

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 (162) and August (174) 2010, totalled 336.

First Instance: Of 356 applications processed in July/Aug '10, four applicants were recognized as refugees at *first instance* and some 215 applicants were refused following interview. A further 79 refusals relate to cases *withdrawn/deemed withdrawn*. Some 58 applicants were returned to the EU country to which they first arrived (*Dublin II Regulation*).

Appeal Stage: Of 330 *Substantive Appeals* processed in July/Aug' 10, some 8 appellants were recognized as refugees, some 322 were refused. In the same period, 33 appeals were withdrawn.

Top Countries of Origin of new asylum applicants in 2010, up to 31 August: Nigeria: 20%; China: 11%; Pakistan: 10%; Afghanistan: 4%; Moldova: 4%.

Backlog of unprocessed cases at 31 Aug 2010: 1,780 (*First Instance: 515; Appeals: 1,265*).

Family Reunification (FR): New applications in July/Aug totalled 44 (with 83 dependants). Some 47 applications (92 dependants) were processed to completion (ie. report sent to Min. Justice).

FR applicants - top countries of origin in 2010, up to 31 Aug - Sudan: 14%; Somalia: 12%; Iraq: 11%; Nigeria: 9%; Afghanistan: 8%;

Direct Provision - 19.09.2010; **Centres:** 43; **Capacity:** 6,423; **Residents:** 5,856, in 19 counties; 666 in Mosney; 316 in Athlone; 308 in Ballyhaunis; 200-300 in 8 centres (Clondalkin, Cork x 2, Galway x 2, Knockalisheen, Monaghan, Sligo); 100-200 in 9 centres; 5-97 people in 23 centres.

Self-Catering: 2 Centres - Dublin, Dundalk; **Capacity:** 276 people; **Residents:** 272 (**Mallow/B'derreen: closed**).

Reception Centre (1) - Baleskin. **Capacity:** 369; **Residents:** 227. (Stats: Dept of Justice and Law Reform)

Work Permits issued non-EEA nationals - The number decreased from 13,600 in 2008 to just under 8,000 in 2009, of which 50% were renewals of existing permits. Of those issued in 2009, a total of almost one-third was for work in the *Service Industry* and in *Medical and Nursing*. (www.deti.ie)

CHURCH

Roma: Moving from social stigma to moral and structural responses - Reflecting on the need to manage human mobility positively (27 Sept 2010), *International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC)* Sec Gen, Johan Ketelers, drew attention to the ... *urgent need to look to the future - a future that takes into account the ever-increasing mobility of services, capital, goods and people, the unprecedented low-birth rate and broad ageing demographics in high-income countries, the movement toward cities that has over 50% of the world's population living in urban settings for the first time in history, the doubling of the global population in the past 30 years and the further increase to 9 billion people in the next 30.* ... (www.icmc.net)

INTERNATIONAL, EU and NATIONAL ISSUES

EU Ministerial Conference on Quality and Efficiency in the Asylum Process - EU Ministers for Asylum and representatives of other EU institutions and of NGOs came together on 13-14 Sept last in Brussels to discuss how to improve asylum procedures in Europe. It was agreed that initiatives to increase practical cooperation, such as the establishment of a European Asylum Support Office, soon to be set up in Malta, will contribute to making the asylum system fairer and more efficient. While accepting that practical cooperation such as sharing information about countries of origin and pooling interpretation services and training can contribute to better decisions, *European Council for Refugees and Exiles* Sec Gen, Bjarte Vandvik, pointed out that EU Member States also need to work together on fairer common asylum rules. A harmonised asylum system with higher standards of protection would, he added, not only be fairer, but would be more efficient and less costly in the longer term.

The European Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) has published two new reports about the divergences people face when they seek asylum in the EU. One focuses on the language barriers during the asylum procedure, showing that where provision of translation is concerned, there are

serious imbalances among the EU Member States. The other examines the varying time limits - from 2 days to 2 months - for filing an appeal if an application for asylum receives a negative decision. According to the FRA, *asylum seekers across Europe are on an uneven playing field*.

European Council on Refugees & Exiles (ECRE) Weekly Bulletins – Sept '10 www.ecre.org

Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill 2010 - the Immigrant Council of Ireland, in a critical overview, underlines that unless the Bill - now in its third version - is significantly amended, the opportunity to reform comprehensively Ireland's immigration system will be missed.

The overview (which does not cover the protection section of the Bill) looks at 7 areas of concern -

- provisions allowing for summary deportations
- limitation of access to justice for migrants
- insufficient protection for victims of trafficking
- failure to provide a permanent immigration status
- lack of rights to family reunification
- failure to set out clear immigration rules in primary legislation
- administrative fees. (for full text cf www.immigrantcouncil.ie)

In an Open Letter to Mr Dermot Ahern, Minister for Justice and Law Reform, on 26 Aug last, the Irish Refugee Council, on behalf of thirteen NGOs (including the Refugee and Migrant Project), voiced concern about the transfer, with very short notice, of persons resident in Mosney to alternative accommodation. Expressing disagreement with this move *en masse* of people seeking asylum, the letter goes on to say - *We are aware of the financial pressures upon the Department of Justice and the need to reduce expenditure and hope that you would recognise that the delays in the asylum process and the Direct Provision system itself should be the targets for the Department, not the vulnerable adults who have been subjected to displacement and delays for many years.* www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie

EMBRACE NI (www.embraceni.org) is hosting an *And You Welcomed Me* workshop, Sat, 20 Nov, 2 - 4pm, in Presbyterian Church Halls, Templepatrick, Co Antrim, to look at how the local church can engage with migrant people. Aneta Dabek, EMBRACE Development Worker, is exploring ways of providing translations of church notices in a number of languages.

The minority ethnic sector - Black and Minority-Ethnic and Faith Forum - has met in Belfast to discuss the N. Ireland Executive's *Cohesion, Sharing and Integration* consultation document.

RESOURCES

Many Cultures One Home - documentary film celebrating 10 years of *Doras Luimni*, Thurs, 14 Oct 2010, 8pm - 10 pm, The Loft, George's Quay, Limerick. Tel 061 310328; www.dorasluimni.org

Theories of Race and Ethnicity - Ten-week evening course (Tuesdays). Issues will include the position of the Traveller community and links between racialisation and the asylum/migration processes. Fee: €175. Beginning Tues, 19th Oct, 6-8pm, Trinity College, Dublin. Contact: Martina Byrne - byrnem19@tcd.ie

Claiming our Future: Sat, Oct 30, 11am - 5pm, RDS, Ballsbridge, D 4 - a chance not just to talk about a better way, but to take new inspiring steps to foster unity across civil society, to power a progressive movement to reshape Ireland's recovery and claim our social value. Info/register: claimingourfuture.ie

Human Trafficking, Prostitution and Sexuality Sept'10 - published by *Act to Prevent Trafficking* (APT). Conference talks and other specially commissioned papers. To order: info@aptireland.org / 087-9701891

Irish Churches' Affirmations on Migration, Diversity and Interculturalism - Copies of the booklet and **A3 posters (new)** with the *Affirmations* available from Parish Integration Programme (PIP).

www.irishchurches.org; www.iccsi.ie - Adrian Cristea, Parish Integration Programme - adrian@iccsi.ie; tel 01 2690951

Who's who? - updated flyer (Sept 2010) on asylum/migration issues, available from refproject@iecon.ie

TO PONDER

Security can be much more effectively guaranteed when people are offered regular, reasonable and transparent paths to integration and community life, rather than through targeting people in irregular situations. With the growth in human mobility, including fairly stable numbers of refugees and an increase of stateless persons, the need for societies to adapt better and to create sufficient space becomes even more urgent. This space is not only humanitarian, but also moral and structural.

Roma: Moving from social stigma to moral and structural responses - Johan Ketelers, Sec Gen, ICMC

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