Asylum and migration: plans for origin and transit countries (Afghanistan, Albania, Iraq, Morocco, Somalia, Sri Lanka)

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PURPOSE : on the initiative of the Netherlands delegation, to prepare action plans for the most important countries of origin and transit of asylum-seekers and migrants. CONTENT : following an initiative by the Netherlands, the Council set up a High Level Working Group on Asylum and Migration on the 7-8 December 1998, with the view to establishing a common, integrated, cross-pillar approach targeted at the situation in the most important countries of origin of asylum-seekers and migrants. The Council agreed, in particular, that, after consultations of the Members of the High Level Working Group, COREPER would suggest the terms of reference and organisation of this group and submit them for approval to the Council in January 1999 at the latest. It further agreed that the High Level Working Group would submit a proposal for a list of countries of origin and transit of asylum-seekers and migrants for which action plans for the implementation of an integrated cross-pillar approach will be prepared. Following its last two meetings on 17.12.1998 and 11.01.1999, the High Level Working Group reached an agreement on the draft terms and a procedure on the determination of the countries from which most of the asylum-seekers and migrants who enter the EU originate from, as well as on the criteria for selecting the countries for which an action plan should be prepared (these criteria include statistics on asylum and migrants applications, geographical balance of the country concerned, likelihood of successful implementation of an action plan, consensus among the Member States). The following countries have been selected for preparation of an action plan: - Afghanistan/Pakistan; - Albania and the neighbouring region; - Morocco; - Somalia; - Sri Lanka. In addition, an assessment of the results yielded so far by the Action Plan on the influx of migrants from Iraq and the neighbouring region will take place.