

# European network of immigration liaison officers. Recast

2018/0153(COD) - 25/07/2019 - Final act

**PURPOSE:** to strengthen cooperation and coordination between immigration liaison officers deployed in third countries by Member States or the EU to manage immigration issues.

**LEGISLATIVE ACT:** Regulation (EU) 2019/1240 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the creation of a European network of immigration liaison officers.

**CONTENT:** the sharp increase of mixed migratory flows in 2015 and 2016 has put migration, asylum and border management systems under pressure. This has posed a challenge for the Union and Member States, showing the need to strengthen Union policy in the field of migration with a view to achieving a coordinated and effective European response.

## *Scope of the new rules*

This recast of Council Regulation (EC) No 377/2004 lays down rules to strengthen cooperation and coordination between immigration liaison officers deployed in third countries by Member States, the Commission and EU agencies through the creation of a European network of immigration liaison officers in order to respond more effectively to the Union's priorities of:

- to prevent and combat illegal immigration and related cross-border crime, such as the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings, and to facilitate return, readmission and reintegration activities in a dignified and effective manner,
- contribute to the integrated management of the Union's external borders, as well as to support the management of legal immigration, including international protection, resettlement and pre-departure integration measures taken by Member States and the Union.

Such coordination should fully respect the existing chain of command and reporting lines between immigration liaison officers and their respective deploying authorities as well as among immigration liaison officers themselves.

## *Tasks of immigration liaison officers (ILO)*

Liaison officers shall collect information to help third countries prevent illegal migration flows and support the management of the EU's external borders. This information shall include, among other things, information on:

- the routes taken by migratory flows;
- the existence of criminal organisations involved in the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings along migration routes;
- the methods used for counterfeiting or falsification of identity documents;
- means to facilitate return, readmission and reintegration;

- measures guaranteeing effective access to protection put in place by the third country, including for the benefit of vulnerable persons;
- existing and possible future legal immigration strategies and channels between the Union and third countries.

Liaison officers will also be able to provide assistance in this regard:

- to establish the identity and nationality of third-country nationals and to facilitate their return, as well as to assist in their reintegration;
- confirm the identity of persons in need of international protection to facilitate their resettlement in the Union, in particular by providing them, as far as possible, with adequate pre-departure information and support;
- to confirm the identity of legal immigrants and to facilitate the implementation of national and Union measures concerning their admission;
- to share information obtained in the performance of their duties within networks of liaison officers and with the competent authorities of the Member States, including law enforcement authorities, in order to prevent and detect illegal immigration and to combat the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings.

Joint deployment by at least two Member States should be supported by Union funds encouraging engagement and providing added value to all Member States.

### ***Steering Board***

The Regulation establishes a Steering Board at EU level to strengthen the management of the network and the coordination of immigration liaison officers, while maintaining the competence of the deploying authorities, in order to ensure efficiency and clear communication channels.

The Steering Board shall be composed of one representative from each Member State, two representatives of the Commission, one representative of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, one representative of Europol and one representative of the European Asylum Support Office (EASO).

Funds shall be made available to support the activities of immigration liaison officers, allocated in agreement with the Steering Board.

Lastly, a secure web-based information exchange platform shall be set up by the Commission in agreement with the Steering Board.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 14.8.2019.