

**Joint Parliamentary Meeting on the initiative of the European Parliament and the Parliament of Finland: 'From Tampere to The Hague; Moving forward? Progress and Shortcomings in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice'
Brussels, 2-3 October 2006**

3 October 2006

**SESSION 4: A BALANCE BETWEEN THE INTEGRATION OF LEGAL MIGRANTS AND THE FIGHT AGAINST ILLEGAL MIGRATION? - SPEAKING NOTES
(TUESDAY, 3 OCTOBER, 10.30-12.00)**

Ladies and gentlemen, Members of the European Parliament and national parliaments,

Europe needs an active immigration policy, but it must be quantitatively and qualitatively controlled in order to maintain the stability of the labour market, ensure that integration succeeds and avoid the problems of illegal immigration. Illegal immigration causes problems relating to human rights and fundamental rights, and it creates opportunities for organised crime in the fields of people smuggling and even trafficking in persons. This makes it necessary, inter alia, to control the grey economy and to introduce stronger EU measures. In this context, the responsibility of employers should also be stressed. As well as threats to security, distortion of competition is a factor here.

At the Tampere and Hague European Councils, ambitious and comprehensive objectives were agreed with a view to developing a common immigration, border control and asylum policy. In addition, the codecision procedure with the European Parliament has largely been adopted in this field. During its Presidency of the Council, Finland has placed these objectives on the agenda: it did so both at the July Council and, the week before last, at the unofficial ministerial meeting in Tampere. Although progress has been made, there is a clear need to strengthen Member States' commitment to the pursuit of the Tampere and Hague objectives.

Europe faces a major challenge. It needs legal immigrants, and at the same time efforts need to be made to combat illegal immigration. In addition, it is necessary to be able to identify those immigrants who are in need of protection, so that their right to international protection can be respected. A comprehensive approach and purposeful cooperation are required between Member States and the EU institutions. Organisations and civil society should also be more involved in the common efforts than previously.

Integrating foreigners who are residing legally in EU territory is a fundamental objective. Legal residence in EU territory should be regarded as a more attractive option than illegal residence and working on the black labour market. Preventing marginalisation is key. The contributions of civil society and the general climate of opinion in society are significant factors in making a success of the integration of immigrants.

The recent events in the Canaries and the Mediterranean have likewise drawn attention to how essential European cooperation is. In a spirit of shared responsibility, the European Union must step up its practical support to those Member States which bear the heaviest burden because of the large numbers of illegal immigrants arriving in their territory. This is a prime aim of the

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initiative on increasing shared responsibility in Europe which the Presidency presented at the Tampere meeting. Under the Presidency's initiative, procedures would be created as a counterbalance to the EU's financial contribution to ensure that Member States also abide by mutually agreed rules and shoulder their responsibility for illegal immigrants and asylum-seekers arriving in their territory.

In this connection Finland particularly stresses the development of the Dublin system and of the Eurodac system associated with it. It seems to us that many of the problems of the Dublin system could be remedied by harmonising the way in which it is applied. The Eurodac system should be developed so as to make it easier to ascertain which State is responsible for dealing with an asylum application. A wider question is how the registration of illegal immigrants can be improved, either by developing the EU's existing databases or possibly by setting up new databases. At Tampere, Vice-President Frattini made some important observations on developing the Eurodac system in this direction.

The Mediterranean crisis has now, if not before, demonstrated to us the importance of external relations, too, in combating illegal immigration. The comprehensive approach to immigration and the priority measures relating to Africa and the Mediterranean which the European Council adopted in December 2005 provide the general framework for the EU's activity. The comprehensive approach strengthens cooperation between Member States and steps up the dialogue and cooperation with African States and the whole Mediterranean region. The European Council has asked the Commission to report by the end of 2006 on the progress made. In this context a comprehensive approach also means unity between countries of origin and transit and host countries.

A number of important initiatives have already been taken under the comprehensive approach, such as the ministerial meeting in Rabat in July, the initiatives by the border security agency Frontex to organise sea patrols in the Mediterranean and the special operational plans in support of Spain and Malta. The Presidency is promoting these initiatives, as well as the very important Commission proposal for a regulation setting up border intervention teams (RABIT Regulation).

The public approval rating of the enlarged European Union also depends on keeping illegal immigration under control. A situation in which 400 000 illegal immigrants enter the EU every year cannot continue. Citizens do not expect the asylum system to be abused, and they expect illegal immigration to be controlled. They also expect cooperation with third countries to be stepped up in a genuinely concrete way in order to eliminate the causes of illegal immigration and uncontrolled migration by intensifying cooperation in the EU's internal and external relations and increasing national contributions to developing third countries' social and economic conditions and democratic credentials. Balance in integrating legal immigrants is also absolutely vital, partly in order to ensure societies' internal security and prevent the radicalisation and recruitment of terrorists. We have failed badly here, as the terrorist attacks in Madrid and London were perpetrated by nationals of the countries concerned - second-generation immigrants, indicating that something has gone disastrously wrong. At next Thursday's Council, Ministers will discuss the contribution made by the Copenhagen preparatory meeting on integration of immigrants, and, where internal affairs are concerned, we shall particularly stress in every way the inseparability of integration and security.