

5809/99

LIMITE

MIGR 6

NOTE

from : Presidency

to : Migration Working Party (Admission)

Subject: Information campaigns in countries of origin and transit

Delegations will find below a submission by the German Presidency in preparation for the discussion on information campaigns in countries of origin and transit to be held at the meeting on 3 March 1999.

I. Introduction

1. In 7384/98 ASIM 90 of 1 April 1998 Denmark put forward proposals as to how illegal immigration could be stemmed by means of information campaigns. The intention is to prevent people from countries of origin or transit shown by experience to have little or no chance of obtaining a residence permit for a Member State of the EU from emigrating from their countries of origin in the erroneous belief that it is possible to obtain a residence permit lawfully.

DK therefore proposed explaining the consequences of refusal and the risk of expulsion. Suitable information could also prevent facilitators from deceiving potential migrants about the possibility of obtaining residence permits in the EU. Part of the campaign should also consist in providing information about the possibilities for obtaining residence permits *lawfully*.

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In order to ensure that the information was as widespread as possible, DK suggested making use of as many different media as possible.

2. The Austrian Presidency took the Danish initiative one step further and suggested in 10276/98 ASIM 182, as a first stage, that persons seeking to gain *lawful* entry into the Member States be informed, by means of Member States' *information sheets*, about the legal conditions for entry into the Member States. The information sheets should then be presented by the initiator (DK), the Troika and the Commission in a third country yet to be chosen, and subsequently made available to Member States' embassies in the countries of origin and transit. Only as a further step should the consequences of *illegal* immigration and the dangers of trafficking in human beings subsequently be explained.

The proposal to carry out information campaigns has been well received in the Migration Working Party's discussions hitherto of the documents submitted by the A and DK delegations. Some delegations, however, voiced the fear that such campaigns might kindle a desire to migrate to the Member States.

The Working Party finally agreed, on the basis of a further note from the previous Austrian Presidency (13454/98 ASIM 248/MIGR 27 of 27 November 1998), to proceed in the following stages:

1. deciding on the countries in which an information campaign is to be carried out;
 2. determining the target groups;
 3. deciding exactly what information is to be given;
 4. deciding on the arrangements to be adopted;
 5. expert assessment of points 1 - 4 by an independent body;
 6. implementation of the information campaign on the basis of the assessment;
 7. evaluation of experience and review of the objectives set for the information campaign.
3. The "Action plan on how best to implement the provisions of the Treaty of Amsterdam on an area of freedom, security and justice" adopted by the Vienna European Council on 11 and 12 December 1998 stipulates that within two years measures should be taken to combat illegal immigration, and in doing so, also refers expressly to carrying out information campaigns in countries of origin and transit (see point 36(c)(iii)).

4. The High-Level Working Group on Asylum and Migration set up recently has as its terms of reference to work out action plans in accordance with a cross-pillar approach for a series of countries (Afghanistan/Pakistan, Albania and the neighbouring region, Morocco, Somalia, Sri Lanka) by the European Council meeting in Tampere on 15 and 16 October 1999. These action plans may also include information campaigns (see point 1(c)(ix) of the terms of reference of the High-Level Group, 5264/99 JAI 1).

II. Procedure

The Presidency intends to discuss points 1 to 5 as a first step. Discussions in the Migration Working Party should be aimed at reaching agreement concerning possible options regarding these points. The feasibility of such options could then be evaluated by external experts.

The following considerations might be addressed in the discussions:

1. **Deciding on the countries in which an information campaign is to be carried out**

- 1.1 The choice of target countries very much depends on what type of campaign is considered and what target groups are to be reached. Thus, for the mere presentation and dissemination of information sheets a broader range of countries would probably be considered than for more broadly organised information campaigns involving a whole series of different media.

Before entering into a discussion of the countries to be considered it might therefore be useful to reach agreement on whether forthcoming discussions should be based on the - broader - Danish approach in 7384/98 ASIM 90 or on the - more narrow - approach of the previous Austrian Presidency in 10276/98 ASIM 182, in which it is proposed that, as an initial step, information sheets be presented and distributed in the target countries.

- 1.2 Up to now the following have been mentioned, inter alia, as potential target countries for an information campaign:

Iraq and neighbouring areas (DK)	Morocco (E)
Turkey (DK)	Algeria (E)
Russia (DK)	Tunisia (E)
India (DK)	Nigeria (E)
Bangladesh (DK)	Mali (E)
Pakistan (DK, S)	Senegal (E)
Sri Lanka (S)	

The following countries were also proposed specifically for the presentation of an information sheet:

Romania (A, D, FIN, UK; somewhat opposed: F),

Albania (D, EL; opposed: A) and

Ukraine (A, D, FIN, UK).

Several delegations had objections to carrying out the presentation in the current applicant countries (so-called 'pre-ins').

Some delegations also stated that the presentation should not be made in any of the applicant countries.

1.2.1 The discussion should not be confined to choosing a single country. It should rather aim at identifying a selection of countries to be considered for an information campaign. Only then should a decision on the country or countries in which an initial presentation of the information campaign should be made. Conducting a pilot project might also be conceivable.

1.2.2 Countries to be considered for an information campaign would be:

- the main countries of origin of persons who emigrate on predominantly economic grounds (e.g. asylum seekers who in reality are not being persecuted politically, or illegal immigrants);
- those referred to by several Member States as causing major problems (reference could be made in this connection to the list of major problem countries mentioned by the Member States, drawn up in preparation for the terms of reference of the High-Level Working Group on Asylum and Migration, see Room Document No 1 for the High-Level Group Meeting on 11 January 1999);
- those in which the political and practical conditions for carrying out an information campaign obtain, and
- those in which there is also the prospect that an information campaign will be successful.

1.2.3 Discussion should particularly focus on whether consideration should also be given to countries:

- which are among those for which the High-Level Group on Asylum and Migration recently set up is to prepare action plans in accordance with a cross-pillar approach, i.e. Afghanistan/Pakistan, Albania and the neighbouring area, Morocco, Somalia and Sri Lanka;
- which are transit countries for immigrants (although it should be borne in mind that in most cases it might be too late to target people who are already in a *transit* country);

- in which many people have to fear political persecution or in which large sections of the population are exposed to threats to their existence (an argument against would be that information campaigns in such countries would certainly be heavily called into question by non-governmental organisations, which, to say the least, would also undermine the credibility of any campaigns).

2. Determining the target groups

2.1 The target group for any information campaign should in any event include persons harbouring the intention of leaving their native countries essentially for economic reasons in order to find a better future in the EU countries. These could include:

- persons who claim to be politically persecuted, but in actual fact are not being persecuted on political grounds;
- persons intending to enter a Member State of the European Union illegally or by evading existing entry requirements and to stay there for some length of time.

2.2 It must be decided whether the following groups of people should also be included in the information campaign:

- those intending, on the basis of existing quota arrangements in individual EU Member States (e.g. Austria and Italy) to enter the country in question and stay there for some length of time;
- those wanting to make use of the possibilities for taking up employment for a limited period;
- those wishing to avail themselves of an entitlement to family reunification;
- those wanting to enter one of the Member States of the European Union as self-employed persons or service providers.

3. Deciding exactly what information is to be given

3.1 The aim of the campaigns should in any event be to provide those for whom they are intended with factual information on the situation, as an information campaign laying emphasis on deterrence and the depiction of excessively crude scenarios is unlikely to be credible. A balance must be struck here between information and warnings.

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LIMITE

MIGR 36

NOTE

from :	Presidency
to :	Migration Working Party
Subject :	Information campaigns in countries of origin and transit

Delegations will find below a submission from the Presidency summarising the outcome of discussions to date within the Migration Working Party (Admission) on information campaigns in countries of origin and transit.

I. Initial situation

1. Discussion of the subject of information campaigns in countries of origin and transit in the Migration Working Party (Admissions) arises from an **initiative by Denmark** (see 7384/98 ASIM 90 dated 1 April 1998), which was discussed under the UK and German Presidencies in particular in the light of the document submitted by Denmark and 10276/98 ASIM 182, submitted by Austria. A consensus was eventually reached under the Austrian Presidency on 3 December 1998 to proceed in the following seven stages:

- (1) Establishment of information campaigns by the destination countries;
- (2) Determination of the target groups;
- (3) Exact description of the information;
- (4) Definition of the arrangements;
- (5) Expert assessment of points 1 – 4 by an independent body.

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- (6) Implementation of the information campaign on the basis of the assessment;
- (7) Evaluation of experience and review of the objectives set for the information campaign.

2. The **"Action plan on how best to implement the provisions of the Treaty of Amsterdam on building up an area of freedom, security and justice"** adopted by the Vienna European Council on 11 and 12 December 1998 refers expressly, in connection with measures to combat illegal immigration, to carrying out information campaigns in countries of information and transit (see point 36(c)(iii)).
3. On the basis of these premises, the German Presidency submitted 5809/99 MIGR 6 of 4 February 1999, which formed the basis for discussion under the German Presidency. This document was discussed in depth at the meeting of the Migration Working Party (Admission) on 3 March 1999.

I. IOM contribution

At the invitation of the chairman of the Working Party, a representative of the IOM briefed the members of the Working Party on 15 April 1999 concerning objectives, content and features of the information campaigns conducted hitherto by the IOM (in Romania, Albania, the Philippines and the Ukraine among other countries), the current or imminent campaigns in Morocco, the Czech Republic, Thailand and Costa Rica, and planned campaigns (including campaigns in Hungary, Bulgaria, Vietnam, Pakistan and the Latin American countries, as well as in southern Africa). The campaigns carried out had lasted from 3 months to 4 years.

The IOM representative stated that information campaigns were of great value in dispelling misconceptions about conditions in the Member States based on misleading or inaccurate information (e.g. from facilitators). They could not, however, constitute a miracle cure for illegal migration as they always needed to be accompanied by measures in other fields (such as development aid and punitive measures).

IOM endeavoured to tailor the campaigns to conditions in the target country and to its media culture, so the campaigns conducted in different countries may vary greatly.

The target groups had to be given a realistic basis for taking decisions. IOM accordingly followed a balanced approach which warned against the consequences of illegal migration but also included information on legal migration opportunities.

IOM tried to measure the success of completed information campaigns using the most objective criteria possible. It is regarded as positive when soundings show that a majority still remember the messages of the campaign even some time after it has ended, and when a significantly smaller proportion of interviewees say that they want to migrate than before the campaign. A fall in the number of asylum applicants or in the number of illegal immigrants apprehended is also taken as a positive indicator.

II. Principle results of consultations

1. Countries targeted for an information campaign

(a) Target countries for the High Level Working Group on Asylum and Migration

To prepare the ground for the High Level Working Group on Asylum and Migration, the Working Party initially considered information campaigns only for those countries of origin with which the High Level Group was also concerned. Its terms of reference (see 5264/99) provide for the establishment of cross-pillar action plans to limit migration from five regions of origin (Albania and neighbouring region, Sri Lanka, Morocco, Somalia and Afghanistan and neighbouring region).

This being so, the Working Party suggested that the High Level Group carry out information campaigns in Albania, Sri Lanka and Morocco (7001/99 JAI 22 dated 24 March 1999). Concerning Pakistan, it pointed to the possibility of conducting an information campaign specifically aimed at Afghan refugees living there.

Somalia and Afghanistan, however, are in the opinion of the Working Party not suitable for information campaigns, because individuals from those countries often have refugee status. Furthermore, the holding of information campaigns in those countries is unlikely to be successful because of the prevailing political and physical conditions. As a result of the Kosovo crisis, extending the information campaigns to the regions bordering Albania did not appear opportune either.

The High Level Working Group on Asylum and Migration largely adopted the proposal of the Working Party on Migration. The "measures" section of the draft action plans for Sri Lanka, Morocco and Afghanistan and neighbouring region refers to the holding of information campaigns in those countries or regions. On the other hand no decision has yet been taken on the holding of an information campaign in Albania because the High Level Group has postponed discussion of Albania till further notice in view of the present Kosovo crisis.

By incorporating information campaigns into the action plans of the High Level Group and their implementation, experience may be gathered which will allow the EU to implement successful information campaigns later in other countries (pilot project concept). It is not however yet clear how far the Working Party on Migration will be involved in the implementation of the action plans.

(b) Other target countries

At a second stage, outside the framework of the High Level Group, the Working Party can discuss the question of whether information campaigns will be carried out in other countries and possibly for other target groups, e.g. potential economic migrants.

- An information campaign basically targets those countries
 - which are the principle countries of origin of persons who leave their home country for preponderantly economic reasons;
 - which are designated by a number of Member States as the main problem countries;

- in which the political and also physical conditions for carrying out an information campaign are present (e.g. stability of conditions) and
 - in which there is also the prospect that an information campaign will be successful.
- On the other hand, countries in which many people have reason to fear political persecution or in which large population groups are exposed to life-threatening risks, are not considered for information campaigns.

2. Target groups

The target groups of the information campaigns should be defined in accordance with sociological criteria (age, family status, region of origin, membership of an ethnic and social group) and should above all include those population groups in the target countries which are most likely to leave their homelands for economic reasons to enter, either illegally or in circumvention of existing immigration rules, a Member State of the EU and settle there for a longer term. In designating target groups statistical data on migration flows should therefore also be duly taken into account.

3. Description of the information

The aim of the campaign should be to provide factual and credible information to the recipients. It must at the same time be made clear that the opportunities for legal migration to the Member States and for legal employment are only very limited.

- (a) Potential illegal migrants must at all events be provided with information on the following aspects of *illegal* migration:
- exploitation by facilitators;
 - the consequences of illegal working, especially exploitation by unscrupulous employers;

- that entitlement to asylum or refugee status is dependent on strict conditions (political persecution) and that refusal of an application may lead to immediate expulsion.
- (b) It needs to be clarified whether additional, more specific details on the various *legal* migration possibilities are to be provided, e.g.:
- Basic information on the possibilities in many Member States of entry for the purpose of taking up temporary employment and entry under existing quotas (it should however be made clear that quotas are understood as a strict filter for limiting entry);
 - Basic information on admission of service providers, the self-employed and family members.

For the precise conditions of individual admission arrangements however, people should be referred to information from the foreign representations of the Member States in question.

4. Arrangements

- (a) Many media may be used for a complete campaign:

Television, radio, video-clips, posters, information leaflets, brochures, provision of information in foreign representations, involvement of opinion-leaders in the country of origin, personal contacts, organisation of talks, advice centres, personal contacts through aid organisations on the spot.

The choice of the most suitable medium depends on the media culture of the target country. Factors such as the limited spread of electronic media in certain countries of origin and the high rate of illiteracy in many countries must accordingly always be taken into account. In some countries in which the IOM has already carried out information campaigns, it has been shown that personal experiences recounted by migrants on radio find a particularly strong echo.

In practice the decision as to which medium is most appropriate in each country depends crucially on the outcome of the abovementioned studies by the institutions preparing the campaign.

- (b) In all cases, consideration should be given even at the preparatory stage of an information campaign to the establishment and maintenance of good relations with the authorities of the target countries, so that their support is given at the implementation stage.

5. Considerations concerning expert assessment of points 1 – 4 by an independent body

The institution entrusted with carrying out the information campaign should have sufficient experience with information campaigns in the countries of origin of migrants, and good knowledge of conditions in the target country selected. As IOM has already carried out information campaigns in many countries of origin, its experience must in any case be drawn on.

The study of conditions in the target country and the work of producing a profile of the groups most frequently migrating from that country are for IOM a regular part of the preparatory phase of an information campaign. In view of this, the involvement of an additional independent body for assessment of points 1 to 4 would be superfluous if IOM is employed. The Member States would need to establish overall clarity with regard to points 1 to 3 (target countries, target groups, information to be given) and with regard to the extent of available finance.

Entrusting the preparation and implementation of information campaigns to IOM nonetheless depends on whether the provisions governing the award of contracts, which must be complied with in making use of the available finance, allow it.