

Press Release

## EMN Annual Report explores trends on migration and asylum in 2021

**The European Migration Network (EMN) has released its Annual Report on Migration and Asylum, providing an overview of the key developments in the EU Member States, Norway and Georgia in 2021. While the COVID-19 crisis continued to have an impact on migration and asylum in 2021, political unrest exerted pressure on the asylum and reception systems. These challenges came in addition to persisting ones such as the need to update migration management systems and ensure the protection of refugees.**

Brussels, 15 June 2021

Several developments occurred in the areas of migration and asylum in 2021. EU Member States continued to experience the **effects of COVID-19** and to tackle challenges of the health crisis on integration, labour market needs and living conditions of migrants. Member States typically extended the right to stay to certain third-country nationals and introduced travel restriction measures. In asylum, measures were taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in reception centres.

During 2021, **the Belarus border crisis and the fall of Afghanistan's Government resulted in sudden increases in migrants** coming to the EU, including those seeking protection. In June 2021, following a geopolitical turmoil, Belarus started to facilitate the transit of migrants towards Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. This led to emergency measures in these EU countries including strengthened border surveillance while temporary measures were put forward at EU level to manage this emergency situation in a humane, orderly and dignified manner. Another significant development was the fall of Afghan government: as the Taliban returned to power in August 2021, most Member States engaged in evacuating and offering protection to Afghans.

**Increasing the efficiency and effectiveness for better migration management** was a common theme at EU and national level. The European Commission continued to develop a comprehensive approach in the areas of migration, asylum, integration and border management through progress on the Pact on Migration and Asylum. Member States undertook a wide range of legislative and organisational changes to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of migration policies and management. An increasing focus was placed **on innovation, simplification of processes and digitalisation of migration management**, such as digital visa and residence permit applications. In border management, several countries implemented large-scale EU information technology systems.

Member States also established various measures to **increase their attractiveness to third-country workers**, with a particular focus on attracting highly skilled and qualified workers but also other workers in specific areas facing labour shortages. At the same time, the **protection of asylum seekers and refugees** remained a priority at EU and national level during 2021.

**New forms of cooperation with third countries** were established both at EU and national level, not only to prevent irregular migration, but also in the area of skilled migration. The EMN itself opened its doors to Georgia and Moldova, who joined network as observer countries in March 2021.

## Background

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### The Report

- Title: “EMN Annual Report on Migration and Asylum 2021”.
- Period covered: The situation in 24 EU Member States, Norway and Georgia in 2021
- Subject: The EMN Annual Report provides a comprehensive overview of the migration and asylum situation and developments in EU Member States and Norway, as well as statistical data for the year 2021, where available at the time of publication of the report. Topics range from legal migration and integration to border control and return of third-country nationals, and the report presents a comprehensive overview of developments implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic across all of these migration areas.

### The European Migration Network (EMN)

The [European Migration Network \(EMN\)](#) is a Europe-wide network consisting of [National Contact Points \(NCPs\)](#) in the Member States as well as Norway, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova, providing information on migration and asylum. The EMN was officially set up in 2008 by the European Commission on behalf of the European Council in order to satisfy the need of a regular exchange of reliable information on migration and asylum related issues on a European level.

The report is the result of a collaboration of migration and asylum experts representing EMN contact points across the EU.

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EMN newsletter Quarterly: [https://next-ma.eu/site2/emn\\_bulletin?u=zSG2y&webforms\\_id=agaMk](https://next-ma.eu/site2/emn_bulletin?u=zSG2y&webforms_id=agaMk)