

13344/98

LIMITE

JAI 37

AG 15

**NOTE**

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from : the Netherlands delegation

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Subject: Task Force on Asylum and Migration

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Delegations will find attached a note from the Netherlands delegation proposing the creation of a Task Force on Asylum and Migration.

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## NOTE FROM THE NETHERLANDS DELEGATION

## ESTABLISHMENT OF A TASK FORCE FOR ASYLUM AND MIGRATION

1. The Council has discussed on various occasions the problem area of mass influxes of asylum seekers and illegal immigrants in the EU. In the Council (General Affairs), on 9 November 1998, a proposal from the Netherlands delegation was discussed aimed at establishing a common, integrated, cross-pillar approach to asylum and migration problems in the EU, targeted at the situation in countries of origin of asylum seekers and migrants, and at establishing a Task Force to that end (see annex). The considerations favouring such an approach are based *inter alia* on a document from the Italian delegation (SN 4432/98) and a Presidency strategy paper on asylum and migration policy (9809/2/98 CK4 27 ASIM 170 Rev 2). The Council mandated Coreper - and the K.4 Committee - to examine the proposals for a country-oriented, integrated approach to asylum and migration in preparation for discussions in the next JHA and General Affairs Councils.
  
2. It is proposed that the General Affairs Council establish a Task Force for Asylum and Migration, with the following tasks:
  - a) to draw up a list and make an evaluation of existing initiatives, such as the Presidency's strategy paper on asylum and migration policy, the action plan on the influx of migrants from Iraq and the neighbouring region, existing (National) country reports, Heads of Mission (HOM) country reports, JHA pluri-annual work programmes, re-admission clauses, etc.
  
  - b) to establish a list of the most important countries of origin of asylum seekers and migrants.

- d) to indicate how cooperation with UNHCR can be strengthened with regard to both the analysis of the situation in the country of origin and possibilities for cooperation in the region.
  - e) to indicate the possibilities for cooperation with governmental and non-governmental organisations in granting humanitarian aid to the country in question and/or to neighbouring countries.
3. The Task Force will make proposals for a country-oriented approach to the Council. After approval by the General Affairs Council the usual EU bodies would be given the task of drawing up and implementing country-oriented action plans.

The Task Force will be set up for the time necessary to establish the action plans for the countries of origin chosen by the Council. As soon as the action plans are approved by the Council the mandate of the Task Force will cease unless the Council decides otherwise.

4. The political guidance for of the Task Force is given by the GAC in consultation with the JHA Council. Coreper will coordinate the work of the Task Force and define the modalities for setting it up.

The Task Force shall be composed of representatives of the Member States and the Commission. Consideration could be given as to whether, should the Member States so propose, a permanent Chairperson should be appointed by Coreper.

The Task Force shall meet in Brussels where the necessary meeting facilities would be made available. The Task Force shall define its own schedule of meetings in the light of the tasks to be carried out.

Note from the Dutch delegation

ASYLUM AND MIGRATION TASK FORCE

1. On 5 October the General Affairs Council discussed the issue of the "influx of migrants from neighbouring countries" in response to a note submitted by the Italian delegation (SN4432/98). This problem was also recently discussed in the Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) Council of 24 September 1998 and in the Informal JHA Council of 29 and 30 October 1998. Discussion was partly based on a Presidency strategy paper on migration and asylum (doc. 9809/1/98 CK4 27 ASIM 170 REV1). Finally, the informal Pörschach Summit of 24 and 25 October urged that greater attention be paid to the issue of asylum and immigration.
2. Earlier this year, on 26/27 January, the General Affairs Council adopted an Action Plan on the influx of migrants from Iraq and the neighbouring region (5573/98 ASIM13). It stressed the need to establish a joint, integrated approach that transcended individual pillars, and that focused on the situation in the countries from which asylum seekers and migrants originate.
3. It is clear from the talks on this topic and the initiatives that have been taken that the member states have a common interest, i.e. to curb the influx into the EU of persons abusing asylum procedures and of illegal migrants. The main problem as far as the southern member states are concerned is the influx of larger numbers of illegal migrants, whereas for the northern member states it is an influx of asylum seekers, many of whom ultimately prove to have no need of international protection. The unrestricted arrival of such categories of persons means that member states are finding it increasingly difficult to cope with the problems associated with reception, administrative processing, length of legal procedures, the disappearance of large numbers of individuals into the illegal circuit and return to the country of origin. Many of these migrants and asylum seekers are moreover the victims of traffickers in persons who profit from their situation. There is a danger that this state of affairs will undermine the position of people who do have a legitimate right to reception and protection under international law.
4. The problems currently faced by the member states need to be tackled jointly, not only because of their nature, but also in the interests of European solidarity. In the long term this will mean taking measures to regulate the influx of migrants and asylum seekers. As an initial step, the Netherlands proposes that countries develop a country policy.
5. By analogy with the EU Action Plan on the influx of migrants from Iraq and the neighbouring region, an integrated, country-specific approach of this kind would need to cover the following points:

partners by the Task Force in the regulation of migration, including transit migration, the curbing of illegal migration rackets and the regulation of readmission.

It is suggested that in the first instance this initiative be confined to the drafting of a list of five countries of origin.

8. The General Affairs Council will draw up the ultimate country reports on the basis of contributions from the various pillars. The reports will list the measures to be taken.
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