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**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 4 February 2000

5908/00

LIMITE

CIREFI 7

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

of : CIREFI

dated : 3 February 2000

Europol representatives also attended the meeting.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda set out in Telex No 326 of 24 January 2000 was adopted, with the addition of the item mentioned under "Other business" below.

**2. Portuguese Presidency's programme
5160/00 JAI 1**

Delegations took note of the Presidency's programme for CIREFI, as outlined in the above-mentioned document.

In connection with the point regarding the collection and analysis of information on the economic exploitation of migrants, the Belgian delegation suggested focusing also on information regarding the so-called pseudo-legal migration, i.e. abuse of visa or legal migration procedures for the purpose of illegal migration.

The Presidency concurred that this matter deserved utmost consideration, as had emerged in the course of CIREFI's exchange of information on illegal migration and facilitating networks.

3. **Prevention and combating of illegal immigration networks and the economic exploitation of migrants**

– **Collection of information**
5579/00 CIREFI 1

On the Presidency's suggestion, it was agreed to deal with this item at the meeting of the Mixed Committee (Iceland and Norway) following this meeting.

In this connection, the Belgian delegation observed that the IGC group on trafficking was working on a related project, and the work done in that context could be used to facilitate the tasks of delegations.

4. **Statistical data on legal immigration**
5580/00 CIREFI 2

The Spanish delegation had doubts on the timing of this initiative (which it otherwise welcomed), considering Eurostat's delay in implementing the Commission's action plan.

The Commission representative described Eurostat's existing programme regarding the establishment of statistical reports on legal migration in the Member States and the EFTA countries, and undertook to bring along copies of the upcoming 1998 report at the next meeting. Such reports are based on data received from the Member States' national statistical offices. If Eurostat were usefully to provide CIREFI with data on legal migration, different channels would have to be found for Member States to transmit such data to Eurostat more quickly. This question deserved careful consideration, which could take place in the context of the discussion of Eurostat's evaluation report, i.e. at the end of the second phase of the implementation of the Commission's action plan.

On the Presidency's suggestion, it was agreed to deal with this item in the context of the Mixed Committee (Iceland and Norway).

5. Follow-up to the European Council meeting in Helsinki
– New candidate countries

The Presidency referred to the implications for CIREFI of the European Council's conclusions as regards the status of Malta and Turkey as accession candidate countries, and considered that they should be invited to the joint meeting with the associated countries scheduled for April 2000.

The Finnish delegation emphasized that, following the Helsinki European Council, CIREFI should simply take note of the right of these countries to be invited to this joint meeting. At the meeting in question, Malta and Turkey should also be informed that they are entitled to join in the EU early-warning system on illegal migration, as well as in CIREFI's statistical information exchange system. Subsequently, they should receive all relevant materials enabling them concretely to join such systems.

The French and United Kingdom delegations and the Commission representative suggested that advice on this question should be sought from the Strategic Committee on Immigration, Frontiers and Asylum, for the following reasons: the fact that accession negotiations had not begun (particularly in the case of Turkey, new candidate country) (F); the confidential nature of some of the information exchanged on illegal migration (Cion); the need to ensure a consistent approach in the various Council bodies (UK).

It was agreed that the Strategic Committee would be invited to consider this matter at its meeting on 8 March 2000. CIREFI could then resume its consideration of this item at its next meeting on 22 March 2000.

6. Transatlantic co-operation
– Illegal Chinese immigration (Telex No 295 of 20 January 2000)

The Presidency outlined the procedure that it intended to follow on this project: the Member States' contributions to the questionnaire contained in the above-mentioned telex would be translated; the General Secretariat would draw up a draft summary report, based on the information received; delegations would have the chance to verify the accuracy of the draft report; an informal expert meeting would then carry out an analysis of the information available and would draw up recommendations for action.

Due to the need to finalize the expert meeting's work in time for the Transatlantic Dialogue meeting scheduled for 26 May 2000, delegations were urged to comply with the deadline of 21 February 2000 to submit their contributions.

Upon request by the Commission representative, it was agreed that Commission representatives would attend the informal expert meeting, alongside representatives of B, D, F, P, UK, the United States and Canada.

The Italian delegation mentioned that a project on illegal immigration from China would be discussed the following week in the framework of the G8. Italy had drawn up a report for this meeting. Measures would be discussed to combat the trafficking of Chinese migrants. All such materials would be useful for the purpose of this Transatlantic Dialogue project.

The German delegation added that, quite apart from the work carried out in the G8, all information produced on this topic in other fora, such as Europol and Interpol, could be fed into the report to be produced under this project.

7. Updating of information on liaison officers (Immigration Liaison Officers/Airline Liaison Officers)

The Presidency suggested updating the information previously collected by the General Secretariat on this subject. In this connection, it stressed that the Action Plans established by the High Level Group on Asylum and Migration recognized the important role of liaison officers for the purpose of preventing illegal migration.

The Finnish delegation supported this initiative, in particular against the background of the difficulties experienced with the project launched in 1999 at the initiative of the German delegation to set up document advisors' teams on behalf of the EU as a whole (the pilot project had met with resistance from the third country concerned, Turkey). In view of such difficulties, it might be wise to try an alternative strategy, possibly involving closer cooperation among Member States liaison officers. For this purpose, the Presidency's initiative would be particularly useful. The relevant project would then have to be coordinated with the Frontiers Working Party, which was considering similar questions.

The Presidency stressed that for the time being, CIREFI was merely making a survey of the existing resources, and this was without prejudice to the pilot project initiated by Germany. It concurred that the Frontiers Working Party should have a major role in future work aiming to make the best use of existing resources and concerning relations with third countries.

In response to the German delegation, which queried the target of the survey and specifically raised the question as to whether it encompassed the German “document advisors” (i.e. officials sent on mission abroad for periods as short as two weeks), the Presidency clarified that the survey aimed to focus on officials posted abroad on a long-term basis, and not those dispatched on temporary assignment.

On the Presidency’s suggestion, it was agreed to deal with this item at the meeting of the Mixed Committee (Iceland and Norway) following this meeting.

8. Other business

- *Europol General Situation Report 1998 concerning legal immigration*

Delegations took note of the above-mentioned report, which was provided for official use only.
