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For the first time since the inception of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), Europe was called to assist such a high number of people seeking protection. In 2023, asylum applications rose to levels reminiscent of the 2015-2016 refugee crisis. But in reality, countries provided protection to far more people, as 4.4 million beneficiaries of temporary protection were recorded on top of the over 1.1 million asylum seekers.

Photo of the EUAA Executive Director, Nina Gregori

Against this background, the adoption of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum represented an important moment for the EU in advancing its unique multinational asylum system. This success was catalysed by political will, flexibility and extensive efforts at the technical level to iron out the specific details of a sophisticated framework. The pact will play a pivotal role in converging practices and enabling EU+ countries to address the high number of asylum seekers.

But let us be clear – Member States will need to continue to show perseverance in the coming years. Work remains to be done to address existing backlogs, effectively process the increased number of incoming applications and provide accommodation to applicants for protection. Simultaneously, authorities will need to restructure their asylum and reception systems to align with the common procedures which are defined in the pact. It is clear that this will require additional resources and detailed national implementation plans.

The European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), already functioning with an enhanced mandate for 2 years, has continued being a major actor in the field of international protection in Europe by providing unprecedented levels of operational, technical and training support in 2023. As we usher in an era of important advancements in Europe’s asylum system, a well-equipped EUAA will continue to assist in harmonising practices in Member States, increasing expertise and improving Europe’s capacity to provide protection solutions.

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