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Annual Report on Immigration and Asylum (2010)

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I. INTRODUCTION

The development of a forward-looking and comprehensive European migration policy, based on solidarity and responsibility, is a fundamental policy objective for the European Union¹.

The Commission presented on 4th May a Communication on Migration.² The purpose of that Communication was to set recent and future policy proposals in a framework that takes account of all relevant aspects and allows the EU and its Member States to manage asylum, migration and mobility of third-country nationals in a comprehensive and coherent manner.

The present Annual Report is presented in response to the request made by the European Council when adopting the 2008 Pact on Immigration and Asylum³ and covers the developments during 2010 in the implementation of the Pact and the relevant priorities of the Stockholm Programme adopted in 2009⁴, both at the EU and the national level. The report has been prepared on the basis of Member States' contributions and other information, in particular reports from the National Contact Points (NCPs) of the European Migration Network (EMN).

The report summarises and assesses developments at the EU and the national level⁵, and puts forward recommendations for future action.

II. ENTERING AND RESIDING IN THE EU

People come to Europe in different ways and for different purposes. The channel by which a third country national enters the EU will have a direct effect on the rights he or she enjoys, in particular as regards access to the labour market. However, migrants who are legally residing in the EU, whatever their specific status, need to be integrated in their host society, a joint responsibility of the migrant and the society he or she has come to.

1. Legal migration – ensuring a legal way to enter the EU

1.1 Demographic Challenges and Labour Shortages

From almost 501 million in 2010 the **EU population** is projected to rise to 520.7 million in 2035 then fall to 505.7 million in 2060. Whereas in 2010 there were 3.5 *persons of working age* (20-64) for every person aged 65 or over, in 2060 the ratio is expected to be 1.7 to 1.⁶

Migration is the *main driver of population change* in the EU. In 2009, net migration to the EU was 857 000, i.e. 63% of total population growth.

On 1.1.2003, the *number of third-country nationals* in the EU-25 was 16.2 million, i.e. 3.6% of the population. In 2010, a breakdown of the population by citizenship in the EU-27 showed that 20.1 million were citizens of a non-EU27 country (4% of the total population).

¹ Stockholm Programme, 2 December 2009, Council of the European Union 17024/09.

² COM(2011) 248/3.

³ <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/08/st13/st13440.en08.pdf>.

⁴ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:115:0001:0038:EN:PDF>.

⁵ A Commission Staff Working Paper provides more detail.

⁶ All data are Eurostat data, unless the contrary is indicated.

The *largest groups* of third-country nationals in the EU are Turks, Moroccans and Albanians.

In 2009, more than 770 000 persons acquired the *citizenship* of an EU Member State, representing a rise of 9% with respect to the average number recorded in the period 2004-2008.

Two million first *residence permits* were issued to third country nationals in the EU in 2009, eight percent less than in the previous year. The number of permits issued for remunerated activities decreased by 28% , reflecting the effects of the economic crisis. Such permits represented 24% of the total number of permits issued in 2009, against 27% for family reasons, 22% for study and another 27% for various other reasons (protection-related, residence without the right to work, etc).

This tendency is also reflected in the flow of *remittances* (extra-EU flows); workers' remittances in 2009 declined by 4% compared to 2008¹.

The above figures show that the EU is facing a structural problem in terms of its demographic development. Despite an unemployment rate of almost ten percent, leaving more than 23 million people jobless, skills shortages are widely reported. The Annual Growth Survey 2010² shows that demand for labour has continued to increase, and that, despite these high levels of unemployment, some employers are unable to find the people with the right skills to fill their vacancies. To sustain economic recovery and maintain Europe's welfare systems, the EU urgently needs to address mismatches between skills supply and labour market demand. This is emphasised in the Europe 2020 Strategy, in particular in the employment guidelines and the flagship Communication 'An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs'. The Europe 2020 strategy commits the EU to reaching an employment rate of 75% by 2020, as well as providing for a better match between the skills people obtain through education and training and actual labour market needs on the other hand.

The predominant initial policy response of Member States to the skills challenge is to improve the employability of their *national* workforce, through improving education and training, increasing the employment rate of women, older workers, nationals with a migration background and already legally residing third country nationals, as well as through Union preference. However, given both the seriousness of the skills mismatch in European labour markets as well as irreversible demographic developments³, a well organised legal immigration and integration policy, in line with the Stockholm programme and supported by the EU legal instruments mentioned below, has a central role to play in ensuring the EU's long-term competitiveness and ultimately the future of its social model.

The contribution of immigrants to the EU economies has been substantial. In the period 2000–2005, third country immigrants to the EU accounted for more than a quarter of the overall rise in employment and for 21% of the average GDP growth in the EU-15. This growing migrant labour share consisted of both highly qualified jobs in the expanding sectors of the economy but also of many jobs requiring a mix of lower skills. Therefore, effectively managing migration and promoting the effective participation and inclusion in employment and in our

¹ Eurostat, Statistics in focus, 40/2010.

² Growth Report, MEMO/11/11, p. 3.

³ Eurostat, Statistics in Focus, 72/2008 "Ageing characterises the demographic perspectives of the European societies".

societies of the important numbers of immigrants already living legally in the EU are key to achieving the employment objectives set in the Europe 2020 Strategy.

In this framework, the Commission is currently putting in place a number of instruments to review the matching of skills and supply, such as the comprehensive EU Skills Panorama available in 2012, the European Vacancy Monitor, the European Job Mobility Bulletin, CEDEFOP's forecasts on longer term demand and supply of skills. The Commission intends to present by 2012 a Green Paper which will explore these issues.

It is crucial to ensure that, once they are legally residing in the EU, migrants should enjoy non-discriminatory access to the labour markets according to their skills and experience and have the possibility to fully participate in the socio-economic, political and cultural life of the societies to which they have come. In this context, measures to ensure the recognition of acquired skills and competences, non-discriminatory access to social and employment services, as well as a strong coordination between integration and inclusion policies are essential for the achievement of the Europe 2020 Strategy objectives. Currently there is no agreed EU-wide method of assessing specific labour/skills shortages in Member States and whether workers from third countries have the skills and qualifications needed to fill them. Not all Member States have systems in place that allow them (or employers operating on their territory) to identify (future) skills shortages and/or how they might be filled by suitably skilled migrants. While the nature and extent of (future) skills shortages varies between Member States, the urgent need to address these shortages is commonly shared across the EU.

With regard to the health sector, for example, as already announced in the "Agenda for New Skills and Jobs"¹, the Commission intends to put forward by 2012 an action plan in order to address the shortage of health professionals in the EU. The joint action on workforce planning announced in the same Communication will help identifying labour / skills shortages in the health sectors of Member States. The role that inward migration of suitably skilled third country nationals can play in meeting these shortages needs to be addressed.

Effective measures in this area will bring benefits for all the parties involved: Member States will be less affected by labour shortages, both male and female migrants will be able to realise the full potential of their skills and qualifications and the EU will develop an attractive labour market for migrants. The Commission is ready to fully support the efforts of the Member States in this process and will be putting forward various tools to this effect.

- *The existing **mismatch between labour market needs and skills supply** needs to be addressed by the Member States, with the full support of the Commission. Meeting these needs via managed inward migration of suitably skilled third country nationals should be central to this effort.*
- ***Better recognition at EU level of skills and qualifications** from third countries would mean that people can fully use their potential in their jobs. More **geographically flexible labour markets** would allow migrants to change employers, possibly located in different Member States, more easily. Such mobility should preserve their residence rights and lead to a better matching of labour market supply and demand.*

¹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0682:FIN:EN:PDF>.

- *In the framework of the EU 2020 Strategy, the role immigration could play in meeting labour and skills shortages should be taken into account by Member States and the EU.*

1.2 EU Legal Framework

At the European level, it was only in 1999¹ that Member States agreed to put in place a common immigration policy, making this a relatively new policy area. Since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, decisions on migration policy are taken under the normal legislative procedure.

The effects of the economic crisis continued to have an impact on the development of legal migration policy in 2010. This manifested itself in the legislative process on EU proposals which proved to be difficult, with only slow progress being made in discussions on new proposals. This has been the case since July 2010 when the Commission presented proposals on seasonal workers² and intra-corporate transferees (ICT)³. Moreover, several opinions were received from national Parliaments contesting the respect of the subsidiarity principle. Discussions continued on the proposed Directive for a 'single permit' and employment related rights for migrants, but the European Parliament and the Council have not yet found an agreement.

The EU needs an immigration system with flexible admission rules, while ensuring common standards on conditions of entry and residence and adequate safeguarding of migrant rights. An agreement on the 'Single Permit' proposal is therefore essential. Without it, the rights of legal migrant workers will not be ensured at the EU level and the current fragmented approach will continue regarding administrative formalities and simplification. The seasonal workers and ICT proposals are likewise indispensable to further build the EU's legislative framework on legal migration. The ICT Directive will help the EU to develop a knowledge-based and innovative economy, attract investment by multi-national companies, and boost competitiveness of our economy. The seasonal workers Directive will help to fight exploitation of a particularly vulnerable group of migrants and to provide a simple and quick common framework for seasonal workers to come to work temporarily in the EU.

The situation is also far from being satisfactory as regards the transposition of the 'EU Blue Card' Directive, which is due to be completed by June 2011. So far, only a few Member States have communicated their transposition measures to the Commission. The EU Blue Card scheme puts in place an attractive package of measures such as equal treatment with national workers, favourable conditions for family reunification and intra-EU mobility to attract highly-qualified persons to the EU. The Commission continued the evaluation of the transposition of existing Directives (on long term residents, students and researchers) with the objective of presenting reports later in 2011. With regard to family reunification, some Member States have identified a need to address what they perceive as the abuse of national family reunification procedures and have initiated legislative changes. Following its 2008 report on the family reunification Directive⁴, the Commission will launch a Green Paper on family reunification by the end of the year.

¹ Tampere European Council conclusions.

² COM(2010) 379 final.

³ COM(2010) 378 final.

⁴ 2003/86/EC.

With a view to the further development of the legal framework for legal migration, the Commission sees a need to intensify discussions with all stakeholders, including social partners, to that end.

- *Member States must transpose fully and in time by June 2011 the "Blue Card" Directive.*
- *An agreement on the draft Single Permit Directive must be reached in the near future. Significant progress in discussions on the proposals on Seasonal employment and Intra-corporate transferees must be achieved in the coming months.*
- *Evaluation of the transposition of the existing directives shall be pursued. This will allow the identification of implementation problems and help to improve existing legislation or identify a need to consolidate the present acquis.*

2. Asylum – granting international protection and ensuring solidarity

In 2009 Member States recorded 266 400 *asylum applications*, the number in 2010 was 257 815, a slight decrease of 3%. While Poland, Italy, Hungary and Malta received less asylum-seekers in 2010 than in 2009, significant increases were recorded in Germany, Belgium and Sweden.

In 2010, the most important *countries of citizenship of asylum-seekers* in the EU were, in order: Afghanistan (20 580), Russia (18 500), Serbia (17 715, excluding Kosovo*¹), Iraq (15 800) and Somalia (14 350).

In 2010, 55 095 asylum-seekers received a *protection status* in the EU at first instance (refugee, subsidiary protection or humanitarian). Protection was therefore granted in 25% of decisions taken in first-instance procedures.

In 2009, 7 147 refugees were *resettled* in the EU from third countries. The figure for 2010 was [until Q3] 3 848.

Legislative progress was slow and difficult in the field of asylum in 2010. The co-legislators agreed on the extension of the scope of the Long-Term Residents Directive to beneficiaries of international protection, and made some progress on the Dublin and Eurodac Regulations as well as on the Qualification Directive. To give an impulse to the stalled negotiations on the Reception Conditions and Asylum Procedures Directives, the Commission will adopt modified proposals on these two instruments in June 2011.

The adoption in 2010 of the Regulation for the creation of the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) was a significant development. The Commission is working actively so that the EASO becomes operational in June this year in view of boosting practical cooperation.

Solidarity among Member States is needed as one of the components of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). A pilot project for the relocation from Malta to ten Member States of approx. 250 beneficiaries of international protection is running and will be

¹ * Under UNSCR 1244/1999.

extended beyond its originally intended duration so as to facilitate the relocation of recently-arrived migrants in need of international protection.

Following the submission of an Action Plan to the European Commission in August 2010, Greece has embarked on a comprehensive overhaul of its asylum and migration system, and has received support from the Commission, the Member States, Norway, the UNHCR and other EU partners. Asylum Expert Teams coordinated by the EASO are now deployed there. Important new legislation has already been adopted by Greece in 2010, and its implementation is underway.

Existing Regional Protection Programmes (RPPs) in Tanzania and Eastern Europe continued; the implementation of a new RPP in the Horn of Africa region started in September, in close cooperation with the UNHCR; and work advanced on the development of another RPP in North-Eastern Africa (Egypt, Libya and Tunisia).

Resettlement is equally essential in this context. Negotiations on the creation of a Joint EU Resettlement Programme must come to an operational and positive end. A strategic approach and political steering on the use of resettlement is needed.

- *Negotiations on all asylum legislative proposals must be finalised by the 2012 deadline.*
- *The recent events in the Mediterranean and the need to restructure the asylum systems of some Member States confirm the necessity of creating a **common procedure and a uniform status at EU level**. This implies **better EU legislation, strengthened practical cooperation** coordinated by the EASO, a **concrete multifaceted commitment to solidarity and an increased investment in cooperation with third countries**.*
- *Agreement must be reached by the European Parliament and the Council on the EU Joint resettlement scheme.*
- *The EU relocation pilot project with Malta, the legislative reforms which have been adopted by Greece and the ongoing support it has received in the implementation of the Action Plan are concrete examples of the **combination of responsibility and solidarity** that are needed to **build the CEAS**.*

3. Integration – a key element both for migrants and receiving societies

Integration issues were high on the political agenda across Europe during 2010. On the one hand, European leaders increasingly recognize the importance of coherence between immigration and integration policies and of the efforts to be made by legally-residing migrants and receiving societies to ensure migrants' economic, social, cultural and political participation. On the other hand, the attitudes of some in Europe about immigration and integration can lead to discrimination and racism, even though anti-migration sentiments are often disconnected from the realities about migration and its impact on the economy.

Despite efforts, migrants still face barriers to their participation in European societies. In order to address these challenges, Ministers responsible for integration met in 2010 in Zaragoza and confirmed their commitment to 'Integration as a driver for development and social cohesion'.¹

¹ http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/115346.pdf.

The Commission launched a pilot project to identify indicators for monitoring the results of integration policies. It also started developing so-called 'European modules' to support national and local integration policies and practices. Two meetings of the European Integration Forum were held and the European Web Site on Integration continued to be developed. The third Handbook on Integration was published.

At the national level, most Member States have developed national plans for integration and/or established advisory bodies to be consulted on integration matters. Some changed their legislation to introduce tests for third country nationals to assess their integration. The formalisation of the rights and obligations of newly arrived migrants through an "admission and integration contract" continued in some Member States. In many Member States special attention was paid to the need to learn the language of the receiving society and to tackling rising unemployment rates of migrants, with measures taken to enhance access to employment. The trend to develop comprehensive strategies and monitoring systems to follow up results of these continued in most Member States.

Further efforts are needed to enhance the effectiveness of integration. The EU needs to recognise and support migrants' contribution to economic growth, while ensuring social cohesion. Only by progressively ensuring effective social and economic integration of legally-resident third country nationals can the EU achieve a broader acceptance of migration, while promoting European core values. Synergy should be encouraged between the targeted policy initiatives in the context of migration policy and the range of horizontal policy initiatives so as to ensure an adequate and comprehensive policy response. For the Commission, a 'bottom-up' approach based on well organised governance at local/regional level is the best way to reach this objective. The Commission will provide incentives and support to these actions. A Communication on a "European Agenda on the Integration of Third-Country Nationals", as well as its accompanying Commission Staff Working Paper, both of which will shortly be adopted by the Commission, will set out the Commission's vision on integration.

- *The EU must progressively ensure **an effective social and economic integration** of legally-residing third country nationals – both men and women - in order to realise the full potential of migration, growth and cohesion.*
- *The EU can **reconcile migrants' contribution to economic growth** with **social cohesion**. Tangible results will be possible only if Member States incorporate integration and inclusion issues in all relevant policy areas. A 'bottom-up' approach, based on an effective governance system at local/regional level, is the best way to achieve this.*
- *A **proactive information and communication strategy** should be put in place at EU, national and local levels, in order to maximise positive perceptions of migration.*

III. ADDRESSING IRREGULAR MIGRATION TO FACILITATE REGULAR MIGRATION

In 2009, the number of *irregularly staying third country nationals* apprehended in the EU-27 was about 570 000 (7% less than in 2008). Member States returned about 253 000 third country nationals (4.7% more than in 2008).

In 2010 63% (i.e. about 20 000 detections) of *illegal border-crossings* into the EU were detected in 3Q2010 at the Greek/Turkey land border.

Effective measures aimed at preventing irregular immigration and at securing safe borders are an essential component of a coherent and credible EU immigration policy, but this policy must be fair and human rights must be respected.

1. Instruments for fighting irregular migration

Two legal key instruments have been adopted in recent years – the Return Directive 2008/115/EC and the Employer Sanctions' Directive 2009/52/EC. They are in place now, but their state of transposition is far from satisfactory, in particular with respect to the Return Directive, where the implementation deadline passed on 24 December 2010. That is why its full and timely transposition is essential. Those provisions, which directly confer rights on migrants, may be, and already are, invoked in proceedings before national courts, and directly applied at the national level, regardless of whether national transposition legislation is in place.

Reinforced border control and cooperation with third countries, notably via readmission agreements, have already proved their effectiveness, as demonstrated in some Member States which have reported on their deterrent effect and on better-functioning return arrangements. However, there remains room for improving the effectiveness of readmission agreements at the EU level, as set out in the Commission's Communication on the Evaluation of EU Readmission Agreements (COM(2011)76). It is also clear that the higher number of joint return flights coordinated by Frontex in 2010 have been a success, earning the agency further support and increased financial means. Moreover, the 29 measures agreed by the Council to reinforce the protection of the external borders and combating illegal immigration are now being implemented. In its Staff Working Document¹ on the fulfilment of these 29 measures, the Commission reported in detail on progress achieved with regard to each measure, putting a special emphasis on the role played by Frontex, the development of EUROSUR and the ongoing dialogue on migration with main countries of origin and transit as part of the implementation of the Global Approach. These measures need to be accelerated and given priority.

The Directive on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings, and protecting victims, the EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator appointed by the Commission and a website on fight against trafficking in human beings² launched in 2010 have equipped the EU with new powers and ways to fight against this modern form of slavery. The recently adopted implementation report on Directive 2004/81/EC³ on residence permits for victims of trafficking also called for their more effective protection, which should also help to dismantle networks of traffickers.

- *Member States must fully transpose **the Employer Sanctions Directive by July 2011, essential for fighting irregular migration and for the credibility of legal migration.***
- *Member States must **step up measures against trafficking in human beings, including assistance given to victims under Directive 2004/81/EC with a view to dismantling networks of traffickers while strengthening rights of the victims.***

¹ SEC (2010) 1480 final of 26.11.2010.

² <http://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/index.action>.

³ COM(2010) 493.

- *The **Return Directive** must be fully transposed and implemented by the Member States who should continue to make use of the opportunity offered by this Directive to **foster voluntary departure** as the preferred return option.*
- *The use of **joint return flights** should be continued, by making full use of the European Return Fund and FRONTEX coordination, and including the presence of **forced return monitors** as required under the Return Directive.*
- *Member States should systematically add **entry bans in the SIS** in order to give full effect to the European dimension of entry bans issued under the Return Directive.*

2. Effective border control

In 2010 the Commission proposed a Regulation on the establishment of an evaluation mechanism to verify the correct application of the Schengen *acquis*. In the light of recent experiences, its adoption must be a priority, so that the EU is better equipped to enforce a uniform application of the rules and take the appropriate measures if this would not be the case. Development of the Visa Information System (VIS) continued with the completion of the second and third major testing phases out of a total of four. Final agreement was reached on the technical specifications for the interaction of SIS II with the national systems. Member States continued to prepare the ground for establishing EUROSUR in line with the roadmap. EUROSUR will gradually establish a mechanism whereby Member States' authorities carrying out border surveillance can cooperate and share operational information with each other and with Frontex, in order to reinforce the control of the external border of the Schengen area, especially its southern maritime and eastern land borders, and step up the fight against irregular migration and cross border crime. During the past year, the EU has faced critical situations at its borders, where it was confronted with high inflows of irregular migrants. This has been, and continues to represent, a major test for the EU's ability to react quickly and efficiently, while the Member States most directly concerned by migratory movements have required assistance in a spirit of solidarity. The achievements of Frontex are now broadly recognised and there is widespread agreement on the need to upgrade its role in order to enable it to be more effective.

The results of concerted EU action to tackle border-related crises have been mixed. On the one hand, the EU and the Member States have demonstrated that they are capable of responding decisively to address specific challenges faced by a Member State in effectively controlling its external borders. For the first time, following a request made by Greece related to the pressure on its land borders with Turkey, use was made of Frontex's Rapid Border Intervention Teams (RABIT). The swift deployment of the RABIT, strongly supported by participating Member States, stabilised the situation and brought down the number of arrivals compared to the peaks in 2010. Malta has recently requested deployment of the RABIT in view of the situation in the southern Mediterranean.

On the other hand, one of the lessons learnt from these events is that both increased cooperation and uniform application of the *acquis* must be better and more effectively ensured by all Member States. Coordinated preventive EU action vis à vis countries of origin is still slow and weak.

- *The European Parliament and the Council must agree on the proposed **amendment to the FRONTEX Regulation** as soon as possible, to provide a proper legal basis to strengthen the functioning of the agency.*

- *All Schengen **border-crossing points should be properly equipped, border surveillance properly ensured, and border guards trained to use new IT tools, as stipulated in the Schengen Borders Code.***
- *The proposed **Schengen evaluation mechanism must be adopted, in order to foster mutual trust between Member States and EU institutions on the correct, uniform and coherent application of the Schengen Acquis.***
- *The feasibility of setting up a European Border Guard System should be considered.*
- *Local Schengen cooperation must be fully exploited in order to ensure a fully harmonised and streamlined visa procedure in particular for the benefit of bona fide travellers.*
- *With a view to developing a fully reliable system of EU border control, Member States should continue to prepare the ground for establishing **EUROSUR, and explore the desirability of putting in place an entry/exit system and a registered traveller programme.***
- *To better coordinate the checks at the external borders the Commission will present proposals in 2012, in order to **improve interagency cooperation between FRONTEX, EUROPOL, national customs and police authorities.***

IV. UNACCOMPANIED MINORS – A SPECIFIC CHALLENGE

Unaccompanied minors deserve specific attention. Many of these children are asylum seekers and, as such, they are protected by the asylum legislation, but there also those who arrive to the territory of the EU irregularly and they are the most vulnerable.

In recent years, most Member States have experienced an increase in the number of unaccompanied minors arriving on their territory, and there has been a growing realisation that EU action is needed. Responding to this need, in 2010 the Commission adopted an Action Plan on Unaccompanied Minors (2010 – 2014),¹ on the basis of which, in June, the Council adopted conclusions.² The Action Plan put forward a common EU approach based on the principle of the best interests of the child and identified several main strands for action such as prevention, reception and identification of durable solutions. The Action Plan also recognised that the successful protection of unaccompanied minors necessitates closer cooperation between Member States, EASO, EU institutions and stakeholders.

The implementation of the Action Plan is ongoing. The 2010 Belgian Presidency seminar 'Unaccompanied Minors: children crossing the external borders of the EU in search of protection' resulted in the adoption of a comprehensive set of recommendations which stressed, amongst other aspects, the importance of establishing procedures allowing for quick identification of unaccompanied children at the border. According to the reports submitted by the Member States in 2010 there have been wide variations in the number of unaccompanied minors arriving to their territory, ranging from a few to up to 6 000. Some Member States carried out targeted information campaigns in the countries of origin on the dangers of irregular migration of unaccompanied minors. Some Member States developed tools to assess the age of unaccompanied minors.

¹ COM(2010) 213. EMN provided an EU study on UAM (<http://emn.intrasoft-intl.com/html/index.html>).

² http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/jha/114900.pdf.

- *The EU and the Member States must continue to implement the **Action Plan on Unaccompanied Minors***

V. THE EXTERNAL DIMENSION OF EU MIGRATION POLICY – THE GLOBAL APPROACH

In 2010, the existing tools of the Global Approach to Migration were increasingly applied globally to develop the external dimension of the EU's migration policy. Notably, the interest in Mobility Partnerships is growing. Several Member States referred to their participation in Mobility Partnerships, and to a willingness to further engage in new ones. Cooperation with the Republic of Moldova, Cape Verde and Georgia in the framework of Mobility Partnerships continued. Discussions on new Mobility Partnerships were conducted with Armenia and Ghana. The Commission also intends to launch dialogues in the near future aimed at the conclusion of Mobility Partnerships with the countries of the Southern Mediterranean.

While continuing to pursue their bilateral cooperation, Member States increasingly acted together in joint initiatives at EU level. Following the revision of the Cotonou Agreement, a migration dialogue with the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries was launched. The (ACP) Observatory on Migration was inaugurated in October 2010. Within the Africa-EU Migration Mobility and Employment (MME) Partnership, a new Action Plan for 2011-2013 was adopted at the 3rd Africa-EU Summit in Tripoli in November. Work on the future orientation of the Prague Process (Building Migration Partnerships) started at the end of 2010. The European Union-Latin America Structured Dialogue on Migration was further developed. An EU-U.S. Platform for Cooperation on Migration and Refugee Issues was launched. A migration dialogue meeting was held with India in October 2010. Regarding the enlargement process, it is important to work closely with candidate countries to align their migration and asylum policies and practices with the EU standards.

The importance of a stronger external migration policy is growing. The Lisbon Treaty and the setting up of the European External Action Service (EEAS) provide new opportunities and necessitate a reflection about the role of the Global Approach to Migration in the broader context of the EU's external relations. The external dimension of EU migration policy also needs to reflect the process whereby the EU creates the conditions for modernising its labour markets in line with the Europe 2020 Strategy. The Global Approach to Migration should therefore better incorporate the strategic objectives of the Union, both external and internal, as regards migration.

- *The external dimension of the EU migration policy needs to reflect the EU labour market priorities and the role of immigration, in line with the **Europe 2020 Strategy**.*
- *The Global Approach to Migration needs to become a more long-term, balanced and sustainable policy framework to address the **geographic and thematic priorities** of the EU.*
- *Member States, EU institutions and relevant EU agencies will also have to cooperate in a more effective way to anticipate and prevent **sudden mass migration flows**, through a solid mechanism based on the **principle of solidarity** as well as in **partnership with the third countries**.*
- *The EU will offer a **structured dialogue on migration, mobility and security** to its partner countries, and in particular those in the Southern Mediterranean, with a view to establishing related **Mobility Partnerships**, which will cover initiatives on legal migration and visa facilitation.*