External borders: integrated management of borders of the Member States of the Union

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The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Hubert PIRKER (EPP-ED, A) on the Commission communication on integrated managment of the EU's borders. It approved the plan adopted by the Council on 13 June 2002 and in particular the decision to have the Common Manual on border protection revised and based on what the Member States have found to be best practice. However, with regard to operational coordination and cooperation, it pointed out that the International Airports Plan was inappropriate for the devising and testing of standard procedures, as the situation at airports was very specific and totally different from every other border situation. As regards training, the committee proposed that a European Staff College be established, so that Europe-wide standards could be guaranteed. As regards the technical equipment used for border protection, it called for measures to be taken to ensure the compatibility of the Member States' equipment. Future radar and satellite-based surveillance systems should be designed in such a way as to ensure smooth cooperation between Member States. The committee therefore wanted to see support for the development of new technologies which would facilitate border controls at European level. Furthermore, it called on the Council to draw up proposals for uniform procurement of mobile surveillance equipment, which might be used, as required, for temporarily sensitive sections of the EU·s external borders. The report also called on Europol to draw up an integrated risk analysis model for border control which should be constantly updated. Moreover, there should be cooperation between Schengen and Europol for the successful accomplishment of specific tasks, such as the fight against people smugglers. The committee regretted that, in its Plan, the Council had said very little about the idea of a European Corps of Border Guards. It endorsed the setting up of a jointly financed Corps, consisting of specialist units which would, at the request of the Member States, be temporarily seconded to assist national authorities at vulnerable sections of the EU·s external borders. The committee said that a new legal basis was required for the establishment of a European Corps of Border Guards and therefore called on the Convention to debate this issue so that the idea of a joint Corps could be implemented in the medium term.