

# Community statistics on migration and international protection

2005/0156(COD) - 14/09/2005 - Legislative proposal

**PURPOSE:** The development of common asylum and immigration statistics

**PROPOSED ACT:** Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council

**CONTENT:** Since the Treaty of Amsterdam came into force, the European Union has invested heavily in the development of a common asylum and immigration system based on harmonised procedures. A common asylum policy is deemed essential for the establishment of an EU based on freedom, security and justice.

The development of a common asylum and immigration policy relies heavily on statistical data. It has become apparent, however, in recent years that there is a growing need for improved, comprehensive and comparable European statistics relating to asylum and immigration/migration issues. Attempts to harmonise definitions through gentleman agreements with the Member States have repeatedly failed, indicating the need, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity for greater action at Community level. In 2003, the Council, with the support of the European Parliament, concluded that more effective mechanisms were needed for the collection and analysis of information on EU asylum and migration.

The objective of the proposed Regulation, therefore, is to establish a common framework for the collection and compilation of Community statistics on international migration and asylum. There is widespread recognition that the way in which data is currently collected varies considerably from one Member State to another. For example, there is still no harmonised term defining the core concept of ‘a migrant’, with each Member State applying varying criteria.

This Regulation attempts to reconcile the great differences that exist across Europe by obliging Member States to make the best use of available data and to produce statistics that resemble, as far as possible, harmonised definitions. At the same time, Member States are not being obliged to introduce completely new data sources nor are they being compelled to make changes in their national asylum and migration administrations. Member States will, however, be obliged to explain where the data is being sourced from and why, as well as offering a description of the anticipated effects the data will have on harmonised definitions. The information thus gleaned will help shed light on how the statistics can be interpreted.

The statistics collected under the proposed Regulation will, as far as possible, be in accordance with the United Nations Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration. Further, they will be broadly based on Eurostat’s existing annual migration data collection as well as the monthly data collections and asylum enforcement measures directed at illegal migrations. An additional migration-related topic to be covered will be the legal immigration of non-EU citizens.

To conclude, the Commission gives warning that failure to harmonise statistical data could have a serious and negative impact on future policy development in the field of asylum and migration and impede upon the Community’s ability to monitor current, as well as future, trends in the fight against illegal immigration.

The proposed Regulation has no budgetary implications.