



News

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[Pushback practices and their impact on the human rights of migrants](#)

Submission by Statewatch to the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants.

News

11 February

[Big data experiments: new powers for Europol risk reinforcing police bias](#)

EU policing agency Europol could be given new powers to process vast quantities of personal data under proposals put forward by the European Commission in December. One objective is to train algorithms "for the development of tools" to be used by Europol and national law enforcement agencies, raising the risk of reinforcing racial and other biases.

11 February

[Ombudsman fails non-EU citizens in Frontex access to documents decision](#)

Recent Statewatch complaints to the European Ombudsman have resulted in significant victories for transparency over the activities of EU justice and home affairs agencies, but one decision made by the Ombudsman approves of restrictions placed by Frontex on the right of non-EU citizens to file requests for access to documents.

10 February

['Black Box EU': New campaign demands an end to secret EU law-making](#)

With some 80% of new EU laws passed in secret, citizens are in the dark about what is being done in their name and are unable to participate in the democratic procedure. A new campaign

by German transparency site FragDenStaat aims to change the situation. The organisation has set up a platform to facilitate public requests for access to the documents discussed in "trilogues", and is calling on people to participate.

9 February

[Migration and asylum: updates to the EU-Africa 'Joint Valletta Action Plan' on the way](#)

In November 2015 European and African heads of state met at a summit in Valletta, Malta, "to discuss a coordinated answer to the crisis of migration and refugee governance in Europe." Since then joint activities on migration and asylum have increased significantly, according to documents published here by Statewatch. The Council is now examining an update to the 'Joint Valletta Action Plan' (JVAP) and considering how to give it "a renewed sense of purpose".

8 February

[Tarajal memorial protests: "Faced with their deadly policies: we remember, defend life and demand rights"](#)

On 6 February the eighth annual march to commemorate the deaths of at least 14 people trying to cross the border at Tarajal beach, in the Spanish enclave of Ceuta, took place. Demonstrations were held in Ceuta and Melilla, cities across the Spanish mainland, as well as in Frankfurt and Dakar. A manifesto published on the day of the protests calls for "a Europe that is open to diversity, which invests resources into receiving and regulating instead of controlling, arresting and deporting."

5 February

[France: Legal case seeks an end to ethnic profiling by police](#)

A group of human rights organisations have initiated legal proceedings against the French state for its failure to halt police racism, in particular as manifested through the long-standing practice of ethnic profiling by police officers.

4 February

[Frontex: Management Board pushes back against secrecy proposals in preliminary report](#)

Statewatch is publishing the preliminary report of the working group set up by the agency's Management Board following allegations of involvement in pushbacks from Turkey to Greece. Amongst other things, the report indicates that Frontex has proposed labelling Serious Incident Reports as EU Classified Information, which would reduce transparency and, in turn, accountability.

2 February

[EU: Recruitment of Frontex "standing corps" of border guards not going to plan](#)

The establishment of a new "standing corps" of border guards directly employed by Frontex was revered by the agency as a "game changer" when it was introduced in the 2019 recast of the agency's legislation. Since then, it has been scrambling to fulfil the new staffing obligations, and the Management Board is not happy with the agency's efforts.

2 February

[EU: Secret negotiations on e-evidence: Council and Parliament positions side-by-side](#)

The Council of the EU and the European Parliament will soon begin negotiations on "e-

evidence" legislation, the aim of which is to simplify law enforcement authorities' ability to access data held by digital service providers in another national jurisdiction. A preparatory document produced by the Council, published here by Statewatch, shows the differences between the two institutions' positions.

1 February

[EU-Afghanistan informal deportation agreement - full text of the new 'Joint Declaration'](#)

A renewed 'Joint Declaration on Migration Cooperation between Afghanistan and the EU' is heading for approval by the Council of the EU. The Declaration is an informal agreement that facilitates forced removals from EU member states to Afghanistan, a country still facing conflict, violence and instability.

Other reports

11 February

[EU: Revamping the Eurodac database: from asylum to "wider immigration purposes"](#)

A recent briefing published by the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) examines in detail the recent proposal to revamp Eurodac, which was originally set up to hold the fingerprints of asylum-seekers and limited categories of 'irregular' migrants. Following changes in 2013 to give police access to the system, more recent proposals will expand its scope even further, with the aim of serving "wider immigration purposes".

11 February

[Criminal justice cooperation after Brexit: papers from Eurojust and the European Judicial Network](#)

Eurojust and the European Judicial Network have both recently published papers examining the implications of Brexit on criminal justice cooperation between the EU and the UK. The UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement contains a number of provisions on criminal justice cooperation.

11 February

[Council of Europe: States must do more to stamp out ethnic profiling](#)

States should pass laws banning ethnic profiling, force the police to take stronger action against racism and ensure clear political leadership against discriminatory practices, says a resolution passed at the end of January by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE).

11 February

[In focus: Facial recognition tech stories and rights harms from around the world](#)

A new report by the International Network of Civil Liberties Organisations looks at the use and abuse of facial recognition technology by states across the globe, providing detailed case studies from the Americas, Africa, Asia, Australia and Europe.

11 February

[Germany: opposition to ongoing deportations to Afghanistan](#)

96 organizations and initiatives in Germany have condemned the government's ongoing

deportations to Afghanistan, a country still at war and in the midst of dealing with the coronavirus pandemic.

11 February

[New report examines the consequences of pandemic measures on migrants and their families](#)

A new report by the Last Rights project - 'Every Body Counts: understanding the consequences of pandemic measures on migrant families' - looks at the ways in which different measures taken to try to control the coronavirus pandemic have affected migrants and their families.

5 February

[Greece accused of committing crimes against humanity at its borders](#)

A new report by Legal Centre Lesvos accuses the Greek state of committing crimes against humanity at its borders, given the "widespread, systematic and violent" nature of the ongoing collective expulsions of people trying to reach EU territory. The report is based on testimonies from more than 50 people subjected to collective expulsions; it analyses their experiences and the practices of the Greek authorities in light of the statute of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

5 February

[EU: Secrecy of border control 'lie detector' research project examined in court](#)

Patrick Breyer MEP is seeking the release of documents produced by the EU-funded iBorderCtrl research project, which sought to produce an automated 'lie detector' to assess the trustworthiness of travellers at the EU's borders. His efforts have taken him to the Court of Justice of the EU, where today the arguments of the parties in the case - Breyer and the EU's Research Executive Agency - were heard.

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