

26.01.2017

CEAS: Home Affairs ministers discuss way forward

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At an informal JHA Council meeting held in Valletta today, Home Affairs ministers from the EU and Schengen-associated countries came together in a bid to identify a way forward on the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and address the issue of solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility in this area. Also present and participating in the discussion were Dimitris Avramopoulos, European Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, and Claude Moraes, Chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE).

This followed on the European Council's Conclusions of 20-21 October 2016, which called for work to continue on the effective application of the principles of responsibility and solidarity, and the European Council's Conclusions of 15 December 2016, which reiterated that call, and more broadly in relation to the EU's asylum policy.

"Work on all European Commission proposals aimed at reforming the CEAS will continue intensively during the Maltese Presidency of the Council of the EU, at both the political and the technical levels," said Carmelo Abela, Minister for Home Affairs and National Security of Malta. "We need to take a comprehensive approach, considering the broader context and the balancing factors that may be found across the CEAS proposals. We also need to look beyond asylum, and bear in mind that efforts are underway in relation to the various aspects of migration."

The ministers also held an orientation debate on the existing challenges and opportunities to mitigate security risks with regard to persons arriving on EU territory irregularly, especially through the use of IT systems, which are also being enhanced with regard to legal border crossings.