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STATEWATCH ANALYSIS

1. [Frontex launches "game-changing" recruitment drive for standing corps of border guards](#) (pdf) by Jane Kilpatrick:

On 4 January 2020 the Management Board of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) adopted a decision on the profiles of the staff required for the new "standing corps", which is ultimately supposed to be staffed by 10,000 officials. The decision ushers in a new wave of recruitment for the agency. Applicants will be put through six months of training before deployment, after rigorous medical testing.

2. Analysis: [Drones for Frontex: unmanned migration control at Europe's borders](#) (pdf) by Matthias Monroy:

Instead of providing sea rescue capabilities in the Mediterranean, the EU is expanding air surveillance. Refugees are observed with drones developed for the military. In addition to numerous EU states, countries such as Libya could also use the information obtained.

STATEWATCH NEWS

1. [Refugee crisis: latest news from across Europe](#) (10-16.3.20) including:

- Little new on migration in Commission's plan for a "comprehensive strategy with Africa"
- More calls for EU and Greece to uphold international law and refugee rights
- Turkey steps back from confrontation at Greek border
- Border externalisation: agreements on Frontex ops in Serbia and Montenegro head for approval

2. EU: [Little new on migration in Commission's plan for a "comprehensive strategy with Africa"](#)

Last week the European Commission published a communication setting out a plan for a "comprehensive strategy with Africa", which includes "migration and mobility" amongst its five key themes. The document is intended to frame talks between the EU and the AU as they move towards a summit in October this year.

3. ITALY: [Coronavirus: critical situation in prisons and detention centres](#)

A note issued on 12 March by the ombudsman for people denied their freedom in jails and places of detention on describes the situation as "relatively" calm, despite problems resulting from disturbances and violence in numerous prisons in the past days.

4. ITALY: [Coronavirus: military personnel given police powers to enforce restrictions on mobility and presence in the streets](#)

On 12 March 2020, Italian press agency ANSA reported the contents of an interior ministry circular issued concerning restrictions on mobility first decreed on 23 February and repeatedly expanded upon in the context of the coronavirus pandemic, from Lombardy and 14 provinces (the initial "red zone") to the entire national territory. Presence on the streets must be duly motivated in a justification form, for essential activities, going to work and essential shopping.

5. EU: [Border externalisation: Agreements on Frontex operations in Serbia and Montenegro heading for parliamentary approval](#)

On 29 January the civil liberties committee of the European Parliament (LIBE) approved the conclusion of status agreements on the actions on the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) on the territory of two neighbouring non-EU states - Serbia and Montenegro.

6. ["Protect our laws and humanity!" - Open Letter by 120 Organizations](#)

The undersigned organisations are deeply concerned about recent developments at the Evros border and the Aegean islands where people are stranded at the borders of Europe, instrumentalised for political purposes, and subject to violations of their rights. We are also deeply concerned about the way the authorities of Greece and the European Union are handling new arrivals. Equally alarming are the extreme actions by security forces against refugees and by civilians against staff of human rights and humanitarian organizations. We would also like to point out that the climate of panic and rhetoric of 'asymmetric threat' -also promoted by the authorities- does not reflect reality and seriously affects not only vulnerable refugees- but also our society and the rule of law as a whole.

7. [Refugee crisis: latest news from across Europe](#) (25.2-2.3.20) including:

- Open letters, joint statements, responses to the situation at the Greek-Turkish border
- Danish boat in Aegean refused order to push back rescued migrants
- EU governments 'harassing' those who help migrants

8. GREECE: [Situation for migrants and refugees goes from bad to worse](#)

The Greek government is in the midst of an unprecedented crackdown against migrants and refugees already on the Aegean islands, as well as against those who are attempting to reach Greece from Turkey. Deploying police and military forces to the land border with Turkey in an attempt to prevent crossings, Greece has also said it will suspend the possibility to request asylum, a clear breach of EU and international law.

9. EU: ["Data lakes", broken silos, changing the law: Counter-Terrorism Coordinator enthusiastic for Europol's new 'innovation hub'](#)

The EU is in the process of setting up an 'innovation hub' at Europol in order to look at the development and use of new technologies for internal security. The Counter-Terrorism Coordinator (CTC), who initially proposed the idea, has circulated an enthusiastic note to national delegations in Brussels setting out his vision for the unit. Meanwhile, minutes of a meeting between EU and Interpol officials suggest that Frontex operations could provide a "test lab" for new technologies.

NEWS

1. [Xenophobia and racism are killing people on the Greek-Turkish border! The European Union is also!](#) (Gisti, link):

"Over the past few days, people have been killed on the Greek-Turkish border! This is a direct consequence of political decisions by European leaders who would like to seal off European Union borders at all costs, notably by subcontracting the examination of asylum applications to non-European States and the encampment of undesirables. Everyday brings new unbearable images showing asylum seekers being pushed out or deliberately put in danger. (...)

A recently established coalition of organisations against border violence has announced that complaints will be lodged against Greece and the EU for violating the rights of people fleeing Turkey. States and the EU decision-makers behind them must not be allowed to commit such abuses with impunity.

We support this initiative and call for protest rallies wherever possible. A demonstration is planned at Place de la République in Paris on 18 March at 6:30 p.m. Videos denouncing the border violence are to be shown. "

2. [The European Parliament must intervene to stop violence, the use of force and human rights violations at the EU-Turkey border](#) (change.org, link):

"We call on the European Parliament and the political groups representing the EU citizens to stop violence and the use of force against defenseless people at the EU-Turkey border and to restore legality and respect for human rights, firstly the right of asylum.

What is happening is the result of wrong choices made with the aim of externalizing borders and preventing people fleeing from wars and persecutions from arriving in Europe to seek protection."

3. [Brussels considers pan-EU police searches of ID photos](#) (Politico, link):

"Ready for your closeup? Your face could soon be included in police databases searchable by law enforcement across the European Union.

The Council of the EU has been advised to include photos of the Continent's residents in a network of databases that could be searched by police using facial recognition software, according to an internal report circulated by the Austrian government and obtained by POLITICO.

These photos could include pictures culled from driver's licenses and passports, if another recommendation obtained by POLITICO and circulated by the Finnish presidency of the Council last year were to be adopted."

4. Council of the EU documents on: [Facial recognition](#) (13356/19, pdf), [vehicle registration data](#) (11264/19, pdf), [fingerprints](#) (13556/19, pdf) and [DNA](#) (13511/19, pdf) and: [Presentation on the TELEFI project](#) (pdf)

5. [Germany puts far-right AfD's 'Wing' group under surveillance](#) (DW, link):

"Germany's domestic security agency will run surveillance on the far-right Alternative for Germany's (AfD) most nationalistic group, the agency's president announced on Thursday.

The step designates the AfD group known as the "Wing" ("Flügel") as a far-right extremist group warranting observation from security forces.

"The Wing evidently has extremist intentions," said Thomas Haldenwang, the president of the Office for the Protection of the Constitution — Germany's domestic security agency."

6. UK: [The Impact of Christchurch Terror Attack | Tell MAMA Interim report 2019](#) (Tell MAMA, link):

"REVEALED: 1 Year-On After the Christchurch Terror attacks, Tell MAMA Reveals a 692% Increase in Anti-Muslim Hatred that Spiked in the UK After the Attacks...

In the week following the terror attacks in Christchurch, incidents reported to Tell MAMA increased by 692%, with 12 incidents recorded in the previous week (March 8 – 14) and 95 the following week (March 15 – 21).

The terror attacks at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand had a significant effect in the UK, resulting in a rapid but long-lasting increase in anti-Muslim hatred and Islamophobia."

7. [Report 'Follow the Money III' - Solidarity: The use of AMIF funds to Incentivise Resettlement and Relocation in the EU](#) (ECRE, link):

"The [third 'Follow the Money' report](#) maps and assesses the use of financial incentives (lump sums) allocated under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) to EU Member States (MS) participating in refugee resettlement and intra-EU relocation. The four case studies, France, Italy Portugal and Slovenia provide a range of national contexts and practices within the role and impact of EU funding is explored. The research draws on the first two 'Follow the Money' studies published by ECRE and UNHCR in 2017 and 2018 tracking the use of AMIF for asylum, integration and return.

Member States resettled 76,205 persons during 2014-18, via both EU schemes and national programmes with uneven participation among MS. The study finds that the funding under the lump sum modality, €6,000 per resettled person, increasing to €10,000 when the resettled person falls into one of the categories included under common Union resettlement priorities, is an effective mechanism to provide EU funding. The reduction or removal would most likely lead to reductions in resettlement numbers and/or programmes that offer less support to resettled persons."

8. ECRE on the situation for refugees in Greece: [Weekly Editorial: About Time Too](#) (link):

"At the EU-Turkey border the situation remains alarming, and ECRE continued to speak out against the actions of the Greek government and the apparent support from the EU's political leadership, and to promote the alternative response set out in our statement and urged by Greek NGOs. It is a relief though to see some signs of a change in approach.

On Thursday, Commissioner Johansson gave an interview to the Guardian which contained a warning to Greece on the need to respect the right to asylum; this was – hopefully – followed by a presentation of these warnings in person during her visit to the country.

Separately, the Commission announced a plan to relocate to other Member States 1600 children from the Greek islands, a very welcome initiative, and one that ECRE and others have supported for years... All these developments are though just the first steps towards a positive and rights-based approach from Europe; following through on it will require the following."

See also: [EU to take in some child migrants stuck in Greece](#) (BBC News, link): *"Five EU countries [Finland, France, Germany, Luxembourg and Portugal] have agreed to take in some migrant children who are stuck in Greece, amid continuing tension on the Greek-Turkish border."*

9. [Turkey Steps Back From Confrontation at Greek Border](#) (New York Times, link):

"BRUSSELS — Turkey has signaled that it is winding down its two-week operation to aid the movement of tens of thousands of people toward Europe, following a tough on-the-ground response from Greek border guards and a tepid diplomatic reaction from European politicians.

Migrants at the Greek-Turkish land border began to be transported back to Istanbul by bus this week, witnesses at the border said, de-escalating a standoff that initially set off fears of another European migration crisis. Greek officials said the number of attempted border crossings had dwindled from thousands a day to a few hundred, and none were successful on Friday, even as sporadic exchanges of tear-gas with Turkish security forces continued.

Also Friday, Turkish officials announced that three human smugglers had each been sentenced to 125 years in prison for their roles in the death of a Syrian toddler, Alan Kurdi, whose drowning came to epitomize an earlier migration crisis, in 2015.

That announcement and the week's other developments were interpreted by experts and European politicians as signals to Europe that the Turkish authorities were once again willing to police their borders and quell a second wave of migration."

10. [The EU Is Abandoning Italy in Its Hour of Need](#) (Foreign Policy, link):

"Italy is in lockdown. Schools and universities are closed, soccer games suspended, and restaurant visits banned amid a rapid spread of the novel coronavirus in the country. Just grocery stores and pharmacies are allowed to stay open, and only absolutely necessary travel is permitted. One might think that fellow European Union countries would count their blessings and send their Italian friends a few vital supplies, especially since the Italians have asked for it. They have sent nothing.

...In the meantime, a partial and flawed savior has arrived. Close to midnight on March 12, a Chinese aircraft landed in Rome carrying nine medical experts and 31 tons of medical supplies including intensive care unit equipment, medical protective equipment, and antiviral drugs. Around the same time, a Chinese truck arrived in Italy bringing more than 230 boxes of medical equipment. It was less than Chinese State Councilor Wang Yi had promised Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio of Italy in a phone call on Tuesday, but two days after the phone call the supplies were on their way."

11. [Migrants on Greek islands to be offered €2,000 to go home](#) (The Guardian, link):

"Migrants on the Greek islands are to be offered €2,000 (£1,764) per person to go home under a voluntary scheme launched by the European Union in an attempt to ease desperate conditions in camps.

The amount is more than five times the usual sum offered to migrants to help them rebuild their lives in their country of origin, under voluntary returns programmes run by the United Nations' International Organization for Migration (IOM).

The offer will last one month, as the commission fears an open-ended scheme would attract more migrants to Europe. It will not apply to refugees who have no homes to return to, but is intended to incentivise migrants seeking better living standards to leave the islands."

12. [Returned to War and Torture: Malta and Frontex coordinate push-back to Libya](#)

(Alarm Phone, link):

"On Saturday, 14 March 2020, RCC Malta coordinated a push-back operation from the Maltese Search and Rescue (SAR) zone to Libya in cooperation with the EU border agency Frontex and the so-called Libyan coastguards. Similar to the events we documented on 18 October 2019, the Maltese authorities instructed the so-called Libyan coastguards to enter a European SAR zone in order to abduct about 49 people and force them back to Libya. Instead of complying with refugee and human rights conventions, the Maltese authorities coordinated a grave violation of international law and of the principle of non-refoulement, as the rescued must be disembarked in a safe harbour. Clearly, Libya is not a safe harbour but a place of war and systemic human rights abuses. Every week, the Alarm Phone receives testimonies of torture, rape and other forms of violence against migrants detained in Libyan camps and prisons."

13. [New EU migration pact must dust off fundamental rights](#) (EUobserver, link):

"The EU's new Pact on Migration and Asylum is an opportunity to take a different approach. To take a breath, to remember the values that the European project was founded upon, and to dust off the good old fundamental rights and put them to use.

Not merely for the benefit of the European citizens, but also for those fleeing conflict and violence and seeking protection in Europe.

While the scale of global displacement is high and the challenges related to irregular migration are real in Europe and beyond, the situation remains manageable.

It requires the political leadership to insist on facts, instead of contributing to instilling unnecessary fear and insecurity in the European public by supporting unhelpful narratives of unmanageable movements and unprecedented crisis."

14. [Frontex launches new operations in Greece](#) (link): by Matthias Monroy:

"In two RABIT missions, the EU Border Agency is sending 100 additional officials to the Greek-Turkish land and sea border. Frontex currently have around 600 operational forces stationed in Greece.

Frontex has started [two new missions in Greece](#). Following a decision by Director Fabrice Leggeri, the EU Border Agency is sending border guards with technical assets to the Aegean Sea. A further mission has been [launched today](#) to reinforce police and military

units for border surveillance on the land border with Turkey. This follows a request by the government in Athens."

15. [Revealed: the great European refugee scandal](#) (Guardian, link):

"Evidence obtained by the Guardian exposes a coordinated and unlawful EU assault on the rights of desperate people trying to cross the Mediterranean by Daniel Howden, Apostolis Fotiadis and Zach Campbell. (...)

As night fell on 26 March 2019, two small boats made their way north across the Mediterranean. The rubber crafts were flimsy; it would be nearly impossible for those onboard to make it to Europe without help. From the north, a twin-propeller aeroplane from the European Union naval force approached. From the south, the coastguard from the country they had just fled, Libya, was coming. (...)

Seagull 75 circled overhead. The flight crew was part of Operation Sophia, an EU naval mission that has patrolled the south-central Mediterranean since 2015. After participating in thousands of rescues in its first four years, Sophia withdrew its sea vessels from March 2019, leaving only aircraft in the rescue zone. It came to be known as the naval mission without any ships.(...)"

16. [Greece denies report of secret 'black site' for migrants near Turkish border](#) (Euractiv, link):

"The Greek government dismissed on Wednesday (11 March) a report in The New York Times that it was holding illegal migrants who cross the border from Turkey at a secret "black site" where they are denied access to lawyers and cannot file asylum claims".

17. [Erdogan says border will stay open until EU meets his demands](#) (New Europe, link):

"Turkey's president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, said Wednesday he would keep the border open for migrants until the European Union had met all his demands.

"Until all Turkey's expectations, including free movement, updating of the customs union and financial assistance, are tangibly met, we will continue the practice on our borders", he said."

18. [Coronavirus: How are Middle East refugee camps prepared?](#) (DW, link):

"With the Syrian health care system "on its knees," according to the World Health Organization, refugee camps across the region are also facing the potential threat of COVID-19. So far, no cases have been found."

19. [Artificial intelligence isn't as smart as it thinks - The technology is decades away from being able to mimic human decision-making](#) (Politico, link):

"Digital personal assistants, software that can trounce board game champions, algorithms serving up customized online advertising — wherever you turn, artificial intelligence appears to be taking over the world.

But look past the self-driving cars and facial-recognition cameras, and you'll see that the technology is a lot less intelligent than it may at first appear. It's likely to be decades, at best,

before even the smartest forms of AI can outdo humans in the complex tasks that make up daily life."

20. European Parliament Study: [The ethics of artificial intelligence: Issues and initiatives](#) (pdf):

"STOA | Panel for the Future of Science and Technology II Chapter 2 moves on to consider the impact of AI on human psychology, raising questions about the impact of AI on relationships, as in the case of intelligent robots taking on human social roles, such as nursing. Human-robot relationships may also affect human-human relationships in as yet unanticipated ways. This section also considers the question of personhood, and whether AI systems should have moral agency. Impacts on the financial system are already being felt, with AI responsible for high trading volumes of equities.

The report argues that, although markets are suited to automation, there are risks including the use of AI for intentional market manipulation and collusion. AI technology also poses questions for both civil and criminal law, particularly whether existing legal frameworks apply to decisions taken by AIs. Pressing legal issues include liability for tortious, criminal and contractual misconduct involving AI. While it may seem unlikely that AIs will be deemed to have sufficient autonomy and moral sense to be held liable themselves, they do raise questions about who is liable for which crime (or indeed if human agents can avoid liability by claiming they did not know the AI could or would do such a thing)."

See also: [Overview](#) (pdf)

21. [Frontex border operation in Greece 'lacks legal basis' after Greece suspends asylum law](#) (euronews, link):

"Experts have questioned the legality of EU border agency Frontex sending officers to the Greek-Turkish border.

Thousands have massed on the frontier after Ankara said it could no longer stop refugees in Turkey from heading to Europe.

Frontex, which manages the European Union's external borders, is deploying reinforcements to Evros from 11 March.

But experts have told Euronews this move "lacks proper legal basis".

This is because Greece - already with a huge backlog - suspended the reception of asylum applications for a month on 1 March."

22. [Are You Syrious? Daily Digest 06/03/20 — MEP Joins Far-Right Vigilantes in Greece](#) (Medium, link):

"Feature: Golden Dawn MEP Among Fascist Vigilantes Attacking People in Greece

Ioannis Lagos, a longtime member of the far-right Golden Dawn party, was spotted at the Greek-Turkish border in Evros. He was photographed with members of local so-called "protection" groups and at least two police officers.

A far-right website published his activities, saying he was "actively participating in patrols organized by locals, to locate & turn over to the authorities the illegal immigrants-jihadists,

that are crossing the borders by the thousands.” Clearly, he is an active participant in the violence being perpetrated against vulnerable people at the border and is making no effort to hide his presence.

This is not the first violent action that Lagos has participated in."

23. [Greek-Turkish border: MEPs reject Turkey’s pressure, demand common asylum rules](#) (EP, link):

"The EU must help Greece manage its border with Turkey, while ensuring the right to asylum for those who need it, several MEPs said on Tuesday.

In a debate with Commissioner Johansson and the Croatian Presidency of the Council, a majority of speakers criticised Turkish President Erdogan for using people’s suffering for political purposes. Many also underlined that the 2015 refugee crisis should not be repeated and insisted that the EU needs to update its common rules on asylum.

Some political group leaders called for a revision of the deal with Turkey, which was hammered out in 2016 to stem the flow of migrants and asylum-seekers in exchange for EU financial aid. Others showed deep concern about the deteriorating humanitarian situation both at the border with Turkey and on the Greek islands, where thousands of asylum-seekers, many of them unaccompanied minors, are stranded."

See also: Commissioner for Migration and Home Affairs, Ylva Johansson: [European Parliament Plenary - Opening statement to debate on situation at Greek-Turkish border](#) (pdf)

24. [Bulgaria is not changing its push-back policy at its border to Turkey](#) (Bordermonitoring Bulgaria, link):

"Media reported that FRONTEX installed 60 additional staff members to the already existing 50 ones at the Bulgarian-Turkish border. This raises the question of whether FRONTEX will only watch the Bulgarian authorities while they go on with their push-back practice in the upcoming days. Until now, the number of crossing incidents around the Turkish-Bulgarian border near Kapikule/Kapitan Andreevo seem much lower in comparison to the Greek-Turkish border around Pazarkule/Kastanies – both border crossings are only about 10 km away from each other."

25. [HRW denounces Greece over migrants held on warship](#) (Yahoo! News, link):

"Human Rights Watch (HRW) on Tuesday called on Greece to reverse its "draconian policy" towards over 450 migrants detained on a navy ship docked in Mytilene port in Lesbos.

The men, women and children were among those picked up by the Greek Coast Guard since March 1, when Turkey decided to open its borders and let make the crossing.

Since Turkey's February 28 decision, more than 1,700 people have arrived on the Greek islands in the Aegean off the Turkish coast."

26. UK: [Police warned about ‘insider threat’ from extremists inside their own forces](#) (The Independent, link):

"Police have been warned about the threat from extremists inside their own forces.

HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) found that while officers' work through the government's Prevent counter-extremism programme was broadly good, few considered the possibility that their own colleagues could be radicalised.

"The vulnerability of staff generally wasn't referred to in forces' Prevent training, but it is a real threat," said a report released on Monday.

...The findings were revealed days after a serving Metropolitan Police officer was [arrested on suspicion of being a member of a neo-Nazi terrorist group.](#)"

See the report: HMICFRS: [Counter-terrorism policing – An inspection of the police's contribution of the government's Prevent Programme](#) (pdf): "This report sets out the high level findings from this inspection and is redacted, in the interest of national security."

27. [Secret documents: European domestic intelligence services networking worldwide](#) (Matthias Monroy, link):

"The „Club de Berne“, in which directors of domestic secret services of the EU member states as well as Norway and Switzerland are organized, has grown into a worldwide network. Jan Jirát and Lorenz Naegeli report this in the online edition of the Swiss „Wochezeitung“, citing a secret document dated 2011. The „Club de Berne“ is thus involved in an international exchange of information with authorities in several continents.

The informal „Club de Berne“ was founded in 1969 by initially nine heads of secret services. Even then, following research by Aviva Guttman, the European services cooperated with Israeli partners Shin Bet and Mossad as well as the US FBI. The networking was done via a cable system called „Kilowatt“.

28. GREECE: [Yaros, the forgotten prison island](#) (DW, link):

"The barren and seemingly godforsaken island of Yaros in the southern Aegean is also known as the "Island of the Devil." Its history as a place of exile goes back to the ancient Romans who sent undesirable people to the island. After the Greek Civil War (1946-1949), Greek rulers kept the old tradition and sent 20,000 communists and other enemies of the government into exile on Yaros. The prisoners were treated to a gruesome educational holiday. Anyone who had dared to defy the government was mistreated until their will was broken and was then reeducated in the ways of "true Greeks."

...But now, it looks like the ball is rolling again. There are plans to turn the island into a nature conservation area and a diver's paradise. The project is being backed by WWF, the world's leading nature conservation organization, and the Cyclades Life program... It will be no easy task due to the complex legal situation."

29. [Fire breaks out at refugee centre on Greek island of Lesbos](#) (The Guardian, link):

"A fire at a refugee centre on the Greek island of Lesbos has caused considerable damage to a warehouse but no injuries, Greece's fire service said.

It was the second fire at an installation built for migrants, after unknown perpetrators burned down a reception centre last Monday. The warehouse, which contained furniture and electrical appliances, was completely destroyed, a fire service spokesman said."

30. [Coronavirus tests Europe's resolve on privacy](#) (Politico, link):

"As governments around the world turn to tech to track the spread of coronavirus, some people are finding out the hard way that tracking tools can expose their private lives.

In South Korea — where the state pings people's phones about the location of infected patients — one man was publicly pinpointed at a class about sexual harassment. In another case, an infected man was located in an area renowned for prostitution, according to the Guardian — leading to a hail of online jeers about his behaviour.

Think this could never happen in privacy-conscious Europe?

Think again."

31. [Bulgaria Floods Evros River to Prevent Migrants Storming Greek Borders](#) (Greek Reporter, link):

"At the request of Greece, Bulgaria opened an Evros River dam located on its territory on Monday in order to cause intentional flooding and make it more difficult for migrants amassed at the Greek-Turkish border to cross the river.

The opening of the Ivaylovgrad Dam accordingly resulted in rising levels of the Evros River, Star TV reported.

As the standoff between thousands of migrants and refugees on the Turkish side of the Evros and Greek security forces continues, PM Kyriakos Mitsotakis met his German counterpart Angela Merkel in Berlin and stressed that Greece and Europe cannot be blackmailed."

32. [Aegean Boat Report](#)

"Arrival number from 01.03.2020, 902 people and all arrivals in week 10, 816 People has not been added to the population number by Greek government, reason unknown but can be related to latest Development on the Greek islands where new arrivals are denied to seek asylum."

33. [Von der Leyen: 'Right to seek asylum' at Greek border](#) (Euobserver, link):

"European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen said part of the solution on the Greek-Turkish border tension must include a right to seek asylum. "There is the obligation to protect the border, there is EU law, but there is the obligation to guarantee fundamental rights, including the rights to ask for asylum, so this is in the charter and this is what we need as a solution," she said."

34. [Amid migrant crisis, Greece-Turkey conflict plays out on social media](#) (euractiv, link):

"Greeks and Turks are waging a proxy war on social media with photos, video and commentary purporting to show the other side behaving badly in a migrant crisis that has seriously strained already tense relations between Athens and Ankara."

35. CYPRUS: [KISA calls on the Minister to retract his defamatory statements and to proceed to a dialogue with the stakeholders and NGOs concerned](#) (press release, pdf):

"The government has reacted to the increased refugee and migrant flows of the last 2-3 years with an ever more extreme right narrative, which comprises, among others, interconnecting migrants and refugees to matters of security, terrorism, unemployment and social cohesion. According to this narrative, refugees are channelled by Turkey following a plan that aims at changing the demographic nature and the full control of Cyprus.

It seems that KISA with its critical positions and views against this narrative annoys the establishment as well as other extreme right and nationalistic circles. That is why, there is lately a systematic attempt targeting, smearing and mudslinging of the work and action of KISA and its leadership by a section of the printed and electronic media that agrees and supports the extreme right policies of the executive branch."

See also: Letter from the European Network Against Racism to the Cyprus interior minister: [Your statements on ENAR on Radio Proto 1, 24 February 2020](#) (pdf)

36. [Joint letter to Frontex regarding attempts to claim legal costs from transparency activists](#) (6 March 2020, pdf):

"On 31 January 2020, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) sent Luisa Izuzquiza and Arne Semsrott an invoice claiming € 23,700.81 in legal costs, establishing a deadline for compliance of 28 days. The recipients are two freedom of information activists and the applicants in the first access to EU documents case against Frontex before the General Court of the European Union.

In light of Frontex's claim, we are writing to demand Frontex refrains from pursuing any financial compensation for a legal challenge aimed at defending and protecting a fundamental EU right. We are also writing to express our concerns regarding the implications of Frontex's action when it comes to civil society's ability to protect and defend fundamental rights in the EU."

37. [ICC authorises Afghanistan war crimes investigation](#) (Reprive, link):

"The Appeals Chamber of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the Hague has upheld an appeal against the Pre-Trial Chamber's decision not to authorise an investigation into alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in the context of the conflict in Afghanistan. This paves the way for an independent investigation of abuses committed by US, Taliban and Afghan forces during the conflict."

38. UK: [Landmark Immigration Bill to end free movement introduced to Parliament](#) (gov.uk, link):

"The Immigration Bill will be introduced to the House of Commons today (Thursday 5 March) ending the European Union's rules on free movement.

It represents an important milestone in paving the way for the new UK points-based immigration system. It will be introduced by the Minister for Future Borders and Immigration, Kevin Foster, and marks an historic moment in the country's history, following the UK's departure from the EU on 31 January 2020."

See: [Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination \(EU Withdrawal\) Bill](#) (pdf)

39. Open letter: [EUROPE MUST ACT FOR THE IMMEDIATE DECONGESTION OF THE AEGEAN ISLANDS](#) (pdf):

"The Aegean Islands have descended into crisis. 5 years of neglectful EU policy has finally culminated in days of protest (1 , 2), NGOs threatened with violence, and mass strikes across the islands. Whilst over 42,000 asylum seekers reside on these islands, there is capacity for just 6,178 (1). Now, communities are braced for a surge in arrivals as Turkey has opened its borders, renegeing on the EU-Turkey agreement.

This ongoing political stalemate between the EU, Greece and Turkey must be resolved. This game, played by the powerful, is putting innocent human lives at risk. It must stop now. Added to this already volatile mix is rising panic over the coronavirus. With healthcare severely lacking in the hotspot camps, NGOs fear that an outbreak would have disastrous consequences."

40. [**Common statement: Transnational solidarity against racism and war!**](#) (link):

"Hundreds of groups and organizations worldwide sign multilingual statement demanding peace, fundamental rights and freedoms of every person on the move.

Five years after the so-called "refugee crisis" and almost four years after the EU-Turkey deal, we are once again witnessing the violence caused by security-centred migration policies. Since last Thursday (27.02.2020), thousands of people have been moving towards the Turkey-Greece border following the announcement that migrants wanting to reach Europe will no longer be stopped on the Turkish side. The announcement from Turkish government officials came after the death of 33 Turkish soldiers in the Idlib area, where conflict escalation has seen the civilian death toll rapidly increase by the day, with basic infrastructure and health facilities being blatantly fired at. Turkish government keeps its borders with Syria closed while seeing no harm in pushing thousands of migrants towards the doors of Europe, into a limbo."

41. [**GUE/NGL MEPs' letter to the Commission and Council on the situation at the Greek-Turkish border**](#) (3 March 2020, pdf):

"We, as Members of the European Parliament call upon you to ensure immediate action in such a way that it will ensure that Turkey immediately stops end the use of people fleeing war as political bargaining chip and as a tool for geo-political pressure to Greece and Europe as a whole. We call upon you to ensure effective access to protection in full respect of the Geneva Convention and EU law and to do so based on equal sharing of all challenges and responsibilities among all the EU Member States.

We call upon you to take all necessary and immediate actions, including via an extraordinary EU Summit, in order to ensure the evacuation of seekers of international protection from the Greek islands and the land borders with Turkey, their immediate transfer to all the EU Member States and, in parallel, to enable the functioning of a fair and effective common asylum system and the creation of safe and legal pathways to the EU."

42. [**Council of the EU: Statement on the situation at the EU's external borders**](#) (Consilium, link):

"The EU and its Member States remain determined to effectively protect EU's external borders. Illegal crossings will not be tolerated. In this regard, the EU and its Member States will take all necessary measures, in accordance with EU and international law. Migrants should not be encouraged to endanger their lives by attempting illegal crossings by land or sea. The Council calls upon the Turkish government and all actors and organisations on the ground to relay this message and counter the dissemination of false information. The EU will continue to actively fight human smuggling.

All Member States, the European Commission and EU Agencies stand ready to strengthen their support to areas under pressure, including through the deployment of FRONTEX's rapid border intervention and additional technical assistance. Member States will swiftly provide the support necessary to ensure the immediate deployment of the relevant teams and assets. The Commission will play an active role in coordinating Member States' support."

43. EU: [**A coalition to “shield” migrants and refugees against violence at the borders - We will hold Greece and the EU accountable for the violations of the rights of migrants and refugees fleeing Turkey**](#) (Migreurop, link):

"We firmly condemn the instrumental use of migrants and refugees by the EU and Turkey, and the Greek and EU operations deployed to prevent them from reaching European soil. No policy aim can justify such gross violations. Exiles fleeing violence must not face the violence of borders while they seek protection. Our organisations are joining their efforts to hold states accountable for their crimes. We plan to document and take legal action against those responsible for the violations of migrants and refugees' rights, as well as those of activists acting in solidarity with them. We will employ our investigative and legal instruments to block state violence and reverse the deeply worrying trend towards the multiplication of push-backs in Greece, – a trend observable to different degrees across the EU's shifting borders. Migrants and refugees are not a threat the EU should shield itself against, but are themselves threatened by state violence all along their precarious trajectories. We aim to use the tools of human rights to shield migrants and refugees from the brutality targeting them."

44. [**Europe's Morality Is Dying at the Greek Border**](#) (Foreign Policy, link):

"This week, Greece's northern border with Turkey and the Bulgarian-Turkish borderlands, too, have witnessed brutal, violent scenes reminiscent of war zones. Thousands of desperate migrants fleeing war zones—including mothers with babies in their arms—are storming barbed-wire fences to get into European Union territory to apply for political asylum, while Greek security forces in anti-riot gear beat them back and shoot rubber bullets and billowing clouds of tear gas at them. On the easternmost Greek islands, such as Lesbos, the Greek coast guard and navy have been turning away dinghies of half-frozen, frightened refugees. More than 32,000 migrants have been arrested at the Greek land border."

45. [**Joint statement on the ongoing violence at the Greece-Turkey border**](#) (Forensic Architecture, link):

"Today, together with more than a dozen NGOs, legal agencies, and activist groups, we published a statement (below) on the ongoing violence against refugees and migrants at the Greece-Turkey border, which has already resulted in multiple reports of serious injuries, as well as the death of 22-year-old Muhammad al-Arab. Watch our preliminary investigation into his death here"

46. [**Danish boat in Aegean refused order to push back rescued migrants**](#) (Politico, link):

"A Danish patrol boat monitoring the Aegean sea refused an order to push back migrants they rescued, Danish officials told public broadcaster DR."

The Danish boat was patrolling the sea between Turkey and Greece's easternmost islands as part of Operation Poseidon, a border surveillance mission in support of Greece, coordinated by EU border protection agency Frontex."

Jens Møller, the police chief in charge of the Danish unit participating in the operation, told DR that the crew had rescued 33 migrants headed for Greece in a rubber dinghy when they received a radio order from Operation Poseidon's headquarters to put the migrants back into to their dinghy and tow it out of Greek waters.

The crew refused the order, believing it would endanger the lives of the migrants."

47. [Migrants: EU commission not fit to guard treaties](#) (EUobserver, link):

"Asked if it was legal for Greece to suspend asylum claims for a month as Greece has done, the commission announced it had no "authority to have a definitive legal opinion or legal doctrine."

Asked if it was legal to fire rubber bullets at asylum seekers, the commission also refused to comment.

"It is not up to the commission to offer any opinion or judgement on a situation which is exceptional, that is under certain constraints," said Margaritis Schinas, the vice-president in charge of "promoting our European way of life".

Eric Mamer, the commission's chief spokesperson, was even more blunt. "You won't get a straight yes or no answer from me," he said.

Instead, what you will get is a commission that has cowed to the far-right and one that is no longer fit to be the guardian of the EU treaties. That honour now belongs to EU citizens alone, it seems."

48. [Briefing: A manufactured refugee crisis at the Greek-Turkish border](#) (The New Humanitarian, link):

"Dramatic scenes have been playing out in recent days at the land and sea borders between Greece and Turkey: Greek police tear-gassing and pushing back crowds of asylum seekers at a northern border crossing; the Hellenic Coast Guard firing warning shots at a dinghy full of asylum seekers in the Aegean Sea; angry protesters preventing another group in a dinghy from disembarking in the port on the island of Lesbos.

The images have been exploited by a savvy Turkish media campaign aimed at maximising pressure on the EU to support Turkish action in northwest Syria and to share more of the burden for hosting refugees. According to refugee advocates and human rights groups, Turkey's politicisation of the refugee issue and the suffering at the EU's borders are a predictable outcome of the EU-Turkey deal – a cornerstone of EU efforts to curb irregular migration across its borders."

49. [UNHCR statement on the situation at the Turkey-EU border](#) (UNHCR, link):

"UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is appealing for calm and an easing of tensions on Turkey's borders with the European Union in light of the present increased movements of people there – including refugees and asylum-seekers.

UNHCR is monitoring developments in Turkey and in Greece and is offering its support. As in all such situations it is important that the authorities refrain from any measures that might increase the suffering of vulnerable people.

All States have a right to control their borders and manage irregular movements, but at the same time should refrain from the use of excessive or disproportionate force and maintain systems for handling asylum requests in an orderly manner.

Neither the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees nor EU refugee law provides any legal basis for the suspension of the reception of asylum applications."

50. [Greece/EU: Urgently Relocate Lone Children](#) (Human Rights Watch, link):

"(Athens) – European Union (EU) Member States should urgently relocate unaccompanied children from the Greek islands to safety in their territory, while ensuring that the children's best interests are taken into account, 64 human rights and humanitarian organizations said in a statement today. The groups warned of widespread violations of children's rights and threats to their health and safety across the Aegean islands' refugee hotspots. Action is all the more urgent in light of the escalating violence on Lesbos and as increased arrivals to the islands could lead to further deterioration of the dangerous conditions in the camps."

51. [Greece: Inhumane asylum measures will put lives at risk](#) (Amnesty International, link):

"The inhumane measures which the Greek authorities are taking to prevent people from entering the country are an appalling betrayal of Greece's human rights responsibilities and will put the lives of people fleeing violence at risk, Amnesty International said today.

Yesterday, following a meeting of Greece's National Security Council, the authorities announced they would temporarily suspend the registration of asylum claims from people who enter the country irregularly. This measure will be coupled with the immediate return without registration of new arrivals if the return to their country of origin is "possible." It's not clear how the Greek authorities are interpreting "possible" in this context."

52. [At the Greek-Turkish border, politicians play with people's lives](#) (Alarm Phone, link):

"People trying to enter Europe in search of protection face brutal repression in the Aegean region. Although this is not new, we currently see an escalation of violence as Turkey and Greece play a dangerous game with people's lives. The survival instinct and hope of many for a better future is exploited and manipulated for cynical political stunts. Greece has now declared a state of emergency and to remove people's right to claim asylum."

53. SPAIN-BELGIUM: European Arrest Warrant: [EU Court of Justice passes the buck on Valtonyc](#) (Majorca Daily Bulletin, link):

"The EU Court of Justice has ruled that Spain cannot retroactively apply for the extradition of Majorcan rapper Josep Miquel Arenas, aka Valtonyc from Belgium.

The Luxembourg-based Court said that its ruling does not mean that the execution of the European arrest warrant should be denied, but that it is up to the Belgian Justice Department, which has already refused to extradite the rapper.

Valtonyc fled to Belgium in June 2018, after he was sentenced to nearly 3 years in jail for glorifying terrorism in his lyrics."

CJEU press release: [In order to ascertain whether the European arrest warrant against a person convicted in Spain for the offence of glorification of terrorism and humiliation of the victims of terrorism must be executed without examining whether that offence is punishable also in Belgium, the Belgian courts must take into account the length of the sentence imposed by the Spanish law applicable to the acts committed](#) (pdf) and: [Judgment](#) (pdf)

54. UK: [Government hired undercover 'spies' at public meeting on road through Litherland](#) (Liverpool Echo, link):

"Highways England paid over £5,000 to a surveillance and security firm to monitor two public information events in Sefton.

The public events related to HE's controversial plans to build a dual carriageway through Rimrose Valley country park, to cope with the increase in HGV traffic resulting from the Port of Liverpool's expansion.

Campaigners have argued that the new road will increase traffic related noise and pollution in Litherland, and ruin the park.

But bosses at Highways England insist the staff were at the meeting for security reasons.

The SRV (Save Rimrose Valley) campaign group has now revealed that total of £5,424 was paid by HE to a surveillance company to monitor two events which took place in October last year."

55. EU: Europol: [Novel Actionable information, Criminal intelligence analysis and data analytics portal \(CONAN\)](#) (Council document 13731/19, LIMITE, 6 November 2019, pdf):

*"On 3 October 2019 Europol launched the new criminal analysis portal, named "CONAN" (CONecting ANalysts), at the European Police Chiefs Convention. CONAN currently connects **1200 criminal intelligence analysts**, [emphasis in original] coming from the MS, EU agencies (Europol, EBCGA, Eurojust, EMCDDA, OLAF, ..) and Third partner countries. New analysts are joining up every day.*

...The new portal has several functionalities to connect analysts and help them to align ways of performing criminal analysis between law enforcement organisations across the European Union"

Background: ["Policing in a Connected World": Council looks to help police deal with "Novel Actionable Information"](#) (Statwatch News, 25 March 2019)

56. [Counter-terrorism programmes are violating human rights, UN expert says](#) (Middle East Eye, link):

"Counter-extremism programmes, including those employed in the United Kingdom and the United States, are contributing to human rights violations, according to a United Nations expert.

A report submitted to the Human Rights Council on Wednesday said religious groups, minorities and civil society actors in particular have been victims of rights violations and are targeted under the guise of countering "extremism."

Special rapporteur Fionnuala Ní Aolain said any programme that relies on teachers, social workers and health-care staff to report signs of radicalisation should be scrapped."

See the report: [Human rights impact of policies and practices aimed at preventing and countering violent extremism](#) (pdf) and press release: [Violent extremism: Prevention programmes should not violate human rights – UN expert](#) (UN Human Rights, link)

57. UK: [Britain's secret state and the need for whistle-blowing](#) (Daily Maverick, link):

"In November 2003, I was charged with a breach of the Official Secrets Act in the UK. My 'crime' had been to reveal an email from the US National Security Agency (NSA) to Britain's intelligence agency, the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) where I was working at the time.

The email, which arrived on 31 January 2003, specified a US operation to target the home and office communications of six foreign diplomats on the UN Security Council. The purpose was to use the information gathered to strong-arm those states into voting for a resolution supporting an invasion of Iraq. "

58. GERMANY: [OPINION: How far-right tensions are boiling over on Munich's mayoral elections campaign trail](#) (The Local, link):

"At first glance, it appeared comical. Behind a barrier festooned with fearsome placards and an expensive PA system, two gentlemen stood glumly, occasionally summoning and murmuring to an offsider.

In front of them stood a crowd of about 15 to 20 counter-protesters – punks, hippies and anarchists clad in black clothing. Speakers blared angry rap exhorting youth to 'fight for their people', and were answered by phones and boomboxes blaring anti-fascist standards such as 'Bella Ciao' and 'Die Internationale'.

It's a scene being played out over and over again in German cities, as parties such as Alternative for Germany (AfD), who many say hold extreme far-right views, increasingly make a play for voters disenchanted with the centrist Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) or centre-left Social Democrats (SPD).

And with extremist attacks such as the shootings in Hanau, Halle and the murder of pro-refugee politician Walter Lübcke, the role of the far-right is also being scrutinised further."

59. UK: ['Gross failures' contributed to man's death in immigration centre](#) (The Guardian, link):

"Neglect and a series of gross failures by the Home Office and other agencies contributed to the death of a vulnerable Ghanaian man from hypothermia, dehydration and malnutrition, an inquest jury has found.

In a damning narrative conclusion, the jury found that Prince Fosu, a car parts dealer, had died suddenly after developing these conditions while he was suffering from psychotic illness.

The jury criticised many aspects of the healthcare systems in Harmondsworth immigration removal centre (IRC) at the time of Fosu's death and said there were "gross failures across all the agencies".

They found that Home Office staff failed to spot and respond to Fosu's deteriorating condition and failed to monitor their contractors adequately."

60. [EU governments 'harassing' those who help migrants: report](#) (Politico, link):

"European countries are misusing immigration and counterterrorism laws to punish civil society organizations and private citizens who are trying to help asylum seekers, Amnesty International said in a report published Tuesday.

Those who have helped migrants by handing out warm clothes, offering shelter and saving lives at sea have been subjected to "unfounded criminal proceedings, undue restrictions of their activities, intimidation, harassment and smear campaigns" in multiple EU countries, Amnesty said.

...Amnesty recorded cases of restriction and criminalization of assistance to migrants in Croatia, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Spain, Switzerland and the U.K. These included incidents in which governments seized boats used by NGOs to rescue migrants at sea, and brought spying and terrorism-related charges against people suspected of helping migrants, such as the case of a Frenchman who faced trial for "facilitating irregular entry" into France after giving asylum seekers tea and clothing."

The report: [Punishing compassion: Solidarity on trial in Fortress Europe](#) (pdf)

61. European Parliament study: [European arrest warrant: Framework for analysis and preliminary findings on its implementation](#) (pdf):

"The European Arrest Warrant has led to simplified and faster surrender procedures for suspects and sentenced persons. However, trust in the system needs to be enhanced through proper implementation and further harmonisation of substantive and procedural criminal law."

62. UK: [At least 20,000 people denied information that could prove right to live in UK, in new 'hostile environment' clampdown](#) (The Independent, link):

"At least 20,000 people have been denied information that could prove their right to stay in the UK, in what campaigners are warning is a revival of the 'hostile environment'.

A controversial loophole – passed into law despite warnings it risked "the next Windrush" – has been used to block almost 43 per cent of requests for the government to release vital data, The Independent can reveal.

The huge impact of the clause – allowing data to be kept secret if release would "undermine immigration control" – comes despite ministers promising it would be used only on a "case-by-case basis".

63. [For Norway it's Official: The Rule of Law is No More in Poland](#) (Verfassungsblog, link):

"The so-called "muzzle law", adopted by the Polish parliament on January 23, was the last straw. On Thursday 27 February, the board of the Norwegian Court Administration (NCA) decided to withdraw from its planned cooperation with Poland under the justice programme of the EEA and Norway Grants, due to concerns over the Polish justice reforms. (...)

In a statement published on the NCA website, the director of the NCA stated that the bilateral cooperation could not continue since "basic European standards for legal security are no longer present" in Poland. The director referred to criticism of the Polish justice reforms by the Venice Commission, the OSCE and the EU Commission, and concluded that the political control of Polish courts is now so extensive that the NCA and the Norwegian courts could no longer continue their cooperation with Poland within the EEA and Norway Grants justice programme. Crucially, the director voiced concern that Norway's cooperation with Poland in the justice field might be considered as an acceptance of the recent justice reforms in Poland."

64. [Frontex wants to disembark refugees in Senegal](#) (Matthias Monroy, link):

"The EU border agency Frontex wants to bring back refugees picked up in the Atlantic Ocean to Senegal. The EU Commission should therefore negotiate a so-called Status Agreement with the government in Dakar. The proposal can be found in the annual report on the implementation of the Regulation for the surveillance of external sea borders. It regulates the maritime „operational cooperation“ of Frontex with third countries.

It would be the first agreement of this kind with an African government. So far, Frontex has only concluded Status Agreements with a number of Western Balkan countries for the joint surveillance of land borders. The only operation to date in a third country was launched by the Border Agency in Albania a year ago."

See: [Annual report on the practical application of Regulation \(EU\) No 656/2014 establishing rules for the surveillance of the external sea borders in the context of operational cooperation coordinated by Frontex](#) (Council document 6294/20, pdf)

65. [Janez Jansa, admirer of Viktor Orban, to be nominated PM of Slovenia](#) (EurActiv, link):

"The centre-right Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS), led by former prime minister Janez Janša, late on Tuesday (25 February) agreed on a future government coalition with three other parties, the four parties said.

The anti-immigration SDS (EPP-affiliated) formed a majority coalition with the centre-left Party of Modern Centre (SMC), the conservative New Slovenia and the pensioners' party Desus.

President Borut Pahor is expected to nominate Janša on Wednesday for the post of prime minister, to replace outgoing centre-right Prime Minister Marjan Šarec who resigned last month. Janša is expected to be confirmed by parliament next week."

66. [Facial Recognition Technology Is the New Rogues' Gallery](#) (Slate, link):

"The government has always sought a way to file away and compare the faces of the guilty, but until very recently the technology only allowed for it to occur in a much more rudimentary way. Before there was the fingerprint, or even the police file, there was the rogues' gallery, which you could find in most U.S. police departments. The gallery was a large wall or cabinet filled with photographs of alleged criminals that could be used as a way of identifying repeat offenders and coordinating surveillance, and as an example for witnesses... As cumbersome as this technology was, its use in the early 20th century posed the same ethical questions about guilt, innocence, and the nature of governance that we continue to grapple with on an exponentially larger scale. "

67. [First Success Against Facial Recognition in France](#) (La Quadrature du Net, link):

"Earlier this month, the Administrative Court of Marseille heard our case against facial recognition systems controlling access to two high schools in Nice and Marseille. These systems were authorised in December by the PACA Region as "experimental". Yesterday, the Court annulled this decision.

The Court found that the Region had no power to take this decision – schools only have such powers. Furthermore, the Court found that it breached the GDPR: these systems were based on "consent", but students' consent cannot be "freely given" because of the authority relationship that binds them to the school's administration."

More detail: [First Ever Decision of a French Court Applying GDPR to Facial Recognition](#) (AI Regulation, link) and the judgment: [No 1901249 Marseilles Administrative Court](#) (pdf)

68. [Justice and Home Affairs in the future UK/EU relationship: analysis of the negotiation positions](#) (EU Law Analysis) by Professor Steve Peers (link):

"The EU has now adopted its negotiation mandate for future relationship talks with the UK ([discussed here](#)). The [UK has now done the same](#). Lots of commentators have looked in detail at the two sides' approach to the future relationship on economic issues: this blog post aims to do the same on justice and home affairs issues (immigration, asylum, civil cooperation, judicial and police cooperation)."

69. [Turkey says will not stop Syrian refugees reaching Europe after troops killed](#) (Reuters, link):

"ANKARA/ISTANBUL (Reuters) - Turkey will no longer stop Syrian refugees from reaching Europe, a senior Turkish official said, as Ankara responded on Friday to the killing of 33 Turkish soldiers in an air strike by Syrian government forces in Syria's northwestern Idlib region."

70. [Greece invokes coronavirus to halt migration](#) (EUactiv. link):

"In an unexpected move, Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis decided on Thursday (27 February) to upgrade border controls to the "maximum deterrent" level to prevent migrants affected with coronavirus from entering EU territory.

"Migration is now taking on a new dimension, as flows to Greece include people from Iran – where we have had many cases of Coronavirus – and many passing through Afghanistan. Our islands, therefore, already burdened with public health issues, need to be protected twice," the conservative leader said at a ministerial meeting.

The Greek premier added that everything should be done in order to avoid having the coronavirus on these islands. The maximum deterrent level is the last step before closing the borders entirely."

71. [EU experts: closing borders 'ineffective' for coronavirus](#) (euobserver, link):

"EU experts said on Thursday (27 February) that refusing entry to an EU country of people with coronavirus symptoms would be counter-productive and "ineffective" to prevent the spread of the virus.

"Refusal of entry is not considered an appropriate preventive measure as the virus would spread further" since those potential patients would keep moving in the region without being treated, EU sources said."

72. European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI): [ECRI Chair to the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers: alarm bells are ringing over racism and intolerance](#) (link):

"In the context of the publication of the latest [annual report](#) drawn up by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), Ms Maria Daniella Marouda, Chair of ECRI, held an exchange of views with the Committee of Ministers, the Council of Europe's decision-making organ.

Shortly after her meeting with Ms Marija Pejcinovic Buric, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Ms Marouda shared ECRI's views with the Committee of Ministers about the alarming situation in Europe. She underlined that ultra-nationalistic, antisemitic and anti-Muslim hate speech and violence were gaining ground in all too many countries. "The xenophobic mass shootings in Hanau in Germany last week demonstrate once again that we not only need to speak urgently about racism and intolerance, but that we also need to be proactive", she said."

73. UK: [Failures in treatment and policing behind 'boom in illegal drugs'](#) (The Guardian, link):

"Disappearing and underfunded drug treatment services and fruitless attempts to restrict the flow of illegal substances into the country underpin a booming £9.4bn illicit drugs market in the UK, a landmark review has found.

Prof Dame Carol Black was commissioned by the former home secretary Sajid Javid to lead a major review to look into the ways in which drugs are fuelling serious violence."

See also: [Review of Drugs: Executive Summary](#) (pdf)

74. [Unprecedented human rights crackdown obligates EU to reevaluate relations with Egypt](#) (CIHRS, link):

"We are writing to urge you to lead a comprehensive review of the EU's relations with Egypt in light of the sustained and unprecedented crackdown on human rights in the country. We call on you to devise and implement a holistic and result-oriented strategy, using all instruments at the EU's disposal to urgently halt this abusive trend and better engage with Egypt on protecting human rights, promoting the rule of law and combatting impunity."

75. [UK to withdraw from European arrest warrant](#) (The Guardian, link):

"The UK is to abandon a crucial tool used to speed up the transfer of criminals across borders with other European countries.

Acting against the warnings of senior law enforcement officials, the government said it would not be seeking to participate in the European arrest warrant (EAW) as part of the future relationship with the European Union.

In a document setting out the UK's approach to negotiations with the EU, the government said: "The agreement should instead provide for fast-track extradition arrangements, based

on the EU's surrender agreement with Norway and Iceland which came into force in 2019, but with appropriate further safeguards for individuals beyond those in the European arrest warrant."⁷⁶

See: 'Agreement on Law Enforcement and Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters' in [The Future Relationship with the EU: The UK's Approach to Negotiations](#) (pdf)

76. [Open Letter to the EU about Climate of Racism in Hungary](#) (European Roma Rights Centre, link):

"Brussels, 18 February 2020: We would like to express our deep concern at the recent statements made by Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán concerning the school segregation case in Gyöngyöspata. We call on the European Parliament to resolutely condemn the rhetoric of the Hungarian government, which exacerbates inter-ethnic tension and anti-Roma racism; delegitimises the work of human rights organisations yet again; and further undermines the rule of law."

77. [Scottish Government to seek Westminster support in rendition investigation](#) (Reprieve, link):

"In a reversal of its previous position, the Scottish Government now says it will seek the UK government's support in obtaining the full US Senate torture report, in order to establish what role Scottish airports played in CIA rendition flights. So far, only the redacted 525 page Executive Summary of the 6,700 page report has been released.

A spokesperson for justice secretary Humza Yousaf confirmed the move following a letter from MSPs, published in the Scotsman. The cross party group wrote: "We are deeply concerned that without concerted action by the Scottish and Westminster governments, Police Scotland's investigation will fail to get to the truth."

See: [MSPs warn Sturgeon of 'deep concern' over police rendition investigation](#) (The Scotsman, link)

78. ['I want to restart the EU's migration debate from scratch': Commissioner Ylva Johansson on sea rescues, relocations and a secret Libyan deal](#) (Times of Malta, link):

"The European commissioner for home affairs is in Malta for discussions on Tuesday in the latest attempt to agree a deal on how to handle the migration crisis. Ahead of the mission, Ylva Johansson answered questions from Jacob Borg about sea rescues, relocations and a secret Libyan deal."

79. [Clashes on Greek islands over new migrant camps](#) (InfoMigrants, link):

"Riot police have clashed with residents on two Greek islands over the construction of new migrant detention centers. The government is insisting that the closed facilities must go ahead to relieve pressure on overcrowded island camps.

On Lesbos, about 500 people reportedly tried to stop heavy machinery from being unloaded on Monday night to begin construction at the site of the new facility.

Police used tear gas on protesters close to the area, some of whom wore surgical masks, news agency reports said. On the island of Chios, at least three people were treated in

hospital for breathing difficulties caused by the extensive use of tear gas, according to local officials."

80. ['Partnerships' to be at heart of EU-Africa strategy, leaked paper reveals](#) (EurActiv, link):

"The EU will seek to put a series of policy-themed 'partnerships' at the heart of its EU-Africa strategy which will be formally launched in early March, according to a leaked draft obtained by EURACTIV.

A draft outline of the strategy states that the EU executive wants to "change the narrative: look at Africa for what it is becoming: home to the world's youngest population; largest trade area since the creation of the WTO; appetite for regional integration; women's empowerment; all creating huge economic opportunities."

It also spells out the areas the EU would cover: Partners for Sustainable Growth and Jobs; for a Green Transition; for a Digital and Data Transformation; Peace, Security, Governance and Resilience; Migration and Mobility; and Multilateralism."

81. [Dodik Stops Bosnia From Cooperating With Frontex](#) (Balkan Insight, link):

"Amid an ongoing dispute over a Constitutional Court ruling that has angered Bosnian Serb politicians, Milorad Dodik, the Serbian member of the state presidency, has stopped Bosnia from signing up to a status agreement with the European Union border agency, Frontex.

At the last session of the three-member Bosnian presidency, Dodik voted against all decisions that were on the agenda. One was the proposal of the Minister of Security, Fahrudin Radoncic, to accept an "Agreement on Status between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the European Union on Actions Executed by the Agency for European Border and Coast Guard in Bosnia and Herzegovina".

Frontex had offered to deploy its forces along the Bosnian border to prevent illegal migration – but for that to happen, it needs a so-called Status Agreement."