

Asylum at Risk: JRS Europe's Response to the EU Safe Country Framework

February 2026

The right to asylum must be safeguarded at all costs. The right to asylum is a basic human right. People asking for asylum do not enter irregularly in a country. Providing protection for people who need it is a legal and moral obligation of states; an obligation that should not be outsourced, not be externalized.

JRS Europe is deeply concerned by the recent vote in the European Parliament approving new rules on so-called EU Safe Countries of Origin (SCO) list and Safe Third Countries (STC). We have [joined civil society again in calling the EU institutions to refrain](#). Now, we are worried to see that the erosion of the right to asylum constitutes a central repercussion of the current policy and legislative developments. Deterrence and shifting of responsibility, too.

We are concerned as we fear, based on our experience on the ground across Europe, that, instead of safeguarding human rights of refugees and other forcibly displaced people, the direction the new Common European Asylum System is taking will lead to the opposite: people stranded in detention centers or other facilities with prison-like conditions, human beings being sent to countries where they have no link whatsoever – no community, no supportive network, no language or culture knowledge-, families with children going through procedures traumatising and not appropriate for kids and other individuals in vulnerable situation.

We urge national governments, local authorities but also policy makers to rethink and refrain from applying those policies. We have already the samples of those politics. We know what happened following the Greece- Turkey deal, we know what are the conditions stemming from the Italy-Albania protocol, we are aware of the situation based on the UK-France deals.

For us, respect for human dignity, which is inherent and not negotiable for every single human person, should be the drive of all policies affecting the lives of people and their futures. The amendments of the Asylum Procedures Regulation, part of the Pact, will result in practices that risk to overlook completely the need to support the dignity and agency of people in several ways: with the undermining of the individual assessment on which every asylum claim should be assessed, with allowing lower protection standards in (third) countries, by considering the mere transit of a country a sufficient link with that country, by systematising fast-track procedures that by definition imply fewer safeguards such as shorter timelines and less access to legal aid, by allowing appeals without an automatic suspensive effect, risking this way to violate the cornerstone of asylum, the non-refoulement principle. But, above all, these laws ignore that vulnerability of people will be heightened, as the risk of isolation, instability, insecurity and uncertainty will increase.

These recent approved legislative amendments and the new EU list of safe countries of origin are not just abstract legal adjustments. They will affect people's lives and

will result in systematic violations of their rights. An asylum system of which the effectiveness is measured by speed cannot be just. Protecting people and upholding rights must remain at the heart of European asylum policy. Deterrence cannot be the answer; deterrence harms and kills. Empowerment and inclusion in dignity is key to move towards peaceful societies.

As JRS Europe, we will remain on the side of the people we serve and work with and we will be monitoring the implementation of these policies on the ground through our Country Offices. We will keep accompanying and supporting individuals and communities, to our best capacity, and advocating for *truly fair* and humane migration policies.