

General programme "Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows": External Borders Fund 2007-2013

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Recognising the need for an adequate European response to the growing humanitarian crisis in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic coast as caused by the dramatic increase over recent months in the number of immigrants arriving in the Canary Islands, Lampedusa, Malta and the Greek Islands, the Council has adopted a series of conclusions aiming to reinforce the southern external border. This response must take into account the particularities of the Southern external maritime border, including cooperation with third countries and must be based on the principles of tangible European solidarity with equitable sharing of responsibilities between Member States and between Member States and countries of origin or transit.

Furthermore, the European actions in the Mediterranean and Atlantic coast should be seen as part of the wider European approach to manage migration and combat illegal migration to the European Union and therefore should be coherent with other policies and actions taken in this area like those along the EU's external borders of Eastern Europe and the Balkans.

The Council requests work to be taken forward on the development of the EU integrated management system for external borders/border management strategy, taking into account the particularities of each border, which will make for a long-term adaptable strategy to meet the objectives of the Community in the field, with a view to the adoption of the necessary strategic guidelines no later than December 2006.

It will equally seek early agreement on the General Programme – Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows 2007-13 in order to ensure the availability of funds for new actions in this area based on a spirit of solidarity.

The Commission is invited to:

- § examine urgently the needs and possibilities for reinforcing Frontex by way of additional personnel and increasing its budget allocation in order to allow its further development and increase its capacity to respond immediately to crisis situations, in particular through speedy coordination procedures with Member States participating in Frontex operations within the existing financial framework of the European Union;
- § follow up its examination of international instruments on the law of the sea, in conjunction with relevant aspects of refugee law, with a view to helping in the development of guidelines on the legal scope for action to be taken by the Community and its Member States to counter migration flows on the high seas without prejudice to the principles laid down in the international legal framework on the law of the sea and the protection of refugees;
- § assess the needs and examine means for ensuring appropriate reception and support conditions in cases where large numbers of third country nationals including minors are trying to illegally enter the territory of a Member State and coordinate adequate targeted support from the Community and other Member States, making use of relevant financial instruments, in particular the General Programme – Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows 2007-13, within the existing financial framework of the European Union;

§ examine the ways and means for improved identification and return of the irregular (undocumented) migrants through the establishment and more effective use of existing and agreed European databases.

The Council invites **Frontex** to take forward work on the feasibility study on the establishment of a European Surveillance System capable of initially covering the whole of the southern maritime border of the Community and the Mediterranean Sea (BORTEC) and to continue preparations to urgently activate Article 7 of the Council Regulation EC 2007/2004 in order to establish a centralised record of technical equipment belonging to Member States which could be put at the disposal of another Member State following a needs and risk analysis carried out by the Agency.

Member States are invited to actively contribute to the centralised record of technical equipment, in order to have an extensive central pool of assets and equipment available in particular for the maritime border for operational needs by summer 2007.

The Council intends, together with the Commission, to work in close cooperation with the third countries of origin and transit concerned in developing relevant operational activities. The cooperation with countries of origin and transit should be based on a mutual responsibility and commitment to manage migration flows. Therefore all third countries involved along the migration routes are called upon to take all the necessary actions to combat illegal migration.