

TODAYS NEWS

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European  
Commission

# OUTCOME OF COMMISSION MIDDAY BRIEFING

WEDNESDAY, 08 SEPTEMBER, 2010

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## [Asylum procedures: Commission identifies shortcomings in existing common standards](#)

The European Commission report on the application of the Directive on minimum standards on procedures for granting and withdrawing refugee status shows that procedural guarantees still vary considerably across the EU. Moreover, the vagueness of the standards set by the Directive and flaws in the implementation at national level may lead to administrative errors. The Commission adopted on 21 October 2009 a proposal to recast the Directive in order to remedy to these deficiencies.

"There are still significant divergences among national asylum procedures and present rules fall short in preventing administrative errors: I call on the European Parliament and the Council to adopt the amendments that the Commission proposed in 2009 to remedy this situation", said European Commissioner for Home Affairs Cecilia Malmström. She added: "The Commission will continue to examine and pursue all cases where problems of implementation were identified, so as to ensure the correct application of the Directive, in particular with regard to the respect for the principle of non-refoulement and for the other rights laid down in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, as well as to reduce the scope for divergences."

The Asylum Procedures Directive was designed to establish minimum standards for fair and efficient procedures for granting and withdrawing refugee status.

The Commission report on its implementation highlights that the objective of creating a level playing field with respect to asylum procedures has not been fully achieved. Some of the Directive's optional provisions and derogation clauses have contributed to the proliferation of divergent arrangements across the EU; consequently, procedural guarantees vary considerably between Member States. This is notably the case with respect to the provisions on accelerated procedures, 'safe country of origin', 'safe third country', personal interviews, legal assistance, and access to an effective remedy.

A number of cases of incomplete and/or incorrect transposition and flaws in the implementation of the Directive have also been identified.

## [45 million for EU research projects focusing on innovative and sustainable maritime activities](#)

The European Commission will tomorrow present to stakeholders and potential participants its €45 million investment in research projects on maritime activities. "The ocean of tomorrow 2011" call for research proposals invites funding bids from projects proposing innovative, forward-looking and sustainable approaches to reap the great potential of our seas and oceans. The money will be allocated

to large multidisciplinary research projects involving partners from different EU and partner countries. Tomorrow's information day will take place at the "Albert Borschette" Conference Centre (ABCC), 36 Rue Froissart, Brussels, with opening speeches by EU Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science Máire Geoghegan-Quinn and EU Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Maria Damanaki at 10h00 followed by a press conference at approximately 10h40 in ABCC Room 4C.

Commissioners Geoghegan-Quinn and Damanaki said: "Oceans cover 70% of the Earth's surface. They are key to our eco-system. But they are also key to our current and future economy and we need 'Smart Seas' to help us meet the challenge of creating sustainable jobs and growth in the 21st century. Selecting the best proposals from this call will help Europe move forward in areas like offshore energy and "blue biotechnologies".

### **[Mergers: Commission accepts referral of proposed acquisition of Sara Lee's household insecticide unit by SC Johnson](#)**

The European Commission has accepted the request by six EU Member States to assess under the EU Merger Regulation the proposed acquisition of Sara Lee household insecticide business by SC Johnson (SCJ). The deal did not qualify for the EU's one-stop shop review because the merging parties do not meet the triggering turnover threshold, but the national competition authorities of Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Greece, Italy and Spain asked the Commission to examine the impact of the deal on their territories.

## **Rediffusion**

### **[European Commission to assess Member States' use of European Union funds for Roma integration](#)**

The European Commission established a Roma Task Force today to assess Member States' use of European Union funds. The proposal was part of an analysis on the situation of Roma in France and in Europe by Vice-President Viviane Reding, EU Justice Commissioner; László Andor, EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion; and Cecilia Malmström, EU Commissioner for Home Affairs. The Commission's Roma Task Force, which will include senior officials from all relevant Commission departments, will analyse how Member States are following up the Commission's Communication of 7 April ( [IP/10/407](#) ; [MEMO/10/121](#) ), which called for concrete programmes to help Roma integration. The Task Force will assess Member States' use of EU funds for Roma integration and identify ways to improve the funds' effectiveness. The Task Force's first findings will be submitted to the College of Commissioners by the end of the year. The Commission will keep the European Parliament and the Council informed about the Task Force's findings on a regular basis.

## **OTHER INFORMATION**

- **[Speech by Commissioner Georgieva on the Humanitarian Situation after floods in Pakistan, EP Plenary, Strasbourg – en rediffusion](#)**
- **[Speech by Commissioner Vassiliou 'Creativity, Culture and Innovation', Brussels](#)**

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**Source: European Commission** - News from the Communication Directorate General's midday briefing