

Migration news roundup 23 September 2024



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Stories that inspired us this week

Reclaim the Sea, a charity in Plymouth, is offering refugees group swimming lessons. Volunteers and participants work in pairs on one to one for all the sessions. The scheme is community funded and aims to help overcome sea trauma. (Source: ITV)

A small town in Galicia region, Spain has welcomed over 120 refugees into their community with many practical gestures such as local football team offering refugees season tickets, hairdressers offering free haircuts whilst local people inviting them for coffee. (Source: the Guardian)

Oxford University's Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS) in collaboration with the sound project Cities and Memory have produced 'the first ever global collection of the sounds of human migration' which tells stories of migration from over 50 countries. (Source: Cities and Memory)

International news

A new report reveals the dark side of EU migration policy in the Mediterranean. Tens of thousands of sub-Saharan refugees and migrants are now trapped northern part of Sfax, Tunisia,

allegedly facing abuse from the national guard which is paid by EU funding. (Source: the Guardian)

Meanwhile, Netherlands, followed by Hungary, have expressed their wish to withdraw from the European Union migration and asylum rules, a move which requires the consensus of all member states. (Sources: the Guardian, POLITICO)

Finally, the Swedish government is reportedly planning to increase payments from around 3,500 to around 30,000 euros to migrants to increase voluntary returns. (Source: InfoMigrants)

UK borders and migration policy

Prime Minister Keir Starmer has visited his Italian counterpart Giorgia Meloni. They discussed various topics, including strategies credited with reducing the number of small boat arrivals in Italy. Starmer expressed interest in the country's arrangements with Tunisia and Libya, and its plans to outsource some asylum processing to centres in Albania. Meanwhile new investment for the UK Border Security Command has been announced to be used to increase border security and tackle people smuggling gangs. (Sources: BBC, Home Office)

As a reminder of the people behind the headlines this article relates the story of a family separated as they attempted to board a small boat, with two children aged 5 and 9 currently in UK foster care while their parents remain in France, desperate to be reunited and awaiting a decision on their urgent entry clearance application. Tragedy has struck once again in the

Channel with 8 people losing their lives. This incident brings the total number of individuals who lost their lives in the attempt to cross the Channel this year to 45. (Sources: the Guardian, BBC)

There are some concerns about the potential impact of the transition to eVisas due to be completed by the end of this year. This briefing aimed at MPs, explains e-Visa for those less familiar with the topic, while this article explains how people will be able to evidence their status after the change has taken place. (Sources: the Guardian, House of Commons Library, Free Movement)

In other news, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has released a new briefing of the effects of immigration policy on destitution and homelessness in Scotland. The briefing recommends more empowered and adequately resourced local, regional and devolved governments to cover essential integration support, and looks at the benefits of effective models of integrated accommodation, such as Fair Way Scotland (Source: Joseph Rowntree Foundation)

Finally, this new report critiques the UK government's assessment of Georgia as a 'safe state', raising concerns about the treatment of the LGBTQI+ community in that country, particularly in light of legislation approved in parliament this week which would restrict rights further. (Sources: Asylos, Reuters)

Specific migrant groups

On children and young people, several stories on the topic of age assessment of young people that are unaccompanied and seeking asylum:

- A young man from Iraq has won a three-year legal battle to prove he was 16 when he arrived unaccompanied in the UK to seek asylum. At the time he was assessed to be between 24 and 26 years old and was accommodated with adults who were seeking asylum. This has generated emotional and mental distress, and he became suicidal. Now aged 19 and as a result of the case, he is entitled to social services support until he is 21. (Source: the Guardian)
- The Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration (ICIBI) has begun an inspection of the Home Office's use of age assessments, calling for evidence from anyone with knowledge or experience of the process to inform the inspection. (Source: ICIBI)
- A report released this week by Solicitors Just Right Scotland highlights the failings of authorities in Scotland towards age disputed young people, and makes several recommendations to Home Office, the Scottish government and Scottish local authorities. (Source: JustRight Scotland)

Another ICIBI's inspection focuses on the Home Office management of contact with migrants who are without leave to enter or remain.(Source: ICIBI)

This briefing on international students in the UK higher education provides an overview of numbers, government policy and the economic impact of international students. (Source: House of Commons Library)

On EU nationals, this article focuses on EU citizens who used to reside in the UK and their chances of regaining status. (Source: Farrer)

Cohesion and integration

British Future have published the latest results from their Immigration Attitudes Tracker. Their most recent accompanying article focuses on public perceptions of the kinds of migrants arriving in the country, with findings showing that the public generally overestimates the proportion of migrants here to claim asylum versus those here for work and study. (Source: British Future)

Refugee Charities have praised English Heritage for its new scheme giving refugees free entry to its sites. The scheme aims to provide opportunities to learn about the UK's culture and heritage, as well as to provide a place of comfort and respite. (Source: The Art Newspaper)

A new government blog offers helpful tips on writing for people with limited English language. (Source: Home Office)

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