

PRESS RELEASE

Council of Europe
Commissioner for Human Rights



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Europe must make migration policies more humane

Strasbourg, 14.04.2011 – As illustrated by the current crisis in North Africa, Europe needs to establish more humane migration management and improve the treatment reserved for migrants. The European Union and the Council of Europe should co-operate more closely on this, ensuring that any EU policy abides fully by human rights standards”, said today the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Thomas Hammarberg, in presenting the [conclusions](#) of the [seminar](#) on the human rights dimensions of migration in Europe organised in Istanbul on 17-18 February.

“European states have signed readmission agreements with countries which do not respect international refugee law and human rights standards. They seek in this way to divert migration flows to third states, thereby trying to avoid responsibility for any violations of the human rights of migrants returned to those countries. This is not acceptable. Political leaders should rather focus on finding fair, durable solutions, with due respect for the human rights of migrants.”

The Commissioner also underlines that it is absolutely essential that the EU’s border control-related agency, FRONTEX, be sufficiently ‘protection-sensitive’ and that respect for human rights, including the right to apply for and to enjoy asylum, be fully safeguarded during border control operations.

“Migration laws and policies have long-term effects on democratic societies and go to the heart of the question of Europe’s pluralistic identity and values. Over-restrictive migration laws and practices have not and will not manage to deter flows of migrants who seek protection or decent living conditions. They can only put more lives and human rights at risk.”

More information on the Commissioner’s work on the human rights of immigrants, refugees and asylum-seekers can be found [here](#).

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The Commissioner for Human Rights is an independent, non-judicial institution within the Council of Europe, mandated to promote awareness of, and respect for, human rights in the 47 member states of the Organisation.

Elected by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the present Commissioner, Mr Thomas Hammarberg, took up his function on 1 April 2006