

# Immigration: creation of a liaison officers network. Initiative Greece

2003/0817(CNS) - 03/06/2003 - Legislative proposal

**PURPOSE** : proposal from the Council for a Council Regulation on the creation of an immigration liaison officers network. **CONTENT** : the plan for the management of the external borders of the Member States envisages the setting up of networks of immigration liaison officers posted in third countries. This proposal seeks to formalise the existence and functioning of such a network - drawing on experiences gained in the operation of running projects, including the Belgian-led Western Balkans ILO network - through a legally binding instrument. The draft Regulation sets out the obligation to establish forms of cooperation among immigration liaison officers of the Member States, the objectives of such cooperation, the functions and appropriate qualifications of such liaison officers, as well as their responsibilities vis-à-vis the host country and the sending Member State. The main points of the proposal are as follows: - Immigration liaison officers may be posted to the national consular authorities of Member States in third countries, to the relevant authorities of other Member States and also to the competent authorities of third countries, for a reasonable time period to be determined by the posting Member State. They will collect information for use at either operational or strategic level, or both. Such information will particularly concern: - flows of illegal immigrants originating from or transiting through the host country; - routes followed by those flows of illegal immigrants in order to reach the territories of the Member States; - the "modus operandi" of illegal immigrants, including the means of transport used; - the activities of criminal organisations involved in the smuggling of immigrants; - new developments with regard to flows of illegal immigrants; - methods used for counterfeiting or falsifying identity documents and travel documents; - ways to assist the host countries in preventing illegal immigration flows; - ways to facilitate the repatriation of illegal immigrants to their country of origin; - information transmitted via the early warning system. Immigration liaison officers may also help to identify third country nationals and return them to their country of origin. The proposal sets out provisions for Member States to inform each other and the Council and the Commission of information relating to immigration liaison officers. The Commission will draw up a summary factual report to be submitted to the European Parliament and to the Council before the end of each year.