



Asylum: a single EU procedure with higher standards of protection

Plenary sessions

Plans for a fair and effective asylum procedure throughout the EU were backed by MEPs on Wednesday. However, Parliament insisted that standard EU-wide guarantees for people in need of protection should be laid down and steps taken to enable Member States to distinguish more quickly between asylum seekers and other migrants.

Parliament also tightened up the safeguards for asylum seekers and stressed that Member States must comply with the "non-refoulement" principle, by which refugees must not be returned to places where they could be in danger.

Why update the legislation?

The 2005 "asylum procedures directive" is to be updated to allow the introduction of a single EU-wide procedure for granting and withdrawing international protection, including common safeguards for asylum seekers.

"The current directive has two major drawbacks", said MEP Sylvie Guillaume (S&D, FR), whose report was approved by Parliament today by 314 votes to 306 with 48 abstentions. "It does not protect asylum seekers rights sufficiently and at the same time creates major disparities of treatment between Member States".

Better "first instance" procedures (the first stage in any application) would enable Member States to distinguish faster between asylum seekers and other migrants in mixed arrivals. They should also help limit secondary movements of asylum seekers amongst Member States, at least where such movements are prompted by differing national procedural arrangements, MEPs believe.

Guarantees for asylum applicants

A personal interview conducted by a "qualified" and "trained" person and the right to free advice on procedural and legal aspects, legal assistance and representation should be guaranteed to asylum seekers, MEPs insist.

Parliament also emphasises that Member States must respect the non-refoulement principle and the right to asylum.

Applicants must be allowed to remain in the Member State until the national authority has made a final decision, including dealing with any appeal, says Parliament.

MEPs also clarify the concept of "safe third countries" and add that an EU list of such countries must be approved jointly by Parliament and Council under co-decision.

Support for Member States

For Member States that accept a "disproportionately large number of asylum applications" in relation to the size of their population, financial support and administrative/technical support must be provided immediately under the European Refugee Fund (ERF) and the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) to enable them to comply with this directive, says Parliament.

Press release

Next steps

The European Commission announced that it would present a revised version of this proposal in the coming months. The amendments adopted by Parliament seek to contribute to that revision. "The deadlock is such that we need to make some compromises so that the two legislative partners [EP and Council] in this can agree", said Commissioner Cecilia Malmström. "This is a very good start", she concluded.

Procedure: Codecision (1st reading)

Contact :

Isabel Teixeira NADKARNI

LIBE

BXL: (+32) 2 28 32198

STR: (+33) 3 881 76758

PORT: (+32) 498 98 33 36

EMAIL: libe-press@europarl.europa.eu

Eimear NÍ BHROIN

Dublin

STR: (+33) 3 881 64122

PORT: (+353) 868 559 423

EMAIL: Press-en@europarl.europa.eu

EMAIL: eimear.nibhroin@europarl.europa.eu

ADDINFO: (+353) 1 605 79 32

Isabel Teixeira NADKARNI

LIBE

BXL: (+32) 2 28 32198

STR: (+33) 3 881 76758

PORT: (+32) 498 98 33 36

EMAIL: libe-press@europarl.europa.eu