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**On common principles for the further development of the Common Immigration Policy:
a platform for a new European approach**

I. INTRODUCTION

Immigration¹ is both an opportunity and a challenge for the EU. Today it represents around 3.8% of the total population in the EU. It has an important role to play in increasing the EU's growth potential, contributing to the prosperity of many Member States by reducing labour markets shortages and enhancing competitiveness. It is also clear that fully realising the gains of immigration will depend on how successful Member States are in integrating immigrants. Rising to this challenge poses a complex mix of questions.

1. The potential contribution of immigration to EU economic performance is significant. In the coming decades, the size and age-structure of Europe's population will undergo dramatic changes due to low fertility rates, continuous increases in life expectancy and the retirement of the baby-boom generation. It is estimated that the population of the EU would be around 50 million lower in 2050 without immigration. The working-age labour force would decrease by 59 million in an scenario of zero immigration, which would mean that the number of people of working-age per citizen over 65 would be halved by 2050. Ageing populations bring major economic, budgetary and social challenges which are expected to have a significant impact on economic growth including by requiring increased public spending².

This is why immigration has become an important factor for the development of the EU's **Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs**, which recognises that appropriate management of economic immigration is an essential element of the EU strategy for competitiveness. Immigration can help the EU to deal with labour shortages and skill gaps and increase the EU's growth potential, complementing ongoing structural reforms.

2. This economic potential can only be realised if integration into host country labour markets is successful. Current figures show that the integration of immigrants in the labour market is unsatisfactory, as they tend to have high unemployment rates, almost twice as high as EU nationals. This is particularly the case for young immigrants. This makes immigrants more exposed to undeclared work and to accept jobs for which they are over-qualified ('brain waste'). In addition, the language skills of immigrants and the educational performance of their children are often unsatisfactory, which raises concern about their future personal and professional development. More generally, integration has an impact on public finances of regional and local communities and therefore the absorption capacity of immigrants in host countries both from an economic and a social point of view needs to be taken into consideration. Illegal immigration often poses risks to security, which must be addressed effectively.

Immigration is therefore part of Europe's changing economic and social realities. **A successful immigration strategy should be developed as part of the EU's overall social agenda. The approach set out in this paper has been developed as part of the wider agenda for access, opportunity and solidarity** to be presented by the Commission in June 2008. Understanding and reinforcing the inter relationships between these policies will

¹ Throughout this paper the term "immigration" refers to immigration from third countries

² See Economic Policy Committee and European Commission (DG ECFIN), (2006), 'The impact of ageing on public expenditure: projections for the EU25 Member States on pensions, health-care, long-term care, education and unemployment transfers (2004-2050)', European Economy, Special Reports No 1, 2006.

enhance the economic and the social development of the EU as it tackles the challenges of globalisation, technological change and population ageing, improving people's life chances and to enabling citizens to fulfil their potential.

3. Immigration is a reality which needs to be managed effectively. Since 2002, it represents between 1.5 and 2 million of net arrivals per year in the EU, which adds to the 18.5 million third-country residents. In 2006, the overall increase in the EU population (4.3% or about 2.1 million people) was mostly accounted for by the increase in net migration flows (+3.2%, about 1.6 million people). To manage such flows effectively, there is a need for action at both European and national level. While Member States have different historical, economic and demographic backgrounds that determine their national immigration policies, these clearly have an impact beyond national borders. Because of these spill-over effects, no Member State can effectively control or deal with all aspects of immigration on their own. Therefore, there is a need for a co-ordinated and integrated approach to immigration in the EU that looks at the different dimensions of the phenomenon, and reflects the three main strands of EU policy - prosperity, solidarity and security:

- Immigration can contribute to the **prosperity** of the EU: immigrants contribute to the economic development of Member States as tax payers and consumers and help alleviate the demographic decline and labour shortages. There is clearly a need for highly skilled migrants to fill current and expected vacancies. Today highly skilled third country workers represent only 1,7% of jobs in the EU compared to nearly 10% in Australia, 7,3% in Canada or 5,3% in Switzerland. As regards non-skilled jobs, such as in hotels and restaurants, child and elderly care and construction, these sectors are less and less attractive to EU-nationals so immigrants are needed to fill the vacancies, if current standards of service are to continue in the future.
- But managing effectively immigration costs money. Funding is needed for border management and control, integration policies and other purposes. Handling it well also requires close cooperation with third countries in order to deal with situations including problems caused by "brain drain". Member States are confronted with different situations and some have to spend considerable sums performing services which are in the Community as well as the national interest. Recognising this phenomenon, the EU has already introduced financial **solidarity** mechanisms to ensure a more equitable burden sharing.
- Finally, managing immigration means addressing different issues linked to the **security** of our societies and of immigrants' themselves. This requires fighting illegal immigration and criminal activities related to it, striking the right balance between collective security concerns and individual integrity. Illegal employment needs to be tackled as it creates situations of abuse and violation of fundamental rights and freedoms. It also undermines legal immigration and has negative implications with regard to cohesion and fair competition.

As reiterated in its Communication of 5 December 2007³ and endorsed by the European Council, developing a **common European immigration policy** is one of the EU's priorities⁴.

³ Towards A Common Immigration Policy (COM (2007) 780 final of 5 December 2007).

⁴ Although the further development of the common immigration policy must go hand in hand with the gradual removal of the existing transitional arrangements that still restrict the free movement of nationals of some EU Member States, this communication is only addressing issues related to the

It should be built on the universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity espoused by the EU, including full respect for the Charter of Fundamental rights and the European Convention of Human Rights. This new European immigration policy should be built as a **partnership** between the Member States and the Commission, in response to the call for a renewed political commitment on immigration from the December 2007 European Council. Such a partnership should build on a set of politically binding **common principles** to be agreed at the highest political level and then be delivered through **concrete measures**. Implementation of these measures should be followed up by means of a specific **common methodology and monitoring mechanism**.

This Communication proposes a set of common principles and a first list of concrete measures. Together with the Policy Plan on Asylum, which will be presented in parallel, they will feed into the debate leading in 2009 to a new 5-year Programme in the Justice, Freedom and Security area. They will also contribute to the definition and implementation of other policy areas, such as the Lisbon Strategy and the renewed Social Agenda for access, opportunity and solidarity.

II. COMMON PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMON IMMIGRATION POLICY

The text which follows groups eleven proposed principles under the three headings of prosperity, security and solidarity. After stating each principle the text then indicates what can be done at either EU or Member State level to turn the principle into concrete actions. After discussion with Member States and other stakeholders the principles could be adopted by the European Council together with a selection of the concrete actions. Their implementation could be monitored on a regular basis by various Council formations.

PROSPERITY: the contribution of legal migration to the socio-economic development of the EU.

The 2008 Spring European Council underlined that "Economic migration can play a role in meeting the needs of the labour market and can contribute to help reduce skills shortages". The European Council asked the Commission to address the dimensions of "the employment and social impact of migration of third-country nationals" in the context of its proposals for a common immigration policy⁵. It also asked the Commission to present a comprehensive assessment of the future skills requirements in Europe up to 2020 and to propose steps to anticipate future needs. Future economic immigration into the EU needs to be assessed inter alia in the light of the match between skills of the immigrants and national labour market needs. On this basis, opportunities for legal immigration should be promoted. In parallel to labour immigration avenues, the EU must ensure that other categories of legal immigrants are given the possibility and the means to legally enter and reside, on a temporary or permanent basis. Successful immigration requires a clear commitment from both the host societies and the immigrants themselves.

immigration of third-country nationals and does not deal with intra-EU or intra-regional movements of EU nationals.

⁵ Presidency Conclusions, - Brussels 13/14 March 2008, point 14.

- 1. Legal immigration shall be governed by clear, transparent and fair rules. Third-country citizens shall be provided with the information necessary to understand the requirements and procedures for legal entry and stay in the EU. Fair treatment of third country nationals who reside legally on the territory of the Member States shall be ensured, with the aim of approximating their legal status as much as possible to that of EU nationals.**

In order to make this happen the EU and its Member States need to:

- Define clear and transparent rules for the entry and residence (permanent, temporary and circular) of third-country nationals, including for exercising a paid or self-employed activity and for job-seeking purposes according to EU labour market needs, and on rules and rights of residence;
- Provide information to potential immigrants and applicants, including their rights and on the rules they have to comply with once legally residing in the EU;
- Provide possibilities to fulfil requirements for entry and residence, by offering assistance and support in both countries of origin and destination and by setting up non-bureaucratic and effective procedures;
- Ensure that a common visa policy allows flexible responses to movements of natural persons who provide services on a temporary basis (Intra-corporate transferees, Contractual Service Suppliers, Independent Professionals and Business Visitors).

- 2. As part of the Lisbon Strategy, well managed and needs-based economic immigration shall be promoted covering a broad range of skills in order to enhance the knowledge based economy of Europe, to advance economic growth and to meet labour market requirements. This shall be done in full respect of the principle of Community preference and of the rights of the immigrants and by actively involving social partners and the regional and local authorities.**

In order to make this happen the EU and its Member States need to:

- Engage, as requested by the March 2008 European Council, in a comprehensive assessment of the future skills requirements in Europe up to 2020, taking account of the impacts of technological change and ageing populations. Current and medium-term labour market needs at all skill levels and sectors in Member States will also be assessed regularly as part of the EU's response to the challenges of demographic ageing, emigration flows, changes in global division of labour and means and methods of production;
- Start developing national "Migration profiles" that give an integrated vision of the national labour market situation and of immigration within each Member State, while taking into account diversity of experiences and needs, and possibly identify "pathways" that allow Member States to implement these common principles in line with subsidiarity concerns;
- Identify measures that can offer a real alternative to illegal employment or create incentives to legal employment (such as "Titre service");

- Invest more in training and other measures aimed at bringing unemployed and economically inactive third country nationals already legally residing in the EU Member States into employment, with a particular focus on women;
 - Increase the availability and effectiveness of labour matching policies and tools. This should include enhanced education and training for EU and third-country workers in order to adapt the skills brought by immigrants to the characteristics of national labour markets. It should also cover more effective matching and utilisation of skills and qualifications, and promote appropriate mechanisms for the recognition of professional qualifications acquired outside the EU so as to limit "brain waste". Consideration should also be given to providing information and training in countries of origin;
 - Increase knowledge of the skills composition of migratory flows (both actual and potential) as well as information on the education and training systems of origin countries, in terms of levels, quality and content, in order to support a more effective management of labour immigration and to limit brain waste;
 - Set up and/or improve the functioning of the necessary mechanisms to monitor the impact of national immigration measures beyond national borders within the EU, so to overcome inconsistencies and improve coordination at EU level;
 - Analyse the current situation and future trends in immigrants' entrepreneurship as well as the current legislative and operational barriers immigrants willing to set up a business (may) encounter in the EU. On the basis of such assessment, put forward measures to address such situations and support immigrants' entrepreneurship.
- 3. Integration policies shall aim for the successful inclusion of all legal migrants in diverse European societies, in accordance with the Common Basic Principles adopted in 2004. Immigrants need to be provided with opportunities to participate and develop their full potential. European societies need to enhance their capacity to manage immigration-related diversity and foster social cohesion. The integration of legal immigrants shall be improved by strengthened efforts from host Member State and contributions from immigrants themselves (“two-way-process”).**

In order to make this happen the EU and its Member States need to:

- Strengthen further the mainstreaming approach of the EU Framework for Integration including, among others, integration into the labour market, social inclusion, anti-discrimination, equal opportunities, education and youth-related measures and diversity management;
- Develop common indicators and adequate statistical capacity to be used by Member States on a voluntary basis to evaluate integration policy outcomes, in order to intensify mutual learning and co-ordination;
- Develop mutual learning and exchange of best practices to strengthen the ability of host countries to manage their increasing diversity, including measures to address the educational challenges faced by immigrant pupils;

- Support the development of specific integration programmes for newly arrived immigrants; this could be further explored by identifying the basic rights and obligations to which newly arrived immigrants could be asked to commit in the framework of specific national procedures (integration contract);
- Foster diversity management in the work place and render advancement opportunities available also for legally residing and working third-country nationals. Policy efforts should aim to ensure a social ladder for all workers in the EU, guarantee fundamental social rights and favour good labour standards and social cohesion. Within this context due attention should be paid to the participation of immigrant women in the labour market;
- Ensure the fair and effective access of legal immigrants to social protection, notably through the implementation of EU law providing a non-discriminatory treatment for third country nationals as regards the coordination of social security schemes across the EU⁶. In this context, the EU and the Member States should promote transparency in the rules applying to pensions entitlements in case migrants wish to return to their country of origin;
- Explore increased participation at local, national and European levels to reflect the multiple and evolving identities of European societies;
- Explore the links between new patterns of immigration, such as circular migration, and integration;
- Assess the implementation of Council Directive 2003/86/EC on the right to family reunification, and on that basis put forward a more coordinated approach.

SOLIDARITY: closer coordination between Member States

A truly comprehensive and common immigration policy must be based on solidarity among the Member States, as enshrined in the EC Treaty. Solidarity and co-responsibility are essential in an area where competences are shared between the European Community and the Member States. The implementation of the common policy can only be successful if it is based on joint efforts. Bearing in mind the spill-over effects of immigration, major decisions that are likely to have an impact on other Member States, need to be coordinated. Financial burden-sharing is another concrete expression of solidarity: EU funds can be used to promote delivery of the common objectives, and national resources should also be pooled, where appropriate, to ensure efficiency. In particular, the management of external borders requires important financial efforts. The solidarity dimension is also demonstrated by the increasing number of systems and measures supporting operational cooperation between the Member States, and by their interoperability. An additional dimension of solidarity has been added with the Global Approach to immigration: the EU must work in partnership with countries of origin and transit of migratory flows, with the aim to achieve a better management of these flows in the interest of all actors involved, including diasporas and immigrant communities. Immigration issues need to be part of the EU development cooperation policy.

⁶ In 2003, the European Parliament and the Council adopted Regulation 859/03 (OJ L 124 of 20.05.2003) extends the provisions of Regulation 1408/71 to third country nationals who are (1) legally residing in the EU and (2) in a cross border situation. In July 2007, the Commission adopted a proposal extending the provisions of Regulation 883/04 (which will replace reg. 1408/71) to third country nationals who are (1) legally residing in the EU and (2) in a cross border situation (COM (2007)439).

4. The common immigration policy shall be founded on a high level of political solidarity, mutual trust, transparency, shared responsibility and appropriate pooling of resources among the European Union and its Member States.

In order to make this happen the EU and its Member States need to:

- Strengthen information sharing and joint discussion within the EU, with a view to exchanging best practices, increasing mutual trust and adopting coordinated approaches to issues of mutual interest, while taking into account differences in immigration traditions and realities;
- Increase pooling of technical means and human resources to achieve a more effective immigration management;
- Develop interoperable systems, mutual support mechanisms and mutual support teams, making strategic use of financial solidarity resources;
- Improve coordination of activities funded through Community and national resources in view of increasing transparency, coherence and efficiency to avoid overlaps and to fulfil policy objectives of immigration policy as well as other related policy areas;
- Improve internal and external communication of EU immigration policies, its objectives and strategies, to allow the Union to speak with a common voice.

5. The solidarity required to enable the common immigration and asylum policies to achieve their strategic goals must comprise a strong financial component that takes into account the specific situation of the external borders of Member States and the specific migratory challenges faced by them.

In order to make this happen the EU and its Member States need to:

- Ensure, in accordance with the principle of sound financial management, the strategic use of the General Programme on Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows (2007 – 2013) as a burden sharing mechanism which addresses comprehensively the interests of the Community as a whole and all Member States in developing the management of these flows in a uniform and effective manner;
- Explore the full potential of the mix of mechanisms existing in the four instruments of the Programme in order to contribute to a sustainable and structural intervention to reinforce the capacity of Member States to implement effective policies and at the same time to respond to urgent needs or specific developments, such as situations of mass influx;
- Make strategic use of EU financial resources to develop interoperable systems, mutual support mechanisms and mutual support teams;
- Constantly review for each instrument of the Programme the distribution key for the allocation of the resources to Member States and adjust it as necessary to reflect increasing demands and new developments.

6. An effective management of migration flows requires genuine partnership with third countries. Immigration issues must be fully integrated into the Union's development cooperation and other external policies. The EU needs to work in

close tandem with partner countries on opportunities for legal mobility, capacities for migration management, protecting fundamental rights and fighting irregular flows.

In order to make this happen the EU and its Member States need to:

- Reinforce support and capacity-building in partner countries with a view to helping them develop policies for well-managed migration. This could include helping them to mitigate brain drain by assessing trends in their own national labour markets, complying with decent work standards, developing their education and vocational training systems in line with labour markets' needs, both at a domestic and international level. It could also cover harnessing the development potential of remittances. In the implementation of the Lisbon EU-Africa Partnership, the EU could encourage and supplement the involvement of the diasporas in promoting the development of their countries of origin, and facilitate returnee entrepreneur businesses;
- Ensure full implementation of existing commitments in multinational fora and fully engage in existing and future mechanisms for dialogue and cooperation, including through possible cooperation platforms;
- Make coherent and strategic use of all the policy instruments developed in recent years within the framework of the "Global Approach to Migration", including mobility partnerships, circular migration, migration profiles, cooperation platforms;
- Agree mobility partnerships with partner countries, paving the way for management arrangements for labour immigration with long-term strategic allies;
- Provide real possibilities for circular migration, by setting up or strengthening legal and operational measures granting legal immigrants the right to priority access to further legal residence in the EU;
- Promote sustainable voluntary return by providing the appropriate legal framework and financial means in order to promote the development of countries of origin;
- Ensure that appropriate resources are made available and used efficiently within all the various relevant national and Community financial instruments to implement the "Global Approach to Migration" in all its dimensions;
- Include provisions on social security coordination in the association agreements concluded between the EU and its Member States and third countries. Apart from the principle of equal treatment, such provisions could cover in particular transfer of pension rights.

SECURITY: effective fight against illegal immigration

The prevention and reduction of illegal immigration in all its dimensions is critical for the credibility and public acceptance of the EU's policy on legal immigration. Control of access to the EU territory must be reinforced in order to promote a truly integrated border management, while ensuring easy access for bona fide travellers and keeping Europe open to the world. Undeclared work and illegal employment can act as pull factors of illegal immigration, although these are also phenomena which involve many EU citizens too. This complex phenomenon with multiple drivers therefore calls for a balanced approach including

measures of prevention, law enforcement and sanctions. Stepping up the fight against migrant smuggling and all aspects of trafficking in human beings must be a key priority of the EU and its Member States. A sustainable and effective return policy – based on clear, transparent and fair rules – should support Member States that need to repatriate third-country nationals who do not, or who no longer, fulfil the conditions for staying in the EU. Large-scale mass regularisations of immigrants in an illegal situation have to be limited to exceptional cases. All these policies and measures shall fully respect the dignity, rights and fundamental freedoms of the persons concerned.

- 7. The common visa policy shall facilitate the entry of *bona fide* visitors and enhance security. New technologies shall be used extensively and proportionally. Differentiated, risk-based checks on visa applicants with extensive sharing of information between Member States shall be developed.**

In order to make this happen the EU and its Member States need to:

- Establish an integrated, four-tier approach so that checks are carried out at each stage when persons are travelling to the Union (at consulates, at departure and arrival, and inside the territory);
- Replace the current national Schengen visas by uniform European Schengen visas, allowing for equal treatment of all visa applicants and a fully harmonised application of criteria for security checks;
- Issue visas at Common Consular Centres representing all Member States, allowing for economies of scale as well as easy access for visa applicants from all third countries. Ensure convergence with the further developments of the Common External Action Service of the Union;
- Explore the possibility of setting up a system requiring third country nationals to obtain an electronic authorisation to travel before leaving for the EU territory;
- Explore further the opportunities to facilitate visa issuing and to improve coordination in visa procedures, also regarding longer-term visas.

- 8. The integrity of the Schengen area as an area without internal border controls shall be preserved. The integrated management of the external borders shall be continuously developed. Policies on checks of persons shall develop in coherence with policies on checks on goods and on prevention of other safety and security related threats.**

In order to make this happen the EU and its Member States need to:

- Reinforce the operational dimension of FRONTEX, including by extending the independence of the Agency, its capacity with regard to operational command, and its powers to initiate operations, as concerns carrying out border control at sections identified as high-risk areas and exposed to exceptional migratory pressure;
- Set in place an integrated approach to enhance the use of new technologies, including existing and planned IT tools, moving towards an integration of the individual functionalities of different systems forming part of the overall IT architecture;

- Continue to build on the EUROSUR concept, by improving coordination within Member States, between Member States, and between the means used and activities carried out by Member States for the purpose of relevant policies related to surveillance and maintaining internal security;
- Develop a coordinated, strategic approach to cooperation with third countries at European level, with targeted support to build up a sustainable, effective border management capacity in key partner countries of migratory transit and origin, with a prominent role to be played by FRONTEX carrying out border assistance missions in those countries;
- Continue to support the build-up of state-of-the-art, uniform, interoperable capacity of Member States for border control through extended means of European financial solidarity, and to develop new mechanisms for efficient, operational burden-sharing to support Member States facing, currently or in the future, recurrent and massive arrivals of illegal immigrants, by combining European and pooled national resources;
- Increase cooperation between Member States' authorities on checks on persons and goods to develop a one-stop-shop at the borders, where each traveller is, as a general rule, subject to one check by one authority.

9. The EU and its Member States shall develop a coherent policy on fighting illegal migration. Given its role in illegal immigration, undeclared work and illegal employment⁷ in its different dimensions shall be effectively combated via preventive measures, law enforcement and sanctions.

In order to make this happen the EU and its Member States need to:

- Increase financial and human resources to raise the number and quality of controls, in particular in the form of workplace inspections;
- Involve workers' and employers' representatives actively in the fight against undeclared work and illegal employment;
- Address relatively new phenomena such as bogus sub-contracting and false self employment;
- Develop risk analysis tools and enhance cooperation and cross-checks by different administrations in order to increase the rate of detection of undeclared work of both illegally and legally residing third-country nationals;
- Investigate the feasibility of a European platform for cooperation between labour inspectorates and other enforcement bodies;
- Facilitate exchanges of good practices, more systematic policy evaluation and better measurement of undeclared work and illegal employment.

10. Europe must fight against the criminal networks organising migrant smuggling and human trafficking into the EU. Reinforcing protection and support for

⁷ Undeclared work and illegal employment of EU nationals should also be tackled by Member States. The internal EU side of this problem is not developed in this paper.

victims of human trafficking is crucial for successfully preventing and reducing this phenomenon.

In order to make this happen the EU and its Member States need to:

- Increase human and financial resources to investigate smuggling and trafficking cases;
- Protect and assist victims in human trafficking, in particular minors and women; continue developing legal and operational possibilities to facilitate victims' recovery and reinsertion in the host or home society, including by means of specifically targeted programmes;
- Assess and review the existing common regime on protection of victims of trafficking, including by considering in which cases temporary or permanent humanitarian residence permits could be issued;
- Strengthen the existing legal framework on combating the facilitation of illegal entry and stay as well as the sexual exploitation of children and child sexual abuse material to take into account new criminal phenomena;
- Step up EU action at regional and international level, so as to ensure that the international instruments applicable in the area of migrant smuggling and human trafficking are effectively implemented, by means of more consistent, continuous and effective cooperation.

11. Effective return measures are an indispensable component of the EU's policy against illegal immigration. Large-scale regularisations of illegally staying persons do not constitute a lasting and effective tool for migration management and should be prevented, while leaving open the possibility for individual regularisations based on fair and transparent criteria.

In order to make this happen the EU and its Member States need to:

- Give a genuine European dimension to return policy by ensuring full mutual recognition of return decisions;
- Reinforce practical cooperation among Member States in the implementation of return measures and strengthen the role of FRONTEX with regard to joint return operations by air;
- Devise measures to facilitate identification of undocumented returnees and to prevent identity theft;
- Develop common standards on regularisation, including minimum requirements for early information sharing;
- Consider the possibility of introducing a European laissez-passer to facilitate the return of undocumented migrants.

II. CONCLUSIONS: GOVERNANCE OF IMMIGRATION

The common immigration policy will be based on a **partnership** between the Member States and the EU institutions. This framework should be flexible enough to adapt to change, particularly linked to the economic situation, market and technological developments. The partnership will be taken forward through:

1. **Coordinated and coherent action** by the EU and its Member States:

- The common principles and concrete measures of the common immigration policy will be implemented **in full transparency** at European or national level, as appropriate.
- In order to strike the right balance between labour market needs, economic impacts, social outcomes, integration policies and external policy objectives, there will be stronger **coordination between the EU and the national level**, especially in the areas of economic, social and development policies.
- **Immigration issues will be taken into consideration in all other policies** which may be connected to it ("mainstreaming"). The economic, social and international dimension of immigration should be factored into all related policy areas, including development, trade (and the GATS framework); employment and social policy; environment; education; health; agriculture and fisheries; security and foreign policy and economic and fiscal policy;
- Mechanisms to promote timely **consultation of relevant stakeholders** on further policy developments, including the social partners, academic expertise, international organisations, immigrant associations and civil society will be established and/or strengthened;
- Mutual learning at all levels and wide and effective dissemination of knowledge about the most effective migration and integration policies will be fostered.

2. **A common methodology** for the EU and its Member States:

- **Immigration profiles** will be developed by each Member State to increase knowledge of the profile of immigration flows, addressing both immigrants already in their territory and potential immigrants. These profiles will look at the skills composition of the immigration population and identify future labour needs;
- **Objectives and multi-annual guidelines** will be defined for the EU and per Member State to ensure the implementation of the common principles and of the concrete measures;
- To allow for policy improvement, quantifiable performance **indicators and benchmarks** will be developed per Member State in relation to these objectives and multi-annual guidelines;

3. **A monitoring and evaluation mechanism** will be set up in order to follow up the development and implementation of action on immigration (ensure more determined action to enforce political and legislative commitments);

- On an annual basis, the Commission will consolidate a **report building on the national immigration profiles**, which will provide an integrated vision of the immigration situation in the EU, including the labour market needs per Member State.

4. A political assessment

- On the basis of the Commission's report and on an annual basis, the **Spring European Council** will make a political assessment of the situation at European and national level and issue **recommendations** as appropriate.