



The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE)

Response to the European Commission Green paper on the Future Common European Asylum System

1. The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the European Commission's **'Green Paper on the future Common European Asylum System'**. Given the CRE's remit to work towards the elimination of racial discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and encourage good relations between people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, this submission will focus its comments on ***Integration***, that is ***'¹ How to enhance the integration of beneficiaries of international protection....'***. As the UK moves towards an integrated approach to equality and human rights, with the creation of the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) (which will be operational from October 2007), this response will adopt a "cross strand" approach to its comments.
2. The CRE supports the Commission's decision to carry out this consultation in parallel with the evaluation of the first phase of legislation. However, the Commission should ensure the results of the evaluation of the existing community legislation (transposition and implementation of the first phase instruments) are examined before proposals for new measures are made. For instance, the ²Qualification Directive came into force in October 2006 and the ³Procedures Directive is not due to be implemented until December 2007 insufficient time has elapsed to be able to judge the impact made by these first phase instruments. There should be emphasis on *increasing practical cooperation* between Member States and the *dissemination of good practice* in implementing the principles of the first phase legislation. Finally, any additional legislative measures (if they prove to be necessary) should be based upon a gap analysis that flows from a *thorough* and *timely* evaluation of the first phase of the Common European Asylum System legislation. This will require member states to cooperate fully and invest in adequate resources.
3. The CRE believes all dimensions of integration policy including economic, social, cultural and political aspects must be underpinned by anti-discrimination policies and legislation. It is essential that integration of all groups is linked to both the anti-discrimination and social inclusion strategies at the European and national levels. Therefore, asylum seekers, as well as wider society, should have access to fundamental rights including equal access to the labour market, vocational training, housing, education, healthcare and access to goods and services.
4. The medium and longer term implications of reception policies for asylum seekers also merit careful consideration. Reception policies for asylum-seekers should be designed to promote integration from the beginning of the reception process through to settlement in

¹ European Commission Green Paper COM(2007) 301 on the future Common European Asylum System , (Page 8), 6 June 2007

² EU council directive 2005/36/ec of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications.

³ Council Directive 2005/85/EC of 1 December 2001 Official Journal of the European Union L 326/13.

the UK with a view to minimising isolation and separation from host communities. To facilitate this, effective language and vocational skills development is a priority as well as pursuing employment opportunities.

5. The CREs approach to integration, focusing on equality of opportunity, universal participation and interaction between people from different ethnic and racial groups, provides an excellent framework for addressing some of the social and economic challenges related to asylum.

-Equality for all sections of the community means that asylum seekers are afforded the rights they are entitled to. For example, this means that they are also given the necessary access to services to ensure that they are equal members of society.

-Participation by all sections of the community in the processes and decisions that affect their lives

-Interaction between all sections of the community. For example, the CRE has contributed to a ⁴handbook on rights and practice for newcomers to the UK, with a focus on work and the workplace. This covers not just employment rights and rights if you have been a victim of racism but also practical needs, such as what pay slips are, the types of car insurance and tax code you need.

6. **Particularly vulnerable groups:** The CRE supports the proposals laid out in the Green Paper for common procedures to assess claims based on *gender* and *child persecution*. The CRE would therefore welcome the Commission's proposals for EU wide training policy for key actors such as health professionals and for the dissemination of best practice at operational level. In this case, best practice could be shared among member states in relation to training, identifying survivors of torture, interviewing children, assessing claims of persecution based on gender or sexual orientation.

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⁴ Working in the UK: Second Edition of the Newcomer's Handbook, published July 28 2006