



# REVISION OF EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was developed in 2004 to prevent new dividing lines from emerging between the enlarged EU and its neighbours, and to strengthen the prosperity, stability and security of all. The policy is based on the values of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and applies to 16 of the EU's closest neighbours: Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova,

Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine. The ENP is chiefly a bilateral policy between the EU and each partner country. It is further enriched by regional cooperation initiatives — the Eastern Partnership and the Union for the Mediterranean;

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) must return to its original aim of creating an area of prosperity, stability, security and good neighbourliness, Parliament said on Thursday. The EU must go "back to basics" and place these goals at the top of its agenda, say MEPs. They stress that the revised policy must be more political, differentiated and based on EU values and principles, democracy, the rule of law and human rights.

"Setting an ambitious and forward-looking neighbourhood policy right is currently one of the greatest challenges in the EU's external relations. And more than ever, we need a more politically driven policy. The EU has to show leadership and vision in its neighbourhood as only a democratic, secure, stable and prosperous neighbourhood can guarantee us all better prospects for the future," said Eduard Kukan (EPP, SK), who steered the resolution through Parliament.

More political ENP: case for special representatives

The renewed policy must be more strategic, focused, flexible and coherent, says Parliament. It

calls for the different challenges facing individual countries and their various aspirations to be matched with differentiated and better targeted EU support. To ensure the political coordination of the revised ENP, the text calls for the appointment of special representatives for the East and the South, who would be more engaged in all EU action in the neighbourhood.

It also asks for support for democracy, the rule of law, good governance, state-building, human rights and fundamental freedoms to be at the centre of the ENP. The EU and its member states should offer incentives and know-how for undertaking and supporting democratic reforms, in accordance with "more for more" principles, Parliament adds.

## Boost the security dimension

The sharply deteriorating security environment in the EU's neighbourhood calls for a strong security component in the ENP, matched with much needed policy tools, says the resolution. The EU must develop capacities to broaden its spectrum of crisis management tools, support its neighbours in building proper security structures and promote joint initiatives of its neighbours in the security field, MEPs say.

## Build strong partnerships

Parliament stresses that the ENP must be part of the EU's broader external policy and take into account the "neighbours of neighbours" who seek to pursue their own interests in the EU's neighbourhood. They also insist that the EU must match its ambitions of reinforced engagement in its neighbourhood with sufficient funding, namely through the upcoming 2017 review of its external financing instruments.

The resolution was passed by 460 votes to 61, with 55 abstentions.

# THE COMMON EUROPEAN ASYLUM SYSTEM

In this issue of EAF newsletter brings you more on the European Asylum System, a topic that is very actual in times when Europe is undergoing the biggest migrant crisis since World War II.

Asylum is granted to people fleeing persecution or serious harm. It's a fundamental right, granting it is an international obligation under the 1951 Geneva Convention on the protection of refugees.

Asylum flows are not constant, nor are they evenly distributed across the EU yet the EU has decided to have a joint approach to asylum across the EU due to the open borders and freedom of movement.

Since 1999, the EU has been working to create CEAS ( Common European Asylum System ) and improve the current legislative framework.

New EU rules have now been agreed, setting out common high standards and stronger cooperation to ensure that asylum seekers are treated equally in an open and fair system – wherever they apply across the EU.

The enhanced regulation brings:

The Asylum Procedures Directive sets out the rules on the whole process of claiming asylum; including on: how to apply, how the application will be examined, what the help the asylum seeker will be given, how to appeal and whether the appeal will allow the person to stay on the territory, what can be done if the applicant absconds or how to deal with repeated applications.

The previous directive was the lowest common denominator between Member States at the time. The rules were often too vague and derogations allowed Member States to keep their own rules, even if these went below basic agreed standards.

THE REVISED ASYLUM PROCEDURES DIRECTIVE aims at a fairer, quicker and a better quality asylum decisions; asylum seekers with special needs will receive the necessary support to explain their claim and in particular there will be greater protection of unaccompanied minors and victims of torture.

The Reception Conditions Directive deals with access to reception conditions for asylum seekers while they wait for examination of their claim. It ensures that applicants have access to housing, food, healthcare and employment, as well as medical and psychological care.

In the past, diverging practices among Member States could, however, lead to an inadequate level of material reception conditions for asylum seekers.

THE REVISED RECEPTION CONDITIONS DIRECTIVE ensures that there are humane material reception conditions ( such as housing) for asylum seekers across the EU and that the fundamental rights of the concerned persons are fully respected; it also ensures that detention is only applied as a measure of last resort.

The core principle of the Dublin Regulation is that the responsibility for examining claim lies primarily with the Member State which played the greatest part in the applicant's entry or residence in the EU. The criteria for establishing responsibility run, in hierarchical order, from family considerations, to recent possession of visa or residence permit in a Member State, to whether the applicant has entered the EU regularly or irregularly.

Experience of previous system has, however, shown the need to better address situations of particular pressure on Member States' reception capacities and asylum system.

THE REVISED DUBLIN REGULATION enhances the protection of asylum seekers during the process of establishing the state responsible for examining the application and clarifies the rules governing the relations between states; it creates a system to detect early problems in national asylum or reception systems and address their root causes before they develop into fully fledged crisis.

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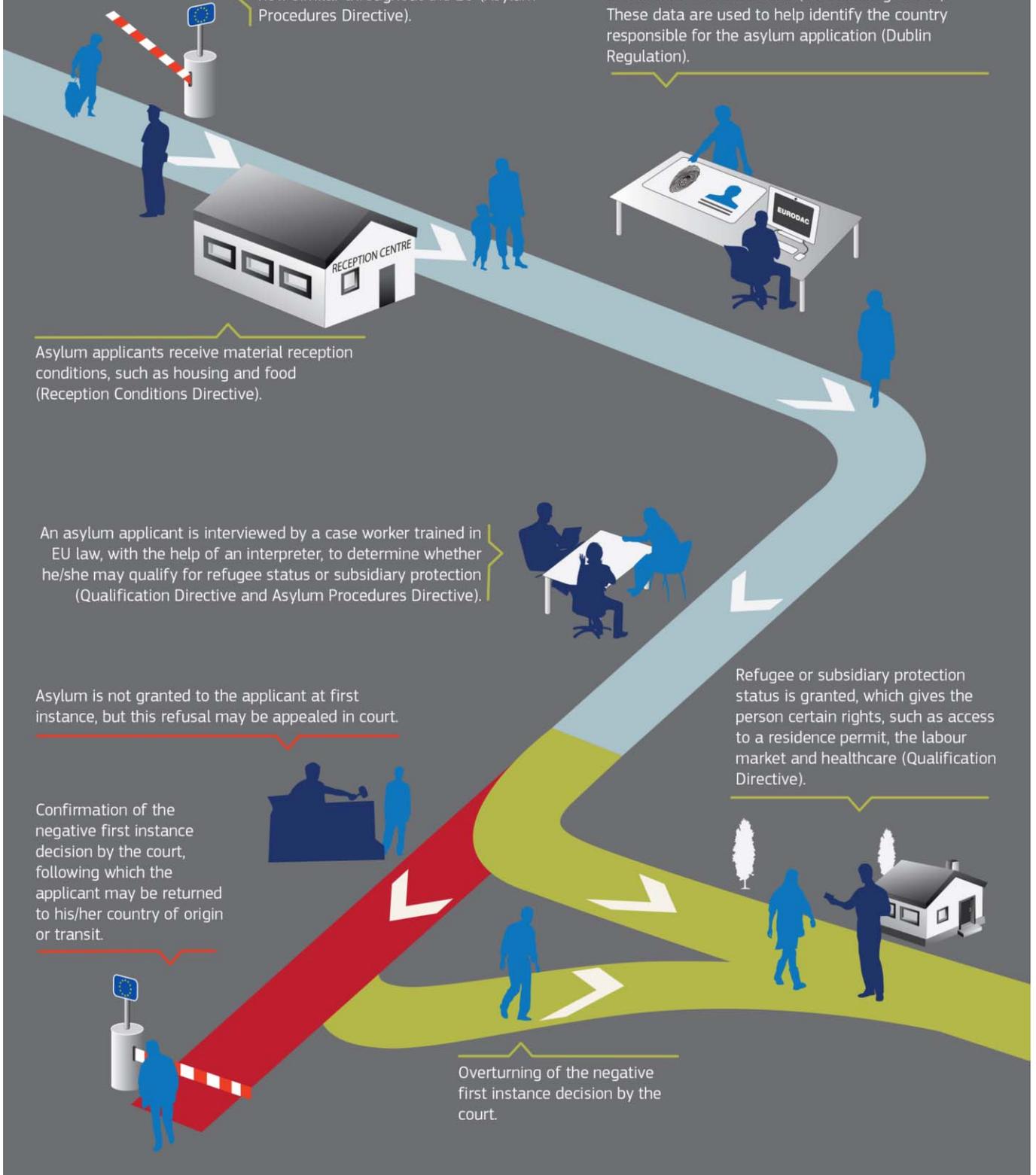


## COMMON EUROPEAN ASYLUM SYSTEM

**ASYLUM** is granted to people fleeing persecution or serious harm.

The process for applying for asylum is now similar throughout the EU (Asylum Procedures Directive).

Each applicant's fingerprints are taken and sent to a database called Eurodac (Eurodac Regulation). These data are used to help identify the country responsible for the asylum application (Dublin Regulation).



# THE COMMON EUROPEAN ASYLUM SYSTEM

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The Qualification Directive specifies the grounds for granting international protection. Its provisions also foresee a series of rights on protection from refoulement, residence permits, travel documents, access to employment, access to education, social welfare, healthcare, access to accommodation and access to integration facilities, as well as specific provisions for children and vulnerable persons.

The minimum standards in the previous directive were to a certain extent vague, which maintained divergences in national asylum legislation and practices. The chances of a person being granted international protection could vary tremendously depending on the Member State processing the asylum application.

THE REVISED QUALIFICATION DIRECTIVE clarifies the grounds for granting international protection and therefore will make asylum decisions more robust; it also improves the access to rights and integration measures for beneficiaries of

international protection.

The Eurodac Regulation establishes an EU asylum fingerprint database. When someone applies for asylum, no matter where they are in the EU, their fingerprints are transmitted to the Eurodac central system. Eurodac has been operating since 2003 and has proved a very successful IT tool.

Some updates were, however, required, in particular to reduce the delay of transmission by some Member States, to address data protection concerns and to help combat terrorism and serious crime.

THE REVISED EURODAC REGULATION will allow law enforcement access to the EU database of asylum seekers under strictly limited circumstances in order to prevent, detect or investigate the most serious crimes, such as murder and terrorism.

*Source :*

[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/e-library/docs/ceas-fact-sheets/ceas\\_factsheet\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/e-library/docs/ceas-fact-sheets/ceas_factsheet_en.pdf)

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