NOTE

from: Presidency

to: CIREFI/Strategic Committee on Immigration, Frontiers and Asylum

EU-Iceland, Norway and Switzerland Mixed Committee

No. prev. doc.: 9007/07 CIREFI 14 COMIX 426

Subject: CIREFI information exchange: progress report

Following the lead given by the Austrian Presidency and further to the German Presidency's submission to the Strategic Committee on Immigration, Frontiers and Asylum (SCIFA) of a progress report on work in CIREFI (9007/07 CIREFI 14 COMIX 426), with a view to further improving exchange of information and statistical data, the Portuguese Presidency now has to submit to SCIFA a progress report for the second half of 2007.
Having considered the national contributions supplied each month and the information exchanged in CIREFI, the Portuguese Presidency would make the following points:

1. The monthly exchange of information within CIREFI makes it possible, among other things, to produce short-term operational assessments which may lead to action being taken on visa issues, upstream prevention of illegal immigration and border control. For this purpose, it is essential that all delegations supply **up-to-date information for the month(s) immediately preceding each meeting**, thus helping to ensure comparability of data in time coverage. It has here proved especially important to **hold meetings in the last week of the month**; this makes for achievement of that aim.
   As regards time coverage, mention should be made of the progress observable in prompt provision of data for the reference period, as a result of significant efforts by Member States' and associate countries' national authorities.

2. While most delegations use the **standard** data-reporting **form** (assessment format for migration pressure per Member State, set out in 10526/05 CIREFI 17 COMIX 420), there are some differences in presentation and in amount of data supplied; these are not conducive to data appraisal and comparability.

3. The statistics supplied should show the **top five nationalities for each item**, as stipulated; this is not the case for all contributions, which hampers appraisal of them.
   **Indication of the number of aliens for each of the nationalities** shown would allow a truer assessment of the scale of some migration flows, which is not always apparent from percentage figures.
4. The reporting period has brought an increase in the information supplied in section 2 (Salient facts) of the form, although a lack of information continues to be observable in the case of a number of delegations.

5. Some delegations have also made representations to the Presidency regarding the fact that not all contributions circulated at CIREFI meetings are in English. It should be pointed out here that the introduction of a standard form for regular reporting gave precedence to relevance of information, over use of a single language, and therefore left open the option of completing it in individual countries' own languages. However, that linguistic constraint is being overcome by means of swifter subsequent circulation, by the General Secretariat of the Council, of the English language version of the original situation report. It should be noted that each draft situation report, as subsequently sent to delegations, is considered to have been approved under a written procedure, unless any amendments are requested within a fortnight as from the date of circulation. The final version is then submitted to SCIFA.

In conclusion, the Presidency:

- urges delegations to continue submitting their contributions promptly and looks for greater efforts on the part of those which do not as yet supply them on time;

- requests all delegations to use the set format and supply data in accordance with 10526/05 CIREFI 17 COMIX 420;
holds that, in the interests of greater effectiveness, each of the categories in section 1 should include the top five nationalities only and, as far as possible, show the number of individuals for each of them, so that their migration impact can be assessed;

in view of the importance of the various points addressed in section 2, calls on delegations to endeavour to supply the relevant information, particularly as regards upstream action to curb illegal immigration, new operating methods and routes, use and abuse of visas and use of false documents;

acknowledges the contribution made by the General Secretariat of the Council in swifter circulation of the English language version of the situation report, which helps to achieve more effective exchange of information;

accordingly welcomes the marked improvement in the quality of CIREFI information exchange. While some of the shortcomings identified were already pointed up in previous reports, they can certainly be remedied with all delegations' cooperation.

SCIFA is therefore requested to note this progress report and ask the incoming Slovenian Presidency to submit a further progress report at the end of its term.

In CIREFI work, mention should be made of continued cooperation between CIREFI, the European Border Management Agency (FRONTEX) and Europol.