



Commission presents options for reforming the Common European Asylum System and developing safe and legal pathways to Europe

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Today 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 harmonisation of asylum procedures and standards to create a level playing field across Europe and 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. 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."*

Migration and Home Affairs Commissioner **Dimitris Avramopoulos** said: *"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. 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."*

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:** To deal better with a high number of arrivals and ensure a fair sharing of responsibility, the Commission could propose to amend the Dublin Regulation, either by streamlining and supplementing it with a corrective fairness mechanism or by moving to a new system based on a distribution key.
- **Achieving greater convergence and reducing asylum shopping:** The Commission intends to

propose a further harmonisation of asylum procedures, to ensure a more humane and equal treatment across the EU and reduce pull factors that draw people to a small number of Member States. The Commission could propose a new Regulation to replace the Asylum Procedures Directive, and a new Regulation to replace the Qualification Directive. Targeted modifications of the Reception Conditions Directive could also be proposed.

- **Preventing secondary movements within the EU:** To ensure that the Dublin System is not disrupted by abuses and asylum shopping, the Commission could propose measures to discourage and sanction irregular secondary movements. In particular, certain rights could be made conditional upon registration, fingerprinting and stay in the EU country assigned to the applicant.
- **A new mandate for the EU's asylum agency:** The Commission could propose to amend the European Asylum Support Office's mandate so it can play a new policy-implementing role as well as a strengthened operational role. This could include operating the distribution mechanism under a reformed Dublin System, monitoring the compliance of Member States with EU asylum rules, identifying measures to remedy shortcomings, and a capacity to take operational measures in emergency situations.
- **Reinforcing the Eurodac system:** To support the application of a reformed Dublin System, the Commission could propose to adapt the Eurodac system and could also propose to expand its purpose, facilitating the fight against irregular migration, better retention and sharing of fingerprints, and support to returns.

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:** Building on existing initiatives, the Commission will set out a proposal to frame the EU's policy on resettlement. This proposal will put in place a horizontal mechanism with common EU rules for admission and distribution, on the status to be accorded to resettled persons, on financial support, and on measures to discourage secondary movements.
- **A reform of the EU Blue Card Directive:** Strengthening its role as an EU-wide system by developing a harmonised approach including more flexible admission conditions, improved admission procedures and enhanced rights could be put in place for highly-skilled third country nationals.
- **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.
- **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.

The Commission will also come forward with an **EU Action Plan on Integration**.

Background

The European Commission has been consistently and continuously working for a coordinated European response on the refugees and migration front.

Upon taking office, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker entrusted a Commissioner with special responsibility for Migration, Dimitris Avramopoulos, to work together with the other Commissioners, coordinated by First Vice-President Frans Timmermans, on a new policy on migration as one of the 10 priorities of the Political Guidelines.

On 13 May 2015, the European Commission proposed a far-reaching strategy, through the [European Agenda on Migration](#), to tackle the immediate challenges of the ongoing crisis situation, as well as to equip the EU with the tools to better manage migration in the medium and long term in the areas of irregular migration, borders, asylum and legal migration.

Three implementation packages under the Agenda, on [27 May](#) 2015, on [9 September](#) 2015 and [15 December](#) 2015 have already been adopted.

For More Information

[Communication: Towards a Reform of the Common European Asylum System and Enhancing Legal Avenues to Europe](#)

[FACTSHEET: The Dublin System](#)

[FACTSHEET: The Common European Asylum System](#)

[FACTSHEET: Legal Migration](#)

[The European Agenda on Migration](#)

[Directorate-General for Home Affairs Website](#)

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Press contacts:

[Markus LAMMERT](#) (+ 32 2 298 04 23)

[Natasha BERTAUD](#) (+32 2 296 74 56)

[Tim McPHIE](#) (+ 32 2 295 86 02)

[Tove ERNST](#) (+32 2 298 67 64)

General public inquiries: [Europe Direct](#) by phone [00 800 67 89 10 11](#) or by [email](#)