

Establishing a European Asylum Support Office

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The Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs adopted the report drawn up by Jean LAMBERT (Greens/ALE, UK) amending, under the first reading of the codecision procedure, the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a European Asylum Support Office.

The main amendments were as follows:

Financing: MEPs underline that the financing of the Office shall be subject to an agreement by the budgetary authority as set out in Point 47 of the [Interinstitutional Agreement](#) (IIA) of 17 May 2006 on budgetary discipline and sound financial management (through an agreement between the two branches of the budget authority).

Limitation of power: MEPs clearly stipulate that the Office shall not have any direct or indirect powers in relation to the taking of decisions by Member State authorities on individual applications for international protection.

Clarification as regards the tasks of the Office: MEPs aim to clarify the tasks of the Office. In particular, it should: (i) gather relevant, reliable, accurate and up-to date information on the countries of origin of asylum seekers and persons applying for international protection in a **transparent and impartial** manner, making use of all relevant sources of information, including governmental and non-governmental organisations, international organisations and **EU institutions**; (ii) manage and develop a portal for gathering information on countries of origin and its maintenance, as well as the ensuring of its **accessibility and transparency**; (iii) ensure the impartial analysis of country-of-origin information and the drafting of reports on countries of origin moving towards **common assessment criteria**.

Mandatory reallocation of beneficiaries of international protection in another Member State: MEPs consider that the reallocation “on a voluntary basis” of beneficiaries of international protection from Member States with specific and disproportionate pressures on their national asylum systems will not in any way be of help in showing solidarity between Member States. Therefore, they propose to delete the terms “on a voluntary basis” from the proposed text. MEPs state clearly that should propose a **binding solidarity mechanism** to reallocate beneficiaries of international protection from Member States, in consultation with the UNHCR.

Strengthen the principle of solidarity between Member States: MEPs state that the Office shall coordinate exchanges of information and all other action taken on the resettlement of refugees within the European Union, taking into consideration the principles of solidarity and of burden sharing.

Cooperation with UNHCR and relevant NGOs: MEPs consider that the Office should establish and develop in close cooperation with UNHCR and relevant NGOs training for members of all national administrations and courts, and national services or NGOs responsible for asylum matters in the Member States. For topics where UNHCR guidelines already exist, these should serve as the starting point for practical cooperation to narrow the gaps in practice.

European asylum curriculum: in addition, the Office shall manage and develop a European asylum curriculum which shall, as a minimum, provide for training on international refugee and human rights law and standards and the EU asylum acquis.

Early warning system: MEPs call for the setting up of an early warning system to notify the Member States and the Commission of any influx of applicants for international protection.

Report: the Office shall draw up an annual report on the situation of asylum in the European Union. It shall be presented to the European Parliament and the Commission. MEPs request that the Office, **at the request of the European Parliament**, draft reports on specific aspects of the implementation of the EU asylum acquis relating to international protection.

Expertise from the Consultative Forum: MEPs propose that where Member States are unable to provide the expertise deemed to be essential for its operation, the Office may take the necessary measures to source such expertise from relevant experts and organisations, drawing on the expertise of the Consultative Forum. MEPs also note that local authorities have an important role and expertise in the field of asylum policy and shall be included in the Consultative Forum.

Appointment of the Executive Director: MEPs note that strengthening Parliamentary involvement in the appointment procedure would ensure greater democratic accountability. This kind of involvement would not constitute a contradiction with the European Parliament's role in budgetary oversight as such a procedure is already in place in the Fundamental Rights Agency (appointed on the basis of his or her personal merits, experience in the field of asylum and administrative and management skills, hearing before the European Parliament and the Council, etc). This brings the role of the European Parliament in the possible extension of the Director's term into line with the terms for the initial appointment.

Respecting the Financial Regulation: MEPs consider that a reference to the basic rule of the financial regulation concerning the establishment of decentralised agencies under which the Office is to be established should be added in the article concerning its legal definition and status.

Transparency: MEPs stipulate that the Office shall develop good administrative practices in order to ensure the highest possible level of transparency concerning its activities, in particular by ensuring relevant documents are available to a wider public.