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**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN  
PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL  
COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

**Towards a Common Immigration Policy**

***Interim progress report on the Global Approach to Migration***

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## COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

### Interim progress report on the Global Approach to Migration

In 2007, work has continued to further enhance dialogue and cooperation on migration issues with sub-Saharan and North Africa, while work has begun with the eastern and south-eastern neighbouring regions, thereby extending the geographical scope of the Global Approach.

This report gives an overview of progress made in implementing the Global Approach in both regions during 2007, although it should be noted that it is not intended to be exhaustive.

#### 1. WORKING WITH AFRICA AND THE MEDITERRANEAN

##### 1.1. Policy dialogue

As a follow-up to the **Rabat** process, a meeting of senior officials was held in Madrid in June to discuss progress. France confirmed that it would organise a second ministerial conference during its Presidency in autumn 2008. A Spanish project to be funded by AENEAS will seek to help stakeholders in the Rabat process to deepen their dialogue and to give practical follow-up both to the process itself and to the initiatives identified by the Action Plan.

The **Tripoli** process has been discussed at length both in the regular Commission-Commission joint task force meetings and in the EU-Africa Ministerial Troika meetings. The European Commission and the African Union Commission produced a roadmap to take forward the Tripoli Declaration, which was endorsed by the Troika in October. These fora have also provided an opportunity to exchange information with the African Union and to discuss the way from Tripoli to Lisbon. Migration will also be one of the key themes addressed at the **EU-Africa Summit** to be held in Lisbon in December. Heads of State and Government will adopt a Partnership on Migration, Mobility and Employment as part of the Action Plan accompanying the EU-Africa Strategy.

Dialogue on the basis of **Article 13** of the Cotonou Agreement has been intensified, partly in situ by delegations and embassies, and partly via EU missions organised under the joint chair of the Commission and the Presidency in extended troika format to Cape Verde, Ghana, Mauritania, Senegal and Ethiopia. At regional level, the first meeting of the ECOWAS-EU (Economic Community of West African States) working group on migration was held in April and followed up in October, and a work programme should be agreed shortly.

Dialogue with **Mediterranean countries** has progressed, on the basis of the relevant Association Agreements and Action Plans under the European Neighbourhood policy, including in the meetings of the subcommittees on social affairs and migration with Morocco and the working group on justice and home affairs with Algeria. Progress is being made on practical cooperation as regards both legal and illegal migration. A FRONTEX-led mission to Libya took place in May-June, with the aim of evaluating the current migration situation in Libya, the capabilities of the Libyan authorities to control migration flows, and ways in which the EU could help Libya to manage migration flows to the EU more effectively. Following the resolution of the Benghazi case, the EU re-launched relations with Libya and the two are now seeking to gear up dialogue and cooperation on many subjects. Migration and related issues are among the priorities and contacts have already been made with a view to establishing practical cooperation as soon as possible.

Following a series of meetings of senior officials, a ministerial conference on migration was held in the framework of **EuroMed** on 19 November. Ministers had an open and frank debate about the opportunities and challenges of migration for all partners. They adopted a political declaration containing a shared understanding of the need for a comprehensive approach to migration and a series of short-term operational objectives organised around three key topics: legal migration, migration and development and illegal migration. First initiatives will be launched in early 2008. Implementation of these objectives will be monitored through meetings of senior officials and will be reported back to the EuroMed Committee.

## **1.2. The migration and development agenda**

In September, the Commission issued a report on **Policy Coherence for Development (PCD)**. The EU concept of PCD aims to build synergies between various policy areas and development objectives and to raise awareness about the effects of EU policies on development, thus helping to highlight the importance of coherence between migration policy and development policy. The report concluded that there is now a clear understanding that migration can be good for development and vice versa; hence the importance of trying to harness the positive links and synergies that exist between the two policy areas. It further agreed that progress in the field of migration and development has so far been good as regards establishing the policy framework and launching political dialogue at regional and country level, particularly with Africa. However, it found that progress now needs to be made on translating policy guidelines, agreements and action plans into concrete action that has a genuine impact.

Migration issues and concerns have continued to be integrated into the new **Country and Regional Strategy Papers** and the ongoing programming exercise for the 10th European Development Fund (EDF). This has also been addressed during EU missions to partner countries. The Commission supports the integration of migration into Poverty Reduction Strategies at national level. The need to promote the links between migration and development was also clearly reflected by the AENEAS programme, with a number of projects having recently been selected. In addition, several micro-projects aimed at promoting better use of remittances for income-generating activities specifically in rural areas will be funded by AENEAS in several regions of the world, including Africa, through a project implemented by the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD).

Various avenues are being pursued to help third countries to **build capacity** to manage migration effectively. Regarding **migration profiles**, Commission delegations have now completed these for almost all ACP countries, including most countries in Africa. An AENEAS-funded project will soon be implemented by IOM with the aim of establishing migration profiles in nine African countries and building the capacities of the national authorities to manage the profiles as tools to foster national development. The Commission continues to co-fund the CARIM project through the AENEAS programme, the aim of which is to help all non-EU Mediterranean countries to collect and analyse statistical data on migration and to assess migratory trends in the region.

The Commission has also decided to finance an all-ACP project using the 9<sup>th</sup> EDF funds. This project seeks to ensure migration issues are taken into account in the development policies of ACP countries, by integrating migration into national and regional action plans. It aims to build institutional capacity in the six ACP regions and in twelve pilot countries; reinforce the capacity of civil society to participate in the ACP institutional dialogue on migration and development; and create an ACP network of migration observatories. An Aeneas-funded project will also set up an Observatory on migration in West Africa.

As regards **cooperation platforms**, the UK has led efforts to develop the concept and establish an East African Cooperation Platform on migration and development. A concept note was agreed in the High Level Working Group on Asylum and Migration in June.

In July, the Commission and the Member States actively helped to prepare and then participated in the first meeting of the **Global Forum** on International Migration and Development, which was held in Belgium. Member States participated actively and led some of the round table discussions. The European Commission and the Republic of Mauritius co-chaired a session devoted to the issues of circular and return migration. This will be followed up by a workshop in 2008 designed to translate these ideas into operational pilot circular migration projects between interested countries. This workshop will also contribute to the debates at the second meeting of the Forum, which will take place in the Philippines in the second half of 2008.

### 1.3. **Fighting illegal immigration**

In its Conclusions of 18 September 2007, the Council called for contacts with third countries to be followed up in a bid to initiate and/or step up cooperation on border control, search and rescue and return. The Council also called for long-term operations to be launched by FRONTEX as of 2008, and for full implementation of the June Council Conclusions on cooperation between FRONTEX, the Commission and the Member States on return.

As regards ongoing efforts to improve management of the Union's external borders, the Commission has worked closely with FRONTEX to build up the agency's capacity. Following the adoption of the **Rapid Border Intervention Team (RABIT)** Regulation on 11 July 2007, FRONTEX worked in tandem with the Member States to develop the implementing rules and procedures for the deployment of RABITs. FRONTEX set up the **FRONTEX Risk Analysis Network (FRAN)**, composed of the analytical units of Member States' border guard services, and established a system for regular exchange of information within FRAN. In accordance with Article 7 of Regulation (EC) No 2007/2004 of 26 October 2004, FRONTEX has set up a **Central Record of Available Technical Equipment (CRATE)** for border control, which is to become an evolving list to be adapted on a regular basis to new or changing situations regarding the control and surveillance of the external borders of Member States. FRONTEX has also established contacts with the regional **Immigration Liaison Officer (ILO) networks** in Africa to improve the flow of information. A Memorandum of Understanding between the Commission and FRONTEX concerning the development of ICONet has also been signed, which will make it easier for FRONTEX to help Member States to organise joint return operations and to identify best practices on the acquisition of travel documents.

Together with the Member States in the region, FRONTEX set up a **European Patrol Network (EPN)** based on the findings of the MEDSEA and the BORTEC studies. The EPN became operational on 24 May 2007 and to a large extent brings together the current patrolling activities of Member States. This should lead to more efficient control of maritime borders and reduce the related costs through the principle of burden sharing. FRONTEX implemented several **joint operations** in high-risk areas along the southern maritime borders, with a higher intensity and longer duration than was the case in 2006. These operations have intensified border control and surveillance in these areas and helped to save lives; they will form the basis for longer-term measures to be developed in 2008, as called for by the Council. FRONTEX also received mandates to negotiate technical **working arrangements** with a number of key third countries, including Turkey, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania, Senegal and Cape Verde.

Working on the basis of the study it commissioned on the **international law of the sea**, the Commission organised three meetings with Member State experts and representatives of

FRONTEX and the relevant international organisations to discuss the development of a common approach to the interpretation of obligations under international law pertaining to illegal immigration at sea and **search and rescue** of persons at sea. The aim of such an approach is to ensure consistent application of these obligations during FRONTEX joint sea operations.

With regard to North African countries, the Commission has disposed of negotiating mandates for EC **readmission agreements** with Morocco and Algeria since September 2000 and November 2002 respectively. Progress in this field, however, has been disappointing. Whereas negotiations with Morocco were formally launched back in April 2003, the state of affairs after twelve rounds of negotiations is such that the prospects for imminent signature of the agreement do not seem promising. Negotiations with Algeria have not yet even been formally launched due to Algeria's refusal to consider addressing readmission at EU level. And while the readmission provisions included in Article 13 of the Cotonou Agreement are directly applicable, the Commission is looking into the possibility of concluding implementing agreements with certain ACP partners. Various ongoing activities are helping to improve cooperation on **return** with third countries and several projects have been funded under the Preparatory Actions 2005 and 2006 and AENEAS.

As regards **smuggling** of and **trafficking** in human beings, the first Regional Anti-Human Trafficking Conference in Eastern Africa was held in June in Kampala, organised by UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) and Interpol. Trafficking will be a specific priority action of the Partnership on Migration, Mobility and Employment to be adopted at the EU-Africa Summit in December. Two AENEAS-funded UNODC/EUROPOL projects will help to improve the criminal justice system response and build the capacities of law enforcement agencies in all North and West African countries in an effort to help them prevent and combat smuggling of and trafficking in human beings.

#### **1.4. Migration routes initiatives**

As part of the migration routes initiative, a report on **East African Migration Routes** was prepared by ICMPD and presented in October. This included a gaps and needs analysis, and will be followed by visits to key countries in the region in order to formulate operational recommendations. These will then be used to implement the East Africa Migration Routes Programme, which will be co-funded by AENEAS. This initiative aims to help enhance cooperation between the EU and East African countries and improve migration management.

As regards the **Western and Central African Migration Routes**, several AENEAS-funded projects are helping the countries concerned to strengthen border management capacities, foster cooperation among law enforcement agencies in the prevention of illegal migration by sea along the coasts of West Africa, build capacity in migration management, counter-trafficking and border control, and promote cooperation in border management.

Regarding the work of **Immigration Liaison Officers**, regional meetings of ILOs have been organised jointly for West Africa, which included a seminar on the use of ICONet, and for East Africa. Initiatives have been taken to improve existing structures. Enhanced cooperation between EUROPOL and the Member States, with the active involvement of the ILOs located along the North and West African migratory routes, was launched by Spain. The second Euro-African police conference on illegal migration was held in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria in October 2007 under the Seahorse project funded by AENEAS.

Expert meetings were organised by ICMPD (International Centre for Migration Policy Development) in 2007 in the framework of the **Dialogue on Mediterranean Transit Migration** (MTM), a joint project by ICMPD, FRONTEX and EUROPOL, with contributions from UNHCR.

These covered the management of reception and detention for mixed migration flows, management of return and readmission, combating smuggling and trafficking networks, including protection of victims of trafficking in human beings, and interception and apprehension of irregular migrants. Guidelines on these issues are due to be finalised by the end of the year. Furthermore, an 'Interactive Map (I-Map) on irregular migration routes in Africa and the Mediterranean' was developed with the support of Interpol. The map shows the current migratory situation, together with a broad range of relevant information, including risks and threats, the latest changes and the possible evolution of migration flows and routes.

### 1.5. Regular migration

In response to the invitation to consider how legal migration opportunities can be better incorporated into the Union's external policies, the Commission issued a Communication on *Circular migration and mobility partnerships between the EU and third countries* in May 2007, which was welcomed by the Council. On **circular migration**, consultations with Member States and other stakeholders have helped to develop an understanding of this concept, especially in terms of its objectives, the main categories to be covered, how a balanced mix of incentives and safeguards can be ensured, and how it can be made operational through concrete pilot projects. On **mobility partnerships**, internal discussions between the Commission and the Member States have made for further refinement of the concept and pinpointed a number of geographical priorities for negotiating possible pilot partnerships, the aim being to start these negotiations in early 2008.

A further way of developing the legal migration component of the Global Approach has been the ongoing work to establish a **migration management and information centre** in Mali, which is being set up with financial support from the Commission. The centre will provide information services to potential migrants, help mobilise the Malian diaspora abroad, help manage legal migration to other African countries or elsewhere and support the reintegration of returning migrants. The centre could serve as a model – adapted accordingly and based on lessons learned – for similar institutions elsewhere in Africa where partner countries are interested. In cooperation with partner countries, EU Member States may wish to avail themselves of the services provided by the centre or lend additional support to its activities.

Projects funded under MEDA or AENEAS aim to improve the capacity of public authorities to manage labour migration, to promote cooperation in matching labour supply and demand, and to carry out information campaigns. AENEAS will shortly fund further projects in the area of legal migration designed to help build the capacity of public authorities to manage labour migration and to disseminate information on job vacancies to prospective migrants.

Other projects concern the protection of **migrants' rights** and are designed to provide assistance to stranded migrants, to promote a culture of respect for migrants' rights, and to help create the conditions for their integration. Several other projects specifically target the provision of assistance to African countries – via UNHCR – to set up policies and legal frameworks in line with international standards in the field of **asylum and international protection**, and to build the administrative capacities to implement them. AENEAS-funded projects are now underway in Tanzania to implement the Regional Protection Programme (RPP). Meetings were held in Tanzania in October between the Tanzanian authorities, the Commission, Member State representatives, UNHCR and local NGOs to assess progress on the RPP.

## 2. WORKING WITH THE EASTERN AND SOUTH-EASTERN REGIONS NEIGHBOURING THE EU

### 2.1. Dialogue with neighbouring regions

**Regional exchange of information** on migration is promoted through several regional processes, such as the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe (its successor, the Sarajevo-based Regional Cooperation Council, will take over activities from early 2008), MARRI (the Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative), the Baltic Sea Region Border Control Cooperation (Council of the Baltic Sea States), and the South-East Cooperation Initiative (SECI) Centre.

More generally, dialogue on migration and asylum issues has been stepped up with neighbouring regions by way of the opportunities presented by existing **regional cooperation**. Some Member States are working in conjunction with IOM and UNHCR as part of the Söderköping process in an EC-financed project to help improve cooperation between government bodies and agencies in Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova. The Budapest Process also fosters dialogue on migration and asylum with Southern and Eastern European countries, including the Western Balkans and Turkey. Other frameworks for dialogue are the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Forum (BSEC) and the Salzburg Forum. Work has continued in the Brdo Process in the fields of illegal migration, organised crime, corruption and terrorism. Within this framework, a Slovenian project to launch a South-Eastern Europe Organised Crime Threat Assessment for the Western Balkans region was welcomed.

On **trafficking in human beings**, Member States have engaged with third countries through police cooperation and training and twinning projects. Work continues with EUROPOL through the Organised Crime Threat Assessment to improve the police response to facilitated illegal immigration and related crime and there is active cooperation with inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations via IOM and ICMPD projects to prevent trafficking and support victims. Transnational cooperation on this issue and dissemination of best practices within the region were also promoted more specifically through a conference on 'Trafficking in an Irregular Migration Context', which took place in October 2007 in Istanbul and was jointly organised within the UNODC and ICMPD framework of the Budapest Process and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Forum.

Dialogue and cooperation on migration issues with Central Asian countries continues through the EC Border Management in Central Asia (BOMCA) Programme, funded by the Tacis programme and implemented by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) with the assistance of several EU Member States under the leadership of Austria. Useful discussions also take place within existing platforms such as the Central Asia Border and Security Initiative, which addresses border management issues. The annual meeting of ASEM (Asia-Europe Meeting) Immigration Directors took place in November 2007 in Seoul and provided an opportunity to discuss issues relating to legal and illegal migration.

### 2.2. Increasing operational cooperation between Member States

Action is being taken to ensure that some aspects of the Global Approach are applied to Eastern and South-Eastern countries and regions neighbouring the EU. Migration and asylum statistics relating to Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova are being collated as part of the cross-border Söderköping Process. **Migration profiles** have been compiled for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, including Kosovo under UN Security Council Resolution 1244, and Turkey, and will be updated annually by the relevant countries and published every two years.

Significant steps have also been taken to improve the **exchange of information** between FRONTEX, EUROPOL, UN bodies and other international and regional organisations and processes. There are regular exchanges of information between EUROPOL and FRONTEX on the Eastern and South-Eastern regions neighbouring the EU, and EUROPOL experts are now participating in the new FRONTEX **Risk Analysis Network**. Individual Member States are also working to improve the availability of data on migration trends by establishing new Focal Points of Contact, sharing information and attending CIREFI meetings.

Attention has also focused on extending FRONTEX-coordinated **joint operations** at the Eastern and South-Eastern borders, in cooperation with the competent authorities of the third countries concerned. FRONTEX coordinated several air border operations in 2007, targeting illegal immigration through EU airports from countries including China, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Maritime Borders continue to be a prime focus. In 2007, combined joint sea and land border operations targeting the Eastern Mediterranean continued and were extended to other land borders, including Greece-Albania and Bulgaria-Turkey, and certain seaports of Greece and Italy.

FRONTEX and EUROPOL have also stepped up their work on **Intelligence and Risk Analysis**, notably through the production of tailored assessments and analytical bulletins. This has included an assessment of high risk routes of illegal migration through the Western Balkans, with the operational objective of setting up joint teams in the region. Member States cooperate closely on these issues, for example through the **Organised Crime Threat Assessment (OCTA)** exercise, during which they provide data for further analysis on a regular basis. Information has also continued to be shared by Member States via ICONet.

Efforts have also been made to increase cooperation between Member States' **Immigration Liaison Officers along migratory routes** in the region. To date, the geographical coverage of ILOs has been uneven, with the largest number in Russia. New ILOs, or representatives with ILO functions (for example, police liaison officers), have been established in Russia, Ukraine, Serbia, Croatia, Turkey, China and Moldova. Other representatives such as Migration Attachés and Member States' Liaison Officers with a more general role are also being increased.

**Common Visa Application Centres** have been established in Chisinau (Moldova) and Podgorica (Montenegro) and the feasibility of centres being set up in other locations such as Tbilisi, Yerevan and Southern Serbia is under consideration.

Progress on coordinating **action on trafficking in human beings** has been made within the dense cooperation networks already in existence between the Member States and third countries, and has been achieved through close cooperation on Risk Analysis, Joint Operations and participation in numerous regional initiatives. Training seminars for police forces in Southern and South-Eastern regions have been organised and financed by Member States and European funds. FRONTEX operations also focus on trafficking (especially in vulnerable groups such as women and minors) and improved coordination is expected in 2008 through the use of Joint Teams. Specific action targeting the trafficking in minors is a new area being explored in the FRONTEX-led project Agelaus.

### **2.3. Cooperation with various regions**

#### **Candidate and Potential Candidate Countries**

Turkey and Croatia are candidate countries negotiating for EU membership. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has been granted candidate status, but has not yet started accession



negotiations. Contractual relations have been established, or are being established, with each of the Western Balkan countries through Stabilisation and Association Agreements (SAA).

All the countries have Accession or European Partnerships, which are regularly updated. The Partnerships identify the priorities which the countries need to address in preparing for European integration. With candidate countries a close dialogue takes place in the relevant sub-committee meetings and in the Association Committee and Council meetings. With the other countries, there are special technical group meetings, where developments can be discussed and specific policy advice given.

On the issue of **return**, three AENEAS-funded projects focus on the identification and social and professional reintegration of Albanians returning to their home country. Two similar projects provide the same kind of assistance to nationals of Serbia.

Efforts have continued to promote closer regional cooperation to tackle **organised crime and illegal migration**. FRONTEX has concluded working arrangements with the EU candidate countries (Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey) and is in the process of negotiating and concluding working arrangements with other third countries in the Western Balkans. FRONTEX and EUROPOL also held an expert meeting with Western Balkan countries and the MARRI Centre designed to follow up on the findings of the FRONTEX-EUROPOL assessment on high risk routes of illegal migration in the Western Balkans; follow-up action on this report is being prepared by GDISC (General Directors' Immigration Services Conference). An AENEAS-funded project will seek to combat **trafficking in human beings** through preventative measures in Albania.

The **Ohrid Process on Border Security and Management** (cooperation between the countries of the Western Balkans, on the one hand, and the European Commission, NATO and the OSCE, on the other, under the umbrella of the Stability Pact), activities of the European Agency for Reconstruction, and numerous twinning projects on border management all help to improve border management in the region and to bring it up to EU standards.

In terms of **capacity building**, an AENEAS-funded project is being implemented to help Western Balkans countries to align their legislation and practices with EU laws and standards in the areas of asylum, migration and visa policy. A further AENEAS-funded project aims to promote understanding and use of the ICONET information exchange and of the CIREFI data collection systems in all Western Balkans countries.

An AENEAS-funded project **on legal migration**, to be implemented by IOM in partnership with the International Labour Organization, will develop migration information centres in all Western Balkans countries. These centres will build on existing centres to give basic information on entry and stay and will be integrated into the structures of the Ministries of Labour, Social Affairs and Employment Agencies of Western Balkans countries. They will also provide information and support on specific job opportunities in the EU.

### **European Neighbourhood Partnership (ENP) countries in Eastern Europe**

Bilateral **dialogue and cooperation** with Eastern European ENP countries continues under the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement and the EU-ENP Action Plans established by the EU with all ENP countries, with the exception of Belarus. With Ukraine, cooperation is based on the EU-JHA Action Plan and scoreboard. With Moldova, the EC has a Group of Experts on migration which meets once a year. Cooperation with Belarus is carried out by individual Member States through existing cooperation platforms or at expert level.

In terms of cooperation on the Black Sea region, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Forum has been an important platform for discussions. In addition, the Budapest Process has been discussing the Black Sea Region more closely under the Turkish Chair, and is considering establishing a specific working group on issues relating to this region. Opportunities for deepening dialogue have also been sought through meetings of the Salzburg Forum, which has also established a 'friends of the Salzburg Forum' group for the Western Balkans, with a view to extending this to the Black Sea in due course. Germany and Romania have proposed the possible creation of a Black Sea cooperation platform.

As regards **asylum and refugee protection**, AENEAS-funded projects are being implemented in Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus in an effort to operationalise the Regional Protection Programme in Eastern Europe. Meetings on the RPP were held in Chisinau, Kiev and Minsk in October and November with the participation of EU Member States, the Commission, the national authorities of the third countries concerned and UNHCR.

On **border management**, the Commission decided in 2007 to fund a project promoting border management in all three Southern Caucasus countries through the newly established ENPI programme. This project will build on the results of two ongoing Tacis-funded projects, one in Georgia to help transform Border Guards from a purely military into a law enforcement agency, the other in Azerbaijan to upgrade the surveillance capacity of border guards along the green border and at key border posts located along the border with Iran. Nearly €30 million has recently been allocated to support the EU Border Assistance Mission in the region, including in Ukraine and Moldova. A regional border support programme for the Caucasus has also been agreed. A further €30 million has been allocated under the ENPI to help Ukraine substantially upgrade its capacity to accommodate illegal migrants apprehended by its law enforcement agencies or those returned from EU Member States.

In 2007 the Commission concluded **visa facilitation and readmission agreements** with Ukraine and Moldova. They are expected to enter into force on 1 January 2008.

Member States have been particularly active in providing support for or implementing various projects focusing on **capacity building** measures. Intensive work in several regional forums has continued. Hungary, with the assistance of ICMPD, leads a group of Member States in implementing an AENEAS-funded project designed to enhance the capacity of the Ukrainian authorities to detect and prevent forged travel documents and identify fraudulent identities at the borders. A further AENEAS-funded project, led by the Czech Republic with other Member States and the assistance of ICMPD, will seek to build the capacity of and provide support to the Ukrainian authorities to help them respond effectively to irregular transit migration.

Regarding **legal migration**, new AENEAS-funded projects will improve the quality of information given to would-be migrants from Eastern European countries, for example by disseminating information on legal conditions of entry and work in the EU in information centres in Ukraine and Moldova. AENEAS-funded initiatives also continue to address **migration and development** linkages, by attracting Armenians back to their home country, persuading them to invest in their country, facilitating their successful reintegration, encouraging the use of remittances for income-generating activities or promoting forms of circular migration while preventing the risk of brain drain.

## Russian Federation

**Biannual meetings** of the EU-Russia Permanent Partnership Council of Justice and Home Affairs Ministers, complemented by informal meetings of experts, have continued to monitor the overall implementation of the Common Space. The agreements on **Visa Facilitation and Readmission** entered into force on 1 June 2007. Two meetings of the Joint Committee for the management of EC-Russia Visa Facilitation have been held since June. The April 2007 PPC agreed on the procedure for an EU-Russia **visa dialogue** to examine the conditions for visa-free travel as a long-term perspective, and the first senior official level meeting of this visa dialogue was held in September. In December 2007, experts will take the work forward and discuss document security, including biometrics, and registration procedures for foreigners. Application of the readmission agreement is now being closely monitored. In this context, meetings of the Joint Readmission Committee took place in July and November. The main issues being discussed at the moment are the conclusion of bilateral implementing protocols between the Member States and the Russian Federation, and the practical arrangements linked to the current application of the Agreement.

**Operational cooperation** with the Russian Federation has also continued through cooperation platforms such as the Black Sea Region Border Control Cooperation and the Council of the Baltic Sea States. Several Member States in the region have concluded bilateral cooperation agreements on migration with the Russian Federation.

As regards **technical assistance**, an AENEAS-funded project is underway to provide training and advice to the Russian Federal Migration Service on the management of apprehended and detained illegal migrants. Another AENEAS-funded project is contributing to more efficient and sustainable planning and management of labour migration in Russia by raising awareness of how to develop legal frameworks and to improve administrative practices. Other projects are giving legal assistance to migrants, in particular irregular migrants and asylum-seekers, to protect their rights, while supporting self-reliance of asylum-seekers and refugees and their integration into the towns and cities of the region. A policy advice project for Russian officials on biometrics in Russian travel documents was also implemented in 2007. Several other projects directly or indirectly linked to migration are covered by the ENPI, including the ENPI Cooperation in Border Management (2007 bilateral Action Programme) and the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme (2007-10).

## Central Asian countries and Asian countries of origin

Political progress with **China** on illegal immigration is still limited despite the existence of High Level Consultations on Illegal Immigration. The next High Level Consultation is expected in 2008, but there was an opportunity for a brief discussion of illegal migration issues at the EU-China Summit on 28 November in Beijing. China continues to link progress on readmission negotiations with parallel visa facilitation talks (for holders of diplomatic passports). However, progress on visa facilitation will depend on improved cooperation to tackle problems with the functioning of the Approved Destination Status Agreement (which covers visits for tourism purposes). An AENEAS-funded project will build capacity to manage migration in China and help stem the flow of illegal migrants to the EU by improving practical cooperation between the Chinese and EU Member States' administrations.

Negotiations on an EC-**Pakistan** readmission agreement have progressed. Following an additional round of negotiations with Pakistan in September, compromise solutions on the outstanding points were discussed. The agreed texts should now allow the Agreement to be initialled swiftly by both parties.

Dialogue on migration with **India** has also advanced. A meeting of the EC-India Sub-Commission on Economic Cooperation was held in Brussels in September. The Commission gave an update of the latest policy developments, such as circular migration and mobility partnerships, highlighting how they could open up new avenues for cooperation between the EU and India on a broad range of migration-related issues. The 8th EU-India Summit took place in Delhi on 30 November. Leaders underlined that facilitating people-to-people exchanges and combating illegal migration remain a priority for both sides; the issues of readmission and visa facilitation were also discussed.

Three **migration and development**-related AENEAS-funded projects will include work with Filipino migrant communities in the Netherlands, Italy and Malaysia and migrants from Tajikistan, as well as promoting action to improve remittance flows. AENEAS-funded projects that address the protection of migrants' rights, the prevention of illegal migration and the reintegration of victims of trafficking are underway in India, the Philippines and Bangladesh. Similar projects will shortly be implemented in Pakistan, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia and Myanmar.

Progress has also been made in providing information in the main Asian countries of origin on **legal work opportunities**. A new AENEAS-funded project will support dialogue and cooperation between Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan on managing labour migration, building on the outcomes of the Fourth Intergovernmental Meeting of the Issyk-kul Dialogue on International Migration Policy in Central Asia, the Caucasus and Neighbouring States that took place in the Kyrgyz Republic in 2004.