Migration news roundup 2 January 2023



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Stories that inspired us this week

We have probably all heard of Alan Turing, the Bletchley Park codebreaker during World War II, but what about Marian Rejewski, the Polish codebreaker key to the beginning of the Enigma story? (Source: The Guardian)

After more than 20 years, Angelina Jolie is stepping down from her role as UNHCR Special Envoy, pledging to continue her support for refugees. (Source: UNHCR)

International news

In Afghanistan tears flow as women protest to have their right to education reinstated following the Taliban banning higher education for females. (Source: BBC, The Guardian)

Doctors Without Borders has urged Lithuania and Latvia to restrain their border police from refugee pushbacks at the border with Belarus, after reports of hospitalisation and even amputations, as a result of individuals being left in woods in freezing temperatures. (Source: Info Migrants)

48 asylum seekers have been relocated to Germany through an EU Solidarity Mechanism scheme, established to ease the strain on asylum systems in member states. Meanwhile Switzerland has temporarily withdrawn its participation from the UN refugee

resettlement programme, due to the rising number of Ukrainian refugees. (Source: Info Migrants)

UK borders and migration policy

The High Court has ruled the government's plan to send some new arrivals to Rwanda is lawful. However, an appeal against this decision is possible and the 8 individual cases referred to must all be reconsidered. More detailed analysis of the decision can be found here and this article considers possible timings for the government's next attempt at a removal flight. (Sources: BBC, Free Movement)

On people crossing the Channel in small boats:

- There's been media coverage of the record number of 45,728 people arriving via this route last year, with a reminder that the main change is in the method of transport rather than overall numbers arriving. (Source: Sky News)
- An Eritrean woman in northern France is hoping to be reunited with her three young children in the UK – they were separated when attempting the crossing. (Source: The Guardian)
- Here's a timeline summary of UK-French co-operation in relation to borders and irregular migration. (Source: House of Commons Library)

It has been reported the government is changing the law to allow new arrivals to be detained in short-term processing centres for 4 days instead of 24 hours, and that disused cruise ships are being considered as asylum accommodation. (Sources: Mirror, BBC)

Birmingham City Council has passed an amendment making it the first local authority to sign the #AntiRefugeeLaws Pledge. The Council has also called on the government to repeal the Nationality and Borders Act. (Sources: Birmingham City Council, Asylum Matters on Twitter)

The government has accepted the recommendations of a recent inspection report of the immigration system in relation to the agricultural sector, including a review of the Seasonal Worker route. (Source: Gov.uk)

Here is a look back at immigration law and policy in 2022. (Source: Free Movement)

Specific migrant groups

The Home Secretary has been found to have acted unlawfully by not raising asylum support rates as advised by officials, due to the cost of living crisis. The Home Office has been ordered to increase the rate by £5 immediately, to £45 per week. (Sources: The Guardian, GM Law)

Former Prime Minister Theresa May has expressed concern about government plans to tighten up modern slavery legislation

, in particular the proposal to require more evidence to demonstrate victimhood. Meanwhile it is thought likely 4 men who died in a fire in Oldham were victims of modern slavery working on a cannabis farm. (Sources: BBC, The Guardian)

Children born to same-sex couples outside the UK, where one parent is British and the other is an EU spouse, may be ineligible for UK citizenship. This has left some children stateless if born in an EU country that doesn't recognise same-sex parents, such as Bulgaria or Greece. (Source: The Guardian)

The High Court has ruled that the EU Settlement Scheme is in breach of the Withdrawal Agreement, as EU nationals with pre-settled status should not need to apply again to upgrade to settled status. The Home Office is appealing the judgment. (Source: Free Movement)

In order to reduce migration to the UK, the government is reportedly planning to increase both the minimum income requirement for family visas, and the minimum salary for workers in shortage occupation list jobs, as well as targeting overseas students (while Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has spoken of the economic and cultural contribution international students make to the UK). (Sources: The Times, The Pie News)

A Ukrainian onward travel scheme has been extended for a further 6 months, enabling free travel to destinations upon arrival in the UK. (Source: Gov.uk)

2023 marks the 75th anniversary of the arrival of the Windrush ship – events are being planned and campaigners are calling for national celebrations across the UK. (Source: The Guardian)

Cohesion and integration

Food is often at the very heart of migration stories, bringing people from various backgrounds together. The inventor of the most popular British curry dish, chicken tikka masala, has died recently. Bringing 'Danish flavours' to the table is the aim of a new bakery in Sheffield, opened by a Danish-British couple, making various Danish pastries as well as 'Scandinavian sourdough bread' using a specialist steam oven. And Jinnah Kashmiri restaurant in Bradford is now offering a traditional Sunday roast. (Sources: The Guardian, The Star, Telegraph & Argus).

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