

Press review: 29th of July, 2010

EU's ageing population faces the increasing role of immigrant flows. In addition, Croatia is on its way to successful EU accession, ahead of Iceland. Elsewhere, the European Union agreed on aid for Somalia. Meanwhile, Sudan launched a human rights sub-forum, while South Africa leaders stressed women emancipation issues.

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EU Affairs

Immigration pushes EU population above 500 million

The population of the European Union surpassed 500 million at the beginning of this year. Eurostat said the EU gained 1.4 million residents in 2009, increasing the population of the 27-country bloc from 499.7 million to 501.1 million.

63% of the increase was due to net migration. The figures reinforce the growing role of immigrants in the EU, which has an ageing population. Italy saw the largest total number of immigrants of any EU country, Britain was second. Overall, population increased in nineteen EU countries and declined in eight. Turks and Moroccans topped the list of new EU citizens. The EU remains a popular destination for migrants mainly from Turkey, North Africa and Latin America, who are keen to stay long enough to become citizens of countries in the bloc, as their own countries are not in the Union.

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/socialeurope/immigration-pushes-eu-population-above-500-million-news-496717>

Enlargement, European Neighbourhood

Croatia will not have to wait for Iceland

Croatia closed two more chapters in its EU accession talks on Tuesday, the same day Iceland formally started its EU accession negotiations becoming the third membership candidate. The main idea was Croatia and Iceland to join the EU together. But this is no longer seen as a realistic possibility with Croatian accession talks, now having entered the final phase.

There is a high probability that Croatia could finish accession talks in the first half of next year. Iceland expects to start real talks mid next year and will not easily drop its own fisheries policy to accommodate the EU's common fisheries policy. There is also the process of screening of all chapters with Iceland, something that takes almost one year. Thus, Croatia is in a position to become the 28th EU member state, before Iceland. Nevertheless, the Croatian foreign ministry welcomed the start of EU accession talks with Iceland and expressed its readiness to provide help and support during the negotiation process and to cooperate when both countries are member states, as Iceland was the first country to recognize Croatia's independence.

<http://waz.euobserver.com/887/30546>

Development

Europe offers Somalia 35 million euro in aid

Europe offered 35 million euro to help millions of Somali people stricken by war, starvation and illness. The money was agreed by the European Union's executive commission. It is aimed at some 3.2 million Somalis estimated to need emergency assistance. The funds will be channelled into a wide range of humanitarian aid projects.

Somalia was also one of six drought-prone countries in the Horn of Africa awarded a total of 20 million euro by the Commission last month. African Union leaders agreed to send thousands of extra troops to reinforce its military contingent battling insurgents in Somali. The hard-line Shebab militia, whose leadership has pledged allegiance to Osama bin Laden, controls the majority of the country.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201007271137.html>

Sudan: Launch of human rights sub-forum

North Darfur Human Rights sub-forum was launched. It brought together representatives from the state government and the humanitarian community. It was formed in response to recommendations made by the African Union Panel on Darfur. The sub-forum aims at improving communication between the State and the humanitarian community on issues of human rights and the rule of law, including following up on cases of human rights violations and discussing joint projects and initiatives.

The eight government representatives in the forum include the State's Chief Prosecutor, Police Commissioners, Humanitarian Affairs Commissioner and the Advisor for Women and Children. Aid workers will be represented by the United Nations Country Team, UNAMID, and a host of national and international groups.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201007281045.html>

Disadvantaged Groups

South Africa: Women urged to play leadership role

Home Affairs Minister Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma has called on women to play a central role in South Africa's sustainable development. Speaking at an Annual African Women in Politics and Leadership Conference in Johannesburg, Dlamini Zuma said advancing and creating leadership opportunities for women was critical in all sectors of society.

The minister said working towards the emancipation of women was not an act of "charity" but an imperative for any nation if it has to develop to its full potential. The role of women in politics and parties required closer introspection. Dlamini added that South Africa had done relatively well in the elimination of racism or in the creation of a non racial society, though not doing so well in the creation of a non sexist and equal society. He stressed that more needs to be done for emancipation and women's rights.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201007281075.html>