Standards for the reception of applicants for international protection. Recast

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Ministers discussed the state-of-play regarding the establishment of a **Common European Asylum System (CEAS).** The CEAS includes a package of six legislative proposals which EU member states have undertaken to adopt by 2012.

The basis for the discussion was a presidency report that gave an overview of the debate after an informal meeting of the Justice and Home Affairs Ministers on 15 and 16 July and a ministerial conference on 13 and 14 September 2010 in Brussels.

Member states highlighted a number of issues of particular concern to them including the need to combine a high level of protection with efficient and effective asylum systems, solidarity and changes to the Dublin II system. The current text of the Dublin II regulation states that the member states through which an asylum seeker first entered the territory of the EU are responsible for dealing with that person's request for asylum.

Malta, Greece and Cyprus, for example, repeated their call for solidarity and support from the European Commission and other member states to help them cope with the large number of asylum requests with which they are confronted. The Dublin II regulation should, in their opinion, be reformed.

Other member states, including Germany and Austria, maintained that the proper functioning of the Dublin II regulation was at the heart of any possible future Common European Asylum System. These countries and others, like the UK, also stressed the importance for more cooperation with third countries on issues such as readmission agreements and border controls. They also stressed that they were ready to **provide practical support and cooperation in order to help those member states struggling with a greater burden to implement existing legislation**. The European Asylum Support Office (EASO), which is expected to be operational early in 2011, is expected to play an important role in this respect.

In the context of this debate, the Commission also informed the Council of its recent missions to Greece where it discussed with Greek political leaders the reform of their asylum system. Greece has recently adopted a national action plan on asylum reform and migration management in response to significant increases in the number of illegal immigrants and asylum seekers. Member states confirmed their readiness to assist in the implementation of the plan.