



PRESS INVITATION
"Quality and Efficiency in the Asylum Process"
Ministerial Conference hosted by the Belgian Presidency of the EU

BRUSSELS
13-14 September 2010

The Belgian Presidency will host a Ministerial conference on Quality and Efficiency in the Asylum Process on Monday and Tuesday 13-14 September 2010. Mr. **Melchior WATHELET**, Belgian State Secretary for Asylum and Migration, will chair the Conference. In order to promote a constructive dialogue and a fruitful exchange of good practices between governmental and non-governmental organizations, the Belgian Presidency invited the EU Ministers for Asylum, the EU institutions, UNHCR, civil society representatives (such as ECRE) and representatives from the academic world.

The main objective of the Conference is to determine good practices that can contribute to making **asylum processes** in EU member states **more efficient** while **respecting high quality standards**.

EU member states put in a considerable effort to implement the first phase **asylum legislation**. At the July 2010 informal JHA Council a debate was held on a strategy for the second phase legislative instruments currently under negotiation.

The Asylum Conference will focus on two main themes constituting the **complementary building blocks** for the development of a Common European Asylum System.

1. Practical cooperation

"Asylum seekers with special needs" and "decision making process" are two of the main subjects around which the Asylum Conference is oriented.

On day 2 a Marketplace for Good Practices on Asylum takes place. Several member states as well as non-governmental organizations, UNHCR, Fundamental Rights Agency, GDISC etc... will present, exchange and discuss interesting examples of quality and efficiency in the asylum process.

2. Solidarity

Financial, material and physical solidarity is the third main theme of the conference. With this the Belgian Presidency intends to have in-depth discussion at Ministerial level on all different aspects of intra-European solidarity.

Press moments on Tuesday 14 September

- 9h00-9h30: Arrival of delegations and conference participants
- 9h30-13h00: Plenary session for presentation of Workshop Conclusions by rapporteurs and Ministerial tour de table, including interventions by UNHCR, EC, EP, ECRE (**Press attendance from 9h30 to 9h40**)
- 9h30-13h00 : Marketplace for Good Practices on Asylum (ATRIUM/SAX)
- 13h00: Family picture
- 16h00-16h30: Press Conference (ORANGE ROOM)
 - Belgian Presidency - State Secretary for Asylum and Migration – *Mr. Melchior WATHELET*
 - European Commissioner for Home Affairs – *Ms. Cecilia MALMSTRÖM*
 - UNHCR Director of the Division of International Protection – *Mr. Volker TURK*
 - Secretary General of the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) – *Mr. Bjarte VANDVIK*

Context

In the Stockholm Programme the European Council recalls that the establishment of a **Common European Asylum System by 2012** remains a key policy objective for the EU. Such a system is needed to both **offer protection** to individuals who are in need of protection and to **combat irregular migration** or **prevent secondary movements** while respecting human rights.

Focus on the future

The Belgian Presidency is convinced that the Conference's bottom-up approach can contribute to finding acceptable solutions for some current outstanding issues and challenges. The outcome of this Conference can thus be a source of inspiration for the ongoing negotiations on the asylum acquis and give concrete input to the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) that will become operational by the end of 2011.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR THE PRESS ON TUESDAY 14 SEPTEMBER

When

On Monday 13 September a plenary session and 3 thematic technical workshops will take place. The outcome of the workshops will be presented to the EU Ministers on Tuesday 14 September.

Press is only invited to attend on September 14th.

Where

Conference Centre Egmont, Brussels. Press entrance: Milan Passage, Waterloo Boulevard 31.

Access and accreditation

Accredited press only

1. Direct access for journalists with a permanent accreditation.
2. Press wanting to obtain an accreditation for this specific Conference, can register on the website www.eutrio.be/accreditation – Journalists are invited to create an account and fill out a pre-inscription form. Your accreditation will be confirmed. A badge will be at your disposal on the day of the Conference.
3. Accreditation on the spot is possible, but no guarantees can be given as to the processing delays.

Press contact

Do you want to get in touch with people for statements, background information on a factual issue or receive general information on the Asylum Conference, please contact:

Mr. Benoît PITANCE – Spokesperson of the State Secretary for Asylum and Migration, Mr. Melchior WATHELET, + 32 497 79 24 78 - benoit.pitance@wathelet.fed.be

Press Centre

Media representatives are kindly invited to the Press Centre as from 8h15 on Tuesday 14 September (**breakfast and sandwich lunch served**).

A press file in **English, Dutch and French** containing more detailed information will be available at the Press Centre.

A detailed programme and other documentation related to the conference can be downloaded from www.eutrio.be.