

# News Digest Issue 29 (February 2018)

## Global Spotlight

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05/02/18

### **Zero draft of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration released**

On 5 February 2018, the zero draft of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) was released. The zero draft represents the information and views of the participating states that were collected by the co-facilitators (Switzerland and Mexico) of the GCM preparatory process since the adoption of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants in September 2016. It will guide negotiations leading up to the adoption of the final GCM in December 2018.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

## EU Spotlight

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20/02/18

### **Frontex publishes Risk Analysis for 2018**

In 2017, the total number of illegal border crossings into the EU dropped to its lowest in four years, especially due to a fall in detections on the Eastern Mediterranean and Western Balkan routes, Frontex analysts write in the Risk Analysis for 2018 released on 20 February. The annual 2017 total of 204,700 illegal border crossings marked a significant decrease compared to recent years, but not yet a return to the situation before 2014, when figures ranged between 72,000 and 141,000 detections.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*



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01/02/18

## **EASO released a visualization tool of recent asylum trends in Europe**

The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) released a tool for visualization of asylum trends in the EU+ countries (28 Member States plus Norway and Switzerland) in 2015-2017. The page was produced by the Information and Analysis Unit based on monthly data exchanged under the Early Warning and Preparedness System. The visualization provides an overview of key indicators regarding the situation of international protection in the EU+ over the past 24 months.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

01/02/18

## **Number of asylum applications in the EU down by 43% in 2017**

New figures published on 1 February 2018 by EASO show a significant decrease in the number of asylum applications made in the EU in 2017. In 2017, 706,913 asylum applications were recorded in the EU countries, a 43% decrease compared to 2016.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

# Highlights: Country News

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## **Armenia**

22/02/18

### **Over 25,000 Armenians received Russian citizenship in 2017**

25,144 Armenian citizens were granted Russian citizenship in 2017, according to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation. In the reporting period, 657,000 migrants from Armenia were registered in Russia. As of December 2017, 265,000 migrants (including labour migrants) from Armenia resided in Russia and another 143,000 Armenian citizens obtained permanent or temporary residence permits in the Russian Federation.



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## Belarus

16/02/18

### Foreign humanitarian aid platform to be established in Belarus

A platform to provide foreign humanitarian aid is being set up in Belarus. Its main provisions are outlined in the agreement on partnership signed between the Belarusian Red Cross Society (BRCS) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The parties agreed to develop a partnership, with the focus on projects that increase the capacity for preparedness and response to emergencies, the spread of knowledge about international humanitarian law, first aid, the restoration of family ties and migration, and the provision of humanitarian assistance to displaced people from Ukraine.

For further information, please follow [this link](#)

09/02/18

### Russia ratified bilateral protocol with Belarus on uniform migration card

On 9 February 2018, the State Duma of the Russian Federation ratified the protocol on amendments to the Belarusian-Russian intergovernmental agreement on the uniform migration card dated 5 October 2004. The protocol expands the categories of foreign nationals exempted from filling out the migration card. Among them are the foreign nationals staying or residing in Belarus and Russia, members of the crews of sea and river vessels entering the ports of the two countries. In addition, foreign nationals crossing the state border of Belarus for temporary stay in its territory without intention to enter the Russian Federation will not have to fill out the migration card, a provision initiated by the Belarusian side.

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## Georgia

09/02/18

### **The Government of Georgia aims to reduce Georgian applications for asylum in the Schengen countries**

The Government of Georgia is planning to tighten measures to reduce the growing number of Georgian asylum seekers in the Schengen countries. The government's press service reported that these measures would involve a set of legislative amendments, which will impose readmission costs on readmitted persons and toughen procedures for changing last names, among others. Additionally, the Ministry of Interior Affairs of Georgia was tasked to reinforce cooperation with partner countries, specifically with respect to combatting organized crime. For that purpose, Minister Giorgi Gakharia will intensify visits to the EU countries and strengthen the work of police attachés.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*

06/02/18

### **EU-Georgia Association Council concludes in Brussels**

On 5 February 2018, the EU-Georgia Association Council took place in Brussels, where the partners took stock of the progress made on the Association Agreement between Georgia and the EU. Following her meeting with Georgia's Prime Minister, Giorgi Kvirikashvili, EU High Representative Federica Mogherini described relations between Georgia and the EU as "excellent" and said the partnership "is working perfectly well."

"Now, more than 170,000 Georgian citizens have enjoyed visa-free travel to the Schengen area. The implementation of all commitments linked to our agreement is also proceeding well, as reported in December by the European Commission," Mogherini said.

*For further information, please follow [this link](#)*



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## Moldova

27/02/18

### Remittances to Moldova by migrant workers rose by 26%

Remittances to Moldova from migrant workers rose 26.2% to USD 94.34 million (EURO 76.5 million) in January 2018 compared to January 2017, the Central Bank of Moldova reported.

In January, money transfers from Moldovan workers residing in EU countries made up 36.7% of the total volume of remittances. The share of remittances from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) reached 28.3%, while 35% came from other states.

For further information, please follow [this link](#)

06/02/18

### New EU-supported project to make Ukraine-Moldova border crossing easier

Travelers and traders using the border crossing between Ukraine and Moldova will soon experience shortened queues and wait times thanks to a new European Union-funded project. The initiative is estimated to benefit at least three million people per year.

Implemented by the International Organization for Migration – the UN Migration Agency and the EU Border Assistance Mission to Ukraine and Moldova (EUBAM), the project will focus on two border crossing points: Kuchurhan-Pervomaisk and Reni-Giurgiulesti.

The project will support the modernization of the crossing points and the establishment of a jointly operated-border crossing point regime where Ukrainian and Moldovan border and customs agencies will work “under one roof” on the Ukrainian side of the frontier.

For further information, please follow [this link](#)



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## Ukraine

20/02/18

### Ukrainians among top 10 nationalities on detections of illegal stay in the EU, according to Frontex

As stated in the recent Risk Analysis released by Frontex on 20 February 2018, for three months of the post-visa liberalization (July-September 2017), the number of Ukrainians heading to the Schengen area increased by 15% compared with the same period in the previous year. Ukrainians are also among top ten nationalities for such indicators as detections of illegal stay, the number of refusals of entry, issued return decisions and effective returns.

For further information, please follow [this link](#)

03/02/18

### Ukraine equips 157 border checkpoints with biometric identification systems

Ukraine has equipped 157 border crossing checkpoints with biometric identification systems, the State Border Guard Service said in a statement dated 2 February 2018.

A total of 1,200 new workplaces for border guards were set up on Ukrainian frontier checkpoints and more than 400 automated stations were equipped with fingerprint scanners.

So far, more than 57,000 foreigners, including 42,000 Russian citizens, have crossed the Ukrainian border under the new biometric control procedure.

For further information, please follow [this link](#)

01/02/18

### The Government of the Czech Republic doubles its quota for Ukrainian workers

The government of the Czech Republic agreed to double the quotas for workers from Ukraine, up to 19,600 per year, the press service of the Czech Republic Foreign Ministry said. Such a step should help local firms overcome the labour shortage.



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According to the press release, the Czech Republic will grant up to 800 additional work visas per month to Ukrainian citizens and the procedure for issuing visas will be simplified.

For further information, please follow [this link](#)

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