**REFORM OF THE COMMON EUROPEAM ASYLUM SYSTEM**

The EU is working towards an integrated, sustainable and holistic EU migration policy based on solidarity and fair sharing of responsibilities and which can function effectively both in times of calm and crisis. Since the adoption of the European Agenda on Migration, the European Commission has been working to implement measures to address both the immediate and the long-term challenges of managing migration flows effectively and comprehensively.

Notwithstanding the significant progress that has been made in the development of the Common European Asylum System, there are still notable differences between the Member States in the types of procedures used, the reception conditions provided to applicants, the recognition rates and the type of protection granted to beneficiaries of international protection. These divergences contribute to secondary movements and asylum shopping, create pull factors, and ultimately lead to an uneven distribution among the Member States of the responsibility to offer protection to those in need.

Recent large scale arrivals have shown that Europe needs an effective and efficient asylum system able to assure a fair and sustainable sharing of responsibility between Member States, to provide sufficient and decent reception conditions throughout the EU, to process quickly and effectively asylum claims lodged in the EU, and to ensure the quality of the decisions made so that those who are in need of international protection effectively obtain it.

On 6 April 2016, the Commission set out its priorities for a structural reform of the European asylum and migration framework in its Communication 'Towards a reform of the Common European Asylum System and enhancing legal avenues to Europe', outlining the different steps to be taken towards a more humane, fair and efficient European asylum policy as well as a better managed legal migration policy.

On 4 May 2016, the Commission presented **a first set of proposals** to reform the Common European Asylum System delivering on three priorities identified in its Communication: establishing a sustainable and fair Dublin system for determining the Member State responsible for examining asylum applications, reinforcing the Eurodac system to better monitor secondary movements and facilitate the fight against irregular migration and establishing a genuine European Union Agency for Asylum to ensure the well-functioning of the European asylum system.

With **the second package**, the Commission is completing the reform of the Common European Asylum System by adopting four additional proposals: a proposal replacing the Asylum Procedures Directive with a Regulation, harmonising the current disparate procedural arrangements in all Member States and creating a genuine common procedure; a proposal replacing the Qualification Directive with a Regulation, setting uniform standards for the recognition of persons in need of protection and the rights granted to beneficiaries of international protection as well as a proposal revising the Reception Conditions Directive to further harmonise reception conditions in the EU, increase applicants' integration prospects and decrease secondary movements. Finally, following-up on the commitment to enhance legal avenues to the EU as announced on 6 April 2016, the Commission is also proposing a structured Union resettlement framework, moving towards a more managed approach to international protection within the EU, ensuring orderly and safe pathways to the EU for persons in need of international protection, with the aim of progressively reducing the incentives for irregular arrivals.

The State Agency for Refugees with CM (SAR with CM) participates actively in the EU working parties on the reform of the Common European Asylum System. For each of the seven active dossiers (3 in the first legislative package and 4 in the second legislative package) expert teams have been formed and a framework position has been developed. The positions have been agreed upon within the framework of Working Party 23: „Cooperation in the field of internal affairs“, and have been approved by the Council on European affairs with the Council of Ministers. In view of the preparation of Bulgaria for the Presidency of the Council of the EU, staff of SAR have been designated to support the work of the Permanent Representation of the Republic of Bulgaria in Brussels during the first half of 2018, when SAR will be chairing the meetings of Asylum Working Party within the Council of the EU.