



April - June 2025

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NEWS FROM EMN MEMBER AND
OBSERVER COUNTRIES**

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**RECENT AND UPCOMING EMN
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NEWS FROM THE EU

The Polish Presidency of the Council of the EU concluded on 30 June, marking a term with 37 major legislative files closed and mandates reached on 18 more. Highlights mentioned in a [statement](#) by President von der Leyen at the joint press conference with President Costa and Polish Prime Minister Tusk following the meeting of the European Council of 26 June 2025 included advancing support to Ukraine and updates in temporary protection. The Presidency paved the way for Denmark's term starting in July.

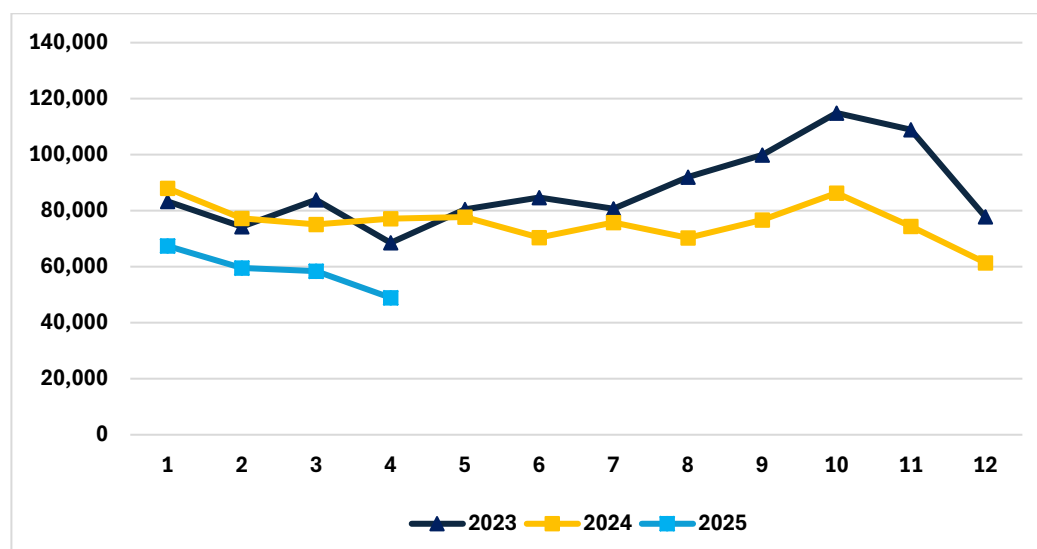
In June, Europe [celebrated](#) the 40th anniversary of the signing of the Schengen Agreement, which aims to provide more freedom, reinforced security and unlocked economic opportunities.

On 5 June, the European Commission launched the [EU Anti-Trafficking Hub](#) as part of the 2021–2025 EU Strategy on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings. The Hub aims to help develop and implement EU anti-trafficking policies, including the [EU Anti-Trafficking Directive](#).

In June, the EU Commission [released](#) its [mid-term review](#) of the Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021–2027. The review noted improved migrant employment rates and highlighted effective practices, but also identified ongoing challenges in housing, healthcare, and education. Future efforts will focus on migrant participation and implementation of the Pact on Migration and Asylum.

Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) ruling of no smuggling penalty for a third country national adult entering the EU irregularly with children under their responsibility and care

On 3 June, the [CJEU](#) held that a third-country national adult who enters the EU irregularly while accompanied by minor children, whose actual care is exercised by the third-country adult, is not committing the crime of facilitating illegal entry. Such conduct, the Court found, is that adult's exercise of responsibility to protect and care over the children in their care based on a family relationship with those children, and EU law precludes criminalising it. Any other interpretation would interfere with the right to family life and the rights of the child under Articles 7 and 24 of the EU Charter on Fundamental Rights.

Figure 1: First-time asylum applications in the EU-27 (January to April 2025)

Source: Eurostat [[migr_asyappctzm](#)], first-time asylum applicants, extracted on 6 August 2025.

NEWS FROM EMN MEMBER AND OBSERVER COUNTRIES

1. General developments

Austria

New three-year Austrian Development Agency programme

On 25 June, the Austrian Development Agency's new [three-year programme](#) (2025 to 2027) was adopted in the Council of Ministers. It reflects government priorities, in particular the challenges of humanitarian crises and fragility, irregular migration and displacement, as well as climate change.

New budget for Austria

On 18 June, the National Council adopted Austria's [new budget](#), which, despite considerable cuts, had clear objectives to support high-quality management of asylum and migration, provide appropriate protection, particularly for vulnerable groups, a reduction of irregular migration, a focus on skilled migration, and the promotion of the linguistic, professional and social integration of migrants residing in Austria lawfully and permanently.

Ireland

Department of Justice now Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration

Following the Irish General Election in November 2024, a new coalition government formed and [updated](#) the department title to reflect an expanded remit and transfer of functions. Several migration-related functions were transferred, including integration and international protection accommodation.

Estonia

EU Asylum and Migration Management Reform information published

In April, the Ministry of the Interior [published](#) an informational webpage on its official website introducing the Asylum and Migration Management Reform. It lists all the legal acts and provides a more detailed description of the upcoming changes.

Greece

Joint Ministerial Decision on Safe Third Countries

On 8 April, Joint Ministerial Decision [No. 63905](#) was published, establishing the national list of safe third countries. The list includes Türkiye, considered as safe third country for applicants for international protection coming from Afghanistan, Syria, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Somalia. Additionally, Albania and North Macedonia for all applicants for international protection who irregularly entered Greek territory from their borders.

Slovak Republic

New National Asylum and Migration Strategy approved by the Government

On 12 June, the Government approved a [National Strategy for Asylum and Migration Management](#) for 2025–2030. Stemming from the EU Regulation and following current Slovak Migration Policy, the Strategy reflects current European trends, such as integrated asylum and migration management, legal migration pathways, cross-sectoral collaboration and planning and contingency, while also addressing the specific needs of the Slovak Republic in the areas of legal and irregular migration and the integration of foreigners.

Spain

Entry into force of the new Aliens Regulations

On 20 May, the new Aliens Regulations ([Royal Decree 1155/2024](#)) entered into force. This new regulation aims to simplify procedures, strengthen legal migration and promote the integration of foreigners.

Georgia

New data on migration and demographics released by Geostat

Between April and June, the National Statistics Office released several important datasets on migration and demographics. The reports included international migration [data](#) for 2024 together with population figures, key demographic indicators, and [statistics](#) on the acquisition and loss of Georgian citizenship.

2. Legal migration

Bulgaria

Law on Foreigners amended

On 18 June, a [Law](#) amending and supplementing the Law on Foreigners was adopted and published in the State Gazette on 27 June. It completes the process of implementing Directive (EU) 2021/1883. It also provides for some changes regarding seasonal workers, the Single Residence-and-Work Permit, student visas, and the provision of a legal basis for granting the right of residence to digital nomads and postgraduates on the territory of Bulgaria.

France

New list of shortage occupations has been published

On 21 May, the Government released an updated [list of shortage occupations](#), identifying around 80 jobs with labour shortages. Foreign workers can apply for a residence permit if they provide 12 months of payslips from the last 24 months, and proof of three-year residence in France. The list, which replaces the 2021 version, will now be updated annually, and varies by region.

Ireland

New online portal for employment permits launched

On 28 April, [Employment Permits Online](#) was launched by the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment. The portal is intended for use by employers, employees, and agents to submit and manage employment permit applications for foreign workers, and includes up-to-date information on applications.

Trinidad and Tobago added to visa required countries

From 12 May, nationals of Trinidad and Tobago will be [required](#) to obtain a visa before travelling to Ireland. A transit visa will also be required if transiting through Ireland to another destination.

Italy

Acquisition of Italian citizenship

[Law No. 74](#) of 23 May entered into force, which allows foreigners residing abroad, who are descendants of Italian citizens and hold citizenship of a country with significant Italian emigration, to enter and reside in Italy for employment purposes. They can do so under the same conditions as skilled workers, without the need to complete the quota requirement.

Italy and Uzbekistan sign agreement on Migration and Mobility

In June, a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) between Italy and Uzbekistan was signed, focusing on migration and mobility. The parties agreed to reserve up to 500 entries for non-seasonal work and 750 for seasonal work for Uzbek workers.

Latvia

A special border area pass

On 3 April, [amendments to the Immigration Law](#) were adopted. The amendments require nationals from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) member states to provide specific information about themselves, their relatives and the purpose of their journey before entering Latvia. Non-compliance with this requirement may result in a fine of up to €2 000.

Lithuania

List of countries eligible for visa or residence applications abroad revised

On 25 June, the [list of countries](#) where foreigners can apply for visas or residence permits via external service providers was updated. The updated list, taking effect from October 2025, reflects requests from employers, higher education institutions, and other groups obtained during consultations. Five application offices will close, while four new ones will be opened.

Spain

New fees for migration authorisations

On 13 June, [Order PJC/617/2025](#) was adopted, establishing the fees for processing administrative authorisations and identity documents in the field of migration, and adapting fee regulations to the new Regulations of Foreigners.

Georgia

New type of residence permit introduced

On 12 June, [amendments](#) to the Law on the Legal Status of Aliens and Stateless Persons were made, introducing new residence permit for Information Technology (IT) professionals. This permit is available for registered IT specialists, individual entrepreneurs with small business status, or representatives of international IT companies. The amendments will take effect on 1 September.

Visa-free regime extended for Ukraine citizens

On 2 April, [Governmental Ordinance N.255](#) 'On Approval of the List of Countries Whose Citizens May Enter Georgia without a Visa' was amended, extending the legal stay of Ukrainian citizens in Georgia until 24 February 2026. This applies to citizens who entered before 24 February 2025, and have stayed without leaving. This Ordinance was previously amended on 23 April 2024, allowing a three-year visa-free stay.

3. International protection including asylum

Austria

Family reunification for beneficiaries of international protection suspended

On 23 May, the [Asylum Act 2005](#) was adapted, giving the federal government the power to issue a decree under certain circumstances, during the validity of which the deadline for the decision on family reunification applications for beneficiaries of international protection is suspended, unless the application must be dealt with urgently pursuant to Art. 8 ECHR (so-called 'hardship cases'). The decree came into force on 2 July.

Belgium

Suspension of application processing for Syrian nationals extended

On 23 April, the Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons [announced](#) extending the suspension of processing applications for international protection from Syrian nationals. The suspension, initially introduced on 9 December 2024, will remain in place until at least the end of July 2025.

Bulgaria

Family reunification procedure changed

On 18 June, amendments to the [Law on Foreigners in the Republic of Bulgaria](#) were approved. It also proposed changes to the Law on Asylum and Refugees regarding the procedure for family reunification, including updated application requirements and processing times, in accordance with updated EU regulations.

France

Electronic issuance of asylum application document

On 5 May, [Decree No. 2025-403](#) was issued, providing that the document attesting to the asylum application may be delivered electronically. Support is offered for persons unable to access it electronically. Should the administration determine the asylum seeker cannot access the document electronically due to their personal situation, disability, or vulnerability, a paper document may be issued.

Greece

National list of safe third countries determined

In April, Joint Ministerial Decision [63905/2025](#) was published. The Decision lists as safe third countries Albania and North Macedonia (for applicants of international protection who have irregularly entered Greek territory from its border with Albania and North Macedonia respectively) and Türkiye for applicants of international protection originating from Syria, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Somalia.

Ireland

International Protection Bill 2025 approved

In April, the [International Protection Bill 2025](#) was approved to replace the International Protection Act 2015, as a part of work to bring the Irish legal system in line with the Pact on Migration and Asylum.

Italy

Repatriation centre in Albania

On 23 May, a governmental [decree-law](#) was passed into law expanding the category of people who can be transferred to Italy's detention facility in Albania to include not only asylum applicants intercepted in international waters and processed under Italy's border procedure, but also irregular migrants already present in Italy and subject to Italian expulsion orders.

The Netherlands

Extensions of deadline for decisions on asylum cases reversed

In June, the Dutch Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) [reversed](#) two deadline extensions for certain asylum applications filed since 1 January 2024, affecting approximately 18 250 cases. This decision follows a European Court of Justice ruling, confirming decision deadlines may only be extended during a sudden, sharp rise in asylum requests, which has not occurred in the Netherlands since 2024.

Processing of Syrian and Lebanese asylum applications resumed

The Dutch Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) [resumed](#) processing all pending and new asylum applications from Syrian nationals after the country policy for Syria was updated due to a new country policy report by the demissionary Minister of Foreign Affairs on 10 June. Consequently, approximately 16 870 pending and new cases can now be assessed again.

Processing asylum applications by people coming from Lebanon was also [resumed](#), following an updated country policy by the demissionary Minister of Foreign Affairs. While violence persists in some regions, most of Lebanon is now considered free from indiscriminate violence as a result of an armed conflict.

Spain

Government of Spain chairs consultations on resettlement and complementary pathways

The 2025 [Consultations on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways](#) took place in Geneva, Switzerland, from 25 to 27 June. The event was chaired by the Government of Spain, represented by the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration (MISSM) and co-chaired by the NGO, ACCEM.

Norway

Exemption from the Requirement of Completed Asylum Interview for Applications for Temporary Work Permits

In June, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security revised the [rules on exemptions](#) from asylum interview requirements, specifically for obtaining temporary work permits.

Asylum applications from individuals from Syria suspended

The Ministry of Justice and Public Security [decided](#) to suspend the processing of applications for international protection by individuals from Syria for up to six months effective from 24 June due to the uncertain situation in the country.

Republic of Serbia

2025 response plan for migrant influx adopted

On 11 April, the [2025 Response Plan](#) for increased influx of migrants was adopted. In addition to adequate assistance and a humane approach to migration management, one of the main goals of the Plan is the efficient registration of irregular migrants and smooth operation in crisis situations due to mass influx.

4. Unaccompanied minors and other vulnerable groups

Greece

Independent Asylum Units for Vulnerable Groups established

[Circular No. 46121/25](#) extended the implementation of Decree No. 23576/2024, so that from 1 April, the newly established Independent Asylum Units for Vulnerable Groups in Attica and Thessaloniki will examine applications for international protection from all vulnerable persons, as defined by Law No. 4939/2022.

Portugal

Rules amended for children and young people's shelters

On 21 April, Ordinance No. [197/2025/1](#) amended Ordinance No. 450/2023, updating rules for child and youth shelters to improve the organisation, operation, and installation of foster homes with a more humanised and inclusive care approach.

Enhancing protection of children and adolescents at risk

[Law 39/2025](#) of 21 April, amending the Civil Code, the Civil Registry Code and the Law on the Protection of Children and Adolescents at Risk, prohibits the marriage of minors including child, early or forced marriage in dangerous situations. This legitimises intervention to protect children and young people at risk.

Spain

'Holidays in Peace' Programme 2025

In June, [instructions](#) for authorising the temporary residence of minors and monitors of Sahrawi origin in Spain under the 'Holidays in Peace' 2025 programme were approved. This annual programme allows thousands of children to enjoy a holiday in Spain in summer before returning to their place of origin.

5. Integration and inclusion

Belgium

Advances in pre-arrival integration for newcomers

On 6 June, the Flemish Government approved a [communication](#) to develop pre-arrival integration trajectories for newcomers from their countries of origin. This follows pilot projects and aims to better prepare family reunification and labour migrants for life in Flanders through a digital societal orientation course.

Italy

Newborn bonus clarified

On 14 April, [circular no. 76](#) described the rules governing the one-off newborn bonus and provided instructions for submitting applications for it. The circular clarifies that not only Italian and EU citizens with the right of residence are entitled to the benefit, but also non-EU citizens legally residing with certain residence permits, namely holders of an EU long-term residence permit, holders of an authorisation issued for the purpose of research and single permit holders.

Training and employment for refugees in the tourism sector

In June, a [three-year protocol](#) was signed by the Italian Ministries of Labour, Interior, and Tourism, along with the National Bilateral Tourism Agency, to provide training and employment opportunities for refugees and vulnerable migrants in the tourism sector. The initiative aims to help these individuals achieve autonomy while addressing labour shortages in the industry.

Social Security Agreement with Albania signed

On 14 April, an [administrative agreement](#) between Italy and Albania was signed to implement the bilateral Social Security Agreement. This agreement operationalises provisions for individuals who have worked in either country, their families, and family members of deceased workers who are eligible to receive social security benefits under the bilateral Social Security Agreement.

Lithuania

Two new national integration programmes introduced

On 17 April, the Reception and Integration Agency launched [two national programmes](#): one to teach migrants about Lithuanian law, history, and societal norms; the other to ensure timely mental health support. Both programmes promote equal access to integration services across municipalities and are based on Nordic best practices.

The Netherlands

Employer subsidy for beneficiaries of international protection launched

In June, it was announced that the [Support for Employer Engagement of Status Holders](#) (SOWIS) subsidy scheme would be re-opened from 2 June to 30 September. This scheme offers employers financial support to assist beneficiaries of international protection in the workplace and aims to promote integration.

Spain

2024 Annual Report on migrants and refugees

On 11 June, the Forum for the Social Integration of Immigrants (FISI) presented its [annual report](#) on the situation of migrants and refugees in Spain in 2024. The report concluded that changes to asylum and residence processes in Spain may increase the number of people in irregular status and discourage asylum applications. Data showed a rise in foreign workers, especially women, but highlighted job insecurity and inequality. Migrant women faced wage and digital gaps. Intercultural mediation and migrant associations played a key role in social cohesion. Education and EU strategies supported inclusion and active citizenship.

6. Citizenship and statelessness

France

Access to French citizenship tightened

On 9 May, a [circular](#) tightening citizenship criteria for foreign nationals was published. It mandates the automatic rejection of applications in cases of past irregular residence, raises the required French language level from B1 to B2, and introduces a civic exam on French history and values from 1 January 2026. Applicants must also show two years of stable employment with a permanent contract of more than one year or several fixed-term contracts over a period of at least two years.

Ireland

Revocation of naturalised Irish citizenship reinstated

In April, the order to recommence [legislation](#) allowing for naturalised Irish citizenship to be revoked was signed. The legislation, which was amended in line with a Supreme Court Judgment in 2021, would allow for naturalised Irish citizenship to be revoked in serious cases, such as obtaining the status fraudulently, or when an individual poses a serious risk or threat to the State.

Italy

Faster citizenship access for family members of deceased workers

On 15 April, [Law no. 63](#) on 'Benefits in favour of victims of harmful events resulting from total or partial subsidence of road or motorway infrastructures of national importance' was published. The Law provides, among other things, for the granting of Italian citizenship to certain categories of surviving family

members, with a reduced five-year residence period. This measure ensures access to social security benefits and facilitates a faster path to Italian citizenship for eligible relatives.

Ministry of the Interior joins the Global Alliance to End Statelessness

In May, Italy formally [joined](#) the Global Alliance to End Statelessness, with the aim of exploring key issues such as child statelessness, the protection of the rights of stateless persons and combating discrimination in national laws and public policies on nationality.

7. Border management and irregular migration

Austria

Temporary reintroduction of border controls

On 15 April, the temporarily reintroduced border controls at the internal borders with the Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic were [extended](#) until 15 October. On 9 May, the temporarily reintroduced border controls at the internal borders with the Republic of Slovenia and Hungary were [extended](#) until 11 November.

Belgium

Targeted checks to tackle irregular migration

On 19 June, it was [announced](#) that federal and local police, along with the Immigration Office, will begin targeted checks from summer 2025. These checks, based on Article 23 of the Schengen Borders Code, aim to address irregular migration and secondary movements within Belgium.

Latvia

A special border area pass

On 3 April, [amendments](#) were adopted to the Law on the State Border of the Republic of Latvia, stipulating that a special border area pass will be issued to Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) citizens only if written consent is received from the State Security Service.

Enhanced border protection system

On 25 June, the Cabinet of Ministers [extended](#) enhanced border protection until 31 December to address continued high numbers of irregular crossings on the Latvian-Belarusian border.

Lithuania

Border rules at key checkpoints with Belarus tightened

In April, due to rising hybrid threats, Lithuania [banned](#) motorcycles, mopeds, and motorised bicycles at Medininkai and Šalčininkai border checkpoints after over 6 000 illegal crossing attempts in Q1 2025.

Lithuania restricts non-biometric Russian passports

On 23 May, a joint order by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Internal Affairs [declared](#) that non-biometric Russian passports will no longer be valid for entry into Lithuania from 1 June. The measure aligns with national and EU security goals. Exemptions apply to rail transit travellers and, in special cases, to democratic opposition members.

Case against Belarus over organised migrant smuggling filed

In May, the Government [filed](#) a case against Belarus at the International Court of Justice for organising the smuggling of migrants into Lithuania. The case concerns violations of the United Nations Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air. Lithuania seeks recognition of Belarus's responsibility and reparations for the harm caused to national security and international law.

Portugal

Strengthening smart border control

In May, Portugal fully [operationalised](#) PASSE+, a national platform for air and land border management, interoperable with EU systems. It enables real-time biometric checks, automated alerts, and risk-based screening to meet Schengen standards. The Borders Portal (*Portal de Fronteiras*) was also launched. This is an internal platform integrated within PASSE+, providing border staff with updated guidance, visa rules and passenger data to support consistent and compliant decision-making.

Sweden

Improved security at detention centres

In April, a [bill](#) aiming to improve order and security at the Swedish Migration Agency (SMA)'s detention centres was adopted. There are now increased options to use coercive and control measures such as body searches and examination of accommodation and storage facilities, as well as increased visitor control.

Norway

Longer storage time for fingerprints in immigration cases

The Ministry of Justice and Public Security implemented [amendments](#) to the Immigration Regulations to extend the storage period for fingerprints to strengthen identity control and prevent misuse of identity data.

8. Trafficking in human beings

Italy

New decree reorganises anti-trafficking directorate-general

On 14 March, Decree [Law No. 25](#) introduced urgent measures to strengthen public administration, including the reorganisation of the directorate-general at the Prime Minister's office, focused on preventing trafficking in human beings, supporting victims, and coordinating anti-trafficking efforts. The revamped directorate-general will include two specialist services, more staffing, and working groups covering prevention, criminal law, protection, and cooperation.

Georgia

Moot Court Competition on Trafficking in Human Beings

From 17–19 June 2025, the Giorgi Margiani Moot Court Competition on Trafficking in Human Beings brought together 153 university students. Seven teams (19 students) reached the finals. The [event](#) aimed to raise awareness of trafficking and build courtroom advocacy skills. It was organised by the Training Centre of Justice and the Interagency Coordination Council chaired by the Ministry of Justice.

9. Return and readmission

Austria

Reintegration support for returnees to Syria

Since 2 June, general [reintegration support](#) for returnees to Syria has been offered via the EU Reintegration Program (EU RP), including returnees from Austria.

Cyprus

New voluntary return programme for Syrian nationals

On 29 May, the Deputy Ministry of Migration and International Protection announced a new [Assisted Voluntary Return \(AVR\) Scheme](#) aiming to support the voluntary return of Syrian families or couples granted or having applied for international protection before 31 December 2024. Under this programme that is open from 2 June to 31 August 2025, one parent or spouse remains in Cyprus for employment, while the rest of the family returns to Syria. The family member staying in Cyprus, will receive a special work permit valid for two years, with the possibility of a one-year renewal, ensuring free access to the labour market. Additionally, financial incentives will be provided to the returning family members, to assist with their reintegration.

France

French-Vietnamese agreement signed

France and Vietnam adopted a new bilateral [agreement](#) on return and readmission during the French President's state visit to Vietnam from 24 to 28 May. This agreement, among other provisions, allows for the removal of registered irregular migrants without a prior readmission request, limits consular interviews and identification missions to specific cases, and shortens response times.

Sweden

Support granted to IOM to increase returns

On May 13, the Government [decided](#) to offer a grant to IOM with SEK 100 million (EUR 8 923 512). The contribution is aimed to increase returns from Sweden and the EU and counter irregular migration from Iraq, Somalia, Uzbekistan, and Tunisia. It should also enhance the conditions for implementing returns to Syria.

10. Migration and development

Germany

Joint migration partnership with Colombia

In April, a joint declaration of intent was [signed](#) to enhance cooperation between the two countries, promoting migration for training, study, and work, reducing irregular migration, and strengthening exchange in education and science.

Republic of Serbia

Partnership Agreement with Swedish Migration Agency (SMA) signed

On 8 March, a [partnership agreement](#) between the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees and Migration and SMA related to the implementation of a joint project was signed. The [MIRCO](#) project will contribute to the development of sustainable training capacities in the field of migration management, with an emphasis on strengthening regional cooperation.

11. EU legislation transposition

France

Directive (EU) 2021/1883 has been transposed

On 14 July, Articles 40 and 41 of the [Law No. 2025-391](#) of 30 April transposed into national law Directive (EU) 2021/1883 of 20 October 2021, which reformed the 'EU Blue Card' scheme for highly skilled foreign nationals.

RECENT EMN PUBLICATIONS

- EMN [Asylum and Migration Overview \(AMO\) 2024](#) and [EMN Statistical Annex](#)
- EMN inform: [Access to remedies for international protection applicants](#)
- EMN study: [Trafficking in human beings - the international dimension](#)

UPCOMING EMN PUBLICATIONS

- EMN Observer Countries Statistical Annex
- EMN study: Labour migration in times of labour shortages
- EMN inform: Language and literacy support measures for adult beneficiaries of international protection
- EMN inform: Distribution of international protection accommodation centres and relationship management with local communities
- EMN inform: Vocational education and training of applicants and beneficiaries of international protection
- EMN study: Family reunification of third-country nationals in the EU: state of play after 20 years of implementation of the Family Reunification Directive