

Commission presents options for reforming the Common European Asylum System

And developing safe and legal pathways

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USPA NEWS - The European Commission is launching the process for a reform of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), presenting: options for a fair and sustainable system for allocating asylum applicants among Member States.

A further harmonization of asylum procedures and standards to create a level playing field across Europe. Also thereby reduce pull factors inducing measures to reduce irregular secondary movements; and a strengthening of the mandate of the European Asylum Support Office (EASO). At the same time, the Commission is setting out measures to ensure safe and well-managed pathways for legal migration to Europe. First Vice-President Frans Timmermans said: "The refugee crisis has shown the weaknesses in our Common European Asylum System. Let there be no doubt: those who need protection must continue to receive it, and they should not have to put their lives in the hands of people smugglers. But the current system is not sustainable."^[1]

"Different national approaches have fuelled asylum shopping and irregular migration, while we have seen in the ongoing crisis that the Dublin rules have placed too much responsibility on just a few Member States. In the immediate term we have to apply the existing law to stabilise the situation. Beyond that, we need a sustainable system for the future, based on common rules, a fairer sharing of responsibility, and safe legal channels for those who need protection to get it in the EU," added Timmermans.

Migration and Home Affairs Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos said that "human mobility will be an inherent feature of the 21st century. To address this challenge, Europe needs to set up a robust and effective Common European Asylum System, including Dublin, that is fair for Member States, EU citizens, migrants and countries of origin and transit. While the EU will continue to invest in its workforce and address unemployment, Europe also needs to enhance legal and safe channels for people who come into the EU, whether it is for protection or to work."^[2]

"Europe needs to attract talent from abroad to support its economic growth. Such reforms are a necessary complement to the actions undertaken to reduce irregular flows to and within Europe, and protecting our external borders. Finally, diversity is increasingly becoming a defining element of many communities and cities in the EU "" we should embrace it and turn it into an opportunity through innovative integration policies," Avramopoulos said.

As part of the implementation of the European Agenda on Migration, this Communication sets out the different paths to move towards a more humane and efficient European asylum policy, as well as a better managed legal migration policy. Based on the feedback it receives to this Communication, the Commission will then come forward with appropriate proposals.

Building a fair and sustainable common asylum policy

The large-scale, uncontrolled arrival of migrants and asylum seekers has put a strain not only on many Member States' asylum systems, but also on the Common European Asylum System as a whole. The volume and concentration of arrivals has exposed in particular the weaknesses of the Dublin System, which establishes the Member State responsible for examining an asylum application based primarily on the first point of irregular entry. The differing treatment of asylum seekers across Member States has further exacerbated the problem of irregular secondary movements.

The Commission has identified five priority areas where the Common European Asylum System should be structurally improved: Establishing a sustainable and fair system for determining the Member State responsible for asylum seekers; achieving greater convergence and reducing asylum shopping; preventing secondary movements within the EU; a new mandate for the EU's asylum agency, and reinforcing the Eurodac system.

Ensuring and enhancing safe and legal migration routes

In April 2014, in Malta, Jean-Claude Juncker presented as part of his election campaign a five-point plan on migration, including a call for Europe to show more political determination when it comes to legal migration. The EU must allow people in need of international protection to arrive in the EU in an orderly, managed, safe and dignified manner, as part of the shared responsibility of the international community. In addition, it is necessary to better position the EU to fill talent and skills gaps and address demographic challenges through a proactive labour migration policy.

The Commission will work on a number of measures concerning legal migration routes to Europe and integration policies: a structured resettlement system; a reform of the EU Blue Card Directive; measures to attract and support innovative entrepreneurs, who can boost economic growth and help create jobs; a REFIT evaluation of the existing legal migration rules, with a view to streamlining and simplifying the current rules for different categories of third-country nationals to reside, work or study in the EU, and pursuing close cooperation with third countries, as part of existing policy dialogues and operational cooperation under the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM) to ensure a more effective management of migratory flows.

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