

European Migration Network (EMN)

2007/0167(CNS) - 10/08/2007 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to formalise the establishment of a “**European Migration Network**”.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

BACKGROUND: in 2003 the Commission set up a three-year preparatory action establishing a European Migration Network (EMN), with a view to providing both the Community and the Member States with objective, reliable and up-to-date migration data. It was set up as a new budget line (18 03 05). The EMN pilot project is fully compatible with the objectives set by the 2004 Hague Programme, which calls for the development of a common policy in the field of asylum, migration, visas and borders.

A migration network is deemed essential for a number of reasons. Firstly, access to information on international migration is not always easy to obtain as it is not centrally available. Secondly, there is insufficient comparable, reliable and up-to-date information and analysis of legal and policy developments concerning asylum and migration and thirdly, there is an acute lack of accurate, up-to-date and comparable statistical data on migration and asylum.

CONTENT: the purpose of this proposal, therefore, is to formalise the EMN through the adoption of an appropriate legal instrument (a Council Decision based on Article 66 of the EU Treaty). Many of the existing structure will be maintained – although some important modifications are being introduced in a bid to improve the EMN’s working efficiency. The proposal lists the EMN’s main objective, tasks, structure, information exchange system, financing arrangements and relations with other organisation.

In brief, the main elements of the formalised EMN, are as follows:

Objective: The EMN’s objectives will be to meet the information needs of the Community institutions, the Member States and the general public on migration and asylum. It will do so by providing up-to-date, objective and reliable and comparable information on migration and asylum, with a view to supporting policy and decision-making in the European Union.

Activities: To obtain this objective the EMN will carry out a number of activities including, *inter alia*: collecting and exchange existing data and information from a range of sources; undertaking an analysis of such data; creating and maintain an internet-based information exchange system; and co-operating with other relevant European and international bodies.

Structure: The network itself will be composed of National Contact Points, designated by the Member States and the European Commission. The National Contact Points will need to fulfil a certain number of requirements such as offering expertise in the area of asylum and migration and having necessary IT skills. They will also need to have an ability to work and write in a second official language of the EU institutions. For its part, the Commission will be responsible for overall co-ordination of the EMN; adopting its annual programme and ensuring that the work of the EMN reflects the political priorities of the Community. The Commission will appoint a **service provider to offer assistance in setting up the IT system and internet site** as well as the preparation of synthesis reports and by the complexity of ensuring appropriate cooperation between the 26 National Contact Points.

The Commission's responsibilities will involve:

- general coordination of the EMN;

- adoption of the EMN's annual programme of activities;
- one representative from the Commission will sit in the Steering Board and will chair it. He or she will be assisted by two scientific experts appointed by the Commission;
- ensuring that the work of the EMN reflects the political priorities of the Community in the area of migration and asylum;
- appointment of a service provider that will assist the Commission with the day-to-day management of the EMN, including the information exchange system of the EMN. The Commission will closely monitor the activities of this service provider, establishing clear responsibilities and working practices; involving, if necessary, working groups of National Contact Points to work closely with the service provider on particular activities. The Commission will also ensure that the National Contact Points are capable of carrying out the tasks entrusted to them. This includes checking if the National Contact Points proposed by the Member States fulfil all the necessary requirements and proposing the necessary actions to the Steering Board when it identifies persistent shortcomings in the work of a National Contact Point, which may have negative consequences in the work of the EMN;
- lastly, the Commission will award operating grants, co-financing the annual work programmes of the National Contact Points which fulfil all the necessary requirements.

Information exchange systems and studies: the EMN will disseminate information in the form of studies and reports through a dedicated web-site. The web-site will be open to the public and the information, in principle accessible to all. Exceptions to the general rule are possible in cases where Member States communicate sensitive/confidential information.

Financing: the budgetary resources needed for funding the EMN will be entered in the annual appropriations of the general budget of the EU. Such resources will co-finance (up to 80%) of the eligible costs of the National Contact Points. It will also cover the costs of the service provider, plus other expenses including evaluation and special activities. For the 2008-2013 period, appropriations totalling **EUR 56.7 million** are foreseen.

Territorial measures: Title IV of the EC Treaty is not applicable to the United Kingdom and to Ireland, unless these Member States decide otherwise in accordance with the procedure laid down in the Protocol on the position of the United Kingdom and Ireland annexed to the Treaties. Title IV is likewise not applicable to Denmark, by virtue of the Protocol on the position of Denmark annexed to the Treaties.