



**Statewatch Observatory on the refugee crisis:
in the Med and inside the EU
24 November – 8 December 2015**

See: [Observatory: EU refugee crisis - a humanitarian emergency](#)

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New key documents and decision-making by Council of the European Union, European Commission and Agencies plus Commentaries (in chronological order) and see:
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Followed by daily press Digests

1. Lesvos: Greece: [Statement on the EU's shameful decision to give Turkey 3 billion euros to hold back war refugees from finding safety in Europe](#) (pdf): by Eric Kempson in Lesvos and Robina Qureshi, Director of Positive Action following her recent visit to Lesvos to assess the situation:

"The EU is badly mistaken if it thinks paying Turkey 3 Billion euros will halt the flow of war refugees into Greece. The smuggling trade alone is worth 10 Billion euros. That trade is not just between Turkey and Greece it's all the way up through Europe, with smugglers waiting to get people through. Boats continue to come through, mainly overnight and in bad weather. 500 came through Lesvos yesterday (Dec 3), 450 people came through on December 2nd, and 800 the day before.

The numbers are less than the previous three months but are still significant. People will keep coming in bad weather when the Turkish coastguard is not patrolling. And they will come overnight when it's more dangerous. The Africans are making their way here, and they will reach here in the spring. And now that the British government has started bombing Syria along with other European countries, many more people will be trying to come to safety, using more dangerous routes.

"What we are seeing because of the EU decision is further persecution and abuse of war refugees by the Turkish coastguard on the open seas, and more deaths as people take ever more dangerous routes to safety. And these abuses will get worse because of this EU deal, and we are losing a lot more people now because of it. "The Turkish coastguard is now using very fast boats to go round and round the refugee dinghies to get up a wave of water and they sink them with the babies, children and women in them..".

2. Turn back refugees from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh at the Turkish external border so that they do not become the EU's problem:
[EU's Timmermans Talks About Expectations of Turkey-EU Pact to Wall Street Journal](#) (link)

"WSJ: Does it concern you that a significant minority comes from other places, like Afghanistan?"

*FT: This is all linked. Because of the Syrian refugees, a path is built and then others, who want to come to Europe for other reasons, see the possibility of using that 'highway to Europe'. A policy will also have to have all these elements – stopping violence in Syria, having agreements with third countries about people who come here who don't have the right to international protection and therefore should be returned, that's why talking to Pakistan is so important, **making sure that Turkey aligns its visa policy to ours, so that people from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh can be stopped at the external Turkish border rather than coming to Turkey first and having to be stopped at the European border....**" [emphasis added]*

See: [In Danger in Afghanistan, Unable to Flee](#) (NYT, link): "Why do we have to risk our lives?" Mohammad Ali asked. "Why can't we just get a visa here and go directly?" The answer stretches back to the origins of the world's refugee and asylum system in post-World War II Europe. In 1951, with millions of Europeans dislocated from their home countries, the international community enacted the [Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees](#). Article 1 declared that people were entitled to international legal protection as refugees, and therefore asylum, if they had a "well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group." **On four out of those five grounds, the Bamian couple would clearly**

qualify, as officials at Western embassies and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees have told them, and proving it would be relatively easy." [emphasis added]

But see: [Merkel urges Afghans to stay at home](#) (euractiv, link): "For the first time, the German Chancellor has urged Afghan migrants not to seek refuge in the Bundesrepublik... The reason is that by the end of October, 68,000 Afghan asylum seekers had registered in Germany, with 31,000 arriving in that month alone. In terms of arrival numbers, Afghans rank second behind Syrians..

3. Refugee crisis: State of play: Commission statistics: September 2015 ongoing (3.12.15):
Comment on the current situation: Nothing is moving, offers of relocation and returns static.

- [State of Play: Measures to Address the Refugee Crisis Updated on 3 December](#) (pdf)

- "Relocations": [Member States' Support to Emergency Relocation Mechanism \(Communicated as of 3 December 2015\)](#) (pdf) Now 3,346 offers of relocation out of 160,000 needed - up by 130 since last report. Only 159 people have been relocated: 129 from Italy and 30 from Greece - no change from last week and week before.

- [Returns since September 2015](#) (pdf): Total "returns" organised by Frontex: 609 people plus 153 from Italy (no change), none from Greece - same as last week.

- [State of Play of Hotspot capacity](#) (3.12.15, pdf): No change from last week

- Pledges: [Member States' financial pledges since 23 September 2015, € million](#) (pdf): The total Shortfall was: 2,227,660,000 euro now 2,224,890,000 euro - shortfall for Africa Trust (following the Valletta Summit) is: 1,718,630,000 euro.

- [Member States' Support to Civil Protection Mechanism for Serbia, Slovenia, Croatia and Greece](#) (pdf) Lots of "needs" unmet and Greece joined last week.

See: Statewatch Compilation: Commission statistics ongoing: [State of Play: Measures to Address the Refugee Crisis](#)

4. Turkish, German leaders discuss Syria, refugee crisis: Although denied by officials in Brussels the Merkel "mini-summit" with Turkey is going ahead on 17 December 2015 in the margins of the EU Council Summit:

"op Turkish and German leaders have discussed the upcoming mini-summit that will take place between Turkey and eight EU countries on Dec. 17 in Brussels, where they will discuss how to best handle the growing refugee crisis... The eight EU member states involved in the meeting are Germany, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Austria, Sweden, Finland and Greece."

5. Justice and Home Affairs Council, 3-4 December 2015: [Final Press release: 3-4 December](#) (pdf)
See pages 8-9 on refugees and Schengen

6. Greece: [Government unveils plan to set up five hotspots](#) (ekathimerini.com):

"Only days after requesting European Union help in tackling the ongoing migrant and refugee crisis, the Greek government has unveiled plans to set up five so-called hotspots to register and identify arrivals."

The decision, which was published early Saturday in the Government Gazette, foresees the creation of screening centers on the eastern Aegean islands of Chios, Kos, Leros, Samos and Lesbos. Their operation will fall under the responsibility of the Southern and Northern Aegean regional authorities and will rely on Defense Ministry technical infrastructure and personnel."

7. UNHCR: Latest figures: [Refugees/Migrants Emergency Response - Mediterranean](#) (UNHCR, link): **899,620 arrivals in the EU, 751,873 to Greece and 144,100 to Italy. 3,550 dead/missing.**

8. ['Die Ziet' analysis on refugee home attacks this year shows just four convictions](#) (DW, link) *"An analysis by German newspaper 'Die Zeit' has found that from 222 dangerous attacks on refugees homes this year, there have been just four convictions. There have been 637 reported incidents...."*

[Attacks on refugees in Germany double in three months](#) (DW, link): *"The number of registered attacks against refugee accommodations and asylum seekers in Germany has doubled in the last three months. Severe crimes such as arson, bombings and assault have tripled."*

9. RABITS team to go to Greece to "combat "illegal immigration"": European Commission: [Refugee Crisis: Greece activates EU Civil protection mechanism, agrees Frontex operation at border with former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and triggers RABIT mechanism](#) (pdf)

What are RABITS? EU:

[Rapid Border Intervention Teams](#) (Statewatch database) and [FRONTEX and RABITS: the European Union is stepping up its operational efforts combating illegal immigration](#) (Commission press release, pdf)

and [The Rapid Border Intervention Teams mechanism \(RABIT\)](#) (pdf): *"The Rapid Border Intervention Teams mechanism (RABIT) was established in 2007. It offers rapid operational assistance for a limited period of time to a Member State facing a situation of urgent and exceptional pressure at points of the external borders, with **large numbers of third-country nationals trying to enter illegally the territory of the Member State**" [emphasis added]*

[EU border agency confirms Greece's request for help](#) (ekathimerini.com):

"Greece asked Frontex yesterday to launch a Rapid Border Intervention Teams (RABIT) mechanism on the Greek islands in the Aegean, where it continues to face massive migratory pressure," the agency said in an announcement on Friday, adding that Executive Director Fabrice Leggeri has five working days to evaluate the situation and decide whether to activate the mechanism. If the mechanism is activated, Frontex explained, EU member states and Schengen associate countries would be obligated to provide border guards and equipment for the operation"

10. [Frontex to assist Greece with registration of migrants at its land border](#) (link): *"Frontex agreed with Greece today to expand its activities to the country's border with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, where the agency will assist with registration of migrants"*

11. IOM: [Mediterranean statistics: 4 December 2015](#) (pdf): 893,970 arrivals, 744,662 to Greece, 145,098 to Italy and 3,631 dead/missing.

12. [Boats in the night](#) (open democracy, link): *"Even if we didn't do a perfect job, we could do something together. It would be better than nothing and certainly better than the absence of support offered by our governments"*.

13. Germany: [Just four convictions for refugee home attacks](#) (The Local.de, link): *Just four out of 222 recorded attacks against refugee homes in Germany this year have ended with a conviction for the perpetrator, an analysis by German newspaper Die Zeit shows... Out of the 93 fire attacks, almost half were against buildings where people were already living. So far in 2015, 104 people have been wounded in fire and other attacks against refugee housing. But prosecutors have secured convictions against just four of the people behind the violence, with a further eight cases ongoing – making for a total of five percent of cases that have even seen a day in court."*

14. EU: Council of the European Union adopt (4.12.15): [Conclusions of the Council and the Representatives of the governments of the Member States on Statelessness](#) (pdf):

While: "Recalling: that the right to a nationality is a fundamental right recognised by Article 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and that this is one of the basic principles of the 1997 European Convention of Nationality...."

These non-binding Conclusions simply: "Invite: the Commission to launch exchanges of good practices among Member States..."

15. [Turkey rounds up 3,000 migrants planning to cross into Greece](#) (ekathimerini.com, link):

"Turkish authorities have rounded up in the past four days nearly 3,000 migrants planning to cross the Aegean Sea to EU member Greece, local media said Friday.

The detentions were part of a major operation that was launched on Monday, a day after Turkey and the European Union reached a deal to stem the flow of refugees into Europe. **The Turkish coastguard apprehended a total of 2,933 migrants, mainly from Syria and Iraq**, as they were preparing to make their way to the Greek island of Lesbos from the northwestern town of Ayvacik in Canakkale province, Dogan news agency reported.

Thirty-five suspected smugglers were also detained while hundreds of migrant boats were seized, it added. **The migrants will be sent to a detention centre where some could face deportation**, Dogan said, without giving details." [emphasis added]

16. [IOM Monitors Greece-FYRoM Border Amid Security Concerns](#) (link): "The situation at Greece's border with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYRoM) is extremely tense with protests and sporadic rioting by stranded migrants and refugees. Nobody has crossed the border since Wednesday, when some 4,058 refugees and migrants from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan were allowed to cross, according to IOM staff. But another 3,500 migrants of other nationalities are now stranded on the Greek side of the border, together with some 2,500 Syrians, Afghans and Iraqis, who have been caught up in the border closure, but who are expected to be admitted to the FYROM when the border re-opens."

17. [EU debates longer-term suspension of Schengen travel-free zone](#) (euractiv, link): "EU interior ministers will discuss a proposal on Friday (4 December) that could allow new border controls between European states for up to two years as an unprecedented migration crisis strains the Schengen free-travel zone".

and see: [Integrity of the Schengen area](#), LIMITE doc: 14300-15, (pdf)

18. European Parliament: Questions to the Council and Commission on "hotspots" and relocation

- To the Commission: [Compatibility of the establishment and management of hotspots with EU law](#) (pdf)

"Since September, within the activated "Hotspot" in Lampedusa, public authorities have adopted new illegal practices in violation of the rights of migrants and asylum seekers. Migrants are hastily "interviewed" and provided with an inadequate form as regards asylum procedures.

Therefore, many migrants are subjected to return decisions without having a real opportunity to apply for asylum under Directives 2011/95/EU and 2013/32/EU. After return decisions have been adopted, migrants are driven out of the centres and only supplied with an expulsion order establishing to leave the country within seven days, via "Fiumicino" airport...."

- To the Council: [Implementation of Council Decisions on the relocation of 160,000 asylum seekers from Italy and Greece](#) (pdf):

" 21 Member States have identified national contact points and (...) so far, only six Member States mechanism have notified (the) reception capacity they have made available to host relocated people".

Likewise, a mere 86 asylum seekers had been relocated until that day from Italy under the new scheme. The 3rd of November, a press release from the Commission underlined that the first relocation flight from Greece with 30 asylum seekers was about to leave to Luxembourg.

We ask the Council which steps it intends to take so that its representatives quickly commit to relocating asylum seekers as soon as possible bearing in mind the urgency of the current humanitarian challenges."

19. EU: Justice and Home Affairs Council, 3 and 4 December 2015: ["B" Points agenda](#)

The Council is discussing: [Proposal for a Regulation establishing a crisis relocation mechanism... amending the Council of 26 June 2013 establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection lodged in one of the Member States by a third country national or a stateless person - State of play](#) (pdf):

"During these discussions, a number of delegations raised general scrutiny reservations and reiterated their positions according to which they consider that **it would be preferable to evaluate the functioning of the temporary emergency relocation schemes**, adopted by the Council on 14 and 22 September, before the discussion on the proposal on the crisis relocation mechanism continues.

They are of the view that shortcomings in the implementation of the relocation decisions, including the functioning of the hotspots and the prevention of secondary movements, should be addressed as a matter of urgency." [emphasis added]

20. [Pakistan sends back 30 'illegally deported' migrants to Greece](#) (DW, link):

"Islamabad has sent back 30 migrants that Athens was trying to repatriate. The Interior Minister Nisar Ali Khan said Greece had failed to provide adequate proof that they were Pakistani citizens.. Shortly after the arrival of a chartered flight at Benazir Bhutto International Airport on Thursday, Pakistani officials refused to allow 30 of the aircraft's 49 passengers to disembark.

Pakistan's Interior Ministry said their identities had not been confirmed and therefore they could not be repatriated under a 2010 agreement with the EU to accept the repatriation of illegal Pakistani migrants.

"Any deportee with the unverified documents will be sent back on the same flight to the country he would arrive [from]," Khan said."

21. EU-GREECE: Threats to seal Greek border or suspend Greece from Schengen?

[EU Commissioner Avramopoulos on scenarios regarding Greece exiting the Schengen area](#) (ANA-MPA, link):

" According to Avramopoulos, "the immediate and full implementation of the agreed measures, both in Greece and in all the member states, will strengthen the security of maritime boundaries and will restore control in the northern border, where non-identified migrants try to continue their trip to the north.""

[Greece faces Schengen threat amid refugee impasse](#) (ekathimerini.com, link):

"As Greece comes under intense pressure to tighten its borders, authorities are still grappling with a relentless influx of migrants. Pressure on Greece appeared to grow on Tuesday as senior EU officials warned that the country faces suspension from the Schengen passport-free travel zone unless it overhauls its response to the crisis by mid-December.

"The Germans are furious and that's why people are talking about pushing Greece out," an anonymous EU ambassador was quoted by the FT as saying noting growing frustration about Athens's failure to meet its obligations."

Greece warned EU will reimpose border controls:

"The EU is warning Greece it faces suspension from the Schengen passport-free travel zone unless it overhauls its response to the migration crisis by mid-December, as frustration mounts over Athens' reluctance to accept outside support." (FT, link)

EU weighs internal border checks to shut Greek refugee route (ekathimerini.com, link):

"European Union governments will consider suspending some passport-free internal travel for as long as two years to prevent refugees who make it to Greece from moving on to western Europe, a draft document showed.

The proposal, designed to pressure Greece into allowing EU policing of its Aegean Sea border with Turkey, will be weighed by home affairs ministers of the 28 EU countries at a meeting in Brussels on Friday. Legal provisions will be discussed "that one or more member states decide to reintroduce border control at all or at specific parts of their internal borders," according to the document, which was published by the Statewatch.org civil liberties website."

Report: [Greece threatened with Schengen suspension](#) (euobserver, link)

22. [Post-deportation risks: Criminalized departure and risks for returnees in countries of origin](#) (pdf)

A country catalogue published by the /Post-Deportation Monitoring Network / (Rights in Exile programme) about "Post-Deportation risks: criminalized departure and risks for returnees in countries of origin" We are very happy to share this outcome with activists and researchers. This work is not exhaustive, even if we tried to gather all the information and sources we could find during these 9 months. Nonetheless, we really hope that some organizations and activists could use the country catalogue and its references/sources to raise awareness about specific risks that people will face if authorities want to return them to the country of origin. ***

and see: [Rights in Exile Programme - International Refugee Rights Initiative](#) (link)

23. EU: Council: [Heads of JHA Agencies meeting, 3 - 4 November 2015](#) (pdf)

Agencies agreed to focus in particular on:

- ensuring fundamental rights, data protection and privacy of the people in Europe in the area of freedom, security and justice;
- developing further support to Member States for the **management of irregular migration**;
- streamlining **inter-agency cooperation in the Hotspots and tackling irregular migration** at the Western Balkan route;
- enhancing joint operational activities aimed at **addressing the threats to Europe and the Schengen free movement area**.....

24. [An overview of anti-Muslim violence and abuse in the UK since the Paris attacks](#). IRR< link):

"The terrorist attacks in Paris last month, killing over 100 people and injuring hundreds more, have been followed by anti-Muslim violence across Europe. In the UK, sixty-four religious or racially motivated hate crimes were reported to the police in Scotland in the week that followed, almost as many as were reported in the whole previous year. In London, the seventy-six 'Islamophobic incidents' that were reported to the police in that same week were triple the number reported in the

previous one. The UK-wide anti-Muslim hate crime reporting body Tell Mama says that there had been a 300 per cent increase in the number of incidents it had recorded, with 115 reports – the victims being mostly women and girls... "

25. EU: BORDERS: [Sealing off Europe: Council Presidency proposals for protecting the "integrity of the Schengen area"](#)

- **Council Presidency issues proposals to "prepare debate" at JHA Council meeting on 3 and 4 December**
- **Smart borders discussions rumble on in background**

A Frontex operation should be set up in northern Greece, identity controls within the Schengen area should be increased and the Council should call for the reintroduction of border controls in "one or more" unnamed Schengen states, according to proposals from the Luxembourg Presidency of the Council of the EU.

See: Note from: the Presidency to: Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 2)/Council, [Integrity of the Schengen area](#), 14300/15, 1 December 2015 (pdf)

And: SMART BORDERS: Working Party on Frontiers/Mixed Committee, [Summary of discussions](#), 13193/15, 17 November 2015 (pdf)

26, EU-ITALY: Statewatch Briefing: [The Italian Roadmap 2015 Hotspots, readmissions, asylum procedures and the re-opening of detention centres](#) (pdf) by Yasha Maccanico

The following is an annotated translation of the Italian Roadmap produced on 28 September 2015, which also refers to eight attachments which are not available. By way of introduction, it is worth noting that it illustrates the Italian Interior Ministry's position and plan for reception of migrants and refugees in the context of the current crisis in late September. Some preliminary comments are in order, including:

- The absence of any reference to access to legal representation or a right of appeal for those deemed "irregular" and/or excluded from the relocation and/or asylum procedures or those for the granting of international protection.
- The great plans for "relocations" appear increasingly uncertain and have currently stalled, considering the number of places offered by Member States to date, as reported by the Commission on 24 November 2015, which have been stuck at the figure of 3,216 (out of 160,000) for two weeks.
- In the section on forced returns and cooperation with third countries, the document refers to both the "more for more" principle and the "laissez-passer" travel document procedure, both of which were dropped due to opposition by African states in the Valletta Conference on 11-12 November 2015
- Contributions pledged by member states for the Africa Trust Fund, which the Roadmap (p. 13) describes as potentially useful for the purpose of setting up and implanting an AFIS (Automated Fingerprint Identification System) in third countries in Africa, are well below the required levels, as reported by the Commission on 27 November 2015

27. EU: [Will aid stop migration?](#)

The EU has announced a €350 million aid package described as "the single biggest EU measure in response to the Syrian refugee crisis to date," which will fund programmes aimed at helping "up to 1.5 million Syrian refugees and overstretched host communities in Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan and Iraq."

According to a Commission document, the fund has "two main strategic objectives" - to "stabilise the overstretched host countries (Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq)" and "reduce the pull factors and root causes of the migration crisis (in the entire region)".

28. EU: HOTSPOTS: [« Hotspots » and « processing centres »: The new forms of the European policy of sorting, encampment and outsourcing of exiles](#) (pdf)

Public meeting in Calais, France on 12 December: *"the « hotspots » terminology (especially for Italy and Greece) and « processing centre » (in Niger in particular) have become the new keywords in the European institutions' communication. Activists and researchers gathered in Calais will exchange views both on these projects and the effects which can already be observed in a number of regions declared as "front lines" of the fight against the so-called illegal emigration. Participants from Greece, Turkey, Italy and Niger will share their experiences and analysis in order to strengthen the defence of human rights and the collective struggles in favour of freedom of movement in Calais, Europe and beyond."*

French: [« Hotspots » et « processing centres » : Les nouveaux habits de la politique européenne d'encampement, d'externalisation et de tri des exilé·e·s](#) (Migreurop, link)

29. [Dispatches: Risks of the EU-Turkey Migration Deal](#) (Human Rights Watch, link): *"Asylum seekers fleeing most countries today cannot obtain effective refugee protection in Turkey. Syrians are given only temporary protection, and Afghans and Iraqis don't receive even that. Preventing people from travelling to the EU will deny protection to many people who need it. Given the Turkish police force's reputation for using excessive force, there is a risk that Turkey will use abusive tactics to prevent people from reaching its EU neighbors Greece and Bulgaria."*

30. European Union Naval Force Mediterranean SOPHIA: Press release 04/15: [First Shared Awareness and De-confliction \(SHADE\) meeting for the Mediterranean Sea](#) (pdf): *"Since the EUNAVFOR MED operation Sophia launch, last 22nd of June, 43 people have been reported to the Italian Authorities as suspect smugglers and 46 boats have been removed from illegal organizations' availability while the EU Task Force contributed to save more than 5700 people."*

31. REECE-TURKEY: PRESS RELEASE: [No More Lives Lost in the Aegan Sea!](#) (pdf)

"The undersigned organizations call on the EU and the Greek Government:

- to develop sufficient and effective resettlement programmes for refugees from third countries to the territory of European countries*
- to develop refugee relocation programmes from Greece to other EU countries under which there will be significant increase in both the number of refugees relocated and the eligible countries of origin*
- to offer to Greece the financial and technical support needed*
- to remove the fence from the Greek-Turkish border and in any case to take all the necessary steps to ensure safe access to the land Greek-Turkey border for people entitled to international protection*
- to take all the necessary steps so that the people entitled to international protection entering Greek territory are enjoying appropriate reception conditions that respect foremost human dignity."*

Signed by AITMA, ARSIS, Network for the Social Support of Immigrants and Refugees, Greek Helsinki Monitor, Greek Forum of Refugees, PRAKSIS, Initiative for Detainees' Rights.

32. EU-TURKEY: [Talking Turkey: €3 billion to control migration](#)

In the days leading up to the EU-Turkey summit that EU Council President Tusk said would "change the rules of the game when it comes to stemming the migration flow," the Commission issued its Decision on the project's funding: the €3 billion ["Refugee Facility for Turkey"](#) (pdf).

The Facility is supposed to be funded with €500 million from the EU and €2.5 billion from the Member States, and has the aim:

"to assist Turkey in addressing the immediate humanitarian and development needs of the refugees and their host communities, national and local authorities in managing and addressing the consequences of the inflow of refugees."

See also: Mülteci-Der (Association for Solidarity with Refugees): [Put an end to the dirty deal and respect the human rights at the EU-Turkey summit on 29 November, 2015!](#) (pdf): *"We denounce this dirty deal over the lives of refugees. We say that no political, economical or social argument could be more precious than human lives. We call the EU and Turkish leaders to terminate this dirty deal at today's summit, to respect human rights and human honour in all their policies and practices and to be transparent in their negotiations and in their asylum/migration policies/practices."*

33. EU-TURKEY: [Meeting of heads of state or government with Turkey - EU-Turkey statement, 29/11/2015](#) (pdf):

[Pont 7] *"The EU and Turkey agreed to implement the Joint Action Plan which will bring order into migratory flows and help to **stem irregular migration**. As a consequence, **both sides will, as agreed and with immediate effect, step up their active cooperation** on migrants who are not in **need of international protection, preventing travel to Turkey and the EU**, ensuring the application of the established bilateral readmission provisions and swiftly returning migrants who are not in need of international protection to their countries of origin."* [emphasis added]

And: [Press remarks by President Donald Tusk after the meeting of EU heads of state or government with Turkey](#) (pdf):

*"we expect a major step towards **changing the rules of the game when it comes to stemming the migration flow that is coming to the EU via Turkey**. Our agreement sets out a clear plan for the **timely re-establishment of order at our shared frontier**."* [emphasis added]

Press coverage: [Germany's plan to strike EU-wide refugee-sharing deal stalls](#) (Guardian, link): *"Angela Merkel holds surprise mini-summit in Brussels with nine EU countries after meeting EC resistance to pro-quota pact with Turkey.... Months of European efforts to come up with common policies on mass immigration unravelled when Germany led a "coalition of the willing" of nine EU countries taking in most refugees from the Middle East, splitting the EU on the issues of mandatory refugee-sharing and funding.... Merkel's mini-summit brought together the leaders of Germany, Austria and Sweden – the countries taking the most refugees – Finland, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Greece (and probably France)...."*

34. EU-TURKEY: Background Note: [Meeting of the EU heads of state or government with Turkey: Brussels, 29 November 2015](#) (pdf)

The reason for this meeting is to get Turkey to agree to the EU-drafted Action Plan on migration to stop refugees arriving in Greece and for Turkey to activate the EU-Turkey readmission agreement *"to ensure the application of the established bilateral readmission provisions and the return of economic migrants to their countries of origin."* The country of origin for refugees arriving in Greece is Turkey. Given that the EU officially will only recognise people from Syria, Iraq and Eritrea as being in need of international protection and "relocation" in the EU thousands of refugees from other countries, especially Afghanistan, could be returned to Turkey.

In return the EU will offer money, moving towards a visa facilitation measure and to "re-energise" the EU accession process.

See: [EU seeks to buy Turkish help with migrants at controversial summit](#) (Guardian, link): *"Germany driving bid to get Ankara to block way to Greece in return for €3bn in aid, with scepticism high about merits of deal... European leaders are to stage an unprecedented and highly controversial summit with the Turkish government on Sunday in an attempt to outsource the migration crisis, paying Ankara €3bn for it to seal its border with Greece to halt or slow migrant flow"*

35. EU: Refugee crisis: Statewatch Briefing: [Italy: MSF report on reception conditions in Pozzallo](#) (pdf):

On 17 November 2015, MSF published a report on reception conditions in the CPSA (Centro di Primo Soccorso e Accoglienza, First Aid and Reception Centre) in Pozzallo which was submitted to the

Commission of Inquiry into the system for reception, identification and holding of migrants, highlighting a number of serious shortcomings. MSF has been operating in the centre since February 2015, in order to attend to the medical and humanitarian needs of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers who disembark in Sicily, in cooperation with the Ragusa province's health authority (ASP, Azienda Sanitaria Provinciale).

36. NORWAY SHUTS BORDERS from 26 November - 6 December: due to "migratory pressure": [Temporary reintroduction of border controls at the Norwegian internal borders in accordance with Articles 23 and 25 of Regulation \(EC\) 562/2006 establishing a Community Code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders \(Schengen Borders Code\)](#) (pdf)

and see: [Norway runs anti-refugee ads in Afghanistan](#) (The Local.no, link): "Ads from the Norwegian government are in Afghan newspapers this week warning that potential asylum seekers "will be returned by force"."

37. [Hungary tries refugees for illegal entry](#) (DW, link): "Hungary rid itself almost entirely of migrants by building a border fence. It also deemed entering the country without permission a crime. Daniella Cheslow reports from the trial of a Syrian refugee in Szeged, Hungary.

*Kovacs said Budapest is providing money and manpower for border construction in Serbia, Macedonia and Slovenia. Inside Hungary, **about 1,500 migrants remain of the more than 300,000 people who crossed the country over the summer**, according to the Helsinki Committee. Prime Minister Victor Orban has vowed to challenge attempts by the European Union to impose a mandatory quota on Hungary to resettle 2,000 refugees.... A spokesperson for the Szeged court wrote DW that since mid-September, 688 people were found guilty of the felony charge of crossing the border illegally. Almost all were sentenced to expulsions lasting between one and five years. **The United Nations has ruled that crossing a border to seek asylum is not a crime;**" [emphasis added]*

38. [UN decries stopping refugees at borders](#) (euractiv, link): "The United Nations yesterday (24 November) condemned new restrictions on refugees that have left around 1,000 migrants stuck at the main border crossing into Macedonia from Greece, denied entry due to their nationalities in violation of international law.

"Profiling asylum seekers on the basis of their alleged nationality infringes the human right of all people to seek asylum, irrespective of their nationality and to have their individual cases heard," U.N. chief Ban Ki-moon said in a statement issued by his press office."

[UN's Ban Ki-Moon decries Balkan refugee restrictions](#) (DW, link): "UN General Secretary Ban Ki-moon has spoken out against filtering asylum-seekers by nationality, claiming that the procedure "infringes" on their rights. Several Balkan states are only accepting migrants from war-zones.

Ban called on authorities "to respond with compassion, solidarity and shared responsibility," and to ensure that their policies on screening refugees adhere to international regulations, his spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

*The head of the global organization also stressed that **collective expulsion and return of asylum seekers were strictly prohibited under international law.**" [emphasis added]*

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(28 news stories and important documents, 5-6.12.15)

[Refugee crisis: latest news from across Europe](#)
(20 news stories and documents, 4.12.15)

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(18 news stories and crucial new documents: 28-29.11.15)

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(30 news stories and documents: 27.11.15)

[Refugee crisis: latest news from across Europe](#)

(10 news stories: 26.11.15)

[Refugee crisis: latest news from across Europe](#)

(20 news stories: 24.11.15)