

Migration news roundup 14 October 2024



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Stories that inspired us this week

The 'University Corridors for Refugees' (UNICORE) program by UNHCR has been running for 6 years providing scholarships for 250 refugees to study at 40 universities in Italy. This year, 65 students have arrived in the country under the program.

(Source: InfoMigrants)

Sister Rosita Milesi, 79 years old from Brazil, has won the Nansen prize, awarded every year by the U.N. High Commission for Refugees, because of her outstanding work that has been helping refugees and migrants for the past 40 years. (Source: Reuters)

'Bora Shabaa', meaning 'quality over quantity' in Swahili, is a grassroots charity in Hull. They provide support to refugees and people seeking asylum to make them feel welcome and to help with integration. (Source: Hull Live)

Also in the region, mural in Bradford, created by a Jewish refugee in 1960s, has now been fully restored. (Source: BBC News)

International news

The European Court of justice has determined that gender and nationality alone are sufficient grounds for a country to grant asylum to women from Afghanistan in the European Union. Meanwhile, seventeen Schengen-zone countries have signed a proposal calling for the European Commission to make it easier for member countries to return 'irregular migrants' to their home countries. (Sources: the Guardian, Reuters)

Beyond Europe, the US Department of Homeland Security has declined to renew a humanitarian entry programme which had enabled more than 500,000 migrants from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela to reside temporarily in the United States. (Source: Reuters)

UK borders and migration policy

Sri Lankan Tamils held on Diego Garcia for three years have been offered places at a UN 'safe centre' in Romania for 6 months, after which they may move to the UK. Others are being encouraged to return to Sri Lanka voluntarily. Diego Garcia, a remote British territory in the Indian Ocean is currently used as a US-UK military base, and will be handed over to Mauritius. (Source: BBC)

973 people arrived in the UK via small boat on 5 October, the highest number on a single day so far this year. There has been further tragedy with four people, including a young child, losing their lives attempting the crossing; the UN says 2024 is the year with the highest death toll since it began keeping records, with

52 people known to have died. Meanwhile the UK is part of a new G7 'Anti-Smuggling Action Plan' agreed at a recent summit. (Sources: BBC, Home Office)

There are ongoing concerns about the transition to eVisas, with this article highlighting the case of an actor who has lived in the UK for 50 years and is anxious she will not be able to prove her right to be here. (Source: the Guardian)

A 1% growth in the UK population has been attributed to immigration, without which the population would have decreased due to deaths outnumbering births (this also occurred during the pandemic year of 2020 but otherwise not since 1976). Meanwhile new analysis of data on the 'irregular' migrant population in a number of European countries suggests that estimated numbers are broadly similar to those in 2008, and make up less than 1% of the population. However, the authors acknowledge that the UK figures are outdated, with the most recent estimates available in the report being from 2017. (Sources: Sky News, Measuring Irregular Migration)

Specific migrant groups

There have been a few publications related to No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) aimed at local authorities and elected members:

- Practice guidance exploring different models councils can adopt to support families and adults with care and support needs with providing accommodation and subsistence when social care duties are engaged
- Updated guidance on supporting children and families with NRPF with current legislation and tools available to identify support options
- An overview of what NRPF covers, the numbers and attempted changes in legislation (Sources: NRPF Network, House of Commons Library)

Elsewhere, this report calls for the new government to take a cross-cutting and preventative approach to tackling modern slavery. It recommends amending immigration law to ensure all survivors receive protection and support, and proposes visa changes to address risks, particularly in the social care and agriculture sectors. (Source: Modern Slavery Policy and Evidence Centre)

Councils across Yorkshire are being asked to sign up to a migrant work charter to protect international workers at risk of exploitation within the health and social care sector. Over 30 companies in the region had licences revoked in the past year affecting thousands of locally based workers. Government

figures show that applications for Health and Social care visa's fell by 83% compared to the same period last year. The drop is attributed to rule changes in March which prevented applicants from bringing family members to the UK. Despite the fall in applications, the previously high numbers of migrant healthcare workers has had an interesting effect on workplace demographics, with men now making up over one fifth of the workforce in the care sector. (Sources: Unison, Home Office, the Guardian)

On EU nationals, the Home Office updated its EU Settlement Scheme guidance for caseworkers to reflect recent changes to the Immigration Rules requiring a joining family member to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme within three months of their first arrival in the UK after the end of the transition period. (Source: Home Office)

Finally on international students, UK universities are encouraging the government to negotiate plans with the EU to reopen the flow of EU students to the UK. A deal for a return to the Erasmus student exchange programme or a negotiation for the British replacement mobility scheme are seen as possible options. (Source: the Guardian)

Cohesion and integration

The BBC has published an article on how children from Irish Traveller communities feel anxious about attending school. Interviews with young people examine how they feel

discriminated against or targeted for their background, and what steps could be taken to improve attendance and help members of Gypsy and Traveller communities feel more welcome. (Source: BBC)

The Scottish Government has recommitted to providing free bus travel to people seeking asylum, following a vote called by the Green Party. The goal is to allow individuals and families that seek asylum to attend vital appointments with GPs or solicitors, as well as to take part in important integration activities, such as language learning sessions or volunteering. (Source: Scottish Refugee Council)

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<https://www.migrationyorkshire.org.uk/news/migration-news-roundup-14-october-2024>