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EU Dublin Regulation: Time for leadership and reform

Responding to today's discussions of EU Home Affairs Ministers on the reform of Europe's broken asylum system, Iverna McGowan, Head of Amnesty International's European Institutions Office said:

"We are deeply concerned that member states are not engaging on this issue with the required seriousness. For two and a half years they have failed to agree an asylum reform proposal and putting it off for another day won't help.

Based on what we heard today, some member states seem to be more concerned with grandstanding to a domestic audience than negotiating in good faith.

The people of Europe need and deserve a fairer more compassionate asylum system that is fit for purpose. Such a system is only possible through solidarity between states."

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For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact Ruairi Talbot on ruairi.talbot@amnesty.org or +32 48 7358081

Background

The current asylum system, governed by the infamous Dublin Regulation, tears apart families who are fleeing the most desperate situations. It means that the country through which an asylum-seeker first enters the EU is responsible for examining their claim. This overstretches some countries at the EU's southern border leading to long delays for asylum applicants, many waiting in one European country while their family resides in another.

Last November, with cross-party political support the Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) put forward their proposal to reform the Dublin Regulation. As co-legislators, the European Parliament must negotiate with the European Council to agree the final text. At the European Council meeting in June, EU Heads of State and Government are finally expected to find a compromise.

To address the current flaws in the Dublin system, Amnesty International is calling on EU leaders to support a mandatory distribution mechanism of asylum seekers and to put the reunification of families at the heart of reform.