# External borders, visas, asylum and immigration: action programme 2002-2006 for administrative cooperation ARGO

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PURPOSE: To develop an action programme for administrative co-operation in the fields of external borders, visas, asylum and immigration (ARGO). CONTENT: An ambitious programme to establish the EU as an area of Freedom, Security and Justice (AFSJ) finds its origin in the Treaty of Amsterdam as well as in the conclusions of the Tampere European Council. A series of Community measures aiming to realise the above objective have been presented to the Council. This proposal for a Council Decision builds upon previous measures through the establishment of an action programme for administrative co-operation in the fields of external borders, visas, asylum and immigration (ARGO). The objective of ARGO is to reinforce the effectiveness of the relevant procedures vis-a-vis asylum, visas, immigration and the control of external borders. It also aims to assist national administrations in the implementation of Community legislation based on Articles 62 and 63 of the TEC. One new, important element is the principle which seeks to implement the relevant Community rules independent of who the national administrations responsible for undertaking those actions are. The ultimate target being that third country nationals will be entitled to equivalent treatment when dealing with the national administrations responsible for applying Community legislation, thereby avoiding any differences in national practices likely to prejudice the establishment of an area of freedom, security and justice. Specific Community actions proposed focus mainly on: - Developing and spreading use of best working practices to computer practices and electronic exchange of data. - Defining and strengthening a common training policy by taking maximum advantage of the projects financed under the Odysseus Programme. This should result in the setting up of a genuine "common core of training" service. - Developing a common working methodology and culture between the Member States to foster a better understanding of the administrative processes in each Member State. The programme will be implemented through a partnership between the Commission and the Member States. An Annual Work Programme will be the central instrument used for implementation purposes. The Annual Work Programme will: - Identify actions which will improve the working methods of the competent administrations of Member States. - Determine community actions with regard to particular sectors. - Make rational use of resources. - Co-ordinate and plan training initiatives. In terms of funding, the programme may benefit from the Community budget in accordance with allocations in the budget line. A financial commitment from the Member States in accordance with their own budgetary procedures is also foreseen. For actions either already defined or otherwise covered by the Annual Work Programme the Community would offer help with co-financing.