

## Briefing for MEP Candidates: Asylum, Migration and Human Rights

The European Union was built on the fundamental values of human dignity and human rights, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law. These values unite the citizens of Europe. Despite this, refugees and displaced people seeking protection in Europe are facing widespread human rights violations across the continent.

According to a 2018 Europe-wide Pew Research Center [survey on public views on supporting refugees](#), a majority of people in several European countries said they support taking in refugees who are fleeing violence and war, with a Europe-median of 77% of citizens being supportive of upholding refugee rights.

Europe is now facing a unique opportunity to reshape its approach to asylum and migration, ensuring an orderly and efficient system whilst also strengthening its ability to meet its obligations under international human rights law.

### I. Top Lines

- Displaced people across Europe are often trapped in unhealthy environments and face widespread rights violations due to inadequacies of the Common European Asylum System, including the Dublin III Regulation.
- Moreover, thousands of displaced people looking for sanctuary in Europe have died or suffered making the dangerous journey across the Mediterranean.
- The EU and its Member States have attempted to outsource migration management to non-EU countries.
- They have been unable to reach an agreement on a co-ordinated response to search and rescue and the disembarkation of those rescued at sea.
- The current European approach to asylum and migration has failed. People either have to return to harmful situations, or find themselves trapped, unable to return home, but unable to seek asylum in Europe.

### II. RRE's Recommendations

#### Seeking Effective and Humane Reforms to the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and Dublin Regulation

- The EU should remove the obligation for people to apply for refugee in the first Member State they enter: this puts disproportionate pressure on Member States on the EU borders.
- The same obligation is harmful as it can be misused to punish refugees by denying them access to humane housing and services in the second or third Member State they apply in.
- Safe and legal routes into the EU should be strengthened, by developing a permanent EU resettlement programme. This will help reduce the numbers dying on route to Europe, and undercut the business models of people smugglers profiting off the plight of refugees.

#### Principles When Working with External Partners

- The EU should only sign cooperation agreements with countries that have a functioning asylum system in line with international human rights law.
- Any agreements must be continuously monitored for human rights violations.
- Existing cooperation agreements with Libya and Turkey should be urgently re-assessed in light of serious human rights concerns.

#### Saving Lives at Sea

- Refugees are dying at sea. The EU and its Member States must develop an operational plan for search and rescue missions in the Mediterranean with disembarkation in the EU.
- The EU should work with civil society organisation and NGOs that have the resources to save lives at sea.
- The EU should not enable the Libyan coastguard to intercept boats in international waters until Libya is considered a safe place upholding international maritime and human rights law.

**Further information:** [www.RefugeeRights.org.uk](http://www.RefugeeRights.org.uk) / [Marta.Welander@RefugeeRights.org.uk](mailto:Marta.Welander@RefugeeRights.org.uk)