



Procedure file

| Basic information | | |
|---|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| INI - Own-initiative procedure | 2006/2184(INI) | Procedure completed |
| Asylum: practical cooperation, quality of decision making in the common European asylum system | | |
| Subject 7.10.06 Asylum, refugees, displaced persons; Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) | | |

| Key players | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|---|------------|
| European Parliament | Committee responsible | Rapporteur | Appointed |
| | LIBE Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs | | 13/03/2006 |
| | | PPE-DE PIRKER Hubert | |
| | Committee for opinion | Rapporteur for opinion | Appointed |
| | FEMM Women's Rights and Gender Equality | | 06/09/2006 |
| | | PSE VERGNAUD Bernadette | |
| | AFET Foreign Affairs | The committee decided not to give an opinion. | |
| | DEVE Development | The committee decided not to give an opinion. | |
| Council of the European Union | Council configuration | Meeting | Date |
| | Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) | 2807 | 12/06/2007 |
| European Commission | Commission DG | Commissioner | |
| | Justice and Consumers | FRATTINI Franco | |

| Key events | | | |
|------------|--|---|---------|
| 16/02/2006 | Non-legislative basic document published | COM(2006)0067 | Summary |
| 06/07/2006 | Committee referral announced in Parliament | | |
| 08/05/2007 | Vote in committee | | Summary |
| 14/05/2007 | Committee report tabled for plenary | A6-0182/2007 | |
| 12/06/2007 | Debate in Council | 2807 | |
| 20/06/2007 | Debate in Parliament |  | |
| 21/06/2007 | Results of vote in Parliament |  | |
| 21/06/2007 | Decision by Parliament | T6-0286/2007 | Summary |

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| 21/06/2007 | End of procedure in Parliament | | |
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| Technical information | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Procedure reference | 2006/2184(INI) |
| Procedure type | INI - Own-initiative procedure |
| Procedure subtype | Initiative |
| Legal basis | Rules of Procedure EP 54 |
| Stage reached in procedure | Procedure completed |
| Committee dossier | LIBE/6/38484 |

| Documentation gateway | | | | | |
|---|------|-------------------------------|------------|----|---------|
| Non-legislative basic document | | COM(2006)0067 | 17/02/2006 | EC | Summary |
| Committee draft report | | PE380.869 | 15/01/2007 | EP | |
| Committee opinion | FEMM | PE380.707 | 24/01/2007 | EP | |
| Amendments tabled in committee | | PE386.375 | 13/03/2007 | EP | |
| Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading | | A6-0182/2007 | 14/05/2007 | EP | |
| Text adopted by Parliament, single reading | | T6-0286/2007 | 21/06/2007 | EP | Summary |
| Commission response to text adopted in plenary | | SP(2007)3798/2 | 18/07/2007 | EC | |
| Commission response to text adopted in plenary | | SP(2007)4174 | 13/09/2007 | EC | |

Asylum: practical cooperation, quality of decision making in the common European asylum system

PURPOSE : to strengthen practical cooperation between Member States on asylum management.

CONTENT : this communication comes as a response to the European Council's call for intensified practical cooperation between EU Member States in the field of asylum. The adoption of the Asylum Procedures Directive in December 2005 marked the completion of the first stage of the Common European Asylum System. Now the EU will step up cooperation on asylum and by 2010 aims to have a fully harmonised common system. More specifically, it sets out how practical cooperation between Member States can support the realisation of the goals set at Tampere and in the Hague Programme. The Hague Programme ? endorsed by the European Council as the EU's workplan for Justice and Home Affairs until 2010 - set three objectives for practical cooperation on asylum:

- 1) The establishment of a Single Procedure for all applications for international protection : single Procedure activities should be aimed at:
 - identifying where changes need to be made in Member States' administrative practice in order to implement the 1st stage instruments;
 - assessing how quality and efficiency of asylum systems can be improved through including all possible grounds for protection in one decision;
 - identifying best practice in managing resources in a Single Procedure, including through costing comparisons and twinning exercises.

The results of these activities will inform the preparation of legislative action, notably to ensure that, at a minimum, the guarantees agreed as applicable to claims for refugee status in the Asylum Procedures Directive extend to applications for subsidiary protection.

- 2) A common approach to Country of Origin Information (COI) (the information used to make decisions on asylum claims) : Cooperation on COI should have three main objectives in the short to medium term:
 - the establishment of common guidelines on the production of COI;
 - the establishment of a ?common portal? to Member States COI databases as well as other relevant information;
 - a pragmatic solution to the translation difficulties facing Member States in dealing with COI from different sources.

The result of these activities should lead in the longer term to the future development of an EU COI database.

- 3) How the EU should address particular pressures on asylum systems and reception capacities caused for example, by the geographic

position of a Member State : Actions to address particular pressures:

- amendment of European Refugee Fund so that Member States can access funds quickly and with a minimum of bureaucratic process for emergency actions;
- streamlining of the procedure for accessing more rapidly the funding for urgent actions contained in the ARGO programme;
- setting up of expert teams to address reception and processing issues for sudden arrivals of large numbers at the external border of the EU.

Longer term options include a comprehensive assessment of particular pressures which have occurred in the past and the setting up of a network of Member State information officers in selected third countries.

The first wave of practical cooperation will encourage Member States to present projects in concert with other like-minded Member States or as an individual venture to the benefit of the 25, which will contribute to the achievement of the Hague objectives. The support and sustainability of the programme of activities put forward in this Communication needs to be assured. However it is clear that existing financial opportunities, through the ARGO Programme and the Community Actions of the ERF do not provide the flexibility or increased funding needed to complete the ambitious mandate set in the Hague Programme. The Commission therefore intend to make proposals to amend the ERF and the ARGO Programme to ensure that delivery of the Hague priorities can be supported.

Asylum: practical cooperation, quality of decision making in the common European asylum system

The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Hubert PIRKER (EPP-ED, AT) on practical cooperation and quality of decision-making in the common European asylum system. The report welcomed the efforts that had been made in this area and strongly reaffirmed the need for a proactive common EU asylum policy, based on the obligation to admit asylum seekers and on the principle of non-refoulement.

The committee stressed that the "ultimate objective" of introducing a common asylum system must be to ensure a high quality of protection, of assessment of individual asylum claims and of procedures resulting in duly substantiated and fair decisions. Improved quality of decision-making must ensure that people in need of protection may enter the EU safely and have their claims properly processed.

The report strongly criticised the lack of adequate resources available to the Commission to monitor the implementation of the various directives dealing with asylum-related matters. To facilitate the Commission's task, it urged the Member States to submit a table of equivalences indicating what measures have been taken to implement particular provisions of those directives. It also said that coordinating activities in connection with practical cooperation on asylum-related matters must remain the task of the Commission, which should be provided with "resources appropriate to that task".

In order to ensure that refugee status is granted as quickly as possible to all those who are entitled to it, the Council and the Commission were urged to introduce in all Member States a single procedure which should make for fair and effective decision-making. In this context the committee pointed out that harmonisation in the area of asylum policy will be facilitated and speeded up if the Court of Justice can in future be consulted by courts other than national courts of first instance, as is currently the case. It therefore called on the Council to restore to the Court of Justice its full powers in the area of preliminary rulings granted to it under Title IV of the EC Treaty.

Among other recommendations, MEPs suggested that one of the improvements to be made to the EU asylum system should consist, for the sake of greater solidarity, in a fairer share of the burden carried by those Member States at the external borders of the EU. They also called for information campaigns to be carried out in countries of origin and transit to inform potential migrants about the risks inherent in illegal immigration, the consequences of denial of refugee status, the scope for legal migration and the possibility to apply for asylum in justified cases, as well as the dangers involved in trafficking in human beings, in particular women and unaccompanied minors.

The report also called for the rapid establishment of an EU repatriation procedure so that measures applicable to those who have not been granted refugee status or whose refugee status has been revoked can be implemented quickly and fairly with full respect for the human dignity and fundamental rights of the persons who have to be repatriated.

Lastly the committee called for the establishment of reception centres with separate facilities for families, women and children and suitable facilities for elderly and disabled asylum-seekers, and stressed the need for full use to be made of the opportunities afforded by the new European Refugee Fund.

Asylum: practical cooperation, quality of decision making in the common European asylum system

The European Parliament adopted the resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Hubert PIRKER (EPP-ED, AT) on practical cooperation and quality of decision-making in the common European asylum system. (Please refer to the summary of 08/05/2007.) The report adopted by 460 votes in favour to 63 against with 5 abstentions, with amendments.