Migration news roundup 13 February 2023



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Stories that inspired us this week

There was unexpected international sporting success for runner Angelina Nadai Lohalith from the Athlete Refugee Team, who won the women's senior race at the European Champion Clubs Cup Cross Country, an annual event for European running clubs. (Source: International Olympic Committee)

A social enterprise in Aberdeen was delighted to fill a much-needed vacancy for a seamstress. Their recruit is Nataliia Zaplitna who used to work in a sewing factory in Kharkiv, Ukraine. (Source: Press and Journal)

Closer to home, hear from Emily Carrigan at Rainbow Junktion food waste café in Leeds about how she previously volunteered at refugee camps in northern France. (Source: Yorkshire Evening Post)

International news

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees visited internally displaced persons in the Tigray region of Ethiopia and Alemwach refugee camp. (Source: Voice of America)

At an EU summit the European Commission has been trying to reinvigorate its 2020 'New Pact on Migration and Asylum' that aims to harmonise existing migration policies in the bloc to

address issues of fair responsibility. Meanwhile, Hungarian Prime Minister Orban argues that ‘fences protect Europe’, calling on the EU to fund border fences, while in Malta organisations and activists remembered people who died trying to reach Europe by laying shoes in the capital and criticised inaction in the Mediterranean Sea. (Sources: Saudi Gazette, Reuters, Times of Malta)

UK borders and migration policy

On the impact of the Nationality and Borders Act 2022:

- The first legal challenge against the criminalisation of asylum seekers who arrive ‘illegally’ via small boats is underway with an appeal against a preliminary ruling that allowed their prosecution under the Act. The appeal is partly based on the incompatibility with the Refugee Convention and the judgement is expected in a few weeks.
- This article explores whether the ten year route to settlement for some refugees, also brought in by the 2022 Act, is compatible with the Refugee Convention.(Source: Free Movement)

The Prime Minister described an imminent piece of legislation as the ‘Stop the Boats Bill’ whilst determined to remain compliant with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). The government is increasingly confident that removals to Rwanda will become a reality expecting the European Court of Human Rights to rule on the policy and with removals enacted by the

end of the year. However, its' unclear what government will do if the Court rules against this, with suggestions of withdrawing from the ECHR, a move that could divide the Conservative party. (Sources: Electronic Immigration Network, Reuters, the Guardian, The Spectator)

This article argues that to stop small boat arrivals, the government must unblock safe routes for asylum seekers to come to the UK legally and have a sufficiently funded asylum processing system. Meanwhile, a study from Durham University says the rise in small boats arrivals is down to Brexit and leaving the EU without a returns agreement. (Source: Independent)

It's been reported that asylum decision-makers have been asked to focus only on claims from Albanian nationals to expedite forced removals. Meanwhile this briefing provides an overview of current policy on 'safe' countries and inadmissibility. (Sources: Independent, House of Commons Library)

This useful visitor visa explainer reveals that Saudi Arabian nationals are the most likely to be granted a visitor visa to the UK, while Botswana has the lowest grant rate. (Source: House of Commons Library)

Specific migrant groups

Housing charity Shelter is considering legal action against the Home Office for its decision to move 40 Afghan families in a hotel in London to another in Yorkshire. This January blogpost explains the issues with the Afghan schemes. (Sources: the

Guardian, Right to Remain)

East Riding Council says it's struggling to find long term accommodation for Ukrainians exiting sponsorship arrangements under the Homes for Ukraine scheme. (Source: Hull Daily Mail)

UK charity Asylum Matters released two new publications: a briefing on asylum support rates that examines the policy background and context of the recent increase, and a briefing with NACCOM on asylum dispersal aimed at those in the voluntary and community sector. (Source: Asylum Matters)

On children and young people:

- In this opinion piece by a legal expert, the government is accused of demonising vulnerable Albanian asylum-seeking children through an 'anti-Albanian' campaign, incorrect asylum refusals and ignoring trafficking concerns despite almost 180 Albanian children missing from Home Office run hotels. (Source: the Guardian)
- a lack of placements and a 'crisis' in recruitment of social workers are preventing councils taking children quickly into their care, according to the deputy council leader in Brighton and Hove. (Source: BBC)

'A Bouffon Play About Hong Kong', a finalist for the 2021 Women's Prize for Playwrighting, will be shown in Manchester as part of the Push Festival. The play, created and performed by Hongkongers who came to the UK through the BNO visa route, explores political situation in Hong Kong through a family's

perspective. (Source: Manchester Evening News)

There's an updated resource for non-EU national parents and primary carers of British children covering issues affecting parents of British children who are applying to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) under the Zambrano route. Meanwhile, last week's story on the error in displaying refused EUSS applications affecting thousands of EU nationals continues with the EU demanding assurances that the digital EUSS system is fit for purpose. (Sources: Rights of Women, Financial Times)

There are a few stories relating to modern slavery:

- There's an overview of the policy on temporary permission to stay, one of new provisions from the Nationality and Borders Act.
- New research recommends a set of seven core outcomes should be reported on in support interventions for survivors.
- A Zimbabwean care worker who disclosed exploitation to the Home Office said she feels unsafe after discovering the details have been shared with her employer.

(Sources: Free Movement, Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre, the Guardian)

Cohesion and integration

This article explores a recent research project in Manchester, 'Uncertain Futures', on experiences of older women in the workplace, highlighting stories of migrant women facing

language barriers and discrimination - often ‘invisible’ in low-paid, zero-hours contract roles, with little chance to progress or utilise their skills. Elsewhere, ‘Black Boy Lane’ in Tottenham has been renamed, to mixed reactions from local residents, after questions were raised regarding links to slavery and accusations of racism. (Sources: The Conversation, the Guardian)

Scotland is planning to refresh its refugee integration strategy so that it reflects the needs of newest refugees from Afghanistan and Ukraine, and extends English and employability support. (Source: Herald)

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