



Towards a solidarity-based European Asylum Policy

The European Union needs to make the Common European Asylum Policy a reality, based on solidarity at three levels: within the Member States, on international and the local level. The Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS) has prepared **twelve proposals** to serve this purpose.





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In 2014, thousands of refugees died while trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea. The overall number of migrant arrivals last year via the Mediterranean was over 150,000. Only within these last weeks, two cargo ships were rescued in the Mediterranean: the *Blue Sky M* and the *Ezadeen* with hundreds of migrants on board.

Abandoning vessels packed with people is one of the most horrifying tactics employed by traffickers, who reap millions in profits from this illegal business. In his statement on January 2nd, 2015 Dimitris Avramopoulos, the EU Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship called for a "decisive and coordinated EU-wide action" against the traffickers.

The figures stated above could not be a clearer sign that **the EU needs to react now to make the Common European Asylum Policy a reality, based on solidarity at three levels: within the Member States, on international and the local level.** The Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS) has prepared twelve proposals to serve the purpose of advancing the European Asylum Policy.

Twelve proposals

1. Foundations and orientations of the EU asylum policy must be clearly spelled out, and the EU asylum policy rebalanced accordingly, so as **to align it comprehensively with European fundamental rights and its traditional value orientations**, not just in words but also in spirit and action, backed by real political commitment and dedication.
2. Whereas the adoption of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) in 2013 marks an important step ahead, its level of ambition is limited and in particular fails to match up comprehensively to human rights and humanitarian standards. Whereas its implementation must be taken ahead, **European policy makers must also commit to further developing and replacing the CEAS in a follow-up step**, so as to develop and implement a truly integrated, common European asylum policy. This work should start immediately!
3. In particular, the future common European asylum policy **must be guided by and spelled out in line with the Lisbon Treaty principle of 'solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility'** (Art 80 TFEU). However, solidarity and burden sharing between EU Member



States is not enough; it must be complemented with effective solidarity and burden sharing at the international level, and also with solidarity and burden sharing at national, regional, and local levels.

Solidarity and burden sharing between EU Member States

4. Despite the weaknesses of the current Common Asylum System, all EU Member States and the European Commission are held to maintain or enhance their efforts towards full implementation of legal provisions, including the Dublin Convention, so as to **ensure the convergence of national asylum systems towards harmonization**, build administrative capacities towards its effective implementation, and ensure an equally high level of protection for all asylum seekers.

5. In parallel, we call on the European Commission **to take the European asylum policy agenda beyond the Dublin Convention** and submit a legislative proposal for a genuinely integrated EU resettlement scheme in which all EUMS participate, and which allocates reception quota to each EUMS, on the basis of an agreed formula.

6. EU Member States must overcome mutual mistrust, close their ranks, and **commit to a roadmap on the phased implementation of an integrated asylum policy** that aims to, inter alia, commit to the implementation of the Dublin Convention, but to also go beyond it, with a view to eventually replacing it.

International solidarity of the EU

7. The EU should be ambitious in further developing its international leadership in the areas of humanitarian assistance and international protection. Despite the challenges of refugee protection under the Geneva Convention, the **EU must also tackle other protection needs like environmental and climate change induced displacements**. Regional protection initiatives should also be promoted through public/private partnerships.

8. The European Commission should establish in depth internal coordination, notably between migration and asylum, humanitarian, development, labour, neighbourhood, and foreign policy services. **A coherent policy concept will allow the European Union to become**



an effective actor in humanitarian diplomacy, not limited to providing funding governmental initiatives. FEPS stands ready to partner with other policy stakeholders to support necessary solidarity-based policy developments conceptually, in line with the principle of subsidiarity.

9. Providing better access to the EU protection space is a core priority of the EU's solidarity-based external asylum policy. **It must be underpinned by legal and international initiatives as well as immediate operational measures to prevent casualties along refugee and migration corridors to Europe**, and to save lives as a matter of priority. Europe must learn to lead by example and use its policy tools strategically to underpin its evolving humanitarian diplomacy.

Solidarity at national, regional, and local levels

10. We must enhance efforts to **support the setting up of humane and effective national asylum systems**. FEPS will engage with political stakeholders to support the setting up of national platforms for the monitoring of national efforts to implement the Common European Asylum System effectively.

11. A coalition of political actors should **elaborate a roadmap toward Equal Rights of Refugees and Asylum Seekers**, and partner to campaign for equal political, civil and social, and economic rights at national levels.

12. Political actors are encouraged to support local solidarity-based integration initiatives, including with a view to create **protection space and integration pathways for those in need in pragmatic ways**. Political actors should support local grassroots initiatives through effective means in their constituencies, promote integration champions and local best practices, including through parliamentary initiatives.

These twelve proposals are based on previous studies of FEPS and its partners on the topics of migration and asylum, as well as on the debates within the annual conference "Call to Europe IV: Building Solidarity in Asylum Policy"¹ organised by FEPS together with its partners in November 2014 in Brussels. They have been brought together by Sönke Schmidt, Advisor to FEPS and Former EU Minister Counsellor on Migration and Asylum Affairs to the UN.

¹ <http://www.calltoeurope.eu/en/>