



Council of the
European Union

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NOTE

From: Presidency
To: Strategic Committee on Immigration, Frontiers and Asylum
Subject: Strategic guidelines
Focus on the future of EU Asylum Policy

On the 26 and 27 of June 2014, the European Council has defined in its conclusions the strategic guidelines on the future of the area of Freedom, Security and Justice. The conclusions reached by Heads of State or Government should now be implemented by all players in order to achieve the overall objective of strengthening the governance of the migratory flows at the European level.

The aim of the Italian Presidency is to trigger a first discussion in the framework of SCIFA on the implementation of the Strategic Guidelines in the field of asylum, so that a coherent and efficient implementation of the Common European Asylum System is underpinned by a more solid and credible framework balancing solidarity and responsibility. The discussion in the framework of SCIFA will be followed by a dedicated Conference on Asylum that will be organized by the Presidency in November, the results of which will be brought back to the attention of SCIFA and then to the JHA Council in order to contribute to the initiatives that all players, first and foremost the European Commission, will take in this field.

In the field of Asylum, the Heads of State or Government agreed that:

“The Union's commitment to international protection requires a strong European asylum policy based on solidarity and responsibility. The full transposition and effective implementation of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) is an absolute priority. This should result in high common standards and stronger cooperation, creating a level playing field where asylum seekers are given the same procedural guarantees and protection throughout the Union. It should go hand in hand with a reinforced role for the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), particularly in promoting the uniform application of the acquis. Converging practices will enhance mutual trust and allow to move to future next steps.”

This commitment should be considered in the framework of increasing pressures on EU Member States, deriving from a high level of instability in the immediate neighbourhood of the European Union, with protection related flows which have reached levels not seen since the massive population movements of the '90s. This has already generated a push for innovative ideas and solutions in order to strengthen the EU solidarity and crisis management system, such as the pilot project on Joint/Supported Processing of Asylum Applications being developed by the EASO.

The full implementation of the Common European Asylum System and the strengthening of operational cooperation with the goal of better managing flows and preventing potential situations of crisis should lead to further steps towards completing the Common European Asylum System and implementing fully all relevant provisions of the TFEU. In this context, all possibilities for further convergence of national asylum systems and practices, should be explored in order to enhance mutual trust and allow moving to future next steps in view of the completion of the Common European Asylum System and the achievement of a uniform status valid throughout the EU.

Against this background, delegations are invited to answer the following questions:

- How can the EU and its Member States strengthen the EU's capacity to prevent and respond to major migration flows by fully implementing existing tools¹ and/or by developing new ones?
 - Are the available data and statistical indicators sufficient to establish a credible contingency system at the European level? If not, what additional data and statistical indicators would we need?
 - What initiatives could be considered in the coming years in order to complete or improve the Common European Asylum System?
 - How could EASO contribute to the achievement of these objectives?
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¹ Existing tools include: (1) Art.33 of the Dublin Regulation, (2) Emergency Funding, (3) Use of those margins of flexibility offered by the Dublin Regulation, (4) Emergency Relocation, (5) EASO Emergency Support, (6) Activation of the Temporary Protection Directive, (7) Supported Processing, (8) Activation and use of civil protection mechanism.