



## Press Review on Asylum Policy, July 2017

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Since it's simply less work to just copy-paste them,  
dates follow the German notification (dd.mm.yy)

### News:

#### *View to Europe and the World*

- Michael Obert was in Libya and caught pictures of the prisoners' camps there. He reported for *titel, thesen, temperamente, ARD*. His statement: „This was hell for me.“ Libyan coast guard was promoted to the security guard of EU. It is supposed to be funded even more in order to expand the prisoners' camps.  
<http://www.daserste.de/information/wissen-kultur/ttt/videos/sendung-vom-09072017-video-102.html> (09.07.17)
- Again, a terror attack happened in Kabul. At least 24 people died yesterday, 42 were injured. The Taliban claimed to have committed the attack.  
<http://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/afghanistan-mehr-als-20-tote-bei-anschlag-in-kabul/20097570.html> (24.07.17)
- German government is about to finish a deal with the government of Guinea. Deporting rejected refugees is the focus of the agreement. Approximately 1,800 people of Guinean citizenship are obliged to leave Germany right now.  
<http://www.mdr.de/nachrichten/politik/inland/bundesregierung-plant-weiteres-abkommen-zur-rueckfuehrung-100.html> (25.07.17)
- Ever since an Italian state prosecutor accused NGOs who save lives in the Mediterranean of cooperating with traffickers, the public debate has not been calming down. German Minister of the Interior joined the voices of those who think that saving lives is somehow immoral. Doctors without borders' executive director, Florian Westphal, accuses de Maizière of irritating the public. According to him it should be much more important to speak about the 2,000 people that drowned in the sea while escaping this year already. De Maizière loses himself in absurd allegations. The NGOs would turn on their searchlights. They do, but not to cooperate with traffickers but rather to drag people out of the sea. They turn off their transponders. Also that they do, but not for the purpose of getting closer to the Libyan coast but rather for avoiding being hit by the Libyan coast guard taking aim. The same coast guard the EU member states are actually cooperating with. Critique towards de Maizière was also voiced by Greens and Lefts.  
<http://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2017-07/seenotrettung-aerzte-ohne-grenzen-kritik-thomas-de-maiziere> (19.07.17)

- Zeit* newspaper adds comprehensively that the NGOs' boats are not allowed to cross the border between the 22 sea miles coast line of Libya and international waters. The newspaper is able to prove that with records of the boats' traffic. Indeed, the traffickers assimilate to the presence of the NGOs. They know that they only have to provide cheap and unstable boats that only have to make the 22 sea miles. Only, the boats are overloaded and in such a terrible state that the passengers are immediately in distress, experts say. The accusations that the boats are actually offering themselves to the traffickers are rejected by the NGOs as cynical. First and foremost, Austria and Italy are voicing those accusations which are proven false by an Oxford study, already published in March 2017. More boats and saving actions do not lead to an increase in escape movements. *Zeit* is also able to prove that the boats of the authorities tend to remain close to islands such as Lampedusa, Malta and Sicily. The NGO boats, coordinated by Italian authorities, are left alone in front of the Libyan coast. Also transfers on open sea do not take place anymore. *Zeit* reminds that it was the EU-member states that did not extend Italy's saving mission Mare Nostrum but replaced it with the half-hearted missions Sophia and Triton.

Very recommendable to read with some graphs, among others the saving routes of NGOs as well as numbers of the drowned and saved ones in the Mediterranean.  
<http://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2017-07/seenotrettung-mittelmeer-fluechtlinge-boote-ngos-marine> (19.07.17)
- Meanwhile, Italian government is evaluating the option to issue Schengen visas for the people seeking protection and arriving in Italy. Italy would not accept to become "Europe's reception centre", says a secretary of the foreign ministry. Despite ever louder calls of Italy for European solidarity, German government sticks to Dublin deportations to the country. In the first quarter of 2017, 371 people were deported to Italy.  
<http://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/international/fluechtlingskrise-italien-droht-eu-staaten-mit-erteilung-von-visa-fuer-migranten/20076176.html> (18.07.17)  
<http://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/deutschland/fluechtlingspolitik-deutschland-haelt-an-dublin-rueckfuehrung-fest/20080880.html> (19.07.17)
- Mosul is being claimed as recaptured by Iraqi army after a three year regime of so-called Islamic State (IS). Approximately a million people fled the city. Those who remained are often homeless nowadays, wide parts of the city are destroyed. The United Nations accuse Iraqi Army not to have done something against an alleged war crime, resulting out of revenge and vigilante justice. According to the UN, 26 people were killed by soldiers of Iraqi army.  
[http://www.deutschlandfunk.de/mosul-nach-dem-is-kalifat-der-hunger-und-die-angst-vor-der.1773.de.html?dram:article\\_id=391331](http://www.deutschlandfunk.de/mosul-nach-dem-is-kalifat-der-hunger-und-die-angst-vor-der.1773.de.html?dram:article_id=391331) (18.07.17)  
<http://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/deutschland/hilfe-fuer-mosul-deutschland-investiert-in-wiederaufbau/20102496.html> (25.07.17)
- People from the East African states are the most among African refugees. They escape also with the knowledge about the prisoners' camps in Libya. A common report filed by "Joint Analysis and Strategy Centre on Illegal Migration" notes that.  
<http://www.dw.com/de/bericht-afrikanische-migranten-str%C3%B6men-weiter-nach-libyen/a-39710418> (16.07.17)
- The newly elected French government sketched its asylum and deportation policy. Approximately 40% of refugees living in France do not have access to state provided accommodations. 4,000 new places shall be created, in 2019, 3,500 more are supposed to follow, 5,000 more are supposed to be built for recognized refugees. Asylum requests shall be decided upon within a time period of six months and not within 14 as it is now the case. At the end stands will to "decisive deportations".  
<http://www.dw.com/de/frankreich-koordiniert-asylpolitik-neu/a-39658201> (12.07.17)

- Approximately 50 passengers of an airplane rejected to sit down before departure in Barcelona in order to prevent the deportation of a man to Senegal. Unfortunately, they could not succeed. The man was on board when the plane departed four and a half hours later.  
<http://www.n-tv.de/panorama/Passagiere-blockieren-Abschiebeflugzeug-article19938931.html>  
 (17.07.17)  
<http://www.faz.net/aktuell/gesellschaft/menschen/flughafen-in-barcelona-fluggaeste-meutern-gegen-abschiebung-15109444.html> (16.07.17)
- Polish president Andrzej Duda prevented a comprehensive modification of Polish judicial system by vetoing a law that had already passed Polish parliament. The national-conservative party PiS aimed to make the Polish state of law dependent upon its interests. Duda blocked two out of three laws: the government won't be able to control the Supreme Court as well as State Judicial Council. Nevertheless, the minister of justice will have the opportunity to fire all senior judges at the local courts without reason. The government announced to stick to its plans. Within a period of two months, it needs to adjust the laws. Thousands of people had protested against the end of the state of law in Poland.  
<https://www.tagesschau.de/ausland/polen-duda-veto-101.html> (24.07.17)  
[http://www.deutschlandfunk.de/polen-ueberraschte-reaktionen-nach-dudas-veto.1939.de.html?drn:news\\_id=772229](http://www.deutschlandfunk.de/polen-ueberraschte-reaktionen-nach-dudas-veto.1939.de.html?drn:news_id=772229) (24.07.17)

#### *Federal, State and Municipality Level*

- In the first six months of 2017, 90,389 refugees reached Germany. The Federal Agency for Migration and Escape (BAMF) decided upon 408,100 asylum requests in the same period of time. 21% received the refugee status, 17% subsidiary protection, 7% a deportation ban, 39% were rejected, 16% of the requests were not evaluated in content (e.g. due to Dublin regulation). 111,600 new requests were issued.  
<http://www.taz.de/Neue-Asylantraege-in-Deutschland/!5428024/> (07.07.17)
- It surely is desirable that an agency works quickly. It surely is desirable in the case of the BAMF. In between electronic files were introduced and communication goes via Intranet. With this, the agency is pioneer. That development turns out to be disastrous if quick data processing correlates with a sloppy decision practice. It turns out to be creepy if check ups of identity and dialects are made possible as well as access to the data of smartphones.  
<http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/asylverfahren-verwaltungsrichter-warnen-vor-zusammenbruch-a-1158807.html> (20.07.17)  
<http://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2017-07/asylverfahren-verwaltungsgericht-richter-ueberlastung-fluechtling> (21.07.17)
- More news from the BAMF: its vice president Ralph Tiesler met with the Head of the Chancellor's Office Peter Altmaier, asking for more time for the BAMF to decide upon 400.000 further asylum requests. However, the delay was not granted. Angela Merkel's reaction depends upon this, Altmaier must have said. *Zeit* newspaper received a note from the state secretary in the Ministry of the Interior, Emily Harber, informing BAMF's management that "it is BAMF's political obligation to quickly process the asylum requests, including old requests." The hearing and decision practice has been suffering by low quality for a long time now already. That affects refugees harshly. Administration courts' judges complain that way too many times they have to correct decisions. A previously announced revision of already decided requests never took place until now.  
<http://www.zeit.de/2017/29/bamf-asylpolitik-asylantraege-fluechtlinge-pruefung> (12.07.17)
- And even more BAMF-news: LGBTIQ refugees are being confronted with inappropriate questions by BAMF employees. *SZ* quotes questions out of hearing protocols, referring to the frequency of and the feelings during sexual intercourse. Often, rejections are reasoned

by claiming that the people affected could have hidden their sexuality in the country of origin. European Court of Justice classified that argumentation as illegal. Also, the German government (which the BAMF as a Ministry of Interior – Agency is part of) does not hold those expectations as acceptable. Critique was raised by the Green Party and the Association of Gays and Lesbians.

<http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/vorwurf-der-diskriminierung-peinliche-fragen-an-homosexuelle-asylbewerber-1.3580316> (10.07.17)

- Even though everyone celebrated the Marriage for Everyone – and for sure it was a historic decision – the other truth is that it became apparent once again that human rights only apply comprehensively when they are turned into citizens' rights. Once again the reinstatement of family reunification was rejected by the Committee for Internal Affairs of German Bundestag. Meanwhile, cases became public where family members of people who were in Germany already stroke off by themselves and drowned in the Aegean.  
<http://www.migazin.de/2017/06/29/innenausschuss-keine-entscheidung-bundestag-familiennachzug/> (29.06.17)
- BAMF stopped the decisions on asylum requests of people of Afghan citizenship until a new report on the security situation in the country is finished. PRO ASYL demands that all decisions issued ever since April 2016 need to be reevaluated. In that month, UNHCR spoke of a tightened security situation for the first time.  
<http://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2017-07/bamf-afghanistan-abschiebung-entscheidung-bundesregierung#comment-form> (01.07.17)
- The Ecumenical Federal Association "Asylum in the Church" demanded a more humane asylum policy, an end to the inadequate work of Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF) as well as a stop of deportation to Afghanistan and the Dublin-states Bulgaria, Hungary and Italy. Also chain deportations to Afghanistan via Norway were condemned by the association. All of those factors lead to an increase in the numbers of church asylum. Throughout Germany, church asylum was applied 309 times for at least 512 people. The church representatives report of an ever increasing pressure being exerted on them. The spectrum reaches from investigations to the eviction of church shelters. The association emphasizes the corrective character of church asylum which cannot be a solution for structural problems of asylum policy.  
<http://www.fr.de/rhein-main/fluechtlinge-zahl-der-kirchenasyle-steigt-a-1306989> (03.7.017)
- A study published by Otto-Brenner-Foundation shows that a big part of the media reported too much along the actions of political representatives in the field of asylum policy after the summer of 2015. Not enough attention was paid towards the perspective of people effected and supporters. Additionally, the term "Willkommenskultur" - highly appreciated by the government – was not questioned critically enough. *Taz* newspaper concluded: "In the face of an expected wave of xenophobic statements and racist resentments and new populisms, many journalists wanted to create a liberal, cosmopolitan counterbalance using the media. According to the results of that study, the plan backfired."  
<http://www.taz.de/Berichterstattung-ueber-Fluechtlingskrise/!5429014/> (23.07.17)
- Advice on "voluntary return" does not go hand in hand with advice on options resulting out of asylum and residence law. Among refugees an impression could arise that returning might be the only option. Critique was raised on that by Caritas, Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband and Sächsischer Flüchtlingsrat.  
<https://mephisto976.de/news/die-freiwillige-rueckkehr-ins-fluchtland-61338> (04.07.17)  
<http://www.lvz.de/Mitteldeutschland/News/Weniger-Fluechtlinge-kehren-freiwillig-aus-Sachsen-in-ihre-Heimatlaender-zurueck> (04.07.17)
- Saxon State Minister for Equality and Integration, Petra Köpping, supports a restriction on the place of living for refugees, being applied internally in Saxony. Refugees would have to

stay in the counties and major cities they've been sent to. It remains unclear how integration shall succeed in the xenophobic and/ or rural areas of Saxony where work is hard to find and young people have moved away a long time ago.

<http://www.sz-online.de/sachsen/kommt-die-wohnsitzauflage-fuer-fluechtlinge-3720097.html>

(05.07.17)

- Saxon Protestant Church Office notes an increase in the numbers of requests for church asylum in the state. Have it been 50 requests in 2016, the number has climbed to 70 in the first six months of 2017 already. 17 cases of church asylum were made possible by Protestant Church so far this year.  
<http://www.dnn.de/Mitteldeutschland/News/Mehr-Anfragen-von-Fluechtlingen-nach-Kirchenasyl>  
(04.07.17)
- Approximately a hundred people demonstrated for the Right to Stay for Everyone on Leipzig Augustusplatz last Saturday. People seeking protection raised their voices and spoke about reasons of escape, what they saw on the escape routes as well as about their experiences in Germany. The demonstration was organized by the local legal support fund Peperoncini e.V.

## Background and Opinion

- The Balkan route may officially be called closed but it is still active. This report by *Zeit* news paper shows that. By closing the borders, the traffickers' business just started to flourish. The higher the risk, the higher prices and profits. Even more people are crammed into trucks and buses under life-threatening conditions. An Austrian police detective explains how the traffickers' business is being organized: drivers and "groupers" are in direct contact with the refugees. "Checkers" would drive ahead of the vehicles with the refugees, looking for possible controls. Also they are in contact with the "head checkers", the organizers. Those structures have an international network and are well organized. Often, only the drivers are caught, maximum the "checkers". Refugees need to rely on those organizations and have to take the risk of being beaten up or to be kidnapped for ransom. According to Belgrad Centre for Asylum Seekers' Support, local traffickers are more active on the Balkan route. Refugees had to organize their escape step by step. Additionally, *Zeit* reports on violent assaults of Croatia police men at the border to Serbia. Until now, only violence at the Hungarian-Serbian border was made public.  
<http://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2017-07/fluechtlinge-balkanroute-schlepper-serbien> (04.07.17)
- Incredibly ridiculous and infamous quotes out of BAMF decisions were collected by Anja Seuthe in *Migazin*.  
<http://www.migazin.de/2017/07/03/asylbescheid-bisher-ist-kein-rueckkehrer-an-hunger-gestorben/>  
(03.07.17)
- A man is being tied to a tree by a self-proclaimed militia. The whole republic shifted its attention towards Arnsdorf in the previous year. That Shabas Al-Aziz was chronically sick, that uninterrupted medical treatment was not provided, that his caretaker was in AfD and well known in the brown swamps of Freital - all of that and much more *taz* newspaper found out in this comprehensive research. Even more so: the article shows the questions which should have been answered in a lawsuit concerning the militia. Only, the trial was abandoned.  
<http://www.taz.de/!5422411/> (13.07.17)
- 22 years after July 13<sup>th</sup> 1995, *MDR* reminds of the back then committed massacre of Srebrenica. Bosnian-Serbian militia executed approximately 8,000 men and boys of Muslim faith. The Netherlands were declared as partial responsible for the crime on the basis of

international law. Despite being locally present, their troops did not do anything when the genocide obviously was at the moment of breaking out. The Dutch government considers filing law suits against the partial reparations obliged to it. For the time being, former general Ratko Mladić stands in front of UN-War-Crimes-Tribunal in Den Haag. A verdict is to be expected at the end of 2017. The solution to “pacify” the Balkan by (re-)constructing nation states nowadays is one of the causes of escape for many people from these states. <http://www.mdr.de/heute-im-osten/Srebrenica-100.html> (11.07.17)

The press review is being published by:

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Saxon Refugee Council is being funded by:

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FÖRDERVEREIN PRO ASYL E.V.

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