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European Union Agency for Asylum appoints its first Fundamental Rights Officer



The Management Board of the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) has appointed Mr. François DELEU as the Agency's first Fundamental Rights Officer. In carrying out his tasks, he will work independently and report to the Management Board.

The European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) is pleased to announce that on 16 May 2023, **Mr. François DELEU** took up his duties as its first Fundamental Rights Officer (FRO). In his new role, Mr. Deleu will make a proposal to the Agency for an **EUAA Fundamental Rights Strategy** and will also be responsible for implementing the Agency's **Complaints Mechanism** once it is established. These are two key pillars of the EUAA's new mandate.

Respecting the dignity and fundamental rights of applicants for international protection within the asylum procedure is a cornerstone of the EU's Common European Asylum System. The EUAA works with Member States to promote procedures and practices that respect fundamental rights, including through specialised training and guidance. At the same time, it works to ensure that its own operations act as an example as to how this can be achieved. The Fundamental Rights Officer will play an important role in bolstering these efforts.

Reacting to his appointment, the Executive Director Ms. Nina GREGORI said: “The appointment of our new Fundar

Commenting on his appointment, Mr. François DELEU stated: "As the newly appointed EUAA Fundamental Rights

Amongst other competencies, the Fundamental Rights Officer (FRO) will:

- **Design a new Fundamental Right Strategy**: Together with the EUAA Consultative Forum of Civil Society Organisations, the FRO will ensure that a new EUAA Fundamentals Right Strategy is reflected throughout our Operational Support to Member States, training services and other activities; and that these continue to be compliant with the EU’s Charter of Fundamental Rights, the Geneva Convention and other relevant international instruments in the field of fundamental rights protection.
- **Manage a new complaints mechanism**: Individuals whose fundamental rights may have been violated by an expert participating in the Agency’s operational activities may submit a complaint to the Agency. The FRO will be tasked with reviewing the admissibility of complaints and ensuring follow-up. The mechanism is not an avenue for appeals against national decisions, which remain the responsibility of Member States’ higher administrative or judicial instances.
- **Work independently**: The FRO is part of the Agency’s administrative structure, but is independent in the performance of his duties and will therefore be provided with the necessary support staff to performs his tasks. In agreement with the Executive Director, he will be able to recommend measures in the delivery of the Agency’s mandate.
- **Contribute to the Monitoring Mechanism**: Entering into force, partially, on 31 December 2023; the mechanism will enable the Agency to better assist Member States with identifying and addressing shortcomings in their asylum and reception systems. The FRO will contribute to ensuring that this mechanism also addresses fundamental rights concerns.

Background

Article 49 of Regulation (EU) 2303/2021 establishing the European Union Agency for Asylum requires the Management Board to appoint a Fundamental Rights Officer. Mr. François Deleu, a Belgian national, joins the EUAA after five years at Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency.

Prior to that, he worked at the OSCE’s Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights where he coordinated work on preventing hate crime, by working with national contact points and over 120 civil society organisations representing affected communities in 57 countries. His career began at UNIA, an independent public body that fights discrimination and promotes equal opportunities in Belgium, and where he helped develop the vision and strategy of the non-discrimination department.

Mr. Deleu holds a master's degree in International Human Rights Law from the Université Saint-Louis Bruxelles.

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