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Delegations will find attached the partially declassified version of the above-mentioned document.

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NOTE

from: CIREFI

to: Strategic Committee on Immigration, Frontiers and Asylum (SCIFA)
(EU-Iceland/Liechtenstein/Norway/Switzerland)

No. prev. doc.: 11502/09 CIREFI 16 COMIX 534
Subject: CIREFI Summary Report July-December 2009

Introduction

This summary report has been prepared in compliance with the "Conclusions and recommendations on the functioning and future of CIREFI"¹ as agreed by CIREFI on 28 April 2009 and endorsed by SCIFA at its meeting on 19 and 20 May 2009.

The report summarises the main trends in the area of illegal migration and the crossing of borders in the period July to December 2009 as they were recorded by Member States and reported in CIREFI. The report also includes relevant information on various phenomena observed during the reference period in relation to illegal migration towards the European Union.

¹ 9873/09, page 6, recommends that "at the end of each Presidency, the Presidency, in cooperation with the Council General Secretariat, should prepare a summary with topics from the situation reports together with conclusions and proposals. Following its approval by CIREFI, the summary should be transmitted to SCIFA and could also provide input for the annual report on immigration and asylum which will be prepared by the Commission".
1. Refusals of entry

In most of the Member States the situation regarding the numbers refused entry was stable during the second half of 2009. However, in 2009 refusals of entry in the EU have generally decreased compared to 2008.

In Northern Europe, Russian citizens are those most often refused entry at the land borders of Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. In the reference period, there was a significant increase in the number of Georgian nationals refused entry at Lithuanian borders. NOT DECLASSIFIED

In Central and Eastern Europe, Ukrainian nationals are still the dominant group refused entry.

In France, Germany and Italy a decreasing trend in refusals of entry has been observed over this period. However, the most significant decrease occurred in Spain. In southern Europe, nationals of Morocco and Brazil are the nationalities most often refused entry.

2. Illegal aliens apprehended

The overall assessment for the period under consideration presents a stable picture regarding the number of third-country nationals found to be illegally present on Member State territory.

Whereas the profile of apprehended nationals remains unchanged in most Member States, the number of Afghan nationals apprehended has steadily increased throughout the European Union during this period. Afghan nationals are currently among the top five groups of illegal aliens apprehended in Finland, Sweden, Norway, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Hungary, Slovakia, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Greece, Latvia and Estonia.
Nationals of North African countries (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Somalia) and also of Brazil were among the third-country nationals most often apprehended in France, Italy, Portugal and Spain. Nationals of Albania remain the group most often apprehended in Greece.

Ukraine remained the main source country of third-country nationals apprehended in Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary. Nationals of the Russian Federation, Turkey and Vietnam were also significant in Eastern Europe.

Somalis remain the group most often apprehended in the Scandinavian countries and in the Netherlands.

3. Asylum

During the second half of 2009, there has been an upward trend in the number of asylum applications in the majority of Member States.

Data for this period show a decrease in the number of Iraqi asylum seekers while the number of Afghan, Nigerian and Somali asylum seekers has increased significantly throughout the EU. Afghan nationals are the most common asylum seekers in the EU. The main destination countries are the Scandinavian countries, the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, Hungary and Greece.

Over this period, Liechtenstein reported a significant increase in the number of asylum applications by Somalis and Eritrean nationals who had probably gone through an asylum procedure in other EU Member States or Associated countries. Switzerland has also faced a significant increase in the number of Nigerian asylum seekers.

At some point over the past six months, some Member States reported a sharp increase in the number of Georgian asylum applicants.
In Southern Europe, particularly in Malta, the number of asylum applicants has increased. Somali nationals are the main group of asylum seekers arriving at the sea borders of Malta.

4. Salient facts

4.1 Use of false documents

The use of false documents is widespread in all European Union countries. Travel and residence documents as well as false source documents are being used by illegal immigrants to enter and stay in the European Union. According to the figures and information forwarded by Member States, this is an important issue in the fight against illegal immigration in the European Union.

4.2 Misuse of legal channels to enter the EU or to legalise stay in EU

The abuse of procedures to ensure entry into European Union countries and to remain illegally has been the focus of special attention. During the reference period, bogus marriages and false paternity claims continued to be a problem for many EU countries. Several Member States carried out operations to dismantle criminal networks organising bogus marriages. In addition, the Czech Republic and the United Kingdom have reported that misuse of study for the purpose of staying in their territories is a continuing trend. In particular, the United Kingdom reported that students who had been in its territory with permission to study at what was considered a “bogus college” had subsequently applied for permission to remain as the spouse of an EEA national.

4.3 Situation at maritime borders in the south of the European Union

In the reference period, the most interesting figure is the decrease in the number of illegal migrants arriving on the Italian coasts, especially in Sicily, by comparison with the same period last year. The number of illegal migrants arriving in Malta has decreased. However the situation remains difficult as Malta is still encountering major problems with effectively identifying rejected asylum seekers and undocumented migrants.
The situation in the Eastern Mediterranean remains rather difficult. Greece detected many illegal immigrants coming from the Turkish coast. Most of them were Afghans, Palestinians, Somalis and Eritreans.

Since the second half of 2008, the migration pressure in the Canary Islands and southern Spain has decreased significantly. There have been arrivals at Spanish sea borders in Almeria and Granada over the last few months; however they have been limited.

4.4 Return operations

A total of 32 Joint Return Operations (JRO's) involving 1622 returnees were coordinated by Frontex in 2009. That means a significant increase in comparison with 2008 (15 (JRO's) and 801 returnees). Frontex co-financed 21 JRO's out of 32 JRO's in 2009.

4.5 Other phenomena observed

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Belgium and Italy have adopted a regularisation process for certain categories of non-EU citizens.

Large numbers of unaccompanied minors have continued to arrive in several Member States. The countries most concerned are Belgium, Italy, Norway, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

Conclusion

SCIFA is invited to take note of this CIREFI summary report for the period July to December 2009.