

# Towards a Common European Asylum System: Improving Protection, Solidarity and Harmonisation



**Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2012**

The Silken Berlaymont Hotel,  
Brussels

"An International Symposium for gathering knowledge, discussing the latest challenges and sharing best practices in migration and asylum policy in Europe"

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## Overview

Asylum is granted to people fleeing persecution or serious harm in their own country and are therefore in need of international protection. Granting asylum is an international obligation, first recognised in the 1951 Geneva Convention on the Protection of Refugees.

The **Common European Asylum System** (CEAS), which was reinforced by The Hague Programme (November 2004) and The Stockholm Programme (2009), is currently in its second phase with the Cypriot Presidency hoping to finalise the System by the end of 2012. The aim of the system is to harmonise asylum procedures in the European Union, increase cooperation between EU states on managing their external borders and develop high standards of protection for asylum seekers. The number of asylum seekers in the EU-27 during the first quarter of 2011 increased by 4,000 compared with the same period of the previous year. There is an urgent need to raise awareness due to this rapid increase, with nearly 66,000 persons seeking asylum in just one of the EU Member States.

The EU shares responsibility for managing refugees with non-EU countries and countries of first asylum. With the goal of improving the management of refugee flows and enhancing protection capacities in the regions from which many refugees originate, the EU is thus stepping up its collaboration with non-EU countries. To make this cooperation robust, the Commission undertook to develop the **EU Regional Protection Programmes and Resettlement Schemes**.

In 2009, the EU proposed to set up a **European Asylum Support Office** to regulate asylum applications as part of a drive to increase cooperation between EU States. In 2012, the Office is expected to develop methodologies and tools for collection and analysis of the data on the implementation of EU asylum law in Member States. This is essential for policy and law makers to improve the quality and effectiveness of the CEAS.

In recent years, the EU has been receiving an average of 1.8 million immigrants annually and as such immigration has become a key issue in the national politics of several Member States. This timely International Symposium will discuss the current situation of those in need of protection and assess the ongoing challenges that Europe is facing to increase the practical cooperation between member states, especially in relation to the collection of measurable data on asylum seekers. The Symposium offers a vital platform to incorporate gender considerations of vulnerable groups into the dialogue, as well as explore how policymakers can strike the balance vis-à-vis the challenges and tensions between protecting human rights and ensuring that immigration controls are not undermined.

The Symposium will support the exchange of ideas and encourage delegates to engage in thought-provoking topical debate with local and regional practitioners and policymakers at EU level.

**“ The consolidation of a genuine common immigration and asylum policy is one of my top priorities. Today the level of treatment and guarantees for asylum seekers varies widely across the EU, and the chances of obtaining protection are radically different depending on which Member State examines the asylum request. This must change. We need efficient and fair asylum procedures and adequate and comparable reception conditions for asylum seekers throughout the EU. At the same time, the standards we agree at the European level should be simple, clear, and cost-efficient. The EU must stand up for its values and provide protection for those coming here to seek refuge from persecution and conflict – that is why we must respect our commitment to establish a Common European Asylum System by 2012 ”**

- Cecilia Malmström, EU Commissioner for Home Affairs, June 2011

## Venue and Accommodation

**The Silken Berlaymont Hotel,  
11-19, Boulevard Charlemagne  
1000 Brussels - Belgium**

Through our partnership with the Silken Berlaymont Hotel we are pleased to be able to offer our delegates specially negotiated accommodation rates. These discounted room rates are subject to availability and are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.



## Why Attend?

- ✓ **Discuss new methods and tools for gathering comparative data on asylum seekers in Europe**
- ✓ **Understand current standards, procedures and decision making processes in assisting and identifying asylum seekers**
- ✓ **Explore possibilities for increasing cooperation between Member States and major stakeholders in improving reallocation and resettlement policies in Europe**
- ✓ **Exchange best practices from pivotal projects implemented in Europe**

## Who Should Attend?

- National Governmental Organisations
- Immigration Advisers
- Legal Advisers
- Local and Regional Government Departments and Bodies
- Regulatory Bodies
- Citizens Advice and Third Sector Practitioners
- Anti-Trafficking Practitioners
- Vulnerable Persons Coordinators
- Missing Persons Units
- Border Control Officials
- Port and Airport Authorities
- Asylum and Refugee Groups
- Health Treatment and Advisory Services
- Social Workers and Social Services Officers
- Social Inclusion Officers
- Public Health Authorities
- Asylum Team Managers
- Refugee and Asylum Support Officers
- Sheltered Housing Scheme Managers
- Local, Regional and National Health Services
- Social Care Professionals
- Private Sectors Employers
- Public Sector Employers
- Homelessness Assessment and Prevention Officers
- Housing Associations
- Employee Relations Advisers
- Legal Advisers Community Cohesion Officers
- Community Engagement Officers
- Community Relations Advisers
- Overseas Student Recruitment Officers
- Asylum and Immigration Tribunals
- Funding Councils
- Research Councils
- Campaigning Organisations
- International Organisations
- Academics

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## Programme

09:15	Registration and Morning Refreshments
10:00	<b>Chair's Welcome and Opening Remarks</b> <b>Prof. Dr. Dirk Vanheule</b> , Migration Law, University of Antwerp (confirmed)
10:10	<b>Towards A Common European Asylum System</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Evaluation and Implementation of EU Legislation – Challenges and Lessons Learned</li><li>• Assessing the Role of Instruments Still Under Negotiations</li><li>• Increasing Solidarity and Responsibility Between Member States</li><li>• Technical and Financial Cooperation</li><li>• Improving Governance of the EU Asylum System</li></ul>
11:35	<b>First Round of Discussions</b>
11:05	Morning Coffee Break
11:25	<b>Improving Multi-Level Cooperation and Collection of Data on Asylum Policy and Systems in Europe</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintaining High Quality Asylum Systems in Europe</li><li>• Improving Cooperation at National Level – Lessons Learned from ASQAEM Project</li><li>• Gathering and Analysing Data – Challenges and Suggestions for Improvements</li><li>• Improving Decision-Making on Asylum Claims in Europe</li><li>• Recommendations</li></ul>
11:50	<b>Second Round of Discussions</b>
12:20	Networking Lunch
13:20	<b>Improving Reallocation and Resettlement of Asylum-Seekers in Europe</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Existing Integration Services</li><li>• Relocation and Resettlement – Challenges and Best Practices from EUREMA Project in Malta</li><li>• Inter-Agency Cooperation – Best Practices</li><li>• Movement of Humanitarian Cases in Europe</li><li>• Improving Asylum Procedures in the Mediterranean Area – Towards Effective and Protection-Sensitive Border Management</li><li>• Conclusions and Recommendations</li></ul>
14:00	<b>Third Round of Discussions</b>
14:30	Afternoon Coffee Break
14:45	<b>Case Study – A Perspective from Asylum Seekers: Providing Adequate Services and Ensuring Effective Systems in Europe</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bottom-up Approaches in Assisting Asylum Seekers</li><li>• Recent Developments, Challenges and Possible Solutions</li><li>• Comparative Experiences</li><li>• Recommendations for Future Policy Actions</li></ul>
15:25	<b>Fourth Round of Discussions</b>
15:55	<b>Chairman's Summary and Closing Comments</b>
16:00	Networking Refreshments
16:30	Close

## Sponsorship and Exhibition Opportunities

We offer a range of opportunities to enable your organisation to raise its profile and communicate with key decision makers in the public sector.

For further information please contact:

**Parvin Madahar** on +44 (0) 20 3137 8630

or email [parvin.madahar@publicpolicyexchange.co.uk](mailto:parvin.madahar@publicpolicyexchange.co.uk)

## Event Details

**Date:** Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2012

**Time:** 10:00am – 4:30pm

**Venue:** The Silken Berlaymont Hotel, Brussels



## Speakers include

- ✓ **Mr. Jacob Andersen**, Policy Officer, Asylum, European Commission (tbc)
- ✓ **Mr. Robert Visser**, Director, European Asylum Support Office (EASO) (tbc)
- ✓ **Ms. Michele Cavinato**, Policy Officer (Legal), Policy and Legal Support Unit, Bureau for Europe, Office of the UNHCR (confirmed)
- ✓ **Mr. Jose Angel Oropeza**, Director, Coordinating Office for the Mediterranean and Chief of Mission in Italy and Malta, International Organisation for Migration (IOM) (confirmed)
- ✓ **Mr. David Reizenzein**, External Relations Officer, Frontex (confirmed)
- ✓ **Mr. Allan Leas**, Acting Secretary General, European Council on Refugees and Exiles (confirmed)
- ✓ **Ms. Anne Dussart**, Department Asylum and Migration: Head of the Social Programs – Caritas International Belgium (confirmed)

**“ It is crucial that the legal framework is in place. But at the same time we are witnessing a combination of financial crisis and increasing pressure on the Southern European asylum systems, especially in Greece and Italy, receiving a disproportionate number of migrants and asylum seekers - that is the political reality the Danish Presidency will be facing ... A common asylum system requires not only common legislation but also a common willingness to comply with this legislation, and effective asylum systems that can implement them in practice ”**

- **Andreas Kamm**, Chairman of ECRE; General Secretary, Danish Refugee Council, January 2012