began spreading from China's Wuhan province, a U.S. Intelligence Community official told Newsweek on Friday."

30. **80 organisations, politicians and journalists call for 'swift actions' on Hungary** (euractiv, link):

"Following the adoption of the controversial Hungarian coronavirus law, 30 MEPs and 50 journalists, academics and civil society organisations have called for "swift and decisive actions" to address "threats to the rule of law being carried out under the guise of emergency powers" in a letter addressed to the European Commission and Council presidents."

31. **Protecting Digital Research Even More Crucial During Covid-19** (HRW, link):

"Government, Company Restrictions Imperil Open Access to Human Rights Information (...)

Private companies are also making decisions that will likely limit access to human rights material. Last month, the major social media platforms put thousands of third-party content moderators on paid leave, saying they could not perform their sensitive work remotely.

In their place, untested and opaque artificial intelligence technologies now have an outsized role in determining what content stays online and what gets removed, and users have a drastically reduced ability to appeal decisions."

32. European Commission: **Coronavirus: Guidance to ensure full data protection standards of apps fighting the pandemic** (link):

*"Today, the European Commission has published **guidance** on the development of new apps that support the fight against coronavirus in relation to data protection. The development of such apps and their take up by citizens can have a significant impact on the treatment of the virus and can play an important role in the strategy to lift containment measures, complementing other measures like increased testing capacities. It is important, however, to ensure that EU citizens can fully trust such innovative digital solutions and can embrace them without fear."*

See also: **Coronavirus triggers soul-searching on privacy in Germany - Experts warn that decades-old standards could suffer lasting damage as the**

country tackles the pandemic (politico, liink). And: '**Major security and privacy issues' in using location data for COVID-19 apps, Commission says** (euractiv. link)

33. **European Commission: COVID-19: Guidance on the implementation of relevant EU provisions in the area of asylum and return procedures and on resettlement** (COM 2516, 2020,pdf);

"The pandemic has direct consequences on the way EU asylum and return rules are being implemented by Member States and a disruptive effect on resettlement. The Commission fully acknowledges the difficulties that in the current context Member States face when implementing relevant EU rules in this regard. Any measure taken in the area of asylum, resettlement and return should also take full account of the health protection measures introduced by the Member States on their territories to prevent and contain the spread of COVID-19."

34. **Greece to move migrants out of congested island camps** (euractiv, link):

"Greece will this month begin moving hundreds of elderly and ailing asylum seekers out of congested island camps to protect them from the coronavirus, the migration ministry said on Thursday (16 April).

The ministry said 2,380 "vulnerable persons" will be moved out of camps on Aegean islands to apartments, hotels and other camps on the mainland.

Authorities said the operation will begin on 19 April and take about two weeks. Details will be announced at a later date."

35. **UK doubles down on Brexit threat, hints WTO terms offer more 'flexibility'** (euractiv, link):

"Boris Johnson's government doubled-down on Thursday (16 April) on its threat to walk away from the EU Single Market this year if a deal on a successor trade pact cannot be reached. It hinted that trading with the EU on World Trade Organisation terms would give the UK more 'flexibility' to manage the economic fallout from the coronavirus pandemic."

36. **The situation in the Greek islands four years after the EU-Turkey statement** (Border Criminologies, link):

"In March 2016, EU leaders and Turkey issued a joint statement declaring that migrants travelling from Turkey to any Greek island would be returned back to Turkey. Following this, Greek authorities imposed a restriction of stay on all new arrivals, under which no-one could leave the islands, thus leaving thousands stranded. The number of asylum seekers soon exceeded the capacity of the Reception and Identification Centers (also known as hot-spots).

With no space in these centers, the living conditions inside them quickly deteriorated. Additionally, countless asylum seekers had to live in deplorable conditions outside. Thus, thousands of asylum seekers—who were already in a precarious status to

begin with—were forced to live in conditions violating their dignity in formal and makeshift camps at the edge or near the islands' capitals."

37. **MEPs say data and AI can help ease lockdown measures** (New Europe, link):

"MEPs suggested on Thursday the use of new technologies to help member-states confront the technical and organisational challenges that will arise in societies, once the Covid-19 pandemic is contained.

"In order to overcome this unprecedented crisis, we must test new solutions and make use of innovation and research," said Christian Bu?oi, Chair of the Industry, Research and Energy Committee (ITRE) in the European Parliament.

The move followed the European Commission's proposal on Wednesday to use mobile applications to enable citizens implement more effective and targeted social distancing measures and to provide early warning, prevention and contact tracing amid the Covid-19 pandemic."

38. **Greece: Free Unaccompanied Migrant Children: New Campaign to Shelter Children, End Detention Amid COVID-19** (HRW, link):

" Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis should free hundreds of unaccompanied migrant children detained in unhygienic police cells and detention centers in Greece, Human Rights Watch said today in opening a campaign to free the children. Their release from abusive detention conditions would better protect them from infection amid the coronavirus pandemic."

39. **Greeks fear Erdogan readies another migration wave by sea** (euractiv, link):

"Turkey is gathering a high number of migrants at its western coasts and urging them to sail across the sea border to neighbouring Greece, several Greek media reported over the weekend.

They quoted high-ranking government officials in Athens as saying these migrants, who completed their 14-day quarantine due to coronavirus, have been transferred in buses from migration camps to seaside towns just opposite the Greek island of Lesvos, which is already packed with migrants and refugees."

40. **I'm a public health expert. I know the hostile environment is making the coronavirus outbreak far worse** (Independent, link):

"Like many unthinkable fiscal strategies brought forward by the chancellor in the past month, addressing structural inequities is now essential to fight this pandemic."

41. **Growth in surveillance may be hard to scale back after pandemic, experts say** (Guardian, link):

"Coronavirus crisis has led to billions of people around the world facing enhanced monitoring."

42. **Italy, democracy and COVID-19** (TNI, link):

"The crisis triggered by COVID-19 is challenging the very meaning of coexistence and cohabitation and redesigning the boundaries of public space in an absolutely unprecedented way, with unpredictable results."

43. **The Coronavirus Crisis-Law in Greece: A (Constitutional) Matter of Life and Death** (verfassungsblog.de, link):

"Each time a crisis emerges, the law is entitled to seize the exceptional moment and contain it, within the limits of democracy and the rule of law. Legal normality, as a vague standard, is usually redefined by the legislator and the courts and rapidly adjusted to reality.

The constitutional value of public interest comes into conflict with civil liberties and scholars begin to question the law. The saga of the (Greek) coronavirus crisis-law is, like everywhere, utterly reduced to the proportionality of the exceptional measures of the (Greek) State, but its moral and political implications seem far broader and ambiguous."

44. CoE: **Algorithms and automation: new guidelines to prevent human rights breaches** (link):

"The Council of Europe today called on its 47 member States to take a precautionary approach to the development and use of algorithmic systems and adopt legislation, policies and practices that fully respect human rights.

*In a **Recommendation on the human rights impacts of algorithmic systems**, the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers issued a set of guidelines calling on governments to ensure that they do not breach human rights through their own use, development or procurement of algorithmic systems."*

45. **Rescue group, EU officials dispute fate of 85 sea migrants** (euractiv, link):

"Europe's coast guards and rescue agencies were at loggerheads Monday (13 April) about the fate of four dinghies and up to 85 migrants potentially lost at sea after setting off from Libya.Germany's Sea-Watch International reported that the little rubber boats had been carrying 258 people."

See also: **UNHCR alarm over dozens of missing migrants in Mediterranean** (euractiv, link)

46. **'We are dying' migrants adrift in Maltese waters - Archbishop calls for rescue** (Times of Malta, link):

"A migrant boat adrift in Malta's search and rescue zone is taking in water with those on board in dire need of help, according to an NGO.

Alarm Phone on Sunday tweeted that a boat of 47 migrants in distress had run out of fuel and been drifting in Malta's SAR zone for more than two days.

"The people in distress told us: 'We are so tired, the situation is like hell. The boat lost so much air, water is coming inside. We are dying. No water, no food. Some people lost consciousness. Come save us please. We are close to death.',"the NGO tweeted. "

47. **Italy to move 'Alan Kurdi' migrants to another ship** (DW, link)

"Italy will transfer migrants from crowded rescue ship "Alan Kurdi" to another vessel where they would be kept in quarantine over coronavirus concerns, officials said. The privately owned ship has been stranded for days."

48. Council of the European Union: **Labour migration as a basis for partnerships with third countries ? Presidency discussion paper** (ilmite,doc no: 5672.- 20, pdf):

"Migration is a human and global phenomenon that will continue to be one of the central topics on the political agenda in the EU since the geopolitical circumstances in its closer and wider neighbourhood are becoming ever more complex"

49. **Migration minister confirms migrants gathering along Turkish coast** (ekathimerini.com, link):

"Greek Migration Minister Notis Mitarakis said on Monday that, although migrants have started gathering along the Turkish coastline opposite the islands of the eastern Aegean, there are no indications that they are infected with coronavirus, as some media reports had suggested over the weekend."

50. **Is the 'war on Covid-19' morphing into a war on the poor?** (IRR News, link):

"The pandemic is revealing the ways in which global health outcomes are shaped by race, class and indigeneity.(...)

History teaches us that inhumane police practices are quick to establish but hard to dismantle with long-term consequences for policing by consent within a democratic order."

51. **Refugees left behind in coronavirus crisis, aid groups warn** (euractiv, link):

"With restrictive measures imposed across Europe, authorities are struggling to provide food and shelter for migrants and asylum seekers sleeping outdoors, aid organisations have warned.

In France, hundreds of refugees living outdoors without proper sanitation or shelter now face food shortages as well, according to charity 'Refugee Info Bus'.

Grassroots aid groups that have served daily hot meals to migrants and refugees in Northern France have been forced to suspend their activities due to COVID-19."

52. **Council of Europe anti-torture Committee publishes report on Greece** (link):

"To this end, the report describes the critical findings from the visits undertaken to the two largest remand prisons in the country in Athens and Thessaloniki and to three new prisons for sentenced prisoners as well as the Korydallos Prison Health Centre (former prison hospital). The report also makes a series of recommendations challenging the current approach towards the management of prisons.

Further, the CPT's report is highly critical of the conditions in which prisoners are transported around the country and of the situation of prisoners held in transfer establishments managed by the Hellenic Police."

Read: **Report** (link)

53. CoE: **Respecting democracy, rule of law and human rights in the framework of the COVID-19 sanitary crisisA toolkit for member states** (link):

"The toolkit is designed to help ensure that measures taken by member states during the current crisis remain proportional to the threat posed by the spread of the virus and are limited in time."