



The EU and Immigration: Opportunities and Challenges

"Immigration will, in the years ahead, be one of our biggest challenges, offering opportunities of growth and jobs for our aging economies and of development for countries of origin."

—Jacques Barrot, European Commission Vice-President for Justice, Freedom, and Security



From ancient times, humans have journeyed across the earth in search of a better life. Today, migration has become a permanent international phenomenon—unprecedented in its volume and scale—and one of the most visible challenges of globalization.

The EU and the U.S. face comparable opportunities and challenges from immigration in the 21st century. Both need immigrant labor to help assure continued economic growth and prosperity. Both are coping with the impact of immigration on social services and trying to find the proper balance between the economic need for immigrants, the challenge of integrating them into society, and the need to curb illegal immigration.

Aligning the immigration policies of 27 Member States, each with its individual historical and cultural ties to various countries that are traditional sources of EU immigrants, poses a significant challenge to the EU. Even the U.S., with its federal government, common language, and unifying historical and cultural background, is confronting significant resistance to adopting immigration reform.

The EU is developing a comprehensive European migration policy that is underpinned by principles promoting prosperity, solidarity, and security and the EU's value system, particularly its unwavering support for human rights and diversity.

While it falls to the individual EU Member States to grant residence rights to immigrants and asylum seekers, the EU strives to set a continental standard governing and facilitating numerous procedures and conditions relevant to asylum, legal and illegal immigration, and integration.

The EU aims to enhance economic opportunities and integration measures; ensure equivalent rights and treatment for non-EU nationals throughout the EU; support an integrated approach to the management

of its external borders by helping equip countries with comparable tools and expertise; and develop a coherent global approach to migration involving partnerships with immigrants' countries of origin.

Well-managed immigration can play a significant role in alleviating the impact of demographic aging and help Europe deal with labor and skill shortages. Without a credible European strategic initiative on economic immigration, however, the strong push/pull factors of immigration are likely to overpower existing national rules and legislation. The EU is striving to create a committed and consistent migration policy that optimizes the opportunities and resolves the challenges for all involved.

The EU and Immigration: Facts and Figures

Of the EU's approximately 495 million people, 18.5 million are non-EU nationals—just under 3.8 percent of the total population.

Recent projections suggest a natural decrease in the EU population between 2010 and 2050. Assuming zero net immigration, the EU's population would decrease by 26 million by 2030 and by 50 million by 2050.

Barring immigration, by 2050, the working age population (15-64 years old) in the EU is forecast to decrease by 59 million, posing a major economic challenge.

The largest immigrant populations in the EU are from Turkey, Morocco, Albania and Algeria.

European Commission Communication, "A Common Immigration Policy for Europe"

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Managing Legal Immigration and the Integration Process in the EU



EU rules facilitate admission for students.

"Immigration is one facet of globalization which demands a European rather than a national response to be effective.... We need a European approach to legal immigration if we want to be serious in becoming the most competitive, knowledge-based society in the world."

European Commission President
José Manuel Barroso

By definition, immigration is a cross-border activity. EU leaders agree that in view of the Union's open borders, existing national legislation on immigration, while remaining distinct, should be "harmonized" to regulate migration flows according to the needs of the economy and Member States' abilities to absorb and integrate new immigrants. Over the past decade, the EU has been working to develop a comprehensive EU-wide immigration policy that is flexible enough to adapt to particular circumstances in individual member countries, while still setting consistent EU-wide standards.

Although far from complete, EU rules are being established to define the criteria for entry of legal immigrants into the EU, to promote integration of immigrants into society, and to curb illegal immigration and trafficking of immigrants.

Legal Immigration: Rules and Rights—A Work in Progress

EU legislation on legal immigration is typically tied to existing work or study arrangements and concerns:

- **Family reunification:** Underpinned by respect for fundamental rights, the EU outlines conditions under which legal immigrants with valid residence permits have the right to bring spouses and minor children into the EU.
- **Long-term residents:** Legal residents who have resided in the EU for more than five years are

granted rights comparable to those of Member State citizens, including reinforced protection against expulsion; equal treatment with EU nationals in many economic and social matters; and the right to reside in another Member State for work, study, or other specified purposes. A proposed amendment would extend the legislation's scope to refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection.

- **Students:** EU-wide rules simplify admission for non-EU citizens for academic studies and exchanges, unpaid training, or volunteer work.
- **Researchers:** EU legislation facilitates admission for scientific researchers.

Two recent proposals will continue to advance the EU's immigration agenda:

- **Legal status of non-EU workers:** The proposed legislation introduces a streamlined, single application and permit procedure for immigrants to reside and work legally in an EU Member State; it guarantees a common set of work-related rights ensuring fair treatment, such as equal pay for equal work.
- **Highly skilled workers:** The proposal seeks to facilitate admission and residence for qualified immigrants to take up highly-skilled employment in EU Member States through issuance of an EU Blue Card, entitling the holder to a series of socio-economic rights.

Additional proposals addressing unskilled (including seasonal) workers, paid trainees and intra-corporate transferees are planned for the near future.

Competing for Highly Skilled Workers: EU Blue Card

Highly-skilled foreign workers constitute only 1.7 percent of the EU workforce in contrast to almost double this rate for the U.S. (3.2 percent) and still higher levels for Australia (9.9 percent), Canada (7.3 percent) and Switzerland (5.3 percent). International competition for these workers is intensifying, particularly from fast-growing, emerging economies.

To respond to increasing demands for highly qualified immigrant labor and to offset present and anticipated skill shortages, the EU has launched a proposal designed to help attract the "best and brightest" foreign workers. This fast-track procedure for the admission of highly-skilled immigrant labor does not create the right of admission. Rather it is demand-driven and contingent upon a work

contract, professional qualifications, and a specified minimum salary level three times above the national minimum wage level.

Workers admitted under these schemes will receive an EU Blue Card—a special residence and work permit entitling them to a series of socio-economic rights and favorable conditions for family reunifications. EU Blue Card holders, after two years of legal residence in a Member State, can move to another Member State for highly skilled work provided they have a work contract.

The EU promotes ethical standards to limit—if not ban—active recruitment for highly skilled workers in developing countries, particularly in Africa, suffering from serious "brain drain."

Helping Immigrants Integrate into Society: EU Values at Work

Legal immigration and integration are two sides of the same coin—inseparable and requiring mutual reinforcement. Immigrants are a critical component of the EU's competitiveness strategy, and their full potential can only be realized by giving them the opportunity to integrate into the host society and economy.

While the Member States are primarily responsible for the development and implementation of integration policies, the EU has enumerated eleven Common Basic Principles (CBP), which form the basis of the EU-wide approach to help bring immigrants into the mainstream of society. These principles take into account the legal, political, economic, social and cultural diversity of the Member States.

The EU is developing a European framework on integration of non-EU nationals, based on the CBPs, which is designed to support and lend coherence to national actions. The European Integration Fund (EIF) can help finance national, transnational or EU actions aimed at integrating non-EU nationals, as well as projects that help Member States share their experiences and best practices.

Funding

Integration measures depend on financial resources and the EU bolsters Member State integration policies through various funding measures. Through 2006, the INTI Program (Integration of Third Country Nationals) co-financed projects designed to put the CBPs into practice. One transnational project is testing a new multi-faith approach to integration aimed at fostering integration among migrant communities in the EU by familiarizing religious leaders with the core European values and the EU's multicultural and multi-faith environment.

Of the nearly €4 billion the EU has committed for migration issues over the 2007-2013 period, €825 million is assigned to the EIF. The bulk of funds are distributed to Member States for programs covering areas including civic orientation, language, history and culture. The EIF can help finance national, transnational, or EU actions aimed at integrating non-EU nationals in the host country, particularly recent arrivals. It will also help Member States share their experiences and best practices, strengthening teamwork at the EU level.

Additional Tools and Resources

National Contacts Points on Integration. This network of Member State officials meets regularly

to exchange and discuss best practices. The Network provided valuable input for the preparation of the first Handbook on Integration, a "how-to" document on integration, published in 2004.

Handbook on Integration for Policymakers and Practitioners. The second edition was issued in 2007 to further advance the exchange of information and best practices, with an emphasis on policymaking and integration; economic integration; access to quality housing for immigrants; and integration governance.

European Migration Network (EMN). EMN collects, analyzes and distributes data on asylum and immigration in order to provide backup for the European Union's decision-making process in this area. Comprised of designated National Contact Points and the European Commission (the EU's executive arm), EMN addresses the need to exchange information on all aspects of migration and to contribute to a common asylum and immigration policy.



Employment is key to the integration process.

Common Basic Principles for Immigration Policy: A Synopsis

1. Immigration is a dynamic process of mutual accommodation by immigrants and Member State residents.
2. Integration implies respect for the EU's basic values.
3. Employment is a key part of the integration process and central to immigrants' participation in society.
4. Basic knowledge of the host society's language, history and institutions is indispensable to integration; enabling immigrants to acquire this basic knowledge is essential.
5. Education is critical for preparing immigrants and their offspring to be active and successful participants in society.
6. Equal and non-discriminatory access for immigrants to institutions as well as to goods and services is important for integration.
7. Frequent interaction between immigrants and EU citizens is fundamental to integration and enhances immigrant/citizen interaction.
8. The EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights guarantees the practices of diverse cultures and religions, which must be safeguarded unless they conflict with inviolable European rights or national law.
9. The participation of immigrants in the democratic process and in the formulation of integration policies, particularly at the local level, supports integration.
10. Mainstreaming integration measures in all relevant policies, levels of government, and public services is a key consideration.
11. Developing clear goals, indicators, and evaluation mechanisms is necessary to adjust policy, evaluate progress on integration, and make information exchange more effective.

Countering Illegal Immigration and Its Impact:

EU Policies and Enforcement Tools



"Getting the balance right between clamping down on illegal immigration and welcoming those migrants we need for our economic and social well-being is essential. And we should not miss our target here—we need to be fighting those who organize illegal immigration, not the migrants themselves."

Benita Ferrero-Waldner,
EU Commissioner for
External Relations and
European Neighborhood Policy

An effective immigration policy is not limited to admission instruments and the integration of legal immigrants. It also requires a competent, resolute fight against illegal immigration and its negative impacts, including traffickers' roles in smuggling illegal immigrants.

Illegal Workers. One of Europe's greatest attractions for illegal immigrants is the possibility of finding work and a better way of life in the European Union. Illegal employment is concentrated in certain sectors, particularly construction, agriculture, cleaning, and hotel/catering, where they help meet the needs of some employers willing to take advantage of workers who will accept what are mostly unskilled, often unsafe, and generally low-paying jobs. Some migrants enter a Member State by using forged documents or organized criminal networks; others enter legally and

simply "overstay" their visa. The scale of the phenomenon is hard to quantify, and estimates vary from between 4.5 million to 8 million.

This "pull" factor is also responsible for the many deaths each year of illegal immigrants who take often tragic journeys, many times organized by traffickers, to reach the EU. Work on the black market distorts competition and exposes immigrants to exploitation, rendering them nameless, deprived of social welfare benefits, and leaving them effectively homeless and outside the law. The EU has made it a key priority to accelerate the fight against illegal employment.

Employer Sanctions. A 2007 European Commission proposal targets employment of illegal immigrants in the EU by requiring employers to obtain from non-EU citizens a valid residence permit or comparable authorization good for the duration of the employment. Building on existing national measures, the objective is to ensure that all Member States introduce similar penalties for employers of undocumented workers and enforce them effectively. Penalties run the gamut from fines and other administrative measures to criminal action in severe cases. Enforcement will be stepped up through increased inspections throughout the Member States.

Enforced Removal (or Voluntary Departure) of Illegal Immigrants. In June 2008, the European Parliament voted for a directive encouraging the voluntary return of illegal immigrants, but otherwise mandating minimum standards for their treatment. The new legislation ensures that immigrants receive similar treatment regardless of the Member State that carries out the return procedure, and addresses voluntary departure periods, the use of coercive measures, temporary custody, re-entry, and the fundamental rights of the persons affected. The new directive also provides for legal aid to be granted to illegal immigrants who have no resources of their own.

The EU Return Fund provides €676 million (2008-2013) to help Member States with the voluntary return of illegal immigrants, counseling for unsuccessful immigration applicants, and measures such as cooperative return flights with other Member States.

Human Trafficking and Immigration

Combating human trafficking is an essential element of the EU's efforts to improve the security of its external borders and to thwart illegal immigration.

Migrant smuggling and human trafficking are frequently linked to international organized crime networks and to the demand for cheap and illegal services. To counter this growing phenomenon, the EU promotes cooperation and information sharing among Member States, particularly those that are party to the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Air and Sea, which supplements the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

The Protocol calls for countries to adopt legislation that will help prevent, investigate, and prosecute those involved in smuggling migrants or facilitating their entry or illegal stay in a country with fraudulent documents. It also advocates full cooperation and compliance with the law of the sea to prevent the smuggling of migrants by sea.

Developing Europe's Architecture for Border Management

As the EU's internal borders dissolve, controls at the Union's external frontiers are being strengthened. The EU plays a vital role in supporting Member State measures and in developing a coordinated and integrated management system for its external borders.

The Schengen Area

In 1985, Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands signed an agreement at Schengen, Luxembourg, to enable "...all nationals of the Member States to cross internal borders freely." The Schengen area has grown dramatically since that time, to 24 European nations, and continues to enlarge. Within the expanding Schengen area, borders have disappeared between Member States, and EU residents and outside visitors are free to travel without systematic passport checks, although individuals can still be asked to prove their identity.

As the Schengen area has grown, the EU has developed a detailed series of measures designed to compensate for the abolition of internal border controls by reinforcing security at the Union's external borders, including common rules on visas, the right of asylum, and external border checks. The Schengen Information System (SIS), at the heart of Schengen controls, is a shared database used by Schengen members to maintain and distribute information relevant to border security and law enforcement. Member States supply information to SIS through national networks connected to a central system.

Schengen's current members include non-EU countries Iceland and Norway, and all but three of the EU's 12 newest members. EU Member States Cyprus, Bulgaria, and Romania will participate fully eventually. Non-EU members Switzerland and Liechtenstein are also in the process of becoming Schengen participants. Ireland and the United Kingdom do not apply the Schengen provisions on border controls, but continue to check the identity of everyone entering their territory, except from one another's territory.

Border Protection: Operational Measures

FRONTEX is the EU's Warsaw-based European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders, and works to improve the integrated management of the Union's external borders. Agency tasks include coordinating operational cooperation

between Member States in this field, risk analysis, and training border guards. FRONTEX also organizes joint operations along the EU's external borders, particularly in areas that are vulnerable to illegal immigration, including the Canary Islands, the Mediterranean, eastern land borders, and major European airports.

Rapid Border Intervention Teams (RABIT) are designed to provide rapid operational assistance for a limited duration in response to a request by a Member State facing urgent and exceptional pressure by large numbers of migrants at the country's external borders. Member States contribute to the pool of border guards.

The **European Patrols Network (EPN)** brings together existing Member State maritime patrolling activities, primarily along the EU's southern maritime borders. In combination with regular information exchange, this operation facilitates more efficient control of the Union's maritime borders and reduces related costs.

The **External Borders Fund** has committed an estimated €1.8 billion between 2007 and 2013 to upgrade infrastructure (e.g. border crossing points and video surveillance) along the 6,000 kilometer land and 85,000 kilometer coastline which make up the EU's external border.



"The enlargement of the Schengen area demonstrates the EU's commitment to facilitating legitimate traveling within and into the EU whil[e] at the same time improving the security of Europe's external borders."

—Jacques Barrot, European Commission Vice-President for Justice, Freedom, and Security

Border Security in the 21st Century

The EU is considering ideas for a 21st century integrated border management system that will rely heavily on technology along with intensified Member State cooperation to facilitate legal border crossings and help secure the Union's frontiers against illegal immigrants, trafficking and organized crime, and terrorists. New initiatives anticipated over the near- to medium-term include:

- Enhancing border surveillance through new technology and improved cooperation and information-sharing among Member States.
- Creating a European Border Surveillance System (Eurosur) to facilitate the use of state-of-the-art technology for border surveillance and provide the common technical framework for streamlining cooperation and communication between Member States' authorities.
- Reinforcing operational coordination between Member States through FRONTEX and intensifying joint operations between Member States, including sea border patrols.
- Facilitating legal border crossings while enhancing security through technology, including the introduction of a biometric entry/exit system for non-EU citizens; automated border crossing facilities for EU citizens and specified non-EU nationals (registered travelers); and development of an Electronic Travel Authorization System which might also provide a workable alternative for non-EU nationals requiring visas.

The EU's Global Approach to Migration: Encouraging External Dialogue and Creative Cooperation



"Through these mobility partnerships, the European Union is taking practical steps toward managing migration in a coordinated and responsible fashion, which should better equip both the Union and its partners to meet the challenges posed by migration and to take full advantage of the opportunities it offers."

—Jacques Barrot, European Commission Vice-President for Justice, Freedom, and Security

The EU is pioneering an innovative, global approach to migration management by promoting dialogue, close cooperation, shared responsibility and tailored partnerships with immigrants' countries of origin and transit. The objective is to formulate short-term actions to streamline legal immigration, stem illegal migration, and in the longer term, address the root causes of migration, especially poverty.

Benefits are widespread and accrue to the countries of origin and destination, the immigrants, their families, and their communities. The initial focus was on Africa and the Mediterranean, but has recently been extended to the eastern and southern regions neighboring the EU. Two new types of legal migration arrangements are beginning to take shape.

Mobility partnerships, currently in a pilot phase, are designed to foster responsible joint management of migratory flows by the EU, its Member States, and the migrants' countries of origin to serve the best interests of all.

Each side of the migration equation fulfills certain commitments, such as EU or Member State awareness campaigns highlighting available jobs; origin countries' efforts to stop the flow of illegal immigrants to the EU; origin country measures to facilitate emigrants' return; or Union funding to help with

capacity building relevant to migratory issues in countries of origin or transit.

Facilitating the legal movement of people between non-EU countries and the EU, if properly tackled, will contribute to meeting EU labor needs, help origin countries optimize the benefits and limit the negative impacts (such as brain drain) of emigration, and remove or mitigate many of the incentives for illegal migration.

Circular Migration is a form of legal migration that when well-managed allows some degree of legal mobility back and forth between two countries for the purposes of temporary work, study, and/or training. It can help address labor needs in EU Member States and maximize the benefits of migration for the countries of origin through fostering skills transfers and mitigating the risks of brain drain.

Such incentive-based movements between countries of origin and destination can enhance the positive effects from the contribution to development provided by migrants and members of settled diasporas when they visit or return to their country of origin on a temporary basis. For non-EU national residents in the Union, circular migration offers the opportunity to engage in an activity (business, professional, voluntary or other) in their country of origin while retaining their residency in an EU Member State.

Migration and Development: An International Perspective

Migration is an issue of increasing importance for the international community. The EU and its Member States are active participants in and strong proponents of international political dialogue and exchange of best practices concerning how best to improve the linkages between migration and development.

As the rate of migration accelerates and emerging evidence highlights the significant advantages it brings for development in both origin and destination countries, the EU is working with other policymakers through the UN and other global and regional fora to better understand and optimize this complex relationship and maximize its beneficial two-way impact through smarter policies and practices.

The **United Nations High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Development** in 2006 led to the

establishment of a permanent forum on the topic—the **Global Forum on International Migration and Development** (GFMD). The GFMD is a unique multilateral forum designed to examine the potential synergies between international migration and development and to steer current research findings and good practices toward more shared, cooperative forms of migration and development management.



| Skilled worker in Benin.

Migration and Development

Effective management of economic migration is linked closely to harnessing the synergies between migration and development, which can help stem illegal migration and address its root causes. This benefits not only individual migrants and their countries of destination, but it can also contribute positively to development in the migrants' countries of origin through the transfer of remittances, skills and experience acquired by migrants in the host countries.

To help optimize the impact of migration on development, the EU has developed a package of practical measures to make remittances easier, enhance the role of diasporas in the Member States as agents for home country development, encourage circular migration and return to the country of origin, and mitigate the adverse effects of brain drain.

Remittances. The increasing amounts of money sent "home" by migrants can potentially contribute to development objectives in the immigrants' countries of origin. According to EU data on official flows of worker remittances, €19.2 billion was sent outside the EU in 2006. The EU plans to make sending remittances cheaper, faster, and more secure through promotion of measures including:

- Partnerships between micro-finance and mainstream financial institutions;
- Encouragement of development-oriented investment by migrants in their home countries;
- Improved data collection for better understanding of the scale of remittance flows;
- Requirements that payment service providers make charges (e.g., exchange rates used) and other conditions (e.g., execution times) fully apparent to customers;
- Creation of a harmonized EU-wide legal framework for payment services;
- Improved access to financial markets;
- Use of new technology through EU financial support for pilot projects;
- Development of alternative, inexpensive technology-based remittance channels, such as debit cards and ATMs.

Diasporas. The EU encourages participation by diasporas in the EU Member States in the development of their home countries. These communities include naturalized Member State citizens originally from these nations as well as people with the nationality of the country of origin. The EU envisages supporting developing

countries' efforts to set up databases that would help them map their diasporas and build links with them. EU funding would help finance joint projects by diaspora organizations and local groups in support of local development. Youth exchange schemes are encouraged and are focused particularly on migrant communities.

Circular Migration. Migrants' return to their countries of origin—even temporarily or virtually—can foster the transfer of skills to the developing world. The EU has a plan to help accomplish this through circular migration, return policy, and building upon temporary or virtual return programs:

- Encourage circular migration by granting priority status for further temporary employment to workers who have already participated in this program and returned at the end of their contract;
- Facilitate return migration by ensuring the successful reintegration of migrants in their home countries through measures such as transferability of pension rights or recognition of qualifications;
- Build upon temporary or virtual return programs by promoting and supporting measures including e-learning schemes; networking programs; projects by migrants to establish sustainable economic activities in their countries of origin; and the identification of best practices in areas such as secondment or sabbaticals.

Brain Drain. Brain drain has negative consequences for developing countries and the EU has proposed ways to counter its impact and foster "brain gain:"

- Establishing databases for developing countries wishing to improve their knowledge of the labor market;
- Encouraging Member States to coordinate their respective recruitment efforts and develop codes limiting active recruitment in cases that would negatively impact specific developing countries, particularly in the health care and education sectors;
- Cultivating institutional partnerships between the EU and developing countries with entities including research institutes, universities, and hospitals.

Funding. The EU has allocated €205 million (2007-2010) for cooperation in the area of migration and asylum. Designed to stimulate the link between migration and development and to help developing countries improve the management of their migratory flows, the program's funding targets labor migration, illegal migration and trafficking, migrants' rights, and asylum and international protection.

EU Mobility Partnerships with the Republic of Moldova and Cape Verde: First Partnerships Launched June 5, 2008

Moldova. The EU-Moldovan mobility partnership is multifaceted and based on reciprocity. It promotes improved information, integration, and protection for migrants; matching labor market opportunities; reducing the risks of illegal immigration and human trafficking; strengthening the Moldovan capacity to manage migration; and Moldovan development through efforts to support voluntary return, sustainable reintegration of returning migrants, and circular migration schemes tailored specifically to Moldovans.

Cape Verde. The partnership responds to both sides' expectations, focusing particularly on facilitating short stays for Cape Verde's nationals in the EU and intensified efforts by Cape Verde on readmission and combating illegal immigration. The EU and Cape Verde are committed to mitigating the adverse effects of brain drain—the emigration of highly qualified Cape Verdean citizens—through temporary or permanent return policies aimed specifically at highly skilled Cape Verdean migrants and European nationals of Cape Verdean origin.

A Common European Asylum System Based on Humanitarian Values

"As we look toward a future Common European Asylum System, it is essential that we develop greater convergence, not only of legislation, but also of practice. It is vital that asylum authorities of the Member States have at their disposal concrete support to answer their daily and operational needs...[so that they]...can share information, improve the quality of procedures, and jointly find solutions to emergency situations such as mass arrivals of asylum seekers."

—Jacques Barrot, European Commission Vice-President for Justice, Freedom, and Security

The countries of the European Union have a long tradition of providing protection to people forced to flee their homelands because of persecution or other serious harm. The right to asylum is guaranteed by the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights and underpinned by the rules of the 1951 United Nations Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees.

The development of a Common European Asylum System (CEAS) is crucial, given the freedom of movement within the EU. With few border controls between Member States, people can travel unhindered from one EU country to the next. If some governments impose stricter rules than others, refugees would naturally gravitate toward countries most likely to approve their asylum application, resulting in an unfair imbalance among Member States.

The EU's CEAS is based on the humanitarian values shared by all EU Member States and the full application of the Geneva Convention. The idea behind CEAS is to ensure equivalent conditions for access to protection in all EU Member States.

Phase One of CEAS is complete. Launched in 1999, it consists of four principal legislative instruments that guarantee a minimum level of protection and procedural safeguards in all Member States for those genuinely in need of international protection, while preventing abuses of asylum applications that undermine the system's credibility and place additional administrative and financial burdens on Member States.

- **Reception Conditions Directive:** Establishes minimum standards for rights and benefits for asylum applicants to ensure them a dignified standard of living and comparable living conditions in all Member States.
- **Asylum Procedures Directive:** Guarantees minimum standards for examination of asylum applications throughout the Member States, based on the 1951 Geneva Convention and its 1967 Protocol, particularly regarding the definition of "refugee" and provisions against expulsion of the applicant prior to a decision.
- **Qualifications Directive:** Defines the conditions for the qualification and status of non-EU nationals or stateless persons as refugees or as persons who otherwise need international protection; specifies the content of the protection granted.



Identifying asylum seekers through fingerprints.

- **Dublin Regulation:** Requires Member States (plus Norway and Iceland) to use objective criteria to determine which Member State is responsible for examining an asylum application lodged in their territory, in order to prevent "asylum shopping" and ensure that each applicant's case is processed by only one Member State.

EURODAC is a centralized, automated European fingerprint database designed to identify asylum seekers. By comparing fingerprints, Member States can determine whether an asylum applicant or foreign national living illegally within a member country has previously claimed asylum in another Member State or entered Union territory illegally.

A €628 million European Refugee Fund (2008-2013) has been established to support Member States receiving refugees and displaced persons and to apply consistent, fair, and effective asylum procedures.

Phase Two of CEAS, due to be in place by 2010, aims for a higher standard and greater equality of protection throughout the EU, and foresees the establishment of a common asylum procedure and uniform status for those granted asylum or subsidiary protection. It also strives for enhanced solidarity among Member States, so that responsibility for processing asylum applications and granting protection in the EU is shared equitably.



EU Focus is published bi-monthly by the Delegation of the European Commission to the United States.

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ISSN: 1830-5067
Catalogue No.: IQ-AA-08-05-EN-C

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