



## News

### 28 October (Issue 18/22)

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Welcome to the latest edition of Statewatch News, featuring:

- **Join our Board of Trustees!**
- **Refugee relocation scheme founders as states plan to “intensify police checks” across the EU**
- **Who benefits from EU military and security funding?**

As well as news on a fresh round of migration control funding from Spain for Morocco (to the tune of €30 million) and our usual roundup of news and reports from across Europe.

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## Refugee relocation scheme founders as states plan to “intensify police checks” across the EU

In June, EU member states agreed a new refugee relocation scheme intended to relieve the “pressure” on Mediterranean states. The ‘Voluntary Solidarity Mechanism’ is so far not performing as well as expected, as detailed in [the conclusions we have published](#) of a meeting hosted by the European Commission in September.

Three weeks later, interior ministers met at the Justice and Home Affairs Council. Amongst other things, they [approved a set of recommendations](#) on “the migration situation” that are supposed to address “the current challenging situation at the external borders”. One of those recommendations is for states to ensure there is “sufficient capacity at national level to intensify police checks related to illegal immigration across the entire territory,” raising the prospect of increased racial profiling by police forces as they seek people to deport.

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## Event: Who benefits from EU military and security funding?

On 8 November at 14:30 CET our Director, Chris Jones, will be speaking at an online event organised by European Network Against the Arms Trade to mark the relaunch of the data platform *Open Security Data Europe*. First launched in 2021 to provide a source of information on security projects funded by the EU, it is now being updated to include data on military projects as well.

More details available [here](#), or click [here](#) to register for the event.

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## News

Council agrees to "intensify police checks related to illegal immigration across the entire territory"

Spanish government approves another €30 million for migration control in Morocco

'Voluntary Solidarity Platform' for relocating refugees failing to meet targets

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## News

25 October

### [Council agrees to "intensify police checks related to illegal immigration across the entire territory"](#)

At a meeting of the 'Schengen Council' on 14 October, interior ministers agreed to a number of recommendations on "the migration situation" supposed to address "the current challenging situation at the external borders". Those recommendations have not, until now, been made public.

24 October

### [Spanish government approves another €30 million for migration control in Morocco](#)

On Tuesday last week Spain's Council of Ministers approved sending another €30 million to the Moroccan authorities for migration control purposes, the fourth such financial aid package since 2019, according to an article in Spanish newspaper Público.

24 October

### ['Voluntary Solidarity Platform' for relocating refugees failing to meet targets](#)

On 22 September the European Commission hosted a meeting on the "Voluntary Solidarity Mechanism" (VSM), the latest ad-hoc system set up to relocate refugees from the EU's Mediterranean member states to other member states. It appears that the speed of transfers is not as quick as is hoped, with the conclusions noting that it is "crucial that all Member State initiate to implement the pledges," with the need for "a higher pace of transfers already ahead of the December Council meeting."

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# The Roundup

Material we have shared on our [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) accounts in the last fortnight.

[Asylum and immigration](#)

[Civil liberties](#)

[Law](#)

[Military](#)

[Policing](#)

[Privacy and data protection](#)

[Racism and discrimination](#)

[Secrecy and transparency](#)

[Surveillance](#)

## Asylum and immigration

InfoMigrants, 27 October

[Appalling conditions observed at UK migrants center](#)

“The UK's official borders watchdog has decried the “wretched conditions” encountered at a migrant processing center in Kent, UK. The facility in Ramsgate has been under fire for days, following reports of a diphtheria outbreak.”

Refugees Platform in Egypt, 27 October

[EU funding for the Egyptian Coast Guard \(Strengthening a Partnership That Violates Human Rights\)](#)

“The Refugees Platform in Egypt (RPE) issues a paper on the European Union’s decision, last June, to fund the Egyptian Coast Guard with 80 million euros, an amount that will be paid in two phases with the aim of “purchasing maritime border control equipment”, but there are no details about what the equipment is and how it is going to be used, and without setting clear indicators to ensure accountability for potential human rights violations and protect the rights of people on the move.”

Alarm Phone, 25 October

[European non-assistance: how four-year-old Loujin was left to die](#)

“In September 2022, after leaving from Lebanon, a boat carrying 60 people reached out to the Alarm Phone. Despite being alerted, various European authorities, including Frontex, failed to act in a swift and coordinated way. Due to their non-assistance, the people were left at sea for several days. This act of non-assistance cost at least two lives: the four-year-old Loujin Ahmed Nasif and an unborn child.”

IOM, 25 October

**[More than 5,000 Deaths Recorded on European Migration Routes since 2021: IOM](#)**

“The International Organization for Migration’s (IOM) Missing Migrants Project has documented at least 5,684 deaths on migration routes to and within Europe since the beginning of 2021, with increasing numbers of deaths seen on routes across the Mediterranean, on land borders to Europe and within the continent.”

Human Rights Watch, 24 October

**[Turkey: Hundreds of Refugees Deported to Syria](#)**

“Turkish authorities arbitrarily arrested, detained, and deported hundreds of Syrian refugee men and boys to Syria between February and July 2022, Human Rights Watch said today.

Deported Syrians told Human Rights Watch that Turkish officials arrested them in their homes, workplaces, and on the street, detained them in poor conditions, beat and abused most of them, forced them to sign voluntary return forms, drove them to border crossing points with northern Syria, and forced them across at gunpoint.”

Refugees Platform in Egypt, 24 October

**[The Egyptian government must disclose the fate of at least 23 migrants, most of them Egyptians, who have been forcibly returned and illegally detained for a month](#)**

“The Refugees Platform in Egypt (RPE) received confirmed information about the forcible return of twenty-three irregular migrants – mostly Egyptians – after they were rescued from a merchant ship while trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea towards the shores of Europe. According to information reviewed by RPE, the returned migrants were transferred and detained inside a military base in Port Said, affiliated with the Egyptian Navy, about a month ago.”

See also: **[Malta instructs merchant ship SHIMANAMI QUEEN to take 23 people to Egypt rather than to closer ports in Europe](#)** (Sea-Watch)

The Guardian, 22 October

UK: **[Asylum seekers: Home Office accused of ‘catastrophic child protection failure’](#)**

“More than 220 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children are missing from hotels funded by the Home Office, prompting claims that the chaos-stricken government department is presiding over a “catastrophic child protection failure”.

Ministers have admitted that the Home Office has no idea of the whereabouts of 222 vulnerable children it was meant to be protecting.”

InfoMigrants, 20 October

**[Turkey doubles down on Greek pushback claims after another rescue at sea](#)**

“Turkish officials say they have rescued another 67 migrants in Aegean waters. The migrants were pushed back by Greek forces patrolling the waters, Turkish authorities claim. Greece denies being involved in pushbacks.”

The Guardian, 19 October

[Finland's main parties back plans to build Russia border fence](#)

Border guard has proposed "a fence several metres high, topped with razor wire and equipped with surveillance cameras and sensors" along 160 miles (20%) of the border.

The Guardian, 17 October

[Greece and Turkey trade blame after 92 naked migrants rescued at border](#)

"The discovery of 92 naked migrants on the border of Greece and Turkey over the weekend has prompted accusations of blame between the two countries and condemnation from the United Nations."

And see: [Concerning claims from Evros border](#) (Koraki)

Kelsey P. Norman, Nicholas R. Micinski, 17 October

[The European Union's migration management aid: Developing democracies or supporting authoritarianism?](#)

"While migration management aid may build the capacity of states to monitor borders and prevent irregular migration, we argue that this fails to account for negative externalities including human rights abuses and increased surveillance for migrants and citizens alike."

Matthias Monroy, 17 October

[LeaveNoOneBehind project: An app for the right to asylum](#)

"The project „Claim Asylum EU“ aims to help people seeking protection in the European Union. This is necessary because the border authorities at the EU's external borders are breaking international law on a massive scale."

Middle East Eye, 14 October

[People who help refugees are not traffickers or terrorists. Stop targeting them](#)

"There was a time when being kind to people was seen as a good thing. Now, around the world, I see people being attacked and targeted for helping those in need, for bringing food and medicine and water to people who are freezing in forests or dehydrating in deserts."

Cyprus Mail, 14 October

[Cyprus proposes changes to the EU asylum procedure](#)

"The €200 million in aid earmarked for Turkey for the security of its external borders should only be given under conditions," the minister added.

In a written statement, Nouris said the conditions should include Turkey's compliance with the EU visa programme, control of illegal departures from its southern coast, control of transfer passengers from Istanbul to the north of Cyprus and an end to the issuing of fake student visas.

Nouris added that an informal document was submitted with a recommendation to amend the asylum procedure to end exploitation of migrants and loss of lives at sea, to fight trafficking rings and reduce flows."

El Nacional, 14 October

Spain-Morocco: [Ombudsman critical of Spanish role in Melilla migrant deaths: risk was "foreseeable"](#)

“Ángel Gabilondo, Spain's "defender of the people", or ombudsman, has concluded that the rights were not respected of the 470 people who tried to cross the Melilla border on June 24th and faced violent police actions to stop them. The tragic clash, in which dozens of people died, became even more controversial when the videos of the police action were leaked, with images showing the inhuman treatment meted out by the border police, which in many cases ended in the death of the would-be migrants. Subsequently, the Spanish government expressed pride in its operation, refused to investigate what happened, and celebrated the work of the Moroccan police in coordination with the Spanish security forces. This Friday, however, an advance release of the ombudsman's report turns the spotlight back onto the loss of life, affirming that "a situation of foreseeable risk" was produced, in which "no account was taken of the Spanish and international legal guarantees of the rights of migrants", such as, for example, the right of all people to seek asylum.”

The Guardian, 13 October

[Over 1,300 asylum seekers can claim compensation for phones seized by UK](#)

“More than 1,300 asylum seekers who arrived in the UK in small boats and had their phones unlawfully seized by immigration officials can claim compensation, the high court has ruled.”

Lighthouse Reports, 12 October

[HOW THE EU FAILED UKRAINE'S INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS](#)

“The EU's decision to offer unprecedented rights and freedoms to refugees fleeing Russia's invasion of Ukraine less than a month after the war began was widely celebrated. What was not said at the time was that the policy was drawn up to intentionally exclude a considerable number of non-European refugees fleeing the war.”

PICUM, September 2022

[Briefing: Immigration detention and de facto detention: what does the law say?](#) (pdf)

“The purpose of this briefing is to reply to frequently asked questions on the existing legal framework and case law on immigration detention and de facto detention. This briefing draws from the evolving and recent jurisprudence from EU and international bodies. It is addressed to policy-makers working on legal reforms as well as civil society organisations advocating for migrants' rights.”

European Parliament Research Service, September 2022

Briefing: [European Parliament scrutiny of Frontex](#) (pdf)

“This briefing looks at the Parliament's accountability mechanisms and how they have been used to ensure that migrants' fundamental rights are respected and upheld at the EU's external borders.”



Transform! Europe, August

[At the Heart of Fortress Europe: Austria's role in border externalisation policies in the Balkans](#) (pdf)

The Conversation, 29 July

[Four ways Brexit and the loss of free movement have made life harder for mixed British-European families](#)

“Brexit and the end of free movement between the UK and the EU has had notable consequences for family life, particularly for mixed British-European families whether they are living in the UK or Europe. Family members who before Brexit held common status as EU citizens now find they have different statuses and rights, both in the places they live and when it comes to mobility between locations.”

## **Civil liberties**

Byline Times, 25 October

UK: [Government Rushing Ahead with Voter ID Next Year Despite Warning It Poses 'Significant Risk to Safe Elections'](#)

“The Government is planning to rush ahead with introducing photographic voter ID in time for next May's local elections – despite a warning from administrators running the process that the timetable involved is “likely to introduce significant risk to safe election delivery”.

The Guardian, 24 October

UK: [Keir Starmer backs stiff sentences for climate protesters who block roads](#)

“Keir Starmer has said he would continue with Tory plans for stiff sentences for climate protesters who block roads, despite reiterating Labour's pledge for no new oil and gas licences, as two Just Stop Oil activists caked a waxwork of King Charles.”

The Guardian, 24 October

[Hundreds more homeless families rehoused outside local area in England](#)

“Hundreds more homeless households across England are being uprooted and rehoused miles from their jobs and schools amid mounting concern about the legality of the practice and the number of lives it is disrupting.”

Amnesty, 20 October

[Bosnia and Herzegovina: Young environmental activists face baseless defamation charges from Belgian-owned hydropower company in Bosnia](#)

“Ahead of a court hearing on Monday in Istočno Sarajevo, Amnesty International urges BUK, a hydropower company owned by Belgian-based Green Invest to drop their defamation suits against two local activists who publicly expressed concerns about the potential environmental impact of the company's small hydropower plants on the Kasindolska river.”

## Law

Mediapart, 27 October

### [Avec Mimmo Lucano à Riace](#)

“C’est qu’il y a deux réalités : d’un côté, celle de l’État ; de l’autre, la réalité de ce village de Calabre. La première ignore la seconde ; mais la seconde ne peut pas se permettre d’ignorer la première.”

And see: [Riace: Appello, chiesti 10 anni e 5 mesi per Lucano](#) (ANSA): “The Public Prosecutor of Reggio Calabria has asked for a sentence of 10 years and 5 months in prison for Mimmo Lucano,” lower than the 13 years 2 months he was originally sentenced to.

The Guardian, 25 October

### Northern Ireland: [Troubles ‘legacy’ bill risks breaching human rights law, UK warned](#)

“Proposed UK government legislation to deal with the legacy of Northern Ireland’s Troubles risks widespread breaches of human rights law, a parliamentary committee has found.”

The report: [Legislative Scrutiny: Northern Ireland Troubles \(Legacy and Reconciliation\) Bill – Report Summary](#) (Parliament)

EurActiv, 24 October

### [AI Act: Leadings MEPs want to expand Commission’s revision powers](#)

“The European Parliament’s co-rapporteurs of the AI Act have proposed expanding the European Commission’s revision powers to extend the list of high-risk systems and prohibited practices at a later stage.”

The Guardian, 24 October

### UK: [Rees-Mogg move to axe 2,400 laws is ‘anti-democratic’, say legal experts](#)

“Leading lawyers have sounded the alarm over Jacob Rees-Mogg’s proposals for post-Brexit legislation that could result in 2,400 laws disappearing overnight – including a ban on animal testing for cosmetics, workers’ rights and environmental protections.”

See also: [Retained EU Law \(Revocation and Reform\) Bill 2022-23](#) (Parliamentary Research Service briefing)

EurActiv, 19 October

### [Dutch parliament votes against Bulgaria and Romania joining Schengen](#)

“The Dutch Parliament adopted a resolution on Thursday (20 October) stating that the Netherlands should oppose the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the Schengen border-free area.”

La Quadrature du Net, 19 October

France: [CAF : LE NUMÉRIQUE AU SERVICE DE L'EXCLUSION ET DU HARCÈLEMENT DES PLUS PRÉCAIRES](#)

An algorithm assigns risk scores to beneficiaries of social support from the Caisse d'Allocations Familiales, to predict who should undergo checks / not be trusted.

Algorithm Watch, 18 October 2022

[Civil society responds to the Council of Europe Treaty on AI](#)

“Together with other observer civil society organizations in the Committee on AI in the Council of Europe, AlgorithmWatch stresses the importance of that legal framework on AI based on human rights, democracy, and the rule of law that is currently being elaborated in Strasbourg. We urge the EU not to delay this process in light of the negotiations on its own AI Act currently ongoing in Brussels. The two frameworks have a different purpose and should complement rather than copy-paste each other.”

## **Military**

ECNL, 18 October

EU: [A RIGHTS-FREE ZONE? BLANKET NATIONAL SECURITY EXEMPTION IN AI LEGISLATION.](#)

“New legal opinion on the dangers of excluding AI used for military and national security from new binding European instruments.”

## **Policing**

North Africa Post, 24 October

[Morocco, Germany to bolster cooperation in counterterrorism, cross-border extremism](#)

“Morocco and Germany have agreed to strengthen their operational cooperation in the fight against terrorism and cross-border extremism, in addition to cross-border and organized crime.

According to a statement released by Morocco’s National Police (DGSN), following a joint security committee meeting, the scope of this cooperation also includes the fight against drug trafficking, illegal migration and smuggling of migrants, human trafficking, cybercrime and document fraud.”

And see: [Morocco Receives Equipment from Germany to Upgrade Border Control](#) (Morocco World News)

OpenDemocracy, 19 October

UK: [Revealed: Police began monitoring ‘social justice’ activity after BLM protests](#)

“Eighteen months’ worth of intelligence briefings, obtained through Freedom of Information laws, also reveal that senior police officials classified protests against policing as “anti-fascist”.”

Deutsche Welle, 19 October

Germany: [Man killed in Dortmund by police taser](#)

“The incident is the second police killing involving a taser in the western German city in recent months. Officers said the victim had tried to climb in to their vehicle.”

Queen’s University Belfast, 17 October

[Independent Panel Report into Fans’ Experiences at the 2022 European Champions League Final](#)

“An independent panel report tells the story of those who survived extreme violence at the hands of the police and local gangs before and after the European Champions League Final in Paris, May 2022.”

Matthias Monroy, 14 October

[Connecting Europol and Interpol: EU provides more surveillance in Libya](#)

“The EU mission EUBAM, which was actually set up to support border management, is building up a counter-terrorism „analysis unit“. This includes equipping it with analytical software.”

## Privacy and data protection

CNIL, 20 October

[Facial recognition: 20 million euros penalty against CLEARVIEW AI](#)

“Following a formal notice which remained unaddressed, the CNIL imposed a penalty of 20 million euros and ordered CLEARVIEW AI to stop collecting and using data on individuals in France without a legal basis and to delete the data already collected.”

## Racism and discrimination

EUobserver, 27 October

[Christian Democracy’s capitulation to far-right is a dangerous mistake](#)

“Centre-right parties are forming governments with the help of neofascists in Europe, most recently in Italy and Sweden.”

ANSA, 22 October

[Orban, Le Pen express delight as Meloni govt sworn in](#)

“Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban and France's National Rally leader Marine Le Pen expressed satisfaction on Saturday after the coalition government of new Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni, the leader of the right-wing Brothers of Italy (Fdi) party, was sworn in.”

The Guardian, 18 October

**[Judiciary in England and Wales ‘institutionally racist’, says report](#)**

“The judiciary in England and Wales is “institutionally racist”, with more than half of legal professionals surveyed claiming to have witnessed a judge acting in a racially biased way, according to a report.”

## **Surveillance**

Algorithm Watch, 26 October

**[Visa-free travelers to the EU will undergo “risk” checks from 2023. Who counts as risky remains unclear](#)**

“Two EU agencies, Frontex and eu-LISA, are developing ETIAS, a new system that automatically assesses the “risk” posed by some travelers. The sorting algorithm will be trained in part with past decisions by border guards.”

See our report: **[Automated suspicion: The EU's new travel surveillance initiatives](#)**

The Guardian, 25 October

UK: **[Information commissioner warns firms over ‘emotional analysis’ technologies](#)**

“There is quite a range of ways scientists close to this dismiss it. I think we’ve heard ‘hokum’, we’ve heard ‘half-baked’, we’ve heard ‘fake science’. It’s a tempting possibility: if we could see into the heads of others. But when people make extraordinary claims with little or no evidence, we can call attention to that.”

Full report available here: **[Biometrics technologies](#)** (ICO)

Border Violence Monitoring Network, 25 October

**[Slovenia: Migrant support NGOs as possible targets of state surveillance?](#)**

The latest Border Violence Monitoring Network monthly report includes a report on the Slovenian government’s action plan on terrorism and extremism, which specifically refers to such NGOs.

Frontex, 21 October

**[Frontex publishes technology foresight on #biometrics for the future of travel](#)**

Technologies with "potential" include "contactless friction ridge recognition" and "3D face recognition".

It appears the future of travel is also the future of surveillance.

Patrick Breyer, 18 October

**[Data retention: France illegally extends blanket mass surveillance of the entire population](#)**

“The blanket retention obligation concerns identity data (surname, first name, date and place of birth, postal address(es), e-mail address(es), telephone number(s)) as well as payment information, connection data (IP addresses, port numbers, identification numbers of users and their devices, date, time and duration of each communication, data on supplementary services and their providers) and also the location data of electronic communications of the entire population.”

EDRi, 17 October

Letter: **[Ensure fundamental rights protections in the Council position on the AI Act](#)** (pdf)

“We, the undersigned organisations, are writing to bring to your attention a number of serious shortcomings in the Council position on the Artificial Intelligence Act (AI Act) (COM/2021/206) currently under negotiation by the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union. This communication builds on the position of 123 civil society organisations calling for the European Union to foreground a fundamental-rights based approach to the AI act in 2021.”

**Support the fight for civil liberties in Europe**

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