

PREFACE

The recurring cycles of violence and systemic human rights violations in many parts of the world are generating more and more intractable displacement situations. In the rapidly changing situation in the field of asylum in Europe in recent years, many governments have not only introduced complex changes in their laws and procedures, but have also become increasingly involved in international cooperation and the harmonization aspects of their refugee and asylum policies. The process of multilateral dialogue and finding the most complex solutions, when it concerns asylum issues, is very much alive.

Human rights issues, notably those pertaining to the right to asylum, are an integral part of ensuring the rule of law in a democratic society. It is the issue of asylum and migration that challenges Europe in a very evolutionary manner. It covers human beings in need, in need of freedom, security and justice.

This book contains a study which deals with the Common European Asylum System and its complex evolution, in particular from the mid-1980s until 2005, and an overview of the continual development of EU Legislation on Asylum in the EU context, in parallel with the evolution of the asylum policy and legislation of Slovakia as a new EU Member State. The content also addresses some of the most difficult issues confronting asylum systems in the EU Member States today with a special focus also on the Slovak Republic as one of the EU ‘newcomers’.

This publication, to my mind, also as a former UNHCR Legal Officer having dealt with refugees for more than a decade, is the first of its kind as it includes an overview of the evolution of the Slovak asylum system from its very beginning (in the 1990s), starting with the establishment of the independent Slovak Republic taken together and in parallel with building and developing the Common European Asylum System in the framework of the EU, up to the present time in 2005. The author also outlines a vision of the future concerning EU Asylum Policy.

With that in mind, this book will be useful to all those who are involved in dealing with asylum matters, including those who study asylum and refugee issues at university level, but also to practitioners, Parliamentarians, NGOs, and those who are generally interested in EU and European Asylum Law and policy. At the same time, I strongly recommend that this book should be read and widely used.

I hope that this publication will serve as a reference for further discussions and studies in the context of the EU, and it can also be useful as a reference work in the further EU enlargement and the development of the asylum system.

Ján Šikuta
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