Migration news roundup 15 May 2023



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Stories that inspired us this week

Maria Romanenko, a Manchester based Ukrainian journalist has been given a volunteering award by the Prime Minister for conducting walking tours for fellow Ukrainians in Liverpool. (Source: ITV News)

An employment thread this week: in France a social enterprise is developing the artisan craft skills of refugees and supporting them with training and language skills to find work with employers such as Dior. In Germany migrant entrepreneurs are playing a key role in the tech start up sector. (Sources: The Times, InfoMigrants)

International news

Emergency preparations were made at the world's largest refugee camp in Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh, in anticipation of a severe cyclone. The million refugee residents mostly live in makeshift accommodation. (Source: Arab News)

France continues to push back migrants to the Italian border including unaccompanied children. (Source: InfoMigrants)

In an interview the European Commissioner for Home Affairs discussed EU migration policy and described a new 'Talent Partnership' for Tunisians to be able to come to fill gaps in the

EU labour market. (Source: Euronews)

UK borders and migration policy

As conflict in Sudan escalated:

- The UK evacuated over 2,000 people in total, mostly British nationals and their dependents, from Port Sudan at the start of May, although there are reports that some British citizens did not join evacuation flights as close family members were not permitted to also travel here.
- Charities have warned that child refugees in Sudan who want to apply to enter the UK through a family reunion visa may be forced to reach the UK via boat.
- It's been claimed that the UK government's contrasting approaches to those fleeing conflicts in Ukraine and Sudan signify the adoption of a 'segregated immigration policy'.
- There's a new parliamentary briefing on the UK response to Sudan.

(Sources: Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, the Guardian, House of Commons Library)

Political debate was triggered as newspapers reported predicted net migration figures of up to a million. The most recent data shows approximately 500,000 between June 2021/22, partly due to arrivals from Hong Kong and Ukraine. The contentious new estimate came from a centre-right thinktank who attribute the rise in part to international students. Official statistics will next be published on 25 May. (Source: The Telegraph)

The Illegal Migration Bill had its second reading in the House of Lords, with a long debate in which nearly 90 peers were tabled to speak. Opponents included the Archbishop of Canterbury, with Lord Forsyth among the supporters. Committee Stage, a detailed examination of the Bill, starts on 24 May. Here's a recent parliamentary briefing on the Bill and an explainer looking at the proposed law in the context of the government's overall plan to stop small boat arrivals. Meanwhile, a former British army chief questioned the suitability of Rwanda as a destination to send people seeking asylum in the UK. (Sources: BBC, UK Parliament, House of Lords Library, Metro)

The re-opening of detention centres in Oxfordshire and Hampshire has reportedly been delayed from this summer until next year, while police are still searching for three men after 13 people escaped from Yarl's Wood immigration removal centre. (Sources: Daily Mail, BBC)

Specific migrant groups

The Bibby Stockholm, a large barge set to house up to 500 people seeking asylum, is docked in Cornwall and is awaiting refurbishment before being moved to Dorset. The ship is part of a range of alternative accommodation sites being considered by the Home Office. (Source: Dorset Live)

This article reveals some of the challenges faced by Afghan refugees in bridging hotels who are trying to secure permanent accommodation, in particular the reaction of private sector

landlords. (Source: openDemocracy)

Only one in three of the Ukrainians who have fled to Europe have found work. This article looks at why, despite Europe experiencing a labour shortage crisis, Ukrainian refugees are finding challenges accessing employment or being exploited in the jobs they do find. (Source: Big Issue)

Keen bakers with a refugee background can apply for a scholarship to achieve an advanced diploma in artisan baking through a six month residential in Nottinghamshire. (Source: The School of Artisan Food)

Relating to people with precarious or temporary immigration status:

- This new report looks at local authority funded immigration legal advice projects and gives a case study of Bradford council who funds several advice projects.
- A new parliamentary briefing explains the no recourse to public funds condition.
- This article provides an insight into the experiences of migrants who are undocumented but have found work as food couriers. They cannot be employed but some legitimately employed couriers reportedly rent their courier accounts to migrants.

(Sources: Justice Together, House of Commons Library, MENAFN)

Statistics from the system for identifying and supporting modern slavery survivors - the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) - for the first quarter of 2023 show the number of people referred to the NRM was the highest recorded. Albania remains the top nationality, followed by the UK. However, the data shows a sharp drop in the proportion of positive 'reasonable grounds' decisions (from 85% the previous quarter to 58%), attributed to provisions from the Nationality and Borders Act coming into force in January. Relatedly, see this explainer relating to modern slavery provisions in the Illegal Migration Bill. (Sources: Home Office, Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre)

Cohesion and integration

Ukrainians in the UK welcomed a 'special moment of unity' as Liverpool hosted the Eurovision Song Contest on behalf of Ukraine. Alongside the competition was 'Discover Ukraine', an area in the Eurovision village promoting Ukrainian culture. (Sources: Sky, Shropshire Star)

Two personal stories discuss belonging in the UK:

- In this story from the Immigration Nation series, Virginia Williams reflects on her experiences of being a white American in England, navigating cultural differences, being treated as a stranger, and access to spaces or conversations not always open to an immigrant.
- In this book extract from 'How to be a patriot', Director of British Future Sunder Katwala discusses his relationship

with his British identity and how to build a new kind of inclusive and shared patriotism.

(Sources: Metro, British Future)

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