



Report EU@Work Seminar  
on EU Asylum and Migration Policies

Brussels, 4-7 December 2018

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**Introduction:**

TEPSA devoted this seminar to the analysis of EU asylum and migration policies, on 4-7 December, in Brussels. This EU@Work Seminar gathered 23 MA students and recent graduates from different universities across Europe and beyond.

Participants had the opportunity to gain first-hand insights from EU institutions in the migration portfolio, by visiting DG Migration and Home Affairs (European Commission), the Council of the EU, the European External Action Service (EEAS) and by meeting with a Member of the European Parliament participating in the negotiations with the Council on the new migration and asylum framework for the EU. Additionally, participants visited the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), where they grasped the understanding of an NGO devoted to the legal assistance of asylum-seekers and advocating for a change in EU agenda. Furthermore, the group visited the Permanent Representation of Austria to the EU, key Member State holding the rotating presidency of the Council of the EU and with a strong focus on the migration dossier.

All visits were discussed internally within lectures provided by Prof. Jaap de Zwaan, Secretary-General of TEPSA and Academic Coordinator of the seminar, who framed the theoretical knowledge of the training. The last day of the seminar, a group exercise was conducted, where participants simulated the representation of the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Council of the EU, EU Member States, the United Nations and an NGO discussing on potential incentives at European level for the integration of third-country nationals residing in the EU.

**Day 1:** Opening of the seminar; introductory lecture *Asylum and migration policy: multidimensional nature and state of play* and info session about the European Solidarity Corps

The first day the seminar kicked off with a general presentation of TEPSA and its seminars. The TEPSA team welcomed the students, who introduced themselves and pointed out their special

interest in migration and asylum policies. After that, Prof. de Zwaan, academic coordinator of the seminar, delivered the first lecture providing a general overview of the asylum and migration policy within the European Union and its latest state of play. Prof. de Zwaan also introduced the group exercise taking place on the last day of the seminar, dealing with the processes of integration of third country nationals in the EU.

After the first lecture, participants enjoyed a welcome drink in an informal setting where one official from the European Commission presented the European Solidarity Corps (ESC) initiative. Furthermore, one former ESC participant complemented the presentation, providing insights and advice for those students who wish to participate in the programme.

**Day 2:** Visit to the European Commission (DG Migration and Home Affairs), to the Council of the European Union and to the European Parliament & lecture *The Common European Asylum System: achievements and shortcomings*

The second day of the seminar started with a visit to the European Commission, more specifically to the Directorate General devoted to Migration and Home Affairs. One official from the Commission debriefed participants on the current reform of the Dublin regulation, by which an EU Member State is appointed responsible for examining an asylum application. This system has been proven to be unfair in the share of responsibilities since it is based on the presence on the territory of asylum seekers. In this way, those EU Member States on the external borders of the EU are overwhelmed with the number of asylum seekers' applications, in comparison to those Member States with only EU internal borders. Participants learnt about the Commission proposal for the update of the Dublin regulation, which supports the principles of solidarity among EU Member States and of the 'state responsibility' (once the responsibility of an EU Member State is determined, this state will be responsible of the dossier without any shifting to other countries to prevent secondary movements of asylum seekers).

Later that day, students visited the Council of the European Union, where a special focus was given to the external aspects of migration and how the EU searches solutions together with partners and neighbouring countries. An official from the Council updated the students on the new proposal on the negotiating table: the establishment of disembarkation platforms in the southern neighbourhood to assure an earlier procedure and assistance to asylum seekers. This initiative is very sensitive and controversial, especially when it comes to negotiating with third countries and since the bottom line is the need to develop the African continent.



Afterwards, the group followed a lecture by prof. de Zwaan on the Common European Asylum System, where participants learnt about its basis and instruments. Among other things, students learnt the difference between a displaced person, a beneficiary of subsidiary protection and a refugee.

The day ended with a visit to the European Parliament, where students were welcomed by a member of the European Parliament, who described the negotiations with the Council on the reform of the Dublin regulation and the Parliament's united front in which posture to adopt. In this way, participants were able to complete the circle of the ordinary legislative procedure by meeting with representatives from the Commission, the Council and the European Parliament.



**Day 3:** Visit to the European External Action Service, and the European Council on Refugees and Exiles & lectures on *the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX)* and *the External dimension of EU migration policies*

On Thursday, students visited the European External Action Service (EEAS), where they had the chance to meet with the Senior Migration expert in the Migration and Human Security Division. The session was focused on the partnerships and agreements of the EU with third countries, and how the EU adapts its tools to better address the different challenges it is currently facing (from development aid and specifically targeted funds, to civilian missions under the Common Security and Defence Policy umbrella).

Later that day, students followed a lecture by Prof. de Zwaan on the external dimension of the EU and on the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX), where participants had the opportunity to meet one official from the FRONTEX office in Brussels.



**Day 4:** Visit to the Permanent Representation of Austria to the EU and Group exercise on integration

The last day of the seminar, participants visited the Permanent Representation of Austria to the EU, where they learnt more about the role that Member States hold under the Council presidency. Moreover, the Austrian presidency of the Council has had a strong focus on the migration dossier, hence the students were able to obtain different perspectives and understandings of a global challenge.

Lastly, the seminar was closed with a group exercise where students were divided into groups and simulated to represent the European Commission, EU Member States, the European Parliament, the Council of the EU, the European Council, NGOs and the United Nations. Students concluded in this exercise that the EU should implement a common framework on integrating third country nationals, not only on the education domain but also on all aspects shaping a society: labour market, sports, cultural, arts activities, etc. In this way, third country nationals would develop a sense of belonging in the community and in the EU as a whole.

