ESMA's Supervisory Coordination network concludes its work

The SCN was established in May 2017 as a response to emerging supervisory convergence risks with respect to the treatment of authorisation requests by EU27 national competent authorities (NCAs) in the context of the UK's withdrawal from the European Union (EU). It was composed of senior supervisors from the EU27 NCAs and chaired by Verena Ross, ESMA's Executive Director. As the Withdrawal Agreement entered into force on 31 January 2020, the work of the SCN is coming to an end.

In order to ensure a high level of consistency in authorisation and supervision, and to protect the integrity of the EU Single Market, the SCN discussed the relocation cases of firms, activities or functions into the EU27. Cases were discussed before authorisations were granted by the respective NCA. The network has worked intensively over the last three years to foster convergence in the way NCAs approach the assessment of such authorisation requests.

The SCN held discussions on 250 cases, as well as more than 150 follow-up discussions on these cases, held several thematic discussions and gathered data that allowed it to identify trends in the behaviour of relocating firms. The exchanges of views and practical experiences contributed to raising awareness in NCAs on risks associated with the relocations and led to common approaches across NCAs.

With the SCN, ESMA has set up a coordination model that facilitated open discussions and allowed supervisors to reach practical common supervisory solutions. These practical solutions have complemented the guidance provided by ESMA through other convergence tools such as supervisory briefings or Q&As.

Next steps

The SCN will hold a final follow-up meeting before the end of the year to take stock of the relocation situation and close its work. ESMA will continue to work with NCAs in preparation for the end of the transition period.

Article – Coronavirus: practical advice for safe travel

In a debate on 28 May, members of the transport and tourism committee called for financial support for the tourism industry to be delivered quickly and suggested a dedicated budget for the sector.

Committee chair Karima Delli (Greens, France) said: "Holidays are upon us. What are we waiting for? More information is needed to know where people can go or can't go."

On 15 May, Parliament approved [relief measures for the transport sector to minimise the effects of the pandemic](#) on airlines, railways, road and shipping companies.

[*Find out more on what the EU is doing to fight coronavirus*](#)

Is it safe to stay in hotels?

Guests in hotels and other types of accommodation should respect social distancing when in common areas, as well as [infection prevention and control measures](#) such as coughing or sneezing into a paper tissue or bent elbow, hand hygiene and face masks.

[Tourism facilities should provide guests with clear information and guidance](#) prior to arrival and should have an action plan in place in case of infection in the establishment. They should also ensure regular cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces and good ventilation systems. Hotel staff should be trained in basic infection prevention and control.

[*Check out the timeline of EU measures against Covid-19*](#)

[Council adopts conclusions on the Afghanistan peace process and future EU support for peace and development in the country](#)

The EU stands by the people of Afghanistan

The Council adopted conclusions reaffirming the **EU's political commitment to support** the people of Afghanistan on their path towards **peace**, **security**, **stability**, **democracy**, **prosperity** and **self-reliance**. The EU will condition its future political and financial support to ensure that the republican, democratic and values-based principles are protected and further promoted. The conclusions also reiterate the EU's support for a **negotiated political settlement** leading to lasting peace and reconciliation, which must build on the democratic and **human rights** achievements of the past 19 years.

In its conclusions, the Council calls on the Taliban to build trust and confidence allowing the **prompt start of intra-Afghan negotiations** on the basis of the sufficient numbers of prisoners already released. The Taliban should respect both the spirit and letter of their bilateral Agreement with the government of the United States signed in Doha on 29 February 2020. In this regard, the **EU strongly condemns attacks on humanitarian and medical personnel and facilities**, including the horrific attack at the Dasht-e-Barchi hospital in Kabul of 12 May.

The EU, in line with the appeal made by the Secretary General of the United Nations on 23 March 2020, calls for an **immediate humanitarian ceasefire** to focus efforts on tackling the COVID-19 pandemic and to save lives on all sides. **All political actors** in Afghanistan should contribute to **mitigate the fallout** of the COVID-19 **pandemic**, and cooperate to create an overall context to tackle it.

The conclusions stress that the EU stands ready to provide political and financial support for the people of Afghanistan by:

(1) supporting the Geneva Ministerial Pledging Conference

(2) strengthening EU assistance for tackling the COVID-19 pandemic

(3) using all instruments available in full cooperation and complementarity with the UN, NATO and regional partners, to contribute to the stabilisation of the country

(4) supporting institutional reform and capacity-building, including in the

sectors of security and defence, based on the principles of democratic governance and on human rights

(5) assisting with the reintegration of former fighters as well as their families, the victims of conflict and the most vulnerable, including through specialised child protection programmes

(6) Promoting regional cooperation, stability, peace, trade and sustainable connectivity in line with "Connecting Europe and Asia – Building blocks for an EU Strategy" as adopted by the Foreign Affairs Council in October 2018

EASO publishes a COI report on the situation of Afghan refugees in Pakistan

Today, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) published the Country of Origin Information (COI) report "[Pakistan – Situation of Afghan refugees](#)". The report provides relevant information on the situation of registered and unregistered Afghan refugees in Pakistan.

Afghanistan has a long history of protracted international displacement, and historically, there has always been movement of persons and groups across the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The developments in the recent history of Afghanistan have generated successive waves of displacement of Afghan refugees to Pakistan. According to sources interviewed for this report in February 2020, although there is no reliable data available on the population of Afghan refugees in the country, nearly three million Afghan refugees (registered and unregistered) are currently being hosted by Pakistan. The majority of Afghan refugees in Pakistan are children and adolescents who are born and raised in the country.

The report provides a brief historical overview of Afghan migration to Pakistan. It describes the legal status of Afghans living in Pakistan and its impact on their ability to access education, employment, health services, housing, financial and communication services, and legal aid. Furthermore, the report provides information on the attitude of the Government of Pakistan as well as on the general attitude of Pakistan's population towards Afghan refugees.

As of mid-2019, [the majority of registered Afghan refugees continued to be hosted by Pakistan (1.4 million)](#), while Afghanistan remained the [second largest country of origin of refugees in the world](#), with 2.7 million refugees in the first half of 2019. Afghans continued to be the second most common citizenship of asylum applicants in the EU+ as of March 2020.

This report was drafted by a Country of Origin Information (COI) specialist from the Belgian Centre for Documentation and Research (Cedoca) in the Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons, in accordance with the [EASO COI Report Methodology](). It was reviewed by experts from France, Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless persons (OFPRA), Germany, Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), and ACCORD, the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation.

The information presented in this report results from desk research of public specialised paper-based and electronic sources. In addition, it draws on interviews conducted by the COI specialist from Cedoca with international organisations and local actors during its fact-finding mission in February 2020 in Islamabad and Peshawar.

Photo: © European Union/ECHO/Pierre Prakash

[EU greenhouse gas emissions kept decreasing in 2018, largest reductions in energy sector]()

The [official data]() submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) confirm that the EU Member States, together with the United Kingdom (UK), cut their greenhouse gas emissions by 2.1 % in 2018 compared to 2017. The EEA report '[Trends and drivers of EU greenhouse gas emissions]()' analyses the development in these data from 1990 to 2018.

Total greenhouse gas emissions in the EU stood at 4 392 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO_2e) in 2018, which is 23.2 % lower than in 1990. Over the same period, average emissions per EU citizen decreased from 12.2 tonnes CO2e to 8.9 tonnes CO2e. The EU reduction without the UK was 20.7 %.

per EU citizen in **1990**

per EU citizen in **2018**

Two thirds of the 2018 emission reduction took place in the heat and power sector, where emissions from coal burning decreased by almost 50 million tonnes and the use of renewables in electricity generation continued to grow. After four consecutive years of increases, emissions from road transport remained stable in 2018, compared with 2017.

The EEA analysis shows that the carbon intensity of the EU economy has more

than halved over the past three decades. For each Euro generated in the economy, the EU emitted 277 grams of CO_2 in 2018, compared with 582 g CO_2 per Euro in 1990. Emissions have decreased in almost all economic sectors, especially in energy supply, industry and the residential sector. In the transport sector, emissions have increased due to higher demand and despite climate policies and efforts to improve vehicles efficiency.

"The EEA data show that cutting greenhouse gas emissions does not need to harm the economy. To the contrary, Europe's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic calls for ambitious and sustainable investments that can rebuild our economy and contribute to a fair transition towards a climate-neutral Europe by 2050, thus creating the competitive jobs for the future. Strong mitigation to avoid the worst effects of climate change remains an absolute priority", said Hans Bruyninckx, EEA Executive Director.

Several factors have contributed to the emission reductions in the EU, the EEA report notes. These include EU and country-specific policies, the increase in the use of renewable energy, switching from coal to gas, improvements in energy efficiency, structural changes in European economies from industry towards services, temporary effects of economic recessions, and on average milder winters since 1990.

Note to editors

The analysis in this report does not yet take into account the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The first EEA estimates of 2020 greenhouse emissions in the EU will be available in the autumn of 2021.

The United Kingdom withdrew from the EU on 1 February 2020 but will apply EU law until the end of the transition period on 31 December 2020. Key provisions of Regulation (EU) No 525/2013 (Climate Monitoring Mechanism) apply to the United Kingdom in respect of greenhouse gases emitted during 2019 and 2020.