The future of the area of freedom, security and justice

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The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Jean-Louis BOURLANGES (ALDE, FR) on the future of the area of freedom, security and justice (AFSJ). MEPs recommended that the Council give priority to: enhancing the legitimacy of the AFSJ inter alia by applying the codecision procedure and the principle of transparency; promoting fundamental rights and freedoms through policies linked to the AFSJ, including systematic training in European law for judges, lawyers and police officers and strengthening the concept of Union citizenship; and enhancing credibility by including a timetable for each objective and reinforcing coordination between the Union and the Member States.

The committee also listed a number of specific objectives to be attained over the next 5 years, including:

- establishing a coherent immigration policy in order to develop legal routes to migration, meet the new demographic and economic challenges currently facing the EU, support the social, cultural and political integration of migrants and establish a framework for international cooperation with the countries of origin;

- creating an appropriate legislative framework for combating illegal immigration, by harmonising this concept among the Member States and setting up a common policy on preventing clandestine employment and combating trafficking in human beings;

- defining a repatriation policy ensuring common standards of protection for repatriated persons and obliging Member States to respect the dignity and physical integrity of persons expelled under repatriation operations;

- defining a uniform status and a common asylum procedure, while strengthening measures for the protection of refugees or persons requiring humanitarian aid;

- encouraging mutual recognition among judicial authorities and adopting harmonisation measures for determining the offences covered by the European Arrest Warrant and minimum guarantees in the event of detention.