

EASO publishes a COI report on Iraq: Key socio-economic indicators for Baghdad, Basra and Erbil

Today, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) published a Country of Origin Information (COI) Report on Iraq. The report is titled Key socio-economic indicators for Baghdad, Basra, and Erbil. This report is a part of a series of Iraq reports that will be produced in 2020. These reports cover the security situation, key socio-economic indicators in Baghdad, Basra, and Erbil, and targeting of individuals. The reports provide information relevant for international protection status determination for Iraqi asylum seekers and will be used to inform the update of the chapter on Internal Protection Alternative within the EASO Country Guidance on Iraq 2020 update.

The report, [EASO COI Report – Iraq: Key socio-economic indicators](#), should be read in conjunction with the other reports that will be published later.

Iraqi applications for international protection in the EU+ have been decreasing since 2016. Nevertheless, Iraqi nationals ranked fifth among the most common citizenships in the EU+ in 2019 with over 30 000 applications. In the first quarter of 2020, Iraqis lodged some 6 100 applications, fewer than in the first quarter of 2019. Subsequently, the number decreased even more as asylum authorities in EU+ countries implemented restrictive measures to halt the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, in the first six months of 2020, Iraqi nationals lodged just under 8 500 applications in EU+ countries, almost half compared to the same period in 2019. Nevertheless, Iraq kept the fifth position among the most common countries of origin. In the first six months of 2020, approximately 11 900 first-instance decisions were issued on Iraqi applicants, with a recognition rate for EU-regulated types of protection at 38 %. The number of pending cases at first instance has gradually decreased over the last six months, so that in the end of June 2020 there were some 15 800 cases awaiting a decision. Germany has been the main destination country for Iraqi applicants: from April 2019 to March 2020 almost half of all Iraqi applications in the EU+ were lodged in Germany.

The [EASO COI report: Iraq – Key socio-economic indicators](#) provides information on key socio-economic indicators in Iraq, focusing on Baghdad, Basra and Erbil. It highlights aspects of demographics, humanitarian context, IDPs/returnees, women, children, support networks, documents, and impact of COVID-19. Relevant indicators include the general economic situation, access to employment and livelihoods, poverty, food and water security, housing and living conditions, access to health care, and access to education.

The report was drafted by the EASO COI Sector in accordance with the [EASO COI Report Methodology](#), and was reviewed by the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD), the Polish Office for Foreigners' COI Unit, and the Dutch Ministry of Justice's Office for Country Information and Language Analysis.

The report can be downloaded from the EASO COI Portal on the following [link](#).

[Child rights handbook now also in Georgian](#)

[The handbook](#) aims to illustrate how European law and case law accommodate the specific interests and needs of children.

It is also in English, Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish and Swedish.

[Hong Kong: Statement by the Spokesperson on the arrest of Joshua](#)



The arrest of Hong Kong pro-democracy activist Joshua Wong on 24 September is the latest in a troubling series of arrests of pro-democracy activists since the summer. These arrests warrant very careful scrutiny by the independent judiciary.

The European Union reiterates that an independent judicial system, operating free of political influence and consideration, is a cornerstone of Hong Kong's autonomy under the one country, two systems principle and is protected by the Basic Law.

The EU has pointed out that developments in Hong Kong call into question China's will to uphold its international commitments, undermine trust and impact EU-China relations. On 28 July, the Council [announced a series of measures](#) and asked the High Representative to review the implementation of the national security law, its effects on rights and freedoms and the business environment in Hong Kong, and the impact of the EU response package before the end of year.

[Austria, Sweden, Finland: Borealis receives EIB loan for development of circular economy solutions for plastics](#)



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- EIB grants €250 million in funding for Borealis's research, development and innovation (RDI) programme
- Loan to boost Borealis's research and development efforts in propelling the industry towards plastics circularity
- Borealis's corporate sustainability strategy in close alignment with goals of European Green Deal and EU Plastics Strategy

The European Investment Bank (EIB) and Borealis have successfully closed a benchmark financing agreement that supports the Borealis research, development and innovation (RDI) programme in the circular economy sphere. The EIB will provide a €250 million loan supporting Borealis' multi-year investment programme in the area of plastics circularity, in line with its objectives to support innovation, climate action and sustainability. The loan enables Borealis to intensify the [development of novel, polyolefins-based circular solutions](#) at its Innovation Centres in Austria, Sweden and Finland. Polyolefins produced by Borealis are used in a wide range of applications in consumer products, packaging, power transmission cabling, and industrial and construction materials.

As a leading provider of innovative polyolefins solutions, Borealis aims to make its own core business more circular. The circular economy is one of three key areas in the new Borealis 2035 Group Strategy which was announced earlier this year. Borealis has been at the forefront of industry efforts to accelerate the transformation to a circular economy of plastics. Its proprietary Borstar®, Borlink™ and Borceed™ technologies have recently been enriched by [Borcycle™](#), an evolving technology that enables the production of high-quality recycled polyolefins (rPOs), and [the Borenewables™](#), a portfolio of circular polyolefins produced with renewable feedstock derived entirely from waste and residue streams.

Borealis has already begun working with value chain partners in recent years to develop and launch innovative, value-adding circular solutions in a variety of industries, including energy, automotive and consumer packaging. Borealis also aims to integrate an ever larger share of recycled plastics in its products.

The European Investment Bank (EIB) is the long-term lending institution of the European Union and owned by its Member States. It provides long-term capital and advisory support for sound investments that contribute towards EU policy goals. The European Investment Bank Group is one of the largest public supporters of innovation in the European Union. Since 2000, the Group has invested over €210 billion in innovation and skills in the European Union and beyond in order to advance innovation and address the social and economic challenges of today and tomorrow. To help tackle climate change, the EIB Group will also aim to support €1 trillion of investments in climate action and environmental sustainability in the critical decade from 2021 to 2030. This also includes circular economy projects. Over the past five years (2015-2019), the EIB has provided around €2.5 billion in loans to co-finance more than 100 circular projects, and stands ready to do more to help meet the lending needs of the circular economy transition.

"We are exceedingly pleased to be able to boost our research and innovation activities in Europe thanks to the EIB," says Alfred Stern, Borealis CEO. "It is good to have strong partners who share our belief in the importance of re-inventing for more sustainable living."

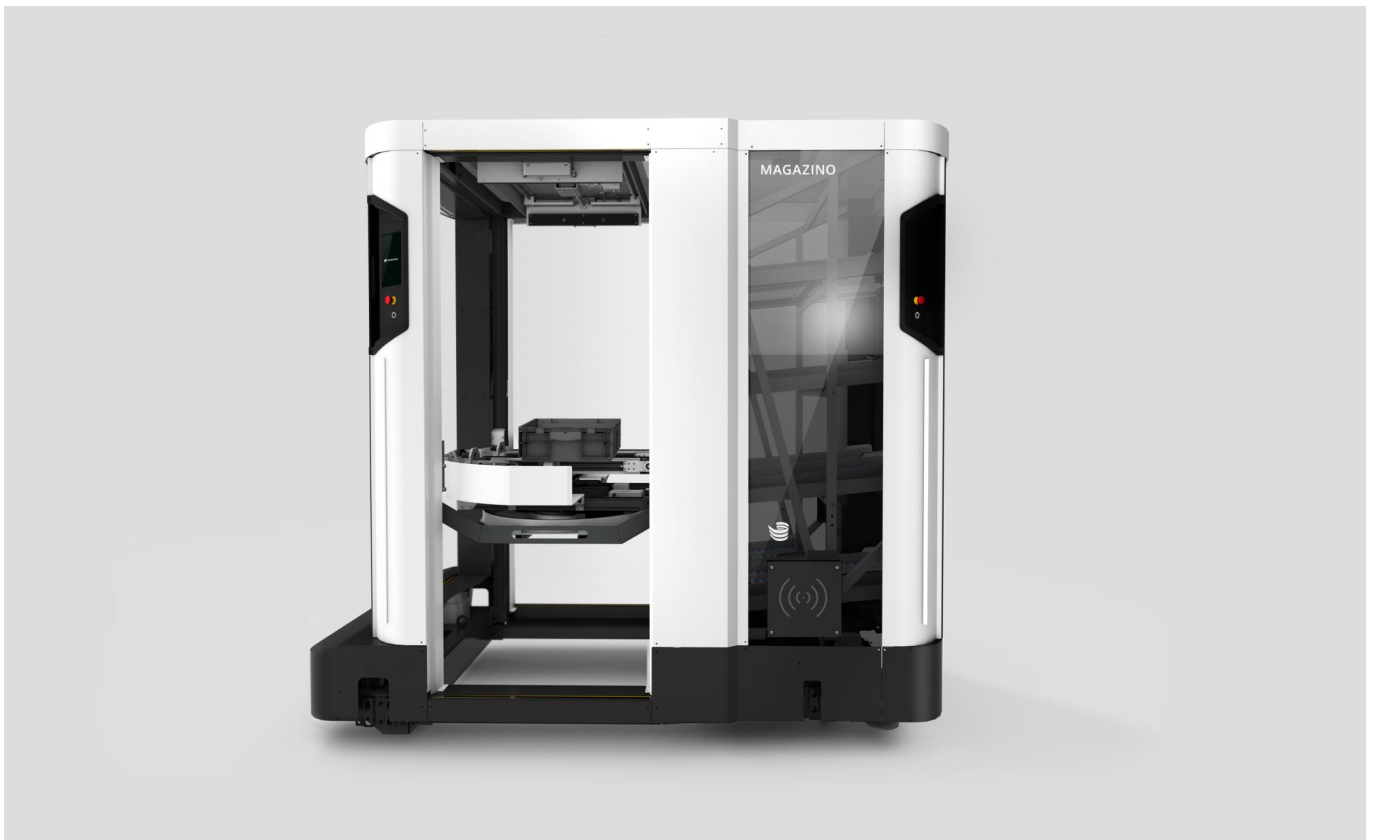
"The promotion of circular solutions in the polyolefins industry is aligned with our goals to accelerate the transition to a circular economy, including for plastics, and to support cutting-edge innovation," explains Ambroise

Fayolle, EIB Vice-President. “We are happy to continue and intensify our collaboration with Borealis AG by signing our largest transaction together so far. As the EU’s climate bank, we are eager to support private sector partners that are committed to environmental sustainability.”

About Borealis

Borealis is a leading provider of innovative solutions in the fields of polyolefins, base chemicals and fertilizers. With its head office in Vienna, Austria, the company currently has more than 6 900 employees and operates in over 120 countries. Borealis generated €8.1 billion in sales revenue and a net profit of €872 million in 2019. Mubadala, through its holding company, owns 64% of the company, with the remaining 36% belonging to Austria-based OMV, an integrated, international oil and gas company. Borealis provides services and products to customers globally, in collaboration with Borouge, a joint venture with the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC), and with Baystar™, a joint venture with Total in Texas, USA. www.borealisgroup.com

Germany: Magazino raises €21 million to expand robot software ACR0S.AI on third-party hardware



The robotics company Magazino has closed a Series B financing round of €21 million. Jungheinrich AG and the European Investment Bank (EIB) are leading the round, with existing investors also participating. The capital raised will be used to expand international sales activities and above all to accelerate the expansion of the "ACROS.AI" software stack – a software platform for intelligent robots developed by Magazino that is also used on third-party hardware.

At the same time, Jungheinrich and Magazino agreed on a broad strategic cooperation and intend to combine their skill sets in the field of mobile automation.

"Magazino is a highly innovative young company that has outstanding skills in the area of navigation and control software for mobile automation. This investment chimes with our strategy in the field of automation and will make a significant contribution to the accelerated expansion of our business with automated trucks", says Dr Lars Brzoska, Chairman of the Board of Management of Jungheinrich AG.

Automation is one of the biggest growth drivers in the intralogistics sector. Double-digit growth rates are expected in this segment in the coming years. This trend is driven above all by the persistently strong growth in online trade and the global shortage in logistics specialists, particularly forklift operators.

"Jungheinrich's investment in Magazino demonstrates the high market demand for our robotics software ACROS.AI and our robots. With it, Magazino will take on a central role in software in the rapidly growing market for mobile robotics", says Frederik Brantner, CEO and Co-Founder of Magazino.

In addition to the investments made by the existing shareholders and Jungheinrich AG, the European Investment Bank (EIB) is providing Magazino GmbH with financing of up to €12 million. The investment from the EU bank is secured by a guarantee from the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI). EFSI is at the heart of the Investment Plan for Europe, under which the EIB and the European Commission work together as strategic partners to channel private capital into projects that strengthen the sustainability and competitiveness of the European economy. In many of these transactions, EIB involvement has an important signalling effect to private investors, whose risk is often significantly reduced by the EU bank's in-depth analysis and involvement.

"Our investment supports a young, medium-sized company which, with its focus on artificial intelligence and automation, is of particular strategic value for the EU", said Ambroise Fayolle, EIB Vice-President responsible for business in Germany. "These sectors are to a large extent knowledge-based and crucial for the future innovative capacity of European industry. They make our economy less prone to crises. I am particularly pleased that in such a challenging year we are promoting a project that benefits the company itself but can also initiate new developments with its customers and partners."

European Commissioner for the Economy, Paolo Gentiloni, said: "The European

Commission is committed to helping our SMEs to grow and invest in innovation. That is exactly what we are doing through the EFSI guarantee for Magazino. With their cutting-edge intelligent robots for warehouse logistics, Magazino is a true protagonist of the digital transition that offers such immense opportunities.”

Background information

About Magazino

[Magazino GmbH](#) develops and builds intelligent, mobile robots that perceive their environment and make their own decisions. These autonomous robots work alongside people and make processes in e-commerce, fashion and production logistics more flexible and efficient than ever before. With over 100 employees in Munich, Magazino is the largest advanced robotics team in Europe. Magazino’s investors include Körber AG, Zalando and Fiege Logistik.

About Jungheinrich

Founded in 1953, [Jungheinrich](#) ranks among the world’s leading solutions providers for the intralogistics sector. With a comprehensive portfolio of material handling equipment, automatic systems and services, Jungheinrich is able to offer customers tailored solutions for the challenges posed by Industry 4.0. The Hamburg-based group is represented worldwide in 40 countries by its own direct sales companies and in approximately 80 other countries through partner companies. Jungheinrich employs 18 000 people worldwide and generated Group revenue of €4.07 billion in 2019. Jungheinrich shares are listed on the SDAX.