Visas: detection of false or falsified documents in the diplomatic representations abroad or offices

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OBJECTIVE: to combat counterfeit travel documents of third-country nationals by providing for a uniform level of equipment and detection techniques in the visa departments of diplomatic representations and in the offices of authorities in the Member States dealing with the issue or extension of visas.
CONTENT: in order to achieve more efficient prevention of document abuse by third-country nationals, this draft joint action, based on Article K.3 of the Treaty on European Union, proposes a series of preventive measures aimed at establishing uniform levels of expertise and equipment for detecting and identifying forged documents. Member States are therefore requested to step up their measures for detecting forged documents, mainly by ensuring that the staff responsible for issuing the documents in question is able to detect forged documents using suitable techniques and applying the uniform level of detection described in the joint common action. This uniform system involves applying different measures, depending on the level of risk inherent in the documents identified. Provision is made for three levels of risk (low, intermediate or high risk) and the draft joint action describes the level of training required for staff and the ?ad hoc? material to be provided for detecting forged documents. Member States will need to decide whether to equip the authorities responsible in the light of these basic uniform provisions and on the basis of the amount of traffic in forged documents identified. The decisive factor on which the decision is based will not be the number of visas produced or the size of the office or diplomatic representation in question but the level of risk of abuse occurring during the visa procedure.