

Brussels, 14/04/2008  
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Mr Bernard Durkan  
Chairman of the Joint Committee on European Affairs  
Houses of the Oireachtas  
Leinster House  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2  
Ireland

Dear Mr Durkan,

The Commission would like to thank the Irish Oireachtas and in particular its Joint Committee on European Affairs for its opinion on the Green Paper on the future of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS).

This Green Paper, issued on 6 June 2007, aimed to launch a broad consultation amongst all relevant stakeholders on the future architecture of the CEAS, as it should materialize by 2010, in line with the Hague Programme. To this end, it posed a series of open-ended questions, with a view to stimulating an in-depth reflection and debate on the relevant issues. In an attempt to be as comprehensive as possible, the Green Paper presented certain possibilities and options, but only by way of example. It did not in any way express a commitment on behalf of the Commission to carry out any of the ideas presented in it.

The results of this comprehensive consultation will inform the preparation of a Policy plan, to be issued in mid-2008, in which the Commission will set out all the measures that it will propose to construct the CEAS, along with a timetable for their adoption. Moreover, in the context of the preparation of each of the second phase proposals, full consideration will be given to their compatibility with the current EU legal framework and in particular with the principles of proportionality and subsidiarity. So the Commission will indeed demonstrate, for each of the measures that it will propose in the course of the second phase, that the requirements of proportionality and subsidiarity are fully satisfied.

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The Commission is pleased to see that the Joint Committee attaches importance to the establishment of a common procedure, to the implementation of the existing directives in a similar manner by all Member States to avoid asylum-shopping, to the creation of new mechanisms of solidarity between the Member States and to give reinforced attention and protection to particularly vulnerable groups of asylum-seekers. The Commission can agree with the views of the Joint Committee on these points, which will be the subject of specific Commission initiatives in 2008 and beyond.

Yours sincerely,



Margot WALLSTRÖM