



Working document No 2

## Informal meeting of Ministers for Justice and Home Affairs

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# Preparing the Stockholm Programme *A Europe based on Responsibility and Solidarity in Immigration and Asylum Matters*

1. International migration is a reality that will persist as long as people strive to realise their potential, and as long as there are differences in opportunities between the various regions of the world. The development of a broad, forward-looking and comprehensive European migration policy is a key objective for the European Union. The European migration policy should therefore continue to be based on universal values, solidarity, transparency and mutual trust between Member States.

Well-managed migration can be beneficial to all stakeholders and contribute decisively to the economic growth of the European Union and of the Member States that need labour migrants. Not least, it provides resources for the migrants and their home countries, and thus contributes to their development.

Europe will continue to face demographic challenges and labour shortages. A flexible, comprehensive and coherent migration policy will thus remain an important component when addressing this reality. It will be crucial in ensuring an open, strong and competitive European economy in accordance with the goals set out in the Lisbon Strategy.

One of the duties of the State is to offer protection to those who flee persecution and are in need of international protection. It is important to guarantee access to a legal and effective asylum procedure in the EU. There has to be a balance between efficient border



management and protection of fundamental rights, *e.g.* the right to apply for asylum. Moreover, solidarity must be shown with Member States facing specific and disproportionate migratory pressures, as well as with third countries and people in need of protection. A genuine and determined European response based on solidarity and shared responsibility, in line with the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum, is essential.

2. In its Communication (<sup>1</sup>) the European Commission noted the following:

- Effective management of migratory flows will be one of the greatest challenges facing the European Union in coming years.
- Immigration will make a crucial contribution to the EU's economic performance in the longer term while being beneficial for the countries of origin and migrants themselves.
- Developing measures to combat illegal migration while respecting human rights is essential.
- The potential cultural and economic benefits brought by immigration can only be obtained through integration in the host country.
- Nearly 240 000 asylum applications were made in the EU during 2008; some Member States are more affected than others.
- The EU must continue to build a true common area of protection and solidarity based on respect for human rights, high standards of protection and a general improvement in the quality of national systems.
- Solidarity with non-member countries confronted with large flows of refugees is essential.

3. The Commission's Communication also raises the important question of how to continue to develop a **dynamic immigration policy**. In this regard, the analysis of Ministers could focus on the following issues:

- a global approach to migration
- migration and development
- labour immigration policy
- illegal immigration
- removal and return policy

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<sup>1</sup> Ref. 11060/09



- family reunification
- integration
- unaccompanied minors.

4. As regards **asylum**, the analysis of Ministers could usefully focus on the following challenges:

- further development of the Common European Asylum System
- mutual recognition of asylum decisions
- solidarity mechanisms
- solidarity with non-EU countries through e.g. resettlement.

5. Against the background of the Communication, the Presidency would invite Ministers to address the following questions:

- *How should the Union develop its common migration policy over the next five years with a view to maximising the contribution that migration can make to economic and social development both in Member States and third countries?*
- *What measures should be taken to better control illegal immigration?*
- *How could we better demonstrate solidarity with both Member States and third countries most exposed to migratory pressure or specific pressures on their asylum systems?*
- *How could the common European Asylum System be further developed to enhance its efficiency, fairness and accessibility and to ensure better convergence in decision-making?*

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