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EU prepares to accelerate deportation procedures

Direct US access to European databases needs new treaty

A touch more transparency at Frontex

UK: Racist violence used to justify facial recognition tech

EU prepares to accelerate deportation procedures

Britain left the EU at the end of 2020, ending the free movement of EU citizens to and from the country, but it seems to have done nothing to stop bad ideas travelling between governments.

After the UK's Labour administration announced it would scrap the plan to deport asylum-seekers to Rwanda, Germany's migration commissioner has **proposed** adopting the same scheme – using the facilities built in Rwanda using UK funds. As we reported **earlier this year**, the incoming European Commission may also consider introducing such a scheme.

The Rwanda proposal would, however, require changing EU law, and it may well be that officials already have enough on their plates.

As we highlight in an article published earlier this week, one priority is to ensure that deportation procedures are accelerated. Under the new "border procedure" for processing asylum claims, people can be held in prison-like conditions for up to six months. To stop that limit being breached, destination countries for deportations need to readmit their own citizens in time – and so the Commission plans to extend the regime of "visa sanctions."

Read the full article **here**.

Direct US access to European databases needs new treaty

US authorities want direct access to EU member state databases in return for ongoing visa-free travel to the US, but the demands fall outside the scope of existing EU-US agreements on the exchange of personal data. Despite already having access to various national databases through bilateral deals, the US wants more data for "routine traveller screening".

The Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU suggested a new international treaty may be needed to facilitate the transfers – but also questioned whether the data exchange proposed by the US "is even possible under the EU-legislation."

Read the full article **here**.

EU watchdog intervention forces Frontex to improve transparency

A year and half after the appointment of an ostensibly pro-transparency leadership at the European Border and Coast Guard agency (Frontex), improvements in the agency's information disclosure practices are begrudgingly following suit.

Our data analysis suggests that Frontex quietly ceased some of its FOI delaying practices after the Ombudsman denounced them in a decision in May 2023. In its internal correspondences with the EO, however, the border agency continued to try to justify these tactics, which the Ombudsman found "disheartening".

Read the full article, co-published with *The New Arab*, **here**.

You can find the first article we co-published with *The New Arab*, on the EU police training agency's cooperation with the Arab Interior Ministers Council, **here**.

More police surveillance will not halt racist violence

Following the racist pogroms that broke out across England in mid-summer, the prime minister, Keir Starmer, announced a range of new policing measures - including a proposal for "wider deployment of facial recognition technology." This was announced alongside a new "National Violent Disorder Programme," though no further details of this have been made public.

Following the announcement, we joined more than two dozen organisations in signing a letter to the prime minister and home secretary, saying that an expansion of live facial recognition "would make our country an outlier in the democratic world" and calling for the plan to be dropped.

Read the letter **here**.

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Asylum, immigration and borders

Germany's migration commissioner proposes Rwanda migrant deportation plan

"Germany's migration commissioner proposed deporting to Rwanda migrants who arrive illegally to the European Union through its borders with Belarus, as Berlin contemplates measures to restrict refugees arriving in the bloc."

Austria joins Germany in deporting Afghans with criminal records back home

"Austria's Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum has said that deportations to Afghanistan are permissible on a case-by-case basis due to the "changed security situation" in the country."

UK: **Doubling of deaths of asylum seekers in Home Office care**

"The number of asylum seekers in the UK who have died in Home Office care has reportedly more than doubled in the past year.

Though some deaths occurred due to illness or old age, others were suicides. Charities worry that the treatment of asylum seekers in the UK has adversely affected their health."

Voices from the Camps: Living Conditions and Access to Services in Refugee Camps on the Greek Mainland

"This report looks at living conditions and access to services for asylum seekers in Greece, drawing on interviews with people living in nine refugee camps on the mainland: Corinth, Katsikas, Kavala, Koutsochero, Lagkadikia, Malakasa, Oinofyta, Ritsona and Serres. With attention often directed to the inhumane, EU-funded Closed Controlled Access Centres on the Aegean islands, the findings of this research reveal a troubling picture of neglect and mismanagement on the mainland as well."

The truth about the shadowy 'Migration 5'

"What started as a scheme to check the identities of a few thousand asylum seekers has spiraled into a vast network of data about everyone who comes and goes from the 'Five Eyes' nations."

And see: **Five Eyes nations consider sharing info from criminal databases**

Ireland: **Harsher fines now in place for airlines that fail to check passenger documentation**

"A two-thirds increase in fines imposed on airlines who fail to ensure that passengers have appropriate travel documentation has taken effect."

Continued support of Germany to modernisation, strengthening of Serbian police

"Dačić said that the donation which includes 29 thermal imaging cameras and the equipment for detecting smugglers of people and goods, as well as 10 off-road vehicles, is another indicator of the intensive cooperation which the Ministry of the Interior has had with the German Ministry of the Interior for many years."

Some 4,000 asylum seekers still waiting for shelter in Belgium

"Asylum seekers in Belgium continue to face long waits before receiving the shelter they are legally entitled to, resulting in thousands sleeping rough and living in precarious conditions. It is hoped the recently approved measures to create new places will bring some relief."

UK: **Immigration Raids: An Anatomy of Racist Intimidation**

"Immigration raids are a fear mechanism. They are a form of racist State intimidation and divide racialised communities.

Our new report Immigration Raids: An Anatomy of Racist Intimidation dissects the secretive and opaque nature of Immigration Enforcement's intelligence gathering, guidance on multi-agency operations and police cooperation. In addition, raids have a disproportionate impact on racialised communities and act as a method to divide or intimidate migrants and People of Colour while making millions for the Home Office in the process."

The US wants to use facial recognition to identify migrant children as they age

"The US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is looking into ways it might use facial recognition technology to track the identities of migrant children, "down to the infant," as they age, according to John Boyd, assistant director of the department's Office of Biometric Identity Management (OBIM), where a key part of his role is to research and develop future biometric identity services for the government."

Frontex goes drone shopping as EU looks to keep migrants out

"As member states call on the European Commission to enforce external borders, the EU's border agency, Frontex, launched tenders totalling around €400 million, for equipment including purchasing more drones, and other surveillance technology."

Britons without new €7 EU visa face being turned away at airport in 2025

"British passport-holders travelling to Europe next year risk being turned away at airports and ports if they do not hold a valid visa waiver."

And see: **What happens if I'm rejected for an Etias – and can I appeal?**

Civil liberties

Seven appear in court over protest at Israeli-based firm's UK site

"Seven people have appeared in court over a Palestine Action protest at an Israeli-based defence firm's site and face claims from prosecutors that they were involved in terrorist-related activities."

Bulgaria bans LGBTQ+ "propoganda" in schools

"The Bulgarian parliament passed a law banning "propaganda [of] non-traditional sexual orientation and/or gender identity other than the biological one" in schools across the country yesterday, as the country falls in line with Russia's push against LGBTQ+ existing in public."

Activist opposed to Rio Tinto lithium mine receives anonymous death threats

"When Aleksandar Matković received the first message threatening his life, he thought it was a prank. The text, sent to his Telegram account just after midnight on 14 August read: "We will follow you until you disappear, scum.""

UK: **'Vote Genocide': Satirical Poster Included in Dossier of Election 'Abuse'**

"An artist has been left in shock after a political poster he designed was included in a dossier sent by a government advisor alleging a "concerted campaign by extremists" to intimidate general election candidates."

Council of Europe: **F. Schwabe criticized the Azerbaijani authorities' ban on the entry of a group of PACE deputies into the country**

"The head of the German delegation to the PACE Frank Schwabe has criticized the decision of official Baku to ban entry to the country for members of this structure who voted in favor of limiting the powers of the Azerbaijani delegation.

In democratic countries, entry bans are imposed only on extremists and violent criminals, he wrote in social network X."

Law

Greece — the country that lets people escape justice

"In the country famous for inventing democracy, there's a sense it is fraying.

Greece has experienced a series of scandals that, while all very different, add up to a feeling that justice is crumbling — and that those in power don't want to rectify it. Or worse, are culpable."

Policing

UK: **Racist and traumatising: inside a Section 60 suspicionless stop and search operation**

"Police chief Sarah Crew, acknowledging this power's controversy, said it was used with community consent and claimed, firmly, that it was an effective deterrent. This narrative, however, parroted by the then-candidates for the region's Police and Crime Commissioner, is strongly disputed."

Draft bill allowing German police to search web with facial recognition panned

"Germany is among the first European nations to push at the seams of the AI Act, with a row brewing over the Federal Ministry of the Interior's plan to allow police use of facial recognition to identify terrorists."

UK: **What is Starmer's promised new 'Standing Army'?**

"On 1 August, Prime Minister Keir Starmer announced the creation of a new 'National Violent Disorder Programme', which he said would "bring together the best policing capabilities from across the country to share intelligence on the activity of violent groups so the authorities can swiftly intervene to arrest them.""

Automated police tech contributes to UK structural racism problem

"Civil society groups say automated policing technologies are helping to fuel the disparities that people of colour face across the criminal justice sector, as part of wider warning about the UK's lack of progress in dealing with systemic racism"

USA: **Police officers are starting to use AI chatbots to write crime reports. Will they hold up in court?**

"A body camera captured every word and bark uttered as police Sgt. Matt Gilmore and his K-9 dog, Gunner, searched for a group of suspects for nearly an hour.

Normally, the Oklahoma City police sergeant would grab his laptop and spend another 30 to 45 minutes writing up a report about the search. But this time he had artificial intelligence write the first draft."

Prisons

Justice review calls for end to child imprisonment in England

"Leading children's rights and justice organisations have called for an end to child imprisonment in England.

In a review, they argue that child imprisonment is beyond reform and that responsibility for children who have to be deprived of their liberty should be transferred from the Ministry of Justice to the Department for Education."

Racism and discrimination

UK: **The racist politics of 'mindless thuggery'**

"What is needed, alongside incisive placards, demonstrations and counter chants, is a political ground shift. Migration, as a fundamental dimension of human life, must be normalised and accounted for across all areas of public policy. The hostile environment must be dismantled. Politicians must stop scapegoating 'migrants' for the social harms of neoliberalism. Instead, they must address elite power and inequality, and invest in housing and public services. We have had enough of decades of state and corporate-driven violence at the border and elsewhere. With anything less than a fundamental shift in political discourse, racist violence on the street, whether random or organised, will not go away."

UK: **Yvette Cooper vows to crack down on promotion of 'hateful beliefs'**

"The home secretary, Yvette Cooper, has vowed to crack down on people "pushing harmful and hateful beliefs", including extreme misogyny, as she announced a new approach to fighting extremism."

Orbán's influence on Project 2025 was highlighted further by leaked training videos

"As Project 2025 becomes more and more of a detriment to Donald Trump's campaign, the fingerprints of people close to the Orbán-government are becoming increasingly apparent. Recently, the project's training videos for internal use were leaked, featuring several people cooperating with the Hungarian PM's political network."

Black children in England and Wales four times more likely to be strip-searched, figures show

"Black children are four times more likely to be strip-searched by police officers across England and Wales than their white counterparts, according to the latest nationwide figures disclosed by a watchdog."

Tommy Robinson's Irish passport may be invalid, TDs say

"Dáil members have called on the Government to investigate how an Irish passport was obtained by Tommy Robinson, who has been accused of inciting riots from abroad.

The Luton-born far-right leader travels on an Irish passport under his real name – Stephen Yaxley-Lennon – and was believed to have qualified for it via his mother, an Irish immigrant to Britain."

Security and intelligence

'Politicising security': Palestinian Americans sue US government over secret watchlist, no-fly list

"Two Palestinian Americans have filed a lawsuit against the US government accusing the Biden administration of placing one of them on a "no-fly" list and the other on a watchlist for their activism and advocacy against Israel's ongoing war on Gaza."