Asylum: Eurodac for the comparison of fingerprints of applicants. Protocol for the Convention

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The committee has rejected a Council proposal to extend the Eurodac system to include the fingerprints of illegal immigrants. Eurodac is used to compare the fingerprints of asylum seekers, thus helping EU member states establish whether they have previously applied for asylum in another member state as well. Should they prove to have done so, they can then be sent back to the country of their initial application in accordance with the Dublin Convention. The Council wants to extend the field of application of the Eurodac Convention in order to increase the effectiveness of the Dublin Convention. The idea is to allow a member state to check whether an alien residing illegally on its territory has made an asylum application in another member state. Hence, the fingerprints of every alien of at least 14 years of age, who is apprehended in connection with irregular entry, should be promptly communicated to the Eurodac Central Unit for comparison with data on asylum applicants. Rapporteur Hubert PIRKER (EPP, A) had wanted to accept the Council proposal subject to a few amendments, but a majority of 13 to 6 MEPs in the civil liberties committee decided otherwise.