The EU and UN share the core values laid out in the 1945 Charter of the United Nations and the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The on-going migration challenge and the growing focus on external and internal security threats have placed in evidence a rift between our fundamental values (cf. Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union: respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities) and security. At International level, the United Nations (UN) is the principal forum for promoting our values. The UN General Assembly (UNGA) and UN system took action on plans to address large movements of refugees and migrants. To this end, a high-level plenary meeting on Refugees and Migrants took place on 19 September 2016 immediately prior to the UNGA General Debate, which started on 20 September. The high-level plenary meeting aimed to secure new commitments towards increased and sustained support for UN humanitarian appeals; greater opportunities for resettlement; and expanded opportunities for refugee self-reliance through access to education, legal employment, and other measures. This Topical Digest offers a sample of recent publications and graphics, produced by the European Parliamentary Research Service, on the nexus between migration, human rights and security and the role played by the EU and UN as non-state actors.

The increasing implications of EU migration policy on development cooperation
Briefing by Marta Latek, October 2016
Recent years have been marked by a development of the external dimension of EU migration and asylum policy due to the sudden substantial increase in the number of migrants. Main stepping stones structuring the EU external migration policy - Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM), European Agenda on Migration or proposed Migration compacts - underline explicitly the link between development and migration. Grounded in the necessity to address the root causes of migration and maximising its development impact, the development-migration nexus has evolved to a more complex configuration that, accordingly, many fear, may lead to the instrumentalization of development aid for migration management purposes. This briefing addresses how the current migration crisis without jeopardizing the development policy achievements and objectives will become one of the key issues of the ongoing revision of the European consensus on development.

EU priorities for the 71st UN General Assembly
At-a-glance note by Joanna Apap, July 2016
This year marks the 50th anniversary of the United Nations General Assembly’s adoption of two international treaties: the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which are cornerstones of international human rights. The European Union is very committed to multilateralism and to deepening its cooperation with the United Nations. This At a Glance addresses the Parliament’s recommendation to the Council on the EU’s priorities for the 71st UN General Assembly in New York, as adopted in Plenary in July 2016.

Common European Asylum System reform
At-a-glance note by Detelin Ivanov, May 2016
The European Commission has set out five priority areas for achieving greater solidarity and fairer sharing of responsibility and for developing safe and legal pathways to Europe as a result of the worst refugee and migration crisis since World War II: a sustainable and fair system for determining the Member State responsible for asylum-seekers; reinforcing the Eurodac system; greater convergence in the EU asylum system; preventing secondary movements; and strengthening the mandate of the EU’s asylum agency.
Integrating migrants and their children through education
At-a-glance by Denise Chircop, March 2016
Migrants’ life stories reveal different levels of difficulty or ease in the process of integration. The key importance of education as a means of integration is widely acknowledged. For a number of years, the European Parliament has called for tangible commitments and proposed practical measures to integrate migrants and their children through education, training and the recognition of skills. Immigrants do not fit neatly into a single profile, and many who live for some time in another country are not consistently classified as migrants. Although the education of migrants is the responsibility of Member States, the EU has a number of tools in place, which make it possible to coordinate and support Member States’ activities.

Hotspots and emergency relocation: State of play
Briefing by Anita Orav, March 2016
The migration crisis has put enormous pressure on frontline states, such as Greece and Italy. For this purpose the EU adopted a mechanism for temporary emergency relocation of persons in clear need of international protection from those two countries to other EU Member States. The European Commission also launched the ‘hotspot’ approach to provide assistance along specific sections of the border with the temporary intervention by EU agencies such as Frontex, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) and Europol.

Arbitrary detention of women and children for immigration-related purposes
Briefing by Joanna Apap, February 2016
An unprecedented mass movement of asylum-seekers and migrants of all ages started in 2014, and has continued throughout 2015 and into 2016. Fleeing armed conflicts, mass killings, persecution and pervasive sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), these persons seek protection under the 1951 Refugee Convention, its subsequent Protocol and other international instruments. In times of such instability, women and girls are particularly at risk of gender-based violence, including sexual violence. Thousands of persons are subjected to arbitrary detention each year. The vulnerable situation in which certain persons, such as women and children, can find themselves due to the serious challenges faced during their journey as well as due to detention, calls for greater awareness on behalf of authorities and also for more gender-sensitive policies as well as specialised care in the centres themselves. This briefing shows how, in case due process is not followed and if detention conditions do not meet international standards, then detention becomes arbitrary.

European Neighbourhood Policy Southern Neighbourhood – migration issues
Briefing by Joanna Apap, December 2015
The Southern Neighbours of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) are facing a crisis situation. More than 3 600 lives have been lost in the Mediterranean Sea in 2015. The grim death toll in the Mediterranean has provoked an urgent call for action as 2015 has been the deadliest year so far for migrants trying to get to Europe. The reasons for this significant increase in migration flows include, amongst others: war, political repression, and economic crisis. Libya has become a popular starting point for many journeys, with human traffickers and smugglers exploiting the country’s power vacuum and increasing lawlessness. On 13 April 2015, a conference of foreign ministers from the European Union and the southern shores of the Mediterranean discussed the review of the ENP and the stepping up of the cooperation in the fight against Jihadist terrorism and irregular immigration. The Valletta Summit held in November 2015 addressed the challenges presented by the ongoing migration and explored opportunities for increased cooperation between the EU and Africa.

Boosting the EU’s role in the United Nations
At-a-glance note by Naja Bentzen, November 2015
Effective multilateralism is a key principle in the EU’s external activities, and the UN – the only international organisation in which all sovereign states in the world are represented – is a principal forum for promoting this. Given the increasingly unstable security environment, upgrading the position of the European Union as a global actor appears more and more necessary. This At-a Glance presents the EP’s Committee on Foreign Affairs’ report which argues that the EU could play its foreign policy cards more effectively by boosting its role in the UN.
EU migratory challenge: Possible responses to the refugee crisis
Briefing by Piotr Bakowski, Eva-Maria Poptcheva and Detelin Ivanov, September 2015
This document analyses possible responses to the unprecedented migratory crisis in Europe. Measures at the EU level include harmonisation of national asylum standards, more even distribution of asylum-seekers, providing legal entry channels and preventing illegal border crossing. Solutions also include cooperation with third countries to address the root causes, counter and prevent migrant smuggling and trafficking, and to provide effective return, readmission and reintegration policies for those not qualifying for protection.

Further reading

The EU and migration
What Think Tanks are thinking by Marcin Grajewski, September 2016

World Refugee Day: Gender-sensitivity is called for in Asylum and Refugees Policies
Blog written by Joanna Apap, June 2016

Gender aspects of migration and asylum in the EU: An overview
Briefing by Rosamund Shreeves, March 2016

Asylum policy in the USA
At-a-glance note by Ionel Zamfir, March 2016

Asylum policy in Canada
At-a-glance note by Ionel Zamfir, February 2016

United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)
At-a-glance by Joanna Apap, February 2016

Annual report on human rights and democracy in the world in 2014
Plenary At-a-glance by Joanna Apap, December 2015

EU-UN cooperation in peacekeeping and crisis management
Briefing by Carmen-Cristina Cîrlig, November 2015

Refugee status under international law
At-a-glance note by Ionel Zamfir, October 2015

Asylum policy in Australia: Between resettlement and deterrence
At-a-glance note by Ionel Zamfir, October 2015

Safe countries of origin: Proposed common EU list
Briefing by Joanna Apap and Anita Orav, October 2015
More in the Graphics Warehouse

Asylum applicants and gender/age
(IN EU MEMBER STATES, 2015)

The gender/age balance for asylum applicants in EU Member States for the whole of 2015 is clearly tipped in favour of adult men. However, the share of female applicants under the age of 14 is more than double that among men.

Source: Eurostat. Not all EU Member States have submitted data for the last months of 2015 yet.

Asylum applicants per EU Member State
(IN EU MEMBER STATES, 2015)

Migration routes and illegal border crossings
(JAN - DEC 2015)

In 2015, 1 822 260 illegal border crossings into the EU were detected, 99% of them on four routes. Sources: Frontex, International Organization for Migration

Countries of origin
(OF ARRIVING MIGRANTS IN EL, IT, & ES; JAN - DEC 2015)

In 2015, Greece, Italy and Spain registered a combined 1 031 401 arriving migrants. Among them, seven nationalities constituted 87.5% of arrivals.

Source: UNHCR

Detention centres worldwide
(NOT PERMANENTLY CLOSED)

Source: Global Detention Project

Detention centres in the EU-28
(NOT PERMANENTLY CLOSED)

In 2015, Greece, Italy and Spain registered a combined 1 031 401 arriving migrants. Among them, seven nationalities constituted 87.5% of arrivals.

Source: UNHCR

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