

Asylum package: A step towards increased solidarity and responsibility

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Today the European Parliament adopted several pieces of legislation which will mark a step towards completing and improving the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) - due to have been completed by 2012 following the Stockholm programme - which establishes harmonised minimum standards for member states' asylum systems.

ALDE MEP Cecilia Wikström (Folkpartiet Liberalerna, Sweden), EP rapporteur on the new Dublin III regulation, which lays down the criteria to determine which Member State is responsible for examining an asylum application in a more efficient way, said: "Rules are finally much clearer and especially more humane. This new system can offer better protection and assistance to asylum seekers. The toughest part now is proper implementation by Member States to ensure a sound asylum system within the EU". "An EU asylum system could not be based on 27 different procedures. Only a minority of countries are examining almost all asylum applications. We need to shoulder joint responsibility and show solidarity ", added Cecilia Wikström, referring to the recast Asylum procedures directive for granting and withdrawing international protection according to common standards and safeguards.

Sarah Ludford (LibDems, UK) ALDE spokesperson on the Eurodac regulation, which helps to establish which Member State should examine an asylum application through the storage and comparison of the fingerprints of asylum seekers, said: "This is not a perfect package, nor is it yet a truly common system. We are also not yet there in having both full fairness and efficiency across the EU in asylum management but we need both common EU laws and practical cooperation. On Eurodac, ALDE secured tight limits on the scope of police access to data and much stronger safeguards for individuals' rights ".

Nadja Hirsch (FDP, Germany) ALDE spokesperson on the Reception conditions directive, which introduces an increased level of protection for asylum seekers into the already existing common standards for their reception and treatment, said: "In view of the catastrophic situation of asylum seekers in some Member States - with no or limited access to health care, accommodation or even food - we would have wished for even higher standards for their reception. However, a big success for the liberals is that asylum seekers will from now on be able to work already after 9 months, not 12 months. Access to the labour market is key to a successful integration".