Police cooperation: common use of liaison officers posted abroad by member States. Initiative Denmark

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The Council takes note of the report from the presidency on the creation of an ILO-network. It shows that a network of liaison officers is in place at this point in most of the countries surveyed in the report. The Council, however, also noted that there is a general need to further strengthen this network. The Presidency report concludes that Member States' liaison officers carry out their tasks with skill and dedication. However, it is also noted that more can be done to further improve the benefits that member States already derive from then deployment of liaison officers. Against this background there is a need to implement progressive initiatives leading to the improvement of the ILO network. On the basis of the survey the Council urges that the following steps be taken : - implementation of the Belgian-led Western Balkan ILO network project, which will present valuable experience to further the improvement of the ILO network (start December 2002-final report end December 2003); - Member States should immediately direct their liaison officers to share operational information to a wider extent, having due regard for national legislation; - Member States should immediately encourage an improvement of the co-operation between their liaison officers and the consular services from other Member States; - Seminars and workshops with participation of ILOs should be held with a view to establish best practices, a first meeting should be held as soon as possible and not later than within four months; - Building on the experiences from the ILO workshops and seminars as well on the experiences gained in the framework of the implementation of the Belgian-led Western Balkan ILO project and the UK-led projects in the Western Balkans, bearing in mind the work carried out on liaison officers within Title VI of the TEU, more clarity should be created regarding the different roles of liaison officers, immigration liaison officers, airport liaison officers, document advisors, technical advisors and consular services who all deal with immigration related issues. Taking these experiences into account as well as best practices established through seminars and workshops, consideration should be given to drawing a common manual for ILOs. This should be completed before the end 2003. The Council stresses the need for the immigration liaison officers to work as an integrated network and invites the Member States to consider the deployment of more immigration liaison officers. The benefits resulting from the posting of more liaison officers should exceed the expenses involved in the posting. The deployment of immigration liaison officers is clearly cost effective. Lastly, the Council will review the improvements in the ILO network before the end of 2003 taking into consideration the implementation of the recommendations set out in these conclusions.