



### EU:

## Agreement on Asylum and Migration

Late last week, the French interior minister returned from the meeting he was chairing with his EU counterparts to announce a "historic agreement". "Great progress in the Council of Ministers on the pact for asylum and migration," he described the deal.

There is a "broad majority" for two regulations intended to improve border protection and for a new "solidarity



mechanism to help member states that are under high pressure". In the coming

days, the French Council Presidency and the EU Commission will convene a meeting to translate the "Platform of Solidarity" into concrete action, he announced.

In autumn 2020, the Commission presented its idea for a reform of asylum and migration law. Since then, not much has happened, the member states were only able to agree on one step on which there was already consensus: upgrading the Asylum Support Office, EASO in short, to a real authority with more financial support, employees and competencies.

Now the way seems clear for two more steps. On the one hand: the Eurodac regulation, in which asylum seekers are recorded when they enter the Union territory for the first time. In the future, biometric data will be stored in addition to fingerprints. Above all, networking with other databases should make it possible to identify migration

movements. This is considered a "technical dossier", but for a long time the Mediterranean countries resisted removing individual elements from the migration pact.

The so-called screening regulation provides for a fast-track procedure at the external border to determine who has a chance of protection - and who does not. Some could be deported faster, others redistributed if the migration pressure on a country is particularly high.

States should take over the migrants that really need protection according to a fixed key. Those who are not willing to relocate should either provide financial help to a particularly burdened state on the external border or support projects in third countries that are suitable for stemming the flow of refugees to Europe. A minimum contribution is planned for this - also to prevent many states from opting for this path and thus reducing the costs for each individual.

German Interior Minister Nancy Faeser (SPD) confirmed the agreement in Luxembourg and spoke of "major progress".

She underlined that the declaration of solidarity was supported by "most member states", the "overwhelming majority". Only a few states had made negative comments, including the Austrian government. "Around twelve countries" are ready to take in refugees, including Bulgaria and Romania. In its coalition agreement, the government in Berlin has campaigned for such a „coalition of the willing.“ The benchmark is an ad hoc mechanism for boat people that was agreed by Faeser's predecessor Seehofer in autumn 2019.

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## Israel and Egypt new suppliers of gas to the EU

In its efforts to make its natural gas supply independent of Russia, the European Union is counting on cooperation between Egypt and Israel. Commission President Ursula von der Leyen was in Cairo last Wednesday

when Energy Commissioner Kadri Simson, Egyptian Petroleum Minister Tarek El-Molla and Israeli Energy Minister Karine



Elharrar signed a memorandum of understanding. It is planned that natural gas produced by Israel will be pumped to the Egyptian Mediterranean coast and liquefied there. It will then be shipped to the EU.

The agreement is "a big step forward in Europe's energy supply," praised von der Leyen. At the same time, she spoke of a "first step on the way to a Mediterranean-wide agreement". Elharrar said in a "historic moment, little Israel has become a significant player in the global energy market."

According to an estimate by the Israeli TV channel 12, natural gas exports to the EU could bring the state almost 280 million euros a year. There are large deposits of natural gas off the coast of Israel and neighboring countries. So far, however, Israel has not exported any gas to Europe; there are neither pipelines nor does Israel have liquefaction plants. Egypt, which has such facilities, aspires to become the regional hub for natural gas.

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## Germany

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### New intelligence reports presented

Right, left, Islamist, anti-Semitic, diffuse: extremism in Germany is getting more and more shades. This is shown by the report of the interior secret service for 2021, which was presented in Berlin. Right-wing extremism is now the greatest threat to democracy in Germany, as Thomas Haldenwang, President of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, stressed.

According to estimates by the Cologne federal authority, the following of Islamist groups has shrunk slightly for the first time in many years: by around 1.5 percent to 28,290 people. Accordingly, Salafist groups in particular lost their appeal. The Office for the Protection of the Constitution warns that jihadist-motivated individuals and small groups in particular still pose a great risk. The Salafist scene has become more heterogeneous, emphasized Federal Minister of the Interior Nancy Faeser: "However, the lower visibility of this scene does not reduce the potential for danger."



In contrast, the report by the State of Berlin's Office for the Protection of the Constitution increased the number of

extremist Islamists by 90 to a total of 2,260 compared to the previous year. The potential number of Salafists remains unchanged at around 1,100 people, while around 600 people continue to belong to the spectrum of political Islam.

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## Playing down Islamist dangers?

Although the German interior minister, when presenting the 2021 report for the Protection of the Constitution, described Islamism as a "serious threat" and had promised in the coalition agreement between the SPD, the Greens and the FDP to "resolutely" oppose Islamism, observers see no concrete action in this area. Rather, some signals from the past few months indicate that the coalition is neglecting the problem.



Die  
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A joint discussion paper by the Ministry of Family Affairs and the Interior for the planned Democracy Promotion Act is one example. It says: "Right-wing extremism, racism and anti-Semitism are just as much an attack on our social coexistence as antigypsyism, and Muslimophobia, antifeminism, queer hostility and other ideologies of inequality and discrimination." Islamic fundamentalism does not appear here.

Parliamentary State Secretary Sven Lehmann (Greens) said at the request of the conservative CDU/CSU faction in the Family Committee: There are no plans to explicitly name all forms of extremism in the law. This would later be "the subject of the program guidelines".

"In a legal regulation, prevention of Islamist extremism must be clearly named as a task," says a statement by the „Federal Working Group on Religiously based Extremism“, in which civil society organizations for the prevention of Islamism have joined forces. It finds it irritating that Islamism is left out here.

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## Ditib Imam pays homage to Hamas and Muslim Brotherhood

The German-Turkish mosque association Ditib employs an imam in Hamburg who praised a leading founder of the Islamist terrorist organization Hamas: In a Facebook post dated April 18, 2021, which has since been deleted, the imam Hasan Caglayan named Hamas founder Ahmad Yasin as one of "five beautiful people" with "messages and teachings for all those who care about the cause of Jerusalem". Yasin founded Hamas with the Muslim Brotherhood in 1986 and called for violent resistance and suicide bombings against Israelis.



According to the statement, the theologian was initially called back to Turkey, but he is now preaching again on German soil, in a mosque in Hamburg.

The Board of Directors of Ditib Nord confirmed: "Mr. Caglayan works as an imam in one of our communities. However, as a member of the Ditib Nord board, we are not aware of the postings that were pointed out to us." A review is being consulted internally. In response to a query more than three months later, the Board of Management stated that the investigations had not yet been completed and were nearing completion. The case will be "integrated and processed internally in a very broad-based review process".

According to information from the daily newspaper "Welt", Caglayan was also employed as deputy religious attaché at the Turkish Consulate General in Hamburg last year. The religious attachés oversee the Ditib imams and are controlled by the Turkish Foreign Ministry.

## **Austria**

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### **More Anti-Muslim acts in Austria**

In its seventh report on anti-Muslim racism, the „Austrian Documentation and Advice Center for Anti-Muslim Racism“ came to the conclusion that slightly fewer attacks on people perceived as Muslim were reported last year. However, while fewer assaults were reported in face-to-face interactions, the number of cases online increased. In 2021, there were almost twice as many attacks online as offline.

The report records 1,061 cases of anti-Muslim racism in 2021 (up from 1,402 cases in 2020). However, these are only those



attacks that have been

reported or discovered through media monitoring. The number is not representative of all cases that have actually occurred, and a higher number of unreported cases can be assumed.

The documentation and advice center also points out that anti-Muslim racism does not only come from right-wing extremist groups, but is a cross-border social problem. The problem in general is increasing.

The anti-Muslim Austrian policy played a major role in this. Up to 31 percent of the reported or observed cases come from politicians during political official acts. Incitement to violence on the Internet particularly often coincided with political events.

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### **Austrian intelligence agency identifies Islamist terror cell in Vienna**

With the help of domestic and foreign authorities, the Office for the Protection of the Constitution has identified a suspected

IS cell in Austria that is linked to plans for attacks in connection with major events in Europe.

According to the Ministry of the Interior, the IS supporters found in Austria are from Iraq.



As has been established, other members of the network are also located in other European countries. It also turned out that the network financed IS from Austria. In this context, the Directorate for State Security and Intelligence (DSN) is also investigating prohibited terrorist financing.