



### A scenario workshop for stakeholders on the reception of asylum-seekers in the EU

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The second scenario workshop for stakeholders was held on the 9<sup>th</sup> of May in Milan, Italy. The workshop was organised by FIERI and the University of Amsterdam, in cooperation with the RESOMA project (<http://www.resoma.eu/>) and kindly hosted in the premises of Fondazione ISMU. The workshop focused on four broad scenarios relating to the reception of asylum-seekers in the EU, which were developed by the FIERI team. The four scenarios were drafted along two key variables that were perceived to be most critical and uncertain for the future of reception in the EU. The first variable was the intensity of migration pressure, measured by the actual volume of mixed migration inflows. The second variable was the level of anti-immigrant attitudes. These four possible policy futures in which the issue of reception could become affected by were the basis of an elaborate discussion that stimulated the re-thinking of current reception policies in the EU.



With the representation of NGO's, local and national policy-makers, academia, the UNHCR and the IOM the mix of national and international participants was well balanced and this further



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stimulated the discussion on the four scenarios and their future policy implications. During the event, the group of sixteen participants was divided in two smaller groups, which discussed opposing scenarios. The participants observed that European States' policies have become more and more focused on the idea of disembarkation platforms, with the expectation that only beneficiaries of international protection will reach Europe and be hosted in reception centres. As a consequence, even if disembarkation platforms are still only a vague project, neither contingency plans nor reception schemes more responsive to possible peaks in arrivals are currently developed. In practice the contours of a possible externalization are already visible as the hotspots and the reception facilities on the Greek islands are the first stages of an ongoing process of externalization.

Interesting to see was that both in the scenario workshop in Amsterdam and in Milan most participants agreed on the crucial role of the media. The 'policy crisis' concerning the EU's asylum system is for a large part a result of the existing narrative, which is driven by the main narrator. Hence, a possible solution could be working to change the dominant narrative. This could be done by a variety of actors, for instance, a larger role for civil society organizations in the process could alter the perception of reception; local governments could possibly deal more efficiently with the reception of asylum-seekers; and the involvement of (former) asylum-seekers could positively affect future reception policies.