**Model European Union Conference**

**Simulation of the Council of the European Union**

**Czech Republic**

**Position Paper on the “Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Union Agency for Asylum and repealing Regulation”**

**I. Introduction**

A thoughtful and cooperative handling of the European Union’s asylum politics is a matter of outstanding importance to the Czech Republic. It has to be the common goal of all Member States to work together as a community, while respecting Europe’s diversity and the different political and financial situations of all EU Member States. Throughout history, the Czech Republic rarely had to face an increased influx of refugees. Whenever migration had been a topic, refugees or migrants came from countries such as Ukraine. This nation at least offered starting-points for cultural integration and identification. Today, Europe is challenged by new dimensions of mass migration from the Near East and North Africa. Unfortunately, there are only few - if any - similarities that could help establish a tie between the Czech population and the majority of today’s refugees. Part of the Czech’ history is that one of its borders – the one marked by the Iron Curtain - has prevented strangers from entering the Czech Republic for over forty years. During this time of the Cold War the Czech people became unfamiliar with other cultures. Not only that, but Muslims are hard to integrate into an atheist country like the Czech Republic, with more than 80 % of the population being without a religion.

**II. Critics**

In general, the Czech Republic approves of the “Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Union Agency for Asylum and repealing Regulation (EU) No. 439/2010.”

However, special emphasis needs to be put on the prevention of secondary movements and consequently on the prevention of exploitation of EU States. Mutual respect is an essential condition to guarantee a successful integration. The Czech government worries that the proposal fails to recognize that refugees head to Europe already facing pre-selected countries. This might become a serious problem when it comes to the integration of refugees into society. In particular, the Czech Republic cannot be classified as a nation that most refugees wish to become part of. It appears to be an exceptional burden to be obliged to welcome foreigners that do not appreciate hospitality.

To show our good will the Czech Republic has already given accommodation to a few hundred refugees and is willing to accept the quota scheme to place 160000 refugees around Europe, despite various provisos. But a medium sized country like the Czech Republic, will not be able to play a significant role in overcoming the difficulties of the current situation. While the Czech Republic has the fastest growing economy in the EU, with 4.4% more growth as compared with the European average, its GDP per capita is with 14700€ still at the lower end of the spectrum, due to centuries of mismanagement under the communist regime. However, the Czech Republic underlines its willingness to support home and third countries and the European Union Agency for Asylum with funds. It is considered feasible for financially fragile countries to spend money proportionate to their current income. In contrast to this, it appears difficult to continually provide decent accommodation and educational programmes for refugees within the Czech Republic, as we can easily slip into regression.

In consequence, it highly appreciates the agreements made in Chapter 3 (*Country of Origin Information*). The more Member States get to know about the home countries of refugees, the easier it will become to tackle the causes of escape directly in their home states, thus preventing further refugee flows and maintaining homes of people in need.

In addition to that, the Czech Republic further approves of Article 10(2) underlining the State’s sovereignty in deciding on individual applications. While guaranteeing the correct application of asylum laws, a State also needs to take into account the population’s opinions and views on questions of migration. As a result, the means of monitoring the Member States in regard to the implementation of the CEAS (*Common European Asylum System*) as stated in Article 13 should not cause a severe restriction of the State’s sovereignty. A government’s first priority is to serve its own citizens. Therefore, all Member States need to maintain a certain free play concerning the implementation of the CEAS. Based on the interests of its nation, a State might then be able to take actions in order to help refugees in need.

The Czech Republic states a related concern in regard to Art. 22(3). Compulsory measures deeply affect a State’s sovereignty and cannot be accepted.

Furthermore, the Czech Republic is in favour of the database mentioned in Art. 5 (*Information on the Implementation of the CEAS*). It is a fundamental right and duty of every State to gather basic information about foreigners searching protection, while respecting the privacy of every asylum seeker. Nevertheless, the Czech Republic proposes an extension to this database to collect criminal information about asylum seekers. We all cannot deny security leaks caused by the current mass immigration and should therefore put a main emphasis on the prevention of criminality within the European Union.

**III. Conclusion**

In conclusion, we believe that the refugee crises can only be solved by a European Union working close together. Respecting the humanitarian rights of the individual and the sovereignty of all Member States is a necessary condition for a harmonious and successful collaboration. In spite of single points of criticism, the Czech Republic generally agrees with the provisions foreseen by the proposal. As we cannot deny the seriousness of our current situation, we hope for an efficient implementation of the CEAS and the European Union Agency for Asylum.