



EUROPEAN COMMISSION - PRESS RELEASE

Qualification Directive: the Commission welcomes the agreement on a key element of the asylum package

Brussels, 27 October 2011 – Today the European Parliament approved the Commission's proposal to amend the Qualification Directive which will enhance the rights granted to refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection in the EU. The Directive guarantees uniform rights when it comes to health care and access to the labour market.

"This is an important milestone in the ambition to get all the asylum proposals of the Commission agreed by next year, as requested by the European Council in the Stockholm program. The agreement also sends a strong political signal on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the UN Refugee Convention. The current events in our neighbourhood show that we must have safe, transparent and efficient procedures for those who turn to us and seek protection." said Cecilia Malmström, Commissioner for Home Affairs.

Today's vote allows for a first reading agreement with the Council which now needs to formally adopt the modified Directive. This will happen in the coming weeks.

Background

The Commission submitted its proposal for the recast of the Directive on qualification and status of persons in need of international protection in October 2009 ([IP/09/1552](#)).

It proposed to clarify important concepts, such as "actors of protection", "internal protection" or "membership of a particular social group", in order to enable national authorities to apply the criteria more robustly and to identify persons in need of protection more quickly. Furthermore, the Commission proposed to approximate the rights granted to refugees and to beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, in particular regarding the duration of residence permits, access to social welfare, health care and the labour market. This will also entail a reduction of the costs and administrative burdens linked to the management of different protection statuses.

An agreement on a balanced compromise text was found in June 2011, following negotiations between the European Parliament (EP) and the Council. Today the EP endorsed this compromise text, the key elements of which include:

- a **clarification of various concepts** to incorporate the established case-law of the Court of Justice of the European Union and of the European Court of Human Rights;
- the commitment to take the **best interests of the child** and **gender-related aspects** into account in the assessment of asylum applications and in the implementation of the rules on the content of international protection,

- the approximation of the **rights granted** to refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection with regard to access to employment and to health care;
- extending the period of validity of a **residence permit** issued to a beneficiary of subsidiary protection upon the renewal of the initial residence permit, to two years, following the granting of status.

These additional amendments will further improve the quality of the decision-making processes in asylum matters, ensure the respect of human rights and facilitate the integration of beneficiaries of protection in host societies.

For more information

Homepage of Cecilia Malmström, Commissioner for Home Affairs

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/malmstrom/welcome/default_en.htm

Homepage DG Home Affairs:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/index_en.htm

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