

Sanctuary

A bi-monthly newsletter on asylum, refugee and migrant matters from a religious perspective
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OVERVIEW

Asylum Applications for the two months, July (220) and Aug (226) 2009, totalled 446.

First Instance: Of 624 applications processed in July/Aug '09, some 13 applicants were recognized as refugees at *first instance*, some 545 were refused and some 66 applicants were returned to the EU country to which they first arrived, to have their case processed there. (cf. *Dublin Convention/Regulation*).

Appeal Stage: Of 496 *Substantive Appeals* processed in July/Aug 2009, some 45 appellants were recognized as refugees (that is, on appeal, some 45 *First Instance* negative decisions were overturned).

Top Countries of Origin of new asylum applicants in 2009 up to 31 Aug: Nigeria: 22%; Pakistan: 10%; China: 7%; DR Congo: 4% and Somalia: 4%.

Backlog of unprocessed asylum applications at 31 Aug '09: 3,692 (*First Instance*: 769; *Appeals*: 2,923).

Family Reunification (FR): New applications in July/Aug '09 totalled 97 (involving 219 dependants).

Some 83 applications (174 dependants) were processed to completion (ie. report sent to Min. Justice).

FR applicants-top countries of origin in '09 to 31 Aug: Sudan: 13%; Somalia: 13%; Iraq: 11%; Nigeria: 8%.

Separated Children (Unaccompanied Minors) - In July/Aug '09, of 39 separated children referred to the HSE, some 10 were re-united with family and 28 placed in care. Of the children referred, some six [5 Chinese, 1 Nigerian (1 F/5M: aged 15-17)] are classified as *Missing from Care*.

Direct Provision at 30/8/'09 - Centres: 49; Residents: 6, 236 in 19 cos; 779 in Mosney; 220-320 in 9 centres (Athlone, Ballyhaunis, Clondalkin, Cork x2, Galway x2, Knockalishen, Monaghan, Sligo & 90 -190 in 14 centres.

Self-Catering: 4 Centres - Dublin, Ballaghaderreen, Dundalk, Mallow. Cap. (reduced): 412 people; Residents: 307.

Reception Centres (2) - Stillorgan and Baleskin. Capacity: 459; Residents: 272.

(Statistics: Dept of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and HSE Separated Children's Unit)

CHURCH

Caritas Europa (CE) 6th Migration Forum (17-19 Sept '09) had as its main objective the review of CE's advocacy strategy for protecting the rights of migrant workers in Europe. Erny Gillen, President of CE, called for the introduction of a minimum wage in all countries *in order to establish a bottom-line for labour and social protection justice*. Will Somerville, Migration Policy Institute, Washington, noted that hate crimes are on the rise as a result of diminished resources and competition for jobs. Patk Taran, International Labour Organisation, encouraged CE to continue its rights-based advocacy work, noting *the defence of migrants' rights is only viable & effective when based on a firm foundation of legal norms, & operates under the rule of law*. Policies aimed at reducing labour immigration are not an option, he added, as projections indicate that the EU will need an annual influx of c.700,000 migrants by 2050.

(www.caritas-europa.org)

INTERNATIONAL, EU and NATIONAL ISSUES

Migration and the Global Recession, a report (Sept 2009) by the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), notes that immigrants are overwhelmingly choosing to stay put in their adopted countries, rather than return home, despite the impact of the economic downturn on employment. The report reveals that some migration flows, particularly illegal migration, are also down as would-be migrants are being deterred by reduced job prospects in countries that would previously have offered them better opportunities. MPI President, Demetrios Papademetriou, who co-authored the report, commented that, so far, relatively few migrants are going back 'home'. *As for the near to mid-term*, he added, *it is 'safe' to predict that the need for immigrants across an expanding number of countries is now structural and, as a result, large-scale immigration will resume in the next two to five years*.

(www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs)

'Calais...symptom of a flawed European Asylum system' - On 22 Sept last, the French authorities dismantled the makeshift camp in the northern French city of Calais. This gathering point for migrants hoping to cross to Britain replaced the Sangatte Red Cross centre closed by France in 2002. During the latest operation, 146 adults were taken into police custody and 132 minors taken to reception centres. According to UNHCR, closing the camp does not address the phenomenon of mixed and irregular migration, nor the problems of the people concerned, many of whom may be in need of protection.

Unaccompanied Minors (UAM) - the EU Council meeting in Brussels (21 Sept 2009) of Justice and Home Affairs Ministers from the 27 EU Member States identified issues of concern regarding unaccompanied minors, of whom there are some 100,000 in the EU, including age assessment techniques, exchange of information, family tracing and the need to pay particular attention to UAM in the context of the fight against human trafficking. The Council requested the EU Commission to present an action plan on unaccompanied minors by 2010. (ECRE Weekly Bulletin, 25 Sept '09, www.ecre.org)

Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act - The UK Parliament has passed the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009, which *inter alia* merges the customs and immigration functions of the UK. The government had proposed introducing immigration checks for those entering and leaving Northern Ireland, but this was defeated in the House of Lords. (www.services.parliament.uk/bills/2008-09)

New Scheme for Undocumented Migrant Workers grants the opportunity for non-EEA nationals who have fallen out of the work permit system and become undocumented through workplace exploitation or unexpected redundancy, to apply for a 4-month temporary residence permission – in effect, the “Bridging Visa” for which the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland has long been campaigning. During this 4-month period, individuals will be permitted to apply to re-enter the work permit system. Announcing the scheme (14 Sept '09), Justice Min Dermot Ahern said: *Where migrant workers have not been treated fairly by their employer and this has been the cause of their undocumented status it is appropriate that we give them the chance to put things right.* Another new provision exempts non-EEA nationals who have held employment permits for 5 consecutive years from the requirement to hold a work permit. (www.mrci.ie; www.inis.gov.ie)

Habitual Residence Condition - Briefing Note: This *interim* Briefing Note from FLAC (Free Legal Advice Centres) deals with the Habitual Residence Condition (HRC) as it affects people seeking asylum, protection or leave to remain. It is mainly concerned with whether people in that process are completely excluded from satisfying the HRC, as claimed by the Department of Social and Family Affairs and, as a consequence, not eligible to receive social welfare payments. (Full Briefing Note: www.flac.ie)

RESOURCES

Situations of women in Armed conflict - Resistance, Actions and Survival – AkiDwA - the Migrant Women's Network - Seminar, Wed, 14 Oct, 2009, 10.00am - 2.00pm, Irish Aid Centre, O'Connell Street, D. 1. Register by 7th Oct with Monica McMahon, info@akidwa.ie or 01 8148582

Human Trafficking: Psychologically Shattered & Caught in a Legal Quagmire: APT - Act to Prevent Trafficking conference to mark *EU Day against Trafficking*, Mont Clare Hotel, Clare St, D.2, Mon 19 Oct, 9.15am - 12.50pm. (APT is associated with Conference of Religious of Ireland & Irish Missionary Union). www.info@aptireland.org

Working Sensitively with Refugees and Asylum Seekers who have experienced Sexual Violence - training programme, Wed 21&Thurs 22 Oct, 9.30-4.30 pm, Rape Crisis Centre, 70 Lr Leeson Street, D 2 - relevant to organisations providing services accessed by refugees/asylum seekers. E-m: etadmin@rcc.ie

'Who's who?' - Updated copies (Sept '09) of this flyer: refproject@iecon.ie/www.catholicbishops/refugees

Help fight welfare cuts - The Poor Can't Pay: to avoid the poorest in our society being forced to pay for the current economic crisis, see www.thepoorcantpay.ie site and e-mail your TDs /key Ministers.

What the Bible says about the Stranger by Prof Kieran O'Mahony OSA, **Directory of Migrant-led Churches & Chaplaincies** (www.irishcouncilofchurches.org), **Unity in Diversity In Our Churches** (www.iccsi.ie)

TO PONDER

We are all witnesses of the burden of suffering, the dislocation and the aspirations that accompany the flow of migrants. ... there is no doubt that foreign workers ... make a significant contribution to the economic development of the host country through their labour, besides that which they make to their country of origin through the money they send home. Obviously, these [workers] cannot be considered as a commodity or a mere workforce. They must not, therefore, be treated like any other factor of production. Every migrant is a human person who, as such, possesses fundamental, inalienable rights that must be respected by everyone and in every circumstance.

Caritas in Veritate (Love in Truth), Encyclical letter of Pope Benedict XVI, 29 June 2009, # 62

For further info on items in this newsletter, contact Sr. Joan Roddy, Refugee & Migrant Project Director
SANCTUARY can now be accessed at www.catholicbishops.ie/refugees

