



*This project is co-financed by the European Refugee Fund*



## Further Developing Asylum Quality

*A multi-phase project for Southern and Central Europe.*

The Further Developing Asylum Quality project (FDQ) examines and develops quality assurance mechanisms in the asylum procedures of selected Member States: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Slovakia.

It involves the assistance of the asylum authorities of Austria, Germany and the United Kingdom who provide good practice advice. The objective is to improve the



quality of asylum procedures by building the capacity of the asylum authorities responsible for examining and taking decisions on asylum applications at first and second instances, and to ensure the effective and sustainable functioning of national Quality Assessment Units (QAUs). In this way, the project supports, through practical co-operation, the building of effective and sustainable internal review mechanisms that will regularly and objectively maintain good quality standards in EU Member States' asylum systems.

### Assisting Member States to fulfil their obligations

#### **The role of UNHCR**

The project involves the focused input of UNHCR's expertise, based on UNHCR's mandate responsibilities under Article 35 of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951 Convention), Article II of its 1967 Protocol and Article 8 of the 1950 UNHCR Statute.

#### **Legal framework**

The project supports the full and inclusive application of the 1951 Convention, as required by the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, in the framework of the Common European Asylum System. The project assists the participating Member States to fulfill their obligations, with a particular focus on the implementation of the EU Asylum Qualification Directive and the EU Asylum Procedures Directive. It also contributes significantly to the development of practical cooperation on asylum among the governments of the participating

Member States. This engagement in practical cooperation reflects the EU's Stockholm Programme objectives, as well as helping to foster greater responsibility-sharing among Member States.

## Southern Europe – Phase One

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In Southern Europe, the project uses an objective evaluation of how asylum authorities assess claims for international protection. Based on the findings, a number of targeted actions to address the priority challenges will be agreed and implemented. While the actions may differ from country to country, they will include informal and formal meetings, regular on-the-job practical support and advice, sample assessments of the handling of a certain number of individual cases, observation of asylum interviews, joint evaluations, drafting internal guidelines/instructions and national training exercises. The aim of these activities is to improve the quality, fairness and efficiency of asylum decision-making at both first and second instances, and to establish operational QAUs in the involved States.

## Central Europe – Phase Two

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In Central Europe, this project builds on the previous ERF-funded ASQAEM project, implemented between September 2008 and February 2010. That project involved a first phase of activities to improve the quality of asylum decision-making and establish assessment mechanisms. This second phase undertakes targeted monitoring of adjudicator preparation, interviews and written decisions, consolidates newly-established internal quality mechanisms and develops a methodology to guide the future establishment of such mechanisms in other Member States. National assessment reports and a manual on assessment methodologies will be produced. A number of technical, practical co-operation exchange visits will take place among Central European countries and the countries providing good practice advice, namely Austria, Germany and the UK.

## Partnering up to meet the objectives

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There are also regular opportunities throughout the project for all participating Member States to meet and share knowledge and experience; e.g. at the regional training seminar and project launch/progress evaluation meetings. The project will conclude with an EU conference where its activities, methodologies and recommendations will be presented and discussed with a broad range of relevant national and EU stakeholders. At the end of the project, Southern European countries will have established new quality assurance mechanisms and agreed on actions to consolidate and continue improvements; in Central Europe, quality mechanisms will be fully functional and independent, while allowing for future support from UNHCR under its mandate as and when required.

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