Immigration and employment: integration of immigrants

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This Commission staff working document comprises the second annual report on migration and integration. This report follows on from the first annual report published in 2004. The annual report aim to provide an overview of migration trends in the EU, analysing the changes and describing actions taken regarding the admission and integration of immigrants at national and EU level. They serve as a tool to review the development of the common immigration policy. The second annual report should be seen in the light of the recently adopted Hague Programme, setting the agenda on Freedom, Security and Justice in the EU for the next 5 years.

The present report is an intermediate document. It covers developments that took place in 2004. A major part of this document is a summary report on integration policies and recent developments in the EU-25 which is attached as an annex.

Main issues dealt with in this report are as follows:

Migratory movements in EU-25 : on 1 January 2003, the number of third-country nationals residing in the EU-25 was 15.2 million, i.e. 3.35% of the total population. In 2005, the population of the EU-25 increased by 2 million mainly due to net migration of 1.7 million. Net migration in the EU-25 was 3.7 per 1000 habitants. Positive net migration was recorded in all Member States except Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, the Netherlands and Estonia. Family reunification is very important in many Member States, accounting for 75% of inflows in France and over 50% in Denmark and Sweden.

Trends in national integration policies : major changes in immigration and integration policies are occurring in several EU countries. New approaches to integration are needed which go beyond the integration of minorities and refugees. The mainstreaming of integration issues needs to be strengthened.

A certain number of Member States now require new immigrants to fulfil certain integration obligations. There is a new emphasis on obligatory integration courses, containing both language instruction and civic orientation. In the case of the Netherlands, it is planned that immigrants coming for reasons of family formation or reunification, as well as refugees, will in the future need to meet certain pre-departure standards. In some countries, there is an emphasis on possible sanctions in case of non-compliance with obligations arising from compulsory integration measures such as cuts in financial support or welfare aid.

Integration in the labour market remains a priority. A coherent and planned strategy to combat discrimination and promote integration in the labour market seems to be missing. On the other hand, more importance is being attached to the question of ethnic or migrant entrepreneurs whose number has been increasing constantly in most of the Member States. An increasing number of Member States attach growing importance to the participation of minority groups in the political decision-making process, although overall progress is slow.