

Towards a reform of the Common European Asylum System

Europe is confronted with the worst refugee and migration crisis since World War II. Pushed by violence and poverty in the Middle East and North Africa, and pulled by prospects of refuge and a better life in Europe, more than 1.3 million asylum-seekers and economic migrants arrived irregularly in the EU in 2015. The unprecedented migratory pressure on Europe has exposed the need for reform of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), as well as for greater solidarity and fairer sharing of responsibility between Member States.

The European Commission's April communication

With its [communication](#) of 6 April 2016, the Commission [launched](#) a discussion on different options for reforming the CEAS and developing safe and legal pathways to Europe. The Commission considers that there are five priority areas in which the CEAS should be structurally improved, and is expected to adopt proposals on all of these on 4 May 2016.

Establishing a sustainable and fair system for determining the Member State responsible for asylum-seekers

The Commission will 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.

Reinforcing the Eurodac system

The Commission will propose to adapt the [Eurodac system](#) to reflect changes in the Dublin mechanism and expand its purpose beyond asylum.

Achieving greater convergence in the EU asylum system

The Commission will propose a new regulation establishing a single common asylum procedure in the EU and replacing the [Asylum Procedures Directive](#), a new qualification regulation replacing the [Qualification Directive](#) and targeted modifications of the [Reception Conditions Directive](#).

Preventing secondary movements within the EU

The Commission will include strengthened procedural measures in its proposals under the new asylum procedures and qualification regulations as well as the Reception Conditions Directive, to discourage and sanction irregular moves to other Member States.

Strengthening the mandate of the EU's asylum agency

The Commission will propose to amend [EASO's mandate](#) so it can play a new policy-implementing role as well as a strengthened operational role. This also entails providing sufficient financial resources and legal means for that purpose.

Stakeholders' views

[ECRE](#) points out that the Commission's proposals fail to take into account the preferences of asylum-seekers. [Human Rights Watch](#) is worried that the Commission's communication emphasises restrictive, even punitive, steps to deter asylum-seekers' access to the EU and their movement between EU countries. [The British Refugee Council](#) believes that any system aimed at sharing responsibility for protecting refugees must put their best interests first, and be preference-based, rooted in respect for fundamental rights and based on incentives rather than coercion. [Amnesty International](#) is convinced that any European asylum system reform must uphold the right to asylum, ensure that asylum-seekers are distributed fairly across all EU Member States, that their human rights are respected and that they will be welcomed and integrated into their host communities effectively.

