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**Session 1– Supporting paper**

**STATISTICS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMON EU POLICIES ON  
MIGRATION AND ASYLUM**

Submitted by Eurostat\*

1. The European Union has as one of its objectives the establishment of an **area of freedom, justice and security**. This includes, along with police and justice cooperation, the development of common European policies in the areas of immigration and asylum. It is only an area of Community competence since the entry into force of the Amsterdam Treaty, on 1 May 1999. The Union's work in this area was first determined by the Tampere programme (1999-2004) and is now currently under The Hague programme. These programmes determine the main objectives to be attained, the delays for action, and the main guidelines to be followed by the Union's institutions.

2. The development of common immigration and asylum policies has entailed an increased need for EU-wide statistics in these areas. The Commission has often insisted on the importance of having accurate, timely and relevant statistics on the migration and asylum situation of the EU, in order, on the one hand, to evaluate the need for common legislation and policies and, on the

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\* Paper prepared by the Immigration and Asylum unit of Directorate General "Justice, Freedom and Security" of the European Commission.

other hand, to monitor the implementation of the common EU measures already in place. For instance, **EC Directives** on family reunification<sup>1</sup> and on the status of third country nationals<sup>2</sup> have been adopted. Once they are transposed into national law, these Directives will harmonise certain definitions and will make it possible to collect more comparable data on the migrant groups they cover. At the same time, the evaluation of the functioning of these Directives will require statistical information on the number of people benefiting from this legislation.

3. The increased importance of EU migration and asylum statistics is at the heart of the Action Plan for the collection and analysis of Community statistics in the field of migration<sup>3</sup>, which was adopted by the Commission in 2003. One of the strands of this Action Plan was the adoption of **statistical legislation**. This is why Eurostat and DG Justice, Freedom and Security (JLS) have worked together in recent years to elaborate draft legislation on Community statistics on migration and asylum<sup>4</sup>. The aim of this legislation is to establish a regular, timely collection of national statistics, according to harmonised definitions, in order that Community statistics might be processed, analysed and disseminated by the Commission in an equally regular and timely fashion, on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis.

4. In addition to improving counts of the numbers of migrants, there is a pressing need for better **demographic and socio-economic information** about migrants. For example, in the case of enforcement measures against illegal migration, it is important to develop the data collections so that they yield information on the age and sex of the persons concerned. These details, which are not currently available, are required to evaluate policies against human trafficking. Similarly, better socio-economic information is needed to research issued such as the integration of migrants and their participation in labour markets. In this context, it will be important to develop databases on the number of foreign-born population and second generation migrants, as data on foreign nationals alone does not always reflect properly the migration situation in a given country (for instance, where naturalisation is a current practice, like in the Netherlands, France or Sweden).

5. It is equally important to stress the relevance of EU-wide statistics for the purpose of **distribution of EU funding**. Although the budget for migration- and asylum-related actions has been rather limited until now, actions like the European Refugee Fund have already needed Community statistics to allow for a fair distribution of funds among Member States. These statistics have been collected and verified by Eurostat. Under the draft financial perspectives for the years 2007-2013, the Commission has proposed to increase the budgetary allocations for the financial programmes in the area of immigration and asylum. The existing European Refugee Fund will be continued, and three new programmes would be established in the following areas:

- the integration of legally residing third country nationals,
- the return of illegally residing third country nationals, and
- external borders and pre-frontier activities.

6. DG JLS has sought advice from Eurostat as regards the feasibility of and modalities with respect to the use of certain Community statistics for the purpose of the (multi) annual calculation

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<sup>1</sup> Council Directive 2003/86/EC

<sup>2</sup> Council Directive 2003/109/EC

<sup>3</sup> COM (2003) 179

<sup>4</sup> The Commission will formally adopt a proposal for a Regulation during the first semester of 2005. This text will have to be negotiated in the Council and the European Parliament before it becomes binding legislation. The negotiations could take around 18 months.

of the allocation of the funds between the Member States under the three new instruments proposed. It is DG JLS' understanding that the current collections of Community statistics on asylum, illegal entry, migration, air transport and maritime transport can provide useful elements but will only partially respond to the need for reliable administrative data or statistics under the envisaged methodology for the calculations. It is therefore probable that new data collections will be necessary to obtain the right data for the distribution of these new funds. In this sense, it is important to mention that DG JLS and Eurostat have developed a new **data collection on residence permits**, under which Member States will be requested – starting in the first half of the year 2005- to provide data on the residence permits issued to third country nationals under different categories (family reunification, studies, employment, other), thus offering a good overview of migration flows into the EU Member States. Data on long-term residence permits, which is also requested, will provide precious information about the stocks of migrants legally residing in the Member States.

7. In **conclusion**, it can be said that statistics have an essential role to play in the definition and the evaluation of the common European policies on immigration and asylum. The current situation is far from optimal but progress has been made in recent years. Moreover, improvements are expected once the statistical legislation on migration and asylum statistics is in place. But the process of developing common statistical tools in these areas will not stop with the regulation. New priorities in the future will certainly need new statistical data, and so DG JLS hopes to cooperate with all the relevant actors in the field to jointly develop the statistical instruments needed to address the policy challenges, which lay ahead.

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