

# Solidarity and sharing in the Common European Asylum System: the case of Syrian refugees

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## ABSTRACT

Although the vast majority of Syrians flee to neighboring countries, an increasing number is trying to reach European soil. On one end of the spectrum, individuals escape their war-torn country seeking protection elsewhere and on the other end the European Union (EU) and its Members States bear specific obligations for granting protection, stemming from their international and regional legal commitments. Drawing from the UNHCR estimations that the exodus is evolving rapidly and in light of Article 80 TFEU and the objectives by the European Council, the EU needs to adopt policies which emphasize the full and inclusive application of the 1951 Refugee Convention and promote a fair distribution of asylum-related responsibilities amongst EU states. The present article investigates how the Syrian refugee crisis triggers practices of sharing within the EU. It describes how the different EU sharing mechanisms have been responding to the asylum-related pressures and critically analyzes their distributive effects. The main proposition is that the way in which sharing is being understood in the European asylum policies and applied in the areas covered by those policies (protection and treatment of individuals, European agencies' role, relations between the EU and third countries) has significant consequences on the institution of asylum and the protection granted.

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