The European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) provides comprehensive research and analytical support to the Members of the European Parliament, its parliamentary committees and the European Parliament as a whole. This selection has been prepared for the Press seminar on the EU Border and Coast Guard system, organised by the Parliament’s Press Service in July 2016.

**European Border and Coast Guard Agency**

*Plenary at a glance by Alexandra Gatto, July 2016*

A proposed regulation establishing a European Border and Coast Guard Agency (the Agency) is expected to be submitted to the European Parliament for a vote at first reading during the July plenary, and subsequently to the Council for adoption. The text agreed in trilogue negotiations between the two institutions expands the Agency’s prerogatives on return operations, on migration management, the fight against cross-border crimes and search and rescue operations. Fundamental rights safeguards and the accountability of the Agency vis-à-vis the EP and the Council have been strengthened. If a Member State opposes a Council decision to provide assistance, putting the Schengen area at risk, the other EU countries may temporarily reintroduce internal border controls. A podcast on the subject can be found on the EPRS blog.

**European Border and Coast Guard system**

*Briefing (EU Legislation in Progress) by Alexandra Gatto, June 2016*

On 15 December 2015, the European Commission put forward a proposal to set up a European Border and Coast Guard System (EBCGS), building on the mandate and experience of the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (Frontex). Many underline that the reinforcement of the Frontex mandate should be accompanied by a change in the current EU Dublin system and an upgrade of Member States’ border management capacities.

**Schengen and the management of the EU’s external borders**

*Briefing (Implementation Appraisal) by Gertrud Malmersjo and Milan Remáč, April 2016*

In December 2015, a legislative proposal to reinforce Frontex and move towards a European Border and Coast Guard was published, along with a proposal to modify the Schengen Borders Code. The proposed legislation aims to reinforce the security of the external borders by increasing the powers of Frontex and by introducing increased entry and exit checks on anyone crossing the EU’s external borders. This Implementation Appraisal analyses the state of play in this field.

**Schengen Area: Update and state of play**

*Briefing by Alexandra Gatto, Pierre Goudin, Risto Niemenen, March 2016*

Passport-free travel across the Schengen area has been called into question as a result of pressure on internal EU borders from the rising number of asylum-seekers and migrants seeking to reach certain Member States, as well as security concerns in the wake of the Paris terrorist attacks. In addition to the loss of personal freedom involved, the reintroduction of borders could well bring significant economic costs, both within and outside the Schengen area. This briefing provides an update on recent developments.
Challenges to the Schengen area
At a glance by Alexandra Gatto, March 2016
In addition to providing common rules on people entering the Schengen area, and internal frontier-control free travel, Schengen-related measures provide for enhanced police and judicial cooperation, and complement the single market, giving tangible reality to the four freedoms that are the cornerstone of European integration. This note gives an overview of the current challenges facing this system.

How the EU budget is spent: Internal Security Fund (ISF)
Briefing by Alessandro D’Alfonso, April 2016
The Internal Security Fund (ISF) supports the implementation of the renewed EU Internal Security Strategy and finances measures related to cooperation in law enforcement and the management of the EU’s external borders. The Fund has two components: one deals with external borders and visa issues, while the other focuses on police cooperation, preventing and combating crime, and on crisis management.

The Establishment of an EU Entry/Exit System
Briefing (Initial Appraisal of a European Commission Impact Assessment) by Hubert Dalli, May 2016
This note seeks to provide an initial analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the European Commission’s Impact Assessment accompanying the Commission’s April 2016 proposal for a regulation establishing an Entry/Exit System (EES) to register entry and exit data, and refusal of entry data, of third country nationals crossing the external borders of the Member States of the European Union, and determining the conditions for access to the EES for law enforcement purposes. EPRS will shortly publish a legislative briefing on the new proposal for establishing an Entry/Exit System.

The Schengen Area [What Think Tanks are Thinking]
At a glance by Marcin Cesluk-Grajewski, February 2016
The unprecedented migration crisis has put severe pressure on the Schengen area of 26 European countries which have abolished passport and any other type of control at their common borders. As Member States reinstate border checks, some politicians predict that the Schengen area may break apart unless a solution is quickly found to manage the flow of migrants fleeing war and poverty in the Middle East, Asia and Africa. This note offers links to recent studies and reports from major international think tanks and research institutes on the state of play and the future of the Schengen area.

Recent migration flows to the EU
Infographic by Giulio Sabbati, April 2016
This infographic aims to present the latest available data in terms of migrant flows. It covers the detection of illegal crossings along the EU’s external borders and the number of asylum applicants for 2015.

Combatting migrant smuggling into the EU
Briefing (Implementation Appraisal) by Milan Remáč and Gertrud Malmersjo, April 2016
In its May 2015 Communication on the European Agenda on Migration, the European Commission set out its broad framework for a migration policy in four areas to 1) reduce incentives for irregular migration, 2) ensure efficient border management, 3) strengthen the common asylum policy and 4) update the policy on legal migration. This briefing analyses how legislation in the first area, regarding the smuggling of migrants, is implemented in individual Member States.
**The economic impact of suspending Schengen**
*At a glance by Cemal Karakas, March 2016*

The suspension of the Schengen Agreement and re-establishment of permanent border controls would lead to a restriction of the four freedoms of the Single Market and have a negative economic impact. Estimates show that the costs of rolling back Schengen would – depending on region, sector and alternative trade channels – be between €5 billion and €18 billion per year. This note presents a quick overview of the potential impact.

**The Western Balkans: Frontline of the migrant crisis**
*Briefing by Velina Lilyanova, January 2016*

While today the Western Balkans remain a substantial source of migration, in the current context they are mainly a transit route. Countries in this particularly sensitive region have less-advanced welfare systems, limited institutional capacity and struggling economies that are further strained by having to provide for large numbers of transiting migrants. This note reviews relations between the EU and the Western Balkan enlargement countries and the need for increased cooperation in a situation of mutual dependence.

**Outcome of informal European Council of 7 March 2016 on migration**
*Briefing (Post-European Council Briefing) by Ralf Drachenberg, March 2016*

The informal European Council of 7 March 2016 focused on migration, assessing the state of implementation of previously agreed measures. EU leaders stressed the need to fully apply the Schengen Borders Code, thereby ending the ‘wave-through’ policy for migrants, providing humanitarian assistance to Greece and moving forward in the EU's cooperation with Turkey. This note summarises the points discussed and the conclusions reached.

**Smart Borders package**
*Plenary at a glance by Anita Orav, May 2015*

In response to the technical, financial and operational concerns expressed by both co-legislators, the Commission embarked on a two-stage ‘proof of concept’ exercise consisting of a technical study identifying optimal technical options and a pilot project putting these options to test. Subsequently, in April 2016 the Commission presented a modified package: a revised proposal for a regulation on the establishment of an Entry/Exit system (EES) and the necessary amendments to the Schengen Borders Code. The previously proposed regulation on the establishment of an Registered Traveller Program (RTP) was withdrawn.

**Irregular immigration in the EU: Facts and Figures**
*Briefing by Eva Poptcheva and Giulio Sabbati, April 2015*

Irregular immigrants are third-country nationals who do not fulfil, or no longer fulfil, the conditions of entry as set out in Article 5 of the Schengen Borders Code or other conditions for entry, stay or residence in that Member State. In contrast, asylum-seekers are persons claiming international protection due to the risk of persecution in their home country. For data on asylum-seekers in the EU, please see our Infographic ‘Asylum in the EU: Facts and Figures’. The EU’s legal framework for irregular immigration is scattered over many legal instruments. Those which apply at the point of a migrant’s arrival focus on border management and prevention of irregular immigration through cooperation with countries of origin and transit. For further information, please see our Briefing ‘EU legal framework on asylum and irregular immigration on arrival’.
Recent migration flows to the EU

This infographic allows the reader to access more information on particular areas (definitions, discussion, further reading, detailed textual information or an explanation of the visuals) by clicking on the images and light bulbs that appear throughout the infographic. It is accessible through the Europarl Think Tank page.

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