

## European Commission: Home Affairs

EUROPA European Commission Home Affairs Policies Asylum

DG HOME at a glance

Policies

Documentation centre

Newsroom

Tenders

Funding

Commissioners

### Asylum – Building a common area of protection and solidarity

#### Asylum

Identification of applicants (EURODAC)

Examination of applications (Dublin)

Reception conditions

Common procedures

Refugee status

Temporary protection

External aspects

Statistics

#### Immigration

Internal Security Strategy

Borders & Visas

Crisis & Terrorism

Organised crime & Human trafficking

Police cooperation

International affairs

Agencies

Asylum is granted to people fleeing persecution or serious harm in their own country and therefore of international protection. Asylum is a fundamental right; granting it is an international obligation recognised in the [1951 Geneva Convention on the protection of refugees](#). In the EU, where there internal borders and countries share the same fundamental values, States need to work together common solutions that guarantee high standards of protection for refugees. Procedures must at the time be fair and effective throughout the EU and impervious to abuse. With this in mind, the EU have committed to establishing a Common European Asylum System by 2012.

#### Establishing the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) – The first phase

Between 1999 and 2005, several legislative measures harmonising common minimum standards for asylum adopted, the four most important ones being:

[Directive on reception Conditions for asylum-seekers](#)

[Directive on qualifications for becoming a refugee or a beneficiary of subsidiary protection status](#)

[Directive on Asylum Procedures](#)

The 'Dublin' Regulation, which determines which EU State is responsible for examining an asylum application

Also important was the strengthening of financial solidarity with the creation of the [European Refugee Fund](#). And in 2001, the [Temporary Protection Directive](#) allowed for a common EU response to a mass influx of displaced persons unable to return to their country of origin. The [Family Reunification Directive](#) also applies to refugees.

#### Three pillars

After the completion of the first phase, a period of reflection was necessary to determine the direction in which the CEAS should develop. A 2007 [Green Paper](#) was the basis for a large public consultation. The responses, together with the results of an evaluation of how existing instruments were implemented, were the basis for the European Commission's [Policy Plan on Asylum](#), presented in June 2008. As stated in the Policy Plan, three pillars underpin the development of the CEAS:

- 1. Bringing more harmonisation to standards of protection by further aligning the Member States' legislation.** This requires amendments to the three most important EU asylum directives: dealing with [conditions](#) for asylum seekers, [asylum procedures](#) and [standards for qualification as refugees or persons international protection](#).
- 2. Effective and well-supported practical cooperation.** The [European Asylum Support Office](#) will bring all activities related to practical cooperation on asylum under its roof, notably in relation to a common approach to Country of Origin Information and to the common European Asylum Curriculum. It will also coordinate Asylum Support Teams deployed to Member States in need of support.
- 3. Increased solidarity and sense of responsibility among EU States, and between the EU and countries.** It is necessary to improve the "Dublin" system (including [Eurodac](#)) and establish mechanisms so that adequate support, with strengthened impact, can be offered to EU States whose systems are under pressure. Under this pillar, collaboration between the EU and non-EU countries intensified, for example through [Regional Protection Programmes](#) and [Resettlement](#).

This approach has been substantiated at the highest political level – the European Council – with the [Immigration and Asylum](#) of 2008 and the [Stockholm Programme](#) of 2009. A Commission [Action Plan](#) in 2008 lists specific measures the Commission would take until 2014 so as to implement commitments made under the Stockholm Programme.



DIRECTORATE-  
GENERAL

Last update: 30 June 2011 | [Back to top](#)