

France tops for asylum seekers (Wed 2 Mar)

WARM-UPS

CHAT: Talk in pairs or groups about asylum seekers / United Nations / refugees / stability in Afghanistan and Iraq / Chechnya and Kosovo / ... Change topic / partner frequently to energize the class.

ASYLUM BRAINSTORM: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'asylum'. Share your words with your partner / group and talk about them.

COSMOPOLITAN: Is your country / city / town / village a cosmopolitan one? Discuss these advantages of asylum seekers resettling in a new country:

- a. They add spice and color to the community.
- b. They bring new skills.
- c. They are very hard working and add to the local economy.
- d. They teach us the world can be a bad place.
- e. We can learn more about a different culture.
- f. Our children learn more about exciting new customs and cultures.
- g. We get to hear / learn a new language.
- h. We have a valuable opportunity to show compassion and help people less fortunate.

2-MINUTE DEBATES: Rotate pairs to ensure a lively pace and noise level is kept:

- a. All countries should openly welcome asylum seekers vs. Should not.
- b. Asylum seekers enrich destination countries. vs. They add to social problems.
- c. Asylum seekers are all criminals. vs. That's a ridiculous stereotype.
- d. Asylum seekers never integrate. vs. That's the government's fault.
- e. Australia should relax its strict asylum policy. vs. Australia doesn't have enough space.
- f. There is too great a burden on the welfare system of recipient countries. vs. It's the duty of rich nations to pay.
- g. Economic refugees should be put in prison – they make it tougher for political refugees. vs. You can't imprison people for trying for a better life.
- h. People should be able to live in any country they want. We are world citizens. vs. Think of the chaos.
- i. There would be fewer refugees if America got tougher on dictators and spread democracy around the world. vs. That's not America's job.
- j. Asylum seekers should return to their home countries once order returns. vs. Not if they like their new country.
- k. They disrupt the school system because of the need to educate children in many languages. vs. Children are quick learners.
- l. There is no asylum seeker problem any more in any country. vs. Tell that to Australia.

PRE-READING IDEAS

WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... of the words 'primary' and 'destination'.

TRUE FALSE: Guess whether the following statements about the article are true or false:

- a. Many French people are asylum seekers. T / F
- b. The number of asylum seekers rose to record levels last year. T / F
- c. The USA was the second most popular destination for asylum seekers. T / F
- d. The UK has seen a 61 percent decrease in asylum seekers in two years. T / F
- e. There is now greater instability in Afghanistan. T / F
- f. Many people are fleeing from Iraq. T / F
- g. The largest groups of asylum seekers were from Chechnya and Kosovo. T / F
- h. Many genuine refugees have enormous difficulty getting access to Europe. T / F

SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------|
| (a) topped | applications |
| (b) primary | calm |
| (c) claims | toppled |
| (d) sought | advanced |
| (e) stability | dilemma |
| (f) fleeing | headed |
| (g) deposed | requested |
| (h) strict | escaping |
| (i) industrialized | harsh |
| (j) crisis | top |

PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases based on the article:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| (a) primary | reasons for this are greater stability |
| (b) levels of asylum claims | from Iraq |
| (c) their lowest | asylum crisis |
| (d) The UK has | asylum controls |
| (e) The main | levels for 16 years |
| (f) fleeing | destination |
| (g) relieves the | reasons for this |
| (h) introduce strict | fell |
| (i) enormous | pressure on governments |
| (j) huge | seen a 61 percent decrease |

GAP FILL

France tops for asylum seekers (Wed 2 Mar)

BNE: France _____ the United States as the primary destination for asylum seekers around the world last year. This is according to a UNHCR (United Nations High Commission for Refugees) report that shows levels of asylum _____ fell to their lowest levels for 16 years last year. The number of people who sought asylum in 2004 fell to 368,000, the _____ since 1988. France had 61,600 asylum requests, next was the United States with 52,400, and the UK was third, with 40,200. The UK has _____ a 61 percent decrease in asylum seekers in two years. The main reasons for this are greater stability in Afghanistan, and people returning to rather than _____ from Iraq since Saddam Hussein was deposed. The largest groups of asylum seekers were from Chechnya and Kosovo. The drop in asylum seekers _____ the pressure on governments from their people to introduce strict asylum controls. Raymond Hall, Director of UNHCR's Europe Bureau, said, "This really should reduce the pressure by politicians, media and the public to make asylum systems more and more restrictive to the _____ where many genuine refugees have enormous difficulty getting access to Europe, or getting recognized once they are there. ... In _____ industrialized countries it should simply not be possible to claim there is a huge asylum crisis any more."

relieves fewest most topped fleeing point claims seen

DISCUSSION:

- a. What do you think of this article?
- b. What do you think of asylum seekers?
- c. Should asylum seekers seek refuge in neighbouring countries instead of heading for Europe / America?
- d. How would it feel to have to leave your home, job, friends, family and go to another country with no money or language ability?
- e. Why are countries so strict with asylum seekers?
- f. Do asylum seekers enrich the countries in which they settle?
- g. What is the asylum policy in your country?
- h. Asylum seekers are the lucky ones – what do we do about the millions of people living in refugee camps?
- i. Where would you seek asylum?
- j. Would you return to Iraq, if it were your native country?
- k. What can the world do to help Chechens and Kosovars?
- l. Have you met any asylum seekers?
- m. Is there an asylum crisis?
- n. Are there any dangers in relaxing or loosening asylum controls?

HOMEWORK

- 1. VOCAB EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.
- 2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find more information on the drop in asylum seeker numbers. Share your findings with your class next lesson.
- 3. LETTER:** Write a letter to your leader expressing your views about your country's asylum policy.
- 4. ASYLUM INTERVIEW:** Make an interview question sheet for an asylum seeker in your country. Role play in next class.

FULL TEXT

France tops for asylum seekers (Wed 2 Mar)

BNE: France **topped** the United States as the primary destination for asylum seekers around the world last year. This is according to a UNHCR (United Nations High Commission for Refugees) report that shows levels of asylum **claims** fell to their lowest levels for 16 years last year. The number of people who sought asylum in 2004 fell to 368,000, the **fewest** since 1988. France had 61,600 asylum requests, next was the United States with 52,400, and the UK was third, with 40,200. The UK has **seen** a 61 percent decrease in asylum seekers in two years. The main reasons for this are greater stability in Afghanistan, and people returning to rather than **fleeing** from Iraq since Saddam Hussein was deposed. The largest groups of asylum seekers were from Chechnya and Kosovo. The drop in asylum seekers **relieves** the pressure on governments from their people to introduce strict asylum controls. Raymond Hall, Director of UNHCR's Europe Bureau, said, "This really should reduce the pressure by politicians, media and the public to make asylum systems more and more restrictive to the **point** where many genuine refugees have enormous difficulty getting access to Europe, or getting recognized once they are there. ... In **most** industrialized countries it should simply not be possible to claim there is a huge asylum crisis any more."