



News

9 April (Issue 07/21)

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Revamped Frontex Observatory now online

Statewatch recently launched an updated and improved Observatory on the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, Frontex, providing a focal point for documentation and analysis on the role and activities of the agency.

The re-launch of the Observatory is accompanied by a policy brief that provides an overview of all the ongoing investigations and inquiries into the activities of Frontex.

Find out more [here](#).

Ban biometric mass surveillance; Protect human rights

Earlier this month we joined over 50 other organisations calling on the European Commission to propose a ban on biometric mass surveillance. You can read the open letter [here](#).

Meanwhile, as the UK government seeks to weaken or abolish measures that allow individuals and organisations to hold the government and state to account, we are backing a statement calling for the protection of the Human Rights Act and judicial review. You can read more [here](#).

Support the fight for civil liberties in Europe

Our [small team](#) relies on your support to keep our work trustworthy, independent and free to access. **With your support, we can maintain and expand our work.**

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30 March

[Frontex investigations: what changes in the EU border agency's accountability?](#)

Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, is currently under heavy scrutiny from multiple angles, including the European Parliament, the EU Ombudsman, and the European Anti-Fraud Office. At the same time, judicial action has been initiated vis-à-vis the agency.

News

9 April

[Netherlands: Racism and Technology Center launches to highlight racism in Dutch society](#)

A newly-launched Racism and Technology Center will analyse and highlight how technology perpetuates racism and racist practices in Dutch society, as part of an effort to “help in fighting systemic injustices and oppression,” say its founders.

8 April

[EU: Europol holding on to UK data post-Brexit](#)

Europol is holding on to tens of thousands of pieces of data entered in its systems by the UK prior to 31 December 2020, an answer to a European parliamentary question has revealed.

8 April

[EU: Tracking the Pact: Council Legal Service identifies problems with asylum and migration proposals](#)

The Council Legal Service has been busy assessing measures proposed as part of the EU's Pact on Migration and Asylum and has identified a number of issues that need to be resolved if EU law is to be respected, according to a document obtained by Statewatch

7 April

[EU: New "ad-hoc working group" on vaccine passports starts work - in secret](#)

Discussions amongst EU member states on how to approach plans for digital vaccination certificates are taking place in a new "ad-hoc working group", a format that is not likely to foster transparency - particularly given that the group has said it will not be keeping "minutes as such".

7 April

[EU: Joint EEAS–Commission Services Reflection Paper on the use of military assets and capabilities in support of civilian authorities in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

A paper produced by the European External Action Service and the European Commission, circulated to military officials in the Council of the EU and member states, examines how military forces have been used to support civilian authorities during the pandemic and sets out a number of options for increased coordination in the future.

6 April

[EU-UK: Brexit means... the UK staying in the G6](#)

"Brexit means Brexit" was a remarkably meaningless slogan coined by former UK prime minister Theresa May. In practice, it appears that one thing Brexit does mean is the UK staying part of the G6, an informal annual meeting that was originally set up to facilitate discussion and coordination between the interior ministers of the six largest EU member states, alongside representatives of the European Commission and the USA.

6 April

[EU: New report highlights impact of pandemic on reception facilities for asylum seekers](#)

COVID-19 lockdown measures across Europe increased homelessness and destitution among asylum seekers due to evictions and the temporary closure of relevant administrations, says a new report by the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS).

6 April

[New platform provides transparency on EU security spending](#)

A new platform that tracks spending by the EU on security-related projects and policies aims to serve as "a tool for journalists, researchers, civil society organizations and others to better understand the growing investments of the European Union in security."

6 April

[EU: Despite acquiring training on how to recruit informants, Frontex insists that it does not recruit informants](#)

As previously reported by Statewatch, EU border agency Frontex acquired training from a private security company on the topic of "human intelligence". Despite seeking lessons on "how to recruit an informant", the agency has insisted that it does not recruit informants – rather, it "conducts interviews with migrants on a voluntary basis where the interviewed person's identity remains anonymous."

1 April

[UK: Protect human rights and judicial review](#)

Statewatch has signed an open statement, alongside more than 150 other organisations, calling for the UK government to halt its attacks on human rights and judicial review.

1 April

[EU: To protect fundamental rights, a ban on biometric mass surveillance is needed](#)

Along with 51 other organisations, Statewatch has signed an open letter calling on the European Commission to introduce measures to ban biometric mass surveillance as part of the upcoming legislative proposal on artificial intelligence (AI).

31 March

[UK: Housing asylum seekers in disused barracks: "The Home Secretary must provide an explanation" for contradictory evidence](#)

Home Secretary Priti Patel "must provide an explanation" for the contradiction between evidence she gave to the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee and the findings of an independent inspection on disused military barracks being used to house asylum-seekers, says the chair of parliament's Home Affairs Committee.

30 March

[Transparency and accountability of Frontex: re-launch of Statewatch Observatory and new policy briefing](#)

Statewatch is today launching an updated and improved Observatory on the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, Frontex, providing a focal point for documentation and analysis on the role and activities of the agency. The re-launch of the Observatory is accompanied by a policy brief that provides an overview of all the ongoing investigations and inquiries into the activities of Frontex.

Other reports

8 April

[ECHR: Court's first judgment on compulsory childhood vaccination: no violation of the Convention](#)

The European Court of Human Rights has ruled that the Czech Republic's general legal requirement for the vaccination of children against certain diseases does not violate the right to respect for private life, in a case brought by parents who had been fined, or whose children had been refused access to nursery, for refusing to have them vaccinated. The case is particularly relevant given the ongoing rollout of coronavirus vaccination programmes across Europe and the world.

1 April

[Declaration of the Assembly of Social Movements of the European Social Forum on Migration](#)

The Declaration, which is the outcome of a process involving "300 social movements, civil society organisations, migrants' associations, unions, migrant and refugee people activists and academics," calls for renewed action to protect the rights of migrants, refugees and people on the move across the globe.

30 March

[Germany: Protest against European asylum and migration policies at Christian Democratic Union headquarters](#)

Press release from a demonstration organised at the headquarters of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) in Berlin. The CDU currently heads Germany's federal government. European Commission president, Ursula von der Leyen, is also a member of the party. According to the press release, the demonstration was against the "catastrophic and inhumane situation in camps at the European external borders," and the EU's asylum and migration policies more generally.

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