**Ireland’s position on the EU’s Asylum Agency**

1. The EU’s Asylum Agency seeks to support EU members states and asylum seekers by specifically assisting each states asylum system. This shall be achieved by sharing information between member states, acting as an independent center of expertise, ensuring consistency, and cooperating with European Union intuitions. The Asylum Agency furthermore aims to support third countries by regional protection programs and coordination actions on resettlement.
2. The images that link today’s refugees with the desperate Irish emigrants of the 1840s are powerful, however, one does not need to go back hundreds of years to find parallels. Those seeking protection and help in Europe are a timely reminder of Ireland’s own history when the Irish people sought refuge abroad as they fled oppression and starvation. Not only in the past have the Irish people tried to find sanctuary abroad but also today many young Irish people have left home since the 2008 recession.
3. Ireland affirms that the European Union should strive for a unified response that reflects the core values of the European Union and the ideal of European solidarity and shared responsibility. The lack of a functioning EU asylum policy has been tragically brought to light as those seeking help, shelter and protection are still drowning in the Mediterranean Sea.
4. However, any changes leading to the introduction of a mandatory and permanent influence of the European Asylum Agency as a solidarity measures would be unacceptable. Ireland maintains that it is vital for each country to determine their own policies. This is even truer for countries – such as Ireland – that have been facing their own economical problems in the past and present.
5. Ireland’s exodus of young people
6. The current exodus of young Irish people is generally held to be a consequence of the financial crisis, which led to increasing unemployment with younger workers most affected. Data from the OECD show that Ireland’s total unemployment rate rose from 4.4 per cent in 2005 to 14.7 per cent in 2012. Additionally, Ireland is, per capita, one of the most indebted countries in the EU. Its budget deficit is one of the highest in Europe.

In recent years Ireland's government has slashed public-sector spending with a series of drastic cuts: child benefit has been cut by 10%, public sector pay by 15%, unemployment benefit by 4.1%. Another €3bn have been removed during one of the recent years, in total a total of 10% of GDP has been cut. Ireland is struggling economically and will not have the means to support those who claim asylum.

1. Ireland is still struggling to come to terms with the consequences of such an exodus of young people and their skills. Ireland is losing its revenue base. This coupled with an ageing population and the outflow of skills could be described as potentially catastrophic. A look at the official numbers demonstrates why this is such an important matter. Studies show that emigration from Ireland tends to be among the well-educated. While 47 per cent of Irish people aged 25-34 have a university qualification, the figure for recent Irish emigrants is 62 per cent. In some professions – with nursing, construction and teaching being particularly affected – there are also concerns how an increase in the uptake of services caused by immigration and those claiming asylum in Ireland would be dealt with.
2. The effects of mass emigration are not limited to the economy; social repercussions are being felt too. It has been found that some households and communities have been severely affected by the dearth of young people. Moreover, the lack of young people means that there are less people who will be able to be part of the necessary integration process and help those seeking asylum in Ireland to feel welcome and feel both financially and socially well supported. Emigration furthermore often means the dissolution of intergenerational households, which puts an additional strain on communities, leaving few resources for additional tasks.
3. Though the Asylum Agency pledges to respect the individual decisions of the members states, Ireland refuses to grant the Agency a new mandate fearing that the agency will overstep its boundaries. Due to Ireland’s historical and economical position it is reluctant to further support the EU asylum agency. Furthermore, Ireland share’s an open boarder with the United Kingdom, specifically Northern Ireland. The peace these countries have achieved could be at risk if the mandate of the European Asylum System is increased.
4. The border between Ireland and the United Kingdom has existed since December 7th 1922 when Ireland decided to opt out of being a Free State of the UK. Over decades there were military checkpoint and custom controls along the 499 km long border due to the unrest in Northern Ireland. Many crossings were blocked and bridges were destroyed to prevent cross-border communications. This in turn led to widespread smuggling. Since the beginning of the 1990’s due to the Common Travel Area between Ireland and the UK this archaic division has been ended and peace has returned to this area.
5. However, in the recent months the border has gained importance once again. If the United Kingdom votes to leave the EU on the 23rd of June this border will be the only boundary with the European Union. As the British government has proclaimed, a “hardening of the border” would be inevitable, since even if the UK decides to stay in the EU it does not support the European solution on refugees. The Ireland-UK border could become a back door into the UK. Tensions between Ireland and the UK would return. Ireland refuses to jeopardize the peace by giving the asylum agency greater authority. Good relations to the UK is of utmost importance for the economy of Ireland. Cross-border shopping is a huge source of income for the towns along the border. A greater increase of refugees in Ireland could threaten the relations to the UK as many refugees could use this border to ultimately reach the UK. In turn the UK would enhance border control and tourism, cross border shopping, and agriculture would suffer. Ireland’s economy would worsen further, prohibiting Ireland to fund other refugee solutions.