



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

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Commission report calls for forward-looking policies on migration

How are the EU and its Member States addressing the challenges and opportunities of migration? Analysing the 2012 and early 2013 developments in the areas of immigration and asylum, a Commission report published today calls for a more coherent EU response.

This includes reinforcing well-managed legal immigration and integration policies, and working on a more modern and efficient management of traveller flows at its external borders. It also requires stepping up the fight against trafficking in human beings and better addressing irregular migration while ensuring that the fundamental rights of immigrants and asylum seekers are guaranteed.

"We are about to establish a common European asylum system that ensures protection of and solidarity with the most vulnerable ones. Many of these people are highly skilled and must be given the possibility to realize their full potential in their new countries. The same goes for other groups of migrants" said Cecilia Malmström, Commissioner for Home Affairs. *"Our approach to migration must reflect common priorities and future needs. Forward-looking policies and political leadership are warranted to make migration a dynamic force for growth and progress"*, she added.

Migration as a tool for growth

It will not be long until Europe starts to feel the impact of its ageing population and shrinking workforce. Even today, despite high levels of unemployment, there are around 2 million job vacancies across the EU, such as in the fields of health, information communication technologies, engineering, sales and finance. While immigration is not the only answer to fill skills gaps where they exist, it is certainly part of a common solution supportive of EU's economic growth strategy.

EU migration legislation contributes towards attracting certain categories of migrants, such as the Blue Card Directive that facilitates the entry and residence of third-country nationals taking up highly qualified employment (the Commission will publish a report on its implementation by mid-2014). Negotiations on the [Intra-Corporate Transferees](#) and the [Seasonal Workers Directives](#) made progress in 2012, but further efforts are needed by the European Parliament and the Council to agree.

The Commission also hopes for swift progress on its proposal setting clearer and more consistent rules for non-EU nationals coming to the EU for studies, scientific research and other exchanges ([IP/13/275](#) and [MEMO/13/281](#)).

Above all Member States must ensure that effective measures are in place to promote integration. Migrants should be able to develop their full potential in an environment where their fundamental rights are fully respected and where they can participate to our societies' prosperity. The correct implementation by Member States of the Single Permit Directive which gives certain equal rights to third-country workers will be important.

Rising to the challenges in international protection

With the adoption of new rules and standards on how to receive people who are asking for protection, the EU has come closer to a common area of protection and solidarity for the most vulnerable. Great efforts are now needed to implement the legislation and ensure this common system will function well and uniformly.

In 2013 the Commission intends to further promote practical cooperation, including through the European Asylum Support Office, and intra-EU solidarity (with Greece, towards those fleeing Syria and on the relocation of beneficiaries of international protection within the EU).

Solidarity should not stop at the EU's borders. 2012 saw the creation of the Joint EU Resettlement Programme under the European Refugee Fund. For the first time, the Member States agreed on a list of specific common EU resettlement priorities for 2013. Under this scheme, the participating Member States pledged to resettle 3.962 refugees in 2013 (compared to 3.083 resettlement places pledged for 2012). The outlines of the Union Resettlement Programme from 2014 onwards are under negotiation as part of the new Asylum and Migration Fund. The Commission aims to see more national resettlement schemes established and to increase the already existing ones.

2012 also saw considerable progress on addressing trafficking of human beings ([IP/12/619](#) and [MEMO/12/455](#)), and on how to ensure the protection of unaccompanied minors, who arrive to the EU each year.

EU's policy response to migratory pressures

A coherent approach to address irregular migration is a pre-condition for a credible legal migration and mobility policy.

By the end of 2012, all States bound by the Return Directive¹, except Iceland, had notified full transposition to the Commission. The EU is now very close to having common return standards, in full respect of fundamental rights. The Commission will issue a Communication on return (due for December 2013). It will also ensure that all Member States properly implement the Employer Sanctions Directive.

The Commission will continue working towards embedding fundamental rights in EU border management activities. In this context, the European Border Surveillance System

(EUROSUR) has the potential to be a life-saving instrument, by facilitating the detection

and tracking of small vessels. The Commission urges the European Parliament and the Council to formally agree on this proposal with a view to making EUROSUR operational by the end of 2013 ([IP/11/1528](#) and [MEMO/11/896](#)).

¹ All EU Member States (except Ireland and the UK) and the associated Schengen States.

Smarter visa and border controls to contribute to growth

Improving travel facilitations for third country nationals visiting the EU is another way to make the EU a more attractive destination.

The Commission has presented proposals facilitating and reinforcing border check procedures for foreigners travelling to the EU (Smart Borders package – [IP/13/162](#) and [MEMO/13/141](#)). It will also propose that our visa policy further supports economic growth and cultural exchanges by facilitating travel of legitimate travellers, such as business people, tourists, students and young people ([IP/12/1177](#) and [MEMO/12/838](#)).

Enhancing international dialogue on migration

Following the 2011 publication of the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM) 2012 saw intensified dialogues at international level and in the development of bilateral agreements (a Mobility Partnership was signed with Morocco [IP/13/513](#)).

Later this year, the Commission will adopt a report on the implementation of the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility focusing on the external dimension of EU's migration policy. Recently it also presented its views on how migration and mobility can contribute to development and how to strengthen global cooperation in this area ([IP/13/450](#)).

Background

Annual Reports on Immigration and Asylum follow the request made by the European Council when adopting the 2008 Pact on Immigration and Asylum.

The fourth report highlights the main developments in 2012 to address challenges in these areas, as well as key figures about EU's migratory situation. Accompanying the report, a Commission staff working document provides a comprehensive factual overview of steps taken at both EU and national level.

Some key figures (see also infographics on [aylum](#) and [immigration](#))

- According to Eurostat data, on 1 January 2012, the EU's total population was 503.7 million, an increase of 1.3 million from 2011.
- The EU population of working-age (15-64 years) amounted to 335.4 million in 2012 and is projected to drop over the next 50 years to 290.6 million in 2060.
- The old-age dependency ratio reached 26.8% in 2012 and it is projected to increase sharply up to 52.6% by 2060.
- The 20.7 million third-country nationals living in the EU amounted to some 4.1% of the total EU population.
- First residence permits issued to third-country nationals, amounted to almost 2.5 million in 2011.
- The total number of asylum applications in 2012 increased by 9.7 % compared to 2011 amounting to just over 330 000 (well below the peak of 425 000 in 2001).

Useful Links

[Fourth Annual Report on Immigration and Asylum](#)

[Commission Staff Working Document accompanying the report](#)

Cecilia Malmström's [website](#)

Follow Commissioner Malmström on [Twitter](#)

DG Home Affairs [website](#)

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European Migration Network: <http://www.emn.europa.eu>

[Infographic on Asylum trends in the EU](#)

[Infographic on Migration](#)

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