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EMN Status Report (2012)

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1. INTRODUCTION

This fourth Status Report¹ reports on progress made by the European Migration Network (EMN) during 2012 where further developments have taken place to increase the relevance and impact of the EMN in supporting policymakers, in line with the recent Report on the Development of the European Migration Network². The Development Report set out a number of requirements for the EMN. These included the need: to provide comparative, factual information to develop and inform policy approaches, based on reliable evidence and analysis covering a wide range of perspectives, and in formats accessible to meet policymakers' immediate needs; to extend the scope of information sources, both through the EMN national networks and through links with other relevant EU/international bodies; and to strengthen cooperation and collaboration with other relevant EU/international bodies, to exchange information and develop complementary activities, -while avoiding overlap.

Within this context, the 2012 Status Report is structured to provide an overview of the EMN main outputs in 2012, all of which are publicly available on the EMN's website,³ followed by a description of the extensive networking that took place at EU and national levels, and the activities taken to promote the EMN to policymakers in particular. Information on how the EMN was managed during the year is then provided, followed by concluding remarks. Overall, momentum has increased throughout the year in relation to improving the relevance and format of EMN outputs and products for policymaking, through creating new formats and by involving relevant policymakers in EMN products and outputs at the earliest opportunity. A significant development during 2012 was the participation of Croatia as an observer in the EMN. Norway⁴ continued to participate in and contribute to the EMN during the year.

2. EMN OUTPUTS IN 2012

This section summarises the EMN's main achievements and impacts in the framework of its 2012 Work Programme. The core activity of the EMN continued to be the collection and analysis of information to support policymaking on migration and asylum in EU Member States. Synthesis Reports, highlighting the main findings within an EU perspective, were produced for each of the EMN studies on the basis of national contributions produced by EMN National Contact Points (NCPs) according to common specifications.

2.1 Annual Policy Reports

The collection of information from EMN NCPs on the most significant political and legislative EU and (Member) States developments and also public debates, in the area of migration and international protection, along with relevant statistics, took place during the first half of the year. These national contributions -provide a valuable contribution to the preparation of the Commission's Annual Report on Immigration and Asylum,⁵ notably the national developments reported in the accompanying Commission Staff Working Paper. The approach adopted for this

¹ As required by Article 4(5c) of Council Decision 2008/381/EC. Previous versions were also published and translated into a number of Member State languages as Commission Staff Working Papers in 2010 as SEC(2010) 1006 and in 2011 as SEC(2011) 1273.

² COM(2012) 427 final

³ <http://www.emn.europa.eu>

⁴ Commission Decision C(2010)6171 of 13th September 2010 established the basis for administrative cooperation between the European Commission and the Ministry of Justice and the Police of the Kingdom of Norway for the participation of Norway in the European Migration Network.

⁵ See, for example, COM(2012) xxx and SEC(2012) xxx

exercise was adjusted in 2012 to ensure that information collected on national developments was in response to the most recent policy developments at EU level. This approach enabled the EMN NCPs also to collect information relevant to the annual reporting requirements of the European Asylum Support Office, thus avoiding duplication of effort. Drawing on information collected and analysed during 2012 in relation to the Annual Policy Report for 2011, rather than create a further lengthy synthesis report, a series of short, succinct EMN Informs was completed and distributed widely, highlighting in a format accessible to policymakers, the main EU and national developments of 2011 in the areas of legal migration and mobility, irregular migration, international protection and the development aspects of migration and mobility.

2.2 Reports on Migration and International Protection Statistics⁶

In 2012, EMN statistics and analytical work focused on only the most relevant and up-to-date statistics, compiled in relation to specific *EMN Reports and Studies*, and in relation to the *EMN Bulletin* (see Sections 2.3 and 4.4 of this Report).

2.3 EMN Studies⁷

The EMN finalised and published a number of policy relevant studies in 2012, many of which contributed directly to the policymaking process at EU level, and were developed in collaboration with policymakers. Notable also in the year was the shift towards the production of shorter, focussed studies, completed within a shorter timeframe than was possible in the development of longer, in-depth studies. Completed studies included: *Visa Policy as Migration Channel*; and *Practical measures for reducing irregular migration, Misuse of the right to family reunification: marriages of convenience and false declarations of parenthood; Establishing Identity for International Protection: Challenges and Practices* and the *Immigration of International Students to the EU*. A pilot study on *Individual profiles and migration trajectories of third-country national cross-border workers - the case of Luxembourg* led by the Luxembourg NCP was also completed.

Summaries of the main findings of the Reports, and, where relevant, examples of impact, are set out below.

2.3.1 Visa Policy as a Migration Channel

This Study, based on 21 National Reports, analysed the nexus between visa policy and migration management and control, including tackling irregular migration, at Member State level. The study generated evidence concerning the effectiveness of different strategies for using visa policy to manage migration, including cooperation with third countries, particularly concerning facilitation and the role of bilateral/multilateral agreements, and highlighted best practice, and contextualised national policies and practices by providing an overview of policy in this area across the EU and its impact at national level. The concluding remarks outline the nexus in a number of Member States between visa and migration policy, where national visa policy is used in to facilitate, and in some cases, promote particular types of legal migration, such as economic migration, migration of

⁶ EMN Bulletins are available from the EMN website <http://www.emn.europa.eu> under "EMN Bulletins"

⁷ The various reports are available from the EMN website <http://www.emn.europa.eu> under "EMN Outputs: EMN Studies"

highly-skilled service providers and/or from specific third countries. In these cases, visa procedures are geared to simplify the process of entry and admission to the Member State. Good practice in relation to third countries was presented through country-based case studies on China, Nigeria and the Russian Federation. The Synthesis Report was finalised in October 2012 and a short EMN Inform was also published highlighting the key findings. All documents were widely disseminated.

2.3.2 Practical measures for reducing irregular migration

The EMN Synthesis Report on *Practical Measures to Reduce Irregular Migration* was published in October 2012, based on 23 National Reports, including Norway. The study found that a common EU approach is a major driving force behind the development of practical measures by Member States in this area, and that joint actions and harmonised approaches were considered effective, although policies were also responsive to specific national circumstances. Statistics collected suggest that whilst irregular migration is in decline in many Member States, in some, it has risen or remained the same. The decline in irregular entry was considered, in part, to be due to effective practices at the border. Member States highlighted the importance of tackling irregular migration prior to the migrants' arrival and, in order to reduce the number of irregular migrants staying in the EU, focussing on addressing abuse of legal migration channels, including preventing irregular work. The Synthesis Report and associated EMN Inform, were distributed widely, and have been referenced in subsequent Reports.⁸ During its lifespan, the study had an impact on a wide range of audiences, at EU and national level, was the main topic of several EMN national network events and was promoted at other EU events, such as the Annual Conference of the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA).

2.3.3 Misuse of the right to family reunification: marriages of convenience and false declarations of parenthood

The EMN Synthesis Report on *Misuse of the right to family reunification: marriages of convenience and false declarations of parenthood*, was published in June 2012, based on 24 National Reports, including Norway. The main findings were that whilst misuse of the right to family reunification is sometimes perceived (e.g. in the media) to be a widespread issue, a lack of comparable statistics on the issue makes it difficult to fully quantify it across all (Member) States. That said, a number of Member States were found to be developing policy or amending legislation in order to (better) tackle such misuse. Where detected, this was found to be primarily in cases of marriages of convenience rather than false declarations of parenthood; and more commonly in marriages of convenience between a third-country and an EU national, rather than between two third-country nationals. Many common challenges are faced in identifying abuse, and a range of approaches are in place to detect and investigate the issue, on a case-by-case basis, drawing on evidence from a combination of investigative techniques, which are time- and resource- intensive, and with the burden of proof most often placed on the (Member) State Authority(ies).

The Synthesis Report was of policy relevance both at EU and national level. At EU level, its publication coincided with the public consultation on Directive 2003/86/EC (the "Family

⁸See:http://www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/89397/An%20update%20on%20the%20situation%20of%20irregular%20migrants%20in%20Greece_SLM.pdf

Reunification Directive”), and its findings were presented at a "Public Hearing on the Right to Family Reunification of Third Country Nationals living in the EU" on 1 June 2012.⁹ The study was also referenced in the EU Roadmap on Action on Migratory Pressures (A Strategic Response) in relation to Strategic Priority V ‘Safeguarding and protecting free movement by prevention of abuse by third country nationals’¹⁰ and the findings of the study were presented on the EU’s Integration website.¹¹ At national level, the Report was widely shared across national networks. The French NCP also presented the Study at the March 2012 General Directors’ Immigration Services Conference workshop on identification.

2.3.4 Immigration of International Students to the EU

Following the Commission’s report on the application of Directive 2004/114/EC¹² (the Student Directive) and in view of its amendment, this study aimed to provide an overview of the immigration policies that are being implemented by (Member) States regarding international students, with a view to assisting policymakers and practitioners to achieve a balance between actively attracting international students into the EU for the purposes of study, and preventing the misuse of international student routes to migration. The Study highlighted the impact Directive 2004/114/EC has had on national legislation, with Member States recognising the importance and added value of attracting international students. The Synthesis Report, based on contributions from 25 EMN NCPs,¹³ was published on 25/03/2013 to coincide with the Commission’s proposal for an amendment of the Student Directive. The EMN Conference 2012 served to promote the study to a wide audience of policymakers and practitioners, and shared initial findings. International students were also the focus of several national events organised by the EMN NCPs and National Networks.

2.3.5 Establishing Identity for International Protection: Challenges and Practices

The study was based on contributions from 25 EMN NCPs¹⁴. It provided, for the first time, an overview of the important challenges facing national authorities in their efforts to establish, in the absence of credible documentation, the identity of applicants for international protection (i.e. asylum and subsidiary protection) and for the return of rejected applicants. It also compiles an overview of national practices in handling these challenges, while allowing for the identification of possible steps towards further (joint) actions. The main conclusions from the study were that (Member) States use a range of different methods to establish identity, which draw upon common tools, applied flexibly or in combination, depending on the specific situation. Effective cooperation with third countries was found to be essential; collaboration with other Member States was also effective in ensuring that relevant information was shared and kept up-to-date. The study also identified effective measures to further develop and share know-how of how to determine or attribute identity, for example, via modules on identity under the European Asylum Curriculum¹⁵;

⁹ http://www.intercultural-europe.org/site/sites/default/files/7th%20EIF%20report%20static_38_597214446.pdf

¹⁰ See: register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/12/st08/st08714-re01.en12.pdf

¹¹ <http://familyreunification.eu/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/European-Website-on-Integration.pdf>

¹² COM(2011) 587 final

¹³ A contribution was provided by the Czech Republic through the National Report was not analysed. Moreover, a National Report for Malta was not taken into account due to its late submission.

¹⁴ Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom and Norway

¹⁵ The training system of the European Asylum Support Office (EASO)

guidelines; developing an EU-wide network of competence centres and sharing expertise on identity establishment to (Member) States carrying a disproportionate share of asylum applicants.

2.3.6 Intra-EU Mobility of Third Country Nationals

The purpose of this study was to act as a scoping exercise to better understand the key issues and challenges that are apparent in relation to the intra-EU mobility of third-country nationals in the different Member States. More specifically, it aims to identify the key issues on legal intra-EU mobility for third-country nationals as perceived by the different Member States, in particular the challenges/barriers which may be affecting the intra-EU mobility of third-country nationals for reasons of work or establishing business; provide an overview of the EU *acquis* and explore in particular the national rules and policy beyond the EU *acquis* of relevance to the intra-EU mobility of third-country nationals; and provide an analysis of the extent to which statistics are available on the scale of legal intra-EU mobility of third-country nationals in order to characterise, for example, current trends and patterns of mobility (who is moving where and from which Member States, reasons for mobility, nationality, skill level, duration of stay, economic sectors of interest to mobile third-country nationals). The study's underlying concern is to understand how intra-EU mobility of third-country nationals might be enhanced in order to benefit from a mobile workforce contributing to the EU's growth. It has been completed in early 2013.

2.3.7 The Organisation of asylum and migration policies in EU Member States

Several NCPs updated their National Reports for the Study on Organisation of Asylum and Migration Policies in EU Member States in 2012, to reflect recent, significant changes. Rather than create a new, lengthy synthesis report on the study, the EMN developed a series of short, accessible, two-page 'fact sheets,' one for each Member State and Norway, including an annex setting out an up to date organisational chart.

2.3.8 Individual profiles and migration trajectories of third-country national cross-border workers - the case of Luxembourg

This pilot study was undertaken by Luxembourg EMN NCP and focussed on understanding the flows of third-country national cross-border workers (TCN-CBWs) into Luxembourg, where labour migration policies have been opened to the Greater Region and the comparative advantages of job opportunities, higher salaries, social benefits and lower living costs than in the neighbouring frontier regions have proved attractive to cross-border workers. In terms of their profile, TCN-CBWs were found to be relatively young, highly skilled and enjoyed stable working conditions, under permanent full-time contracts, and had often been in the same profession for between five and ten years. TCN-CBWs appeared satisfied with their general working conditions. From the perspective of country of residence, the majority were found to be living in France (approximately 50%), Belgium and Germany (approximately 25% each). However, one issue identified was that permits for work and residence, issued by different countries, lead to anxiety where the timings of renewal were not aligned. The Report drew attention to the need for a more integrated mobility policy, for example, informing the development of transport policy in the region.

2.4 EMN Informs

EMN Informs are succinct policy briefs providing a short summary on a given topic, and, where relevant, headline statistics. The following EMN Informs were produced and distributed to a wide audience: *Visa Policy as Migration Channel*; *Practical Measures to Reduce Irregular Migration*; *Developments in Legal Migration and Mobility*; *Developments in International Protection and Asylum*; *Maximising the Development Impact of Migration and Mobility*; *Responding to Migratory Pressures*; *Misuse of the Right to Family Reunification*; *Migration and International Protection Statistics*; *Indications of the effect of the economic crisis from EU migration statistics*. Several were also translated into national languages by NCPs to make them more accessible to national network members. All EMN Informs, including their translated versions, are available on the EMN website.

2.5 Ad-Hoc Queries

EMN Ad-Hoc Queries continued to be a highly responsive mechanism for collecting comparative information from across EMN NCPs on specific, topical issues, within a short timeframe. An Ad-Hoc Query can be launched by an EMN NCP, or the Commission, with a typical response period of four weeks, after which a compilation of all responses is produced and circulated, and made publicly available on the EMN's website,¹⁶ subject to the agreement of the contributing EMN NCPs. Some 460 Ad-Hoc Queries have been launched, responding to an extensive range of migration and asylum issues which provide a valuable information resource for the Commission, EMN NCPs, and the wider public. Almost all EMN NCPs and Commission launched at least one Ad-Hoc Query, making a total of 88 in 2012, with each query attracting a response from an average of 19 individual Member States (equivalent to over 1 670 individual responses from the EMN NCPs).

The most frequent topics addressed by Ad-Hoc Queries were residence, accounting for 22% of all Ad-Hoc Queries; international protection, accounting for 21%, return representing 11%, and direct implementation of the EU *acquis* accounting for a further 10%. Other themes of note included residence, economic migration, trafficking and irregular migration. The Commission itself launched three Ad-Hoc Queries in 2012; on intra-EU mobility, launched in conjunction with the EMN focussed study; on third country national au-pairs and remunerated trainees; volunteers, school pupils and unremunerated trainees and on migration from and to the Russian Federation. The latter two Ad-Hoc Queries were used to directly feed into policy discussions at EU level on the respective topics.

2.6 EMN Glossary and Thesaurus¹⁷

The EMN's Glossary and Thesaurus Working Group, composed of EMN members and the Fundamental Rights Agency, continued its work in 2012 to finalise and publish translations of Version 2 of the glossary definitions and terms into German, Spanish, French, Italian and Portuguese. All the translated versions were finalised and published during the year. In addition, a translation of the updated glossary into a further language, Arabic, was initiated and developed during the year by the Italian NCP. The final version of the Arabic translation of the Glossary was published in 2013. Further progress was also made on the development of the EMN Thesaurus,

¹⁶ <http://www.emn.europa.eu> under "EMN Outputs: EMN Ad-Hoc Queries"

¹⁷ Available from <http://www.emn.europa.eu> under "EMN Outputs: EMN Glossary."

which will facilitate structured searching of the documents available through the EMN's Information Exchange System. Progress was also made on incorporating the EMN Glossary terms into IATE (Inter-Active Terminology for Europe).¹⁸

3 NETWORKING

Extensive networking continued in 2012, amongst the EMN NCPs themselves, and at national level, as detailed below. This has contributed to the strengthening of the network and its impacts. A more strategic approach has been adopted towards other relevant entities in the fields of migration and international protection.

3.1 Networking among EMN NCPs

Regular EMN NCP Meetings were organised and hosted by the Commission, which brought together the EMN NCPs approximately every 6-8 weeks. The meetings focused on monitoring the delivery of the outputs set out in the EMN Work Programme, and were also effective in planning (with relevant policymakers), and discussing the findings from, EMN studies and reports. Meetings were typically attended by one or two delegates from each EMN NCP.

EMN NCP workshops continued during 2012, in conjunction with formal EMN NCP meetings, and in response to identified needs. Capacity-building workshops were held for EMN NCPs to help them better understand the policymaking processes within the EU Institutions in the field of migration and international protection with the aim of assisting them in designing and developing products appropriate to these processes. The remaining workshops focussed on the implementation of the 2012 EMN studies, incorporating lessons learned and on the development of EMN Studies for 2013.

Twinning collaborations, cluster meetings and conferences hosted by individual EMN NCPs to facilitate information exchange on specific topics of common interest and to improve access to information continued in 2012, with over 30 events held in total. Many national events were additionally attended by a representative from the Commission and/or the EMN Service Provider who, for example, provided an EU overview of a specific topic which was then supplemented with examples from the hosting EMN NCP plus invitees from other EMN NCPs (see also below).

3.2 Networking at National level

EMN NCPs are required to develop and maintain a national network consisting of a wide range of relevant stakeholders, with the aim of allowing EMN NCP and Steering Board members to actively contribute to enhancing the visibility of the EMN at national level, particularly in relation to policymaking, through a wide range of activities, including the organisation of national conferences and networking events. Almost all EMN NCPs organised at least one or more national network meetings and other events involving their network partners, often in conjunction with a twinning/cluster meeting with other EMN NCPs. It was notable again in 2012 that a high number of national networking events acted as a channel for collecting and feeding a range of perspectives directly into national policy and legislative debates. EMN NCPs also used their network as a vehicle

¹⁸ <http://iate.europa.eu/>

to invite perspectives from other Member States on issues of specific national relevance, and for promoting recent EMN studies¹⁹, reports and other outputs, or to discuss upcoming ones. Other events organised included the themes of migration and development (Norway, irregular work and exploitation of migrants (Austria), the Common European Asylum System (France) and the analysis of immigration-related statistics (Italy). Other events focussed on capacity building of the EMN, for example, in relation to improving the uptake by policymakers of information collected through EMN Ad-Hoc Queries (United Kingdom).

3.3. Networking with other relevant entities

The EMN made further efforts to improve its collaborative work with other entities²⁰ during 2012, in line with its mandate to ensure that its activities are consistent and coordinated with relevant EU instruments and structures. Co-operation took the form of contributions to EMN NCP meetings and workshops, and to specific EMN studies and other outputs. A significant development in 2012 was the increase in the number of invited representatives notably from the Commission's Eurostat, the European Parliament, the Fundamental Rights Agency, the European Asylum support Office the EU Anti-trafficking Coordinator and Frontex. These developments have assisted in coordinating the EMN's work with that of other relevant entities in the fields of migration and international protection and have encouraged early engagement with policymakers in all of the EMN's outputs and products. Collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe is also being negotiated in relation to their Task Force on Circular Migration. Co-operation was also enhanced at the level of the EMN Steering Board (see section 5 below).

The EMN continued to provide contributions to the EU Immigration Portal²¹ by ensuring that the content for their Member State on the portal website was correct, reliable and up-to-date.

4. ENHANCING THE EMN'S VISIBILITY

The EMN took further steps to increase its visibility to policymakers at national and European level, and to inform the wider public about its objectives and outputs. All EMN outputs continued to be made available to the wider public, principally through the EMN website and the EMN NCP national websites, but were also presented at workshops, seminars, meetings and conferences at EU and national levels. The main activities undertaken, and progress made in 2012, are highlighted below.

4.1 EMN Conference 2012²²

The EMN Conference in 2012 took place under the auspices of the Cypriot Presidency of the Council of the European Union, on the topic of *The Immigration of International students to the EU*, which was linked to the EMN study topic of the same name. High-level speakers included Mrs

¹⁹ The EMN study on *Immigration of international students to the EU*, also the topic for the EMN Conference in 2012, attracted a great deal of interest and was discussed during events in Austria, Finland, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Sweden and United Kingdom.

²⁰ An extensive list of relevant entities is available from the EMN website (<http://www.emn.europa.eu>) under "Useful Links," as well as, with regard to other databases, under "Activities: Other Databases."

²¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/immigration/>

²² http://emn.gov.pl/portal/ese/751/8888/EMN_Conference_2011.html containing also the Conference Conclusions.

Androulla Vassiliou, European Commissioner in charge of Education, Culture, Multiculturalism and Youth and senior representatives from the Cypriot Government, Mrs Eleni Mavrou, Minister of Interior and Dr George Demosthenous, Minister of Education and Culture. The event was attended by representatives of all EMN NCPs plus delegates from international and regional organisations, including the Fundamental Rights Agency, the European Students Union, the Mediterranean Universities Union, CEDEFOP, EUROCITIES, National and International Academics and researchers, plus international students and their representatives. The published Conference Conclusions²³ reported that international students make many positive contributions by choosing to study in the EU, both for their countries of origin and for EU Member States, and that measures introduced to attract international students had been successful in shaping flows of international students, to meet specific policy priorities. However, obstacles still remained in some Member States, and overall, a careful balance needed to be applied between attracting international students to the EU and preventing the misuse of the 'student route' to migration. Along with the related EMN Study, the Conference conclusions were used to inform the work on preparing a proposal amending the Directive on the conditions of admission of third-country nationals for the purposes of studies, pupil exchange, unremunerated training or voluntary service (Directive 2004/114/EC) and the Directive on the procedures for admitting third-country nationals for the purposes of scientific research (Directive 2005/71/EC).

4.2 EMN and National Websites

The EMN website serves as the main means by which the EMN's various outputs are made publicly available. In 2012, the website was fully maintained and actively managed, ensuring regular updates. Weekly monitoring of visitors to the website continued in order to better understand the scale and scope of access and to monitor progress towards increasing the visibility of the EMN. On average, some 150 visits/day were received, an increase of almost 9% over the previous year. The analysis of website statistics has also shown that the most popular downloads were of EMN studies and the EMN Annual Policy Reports. The EMN Glossary was also very frequently visited. A web-based Information Exchange System is used to share documents with EMN NCPs, including for meetings, studies and for reference, and to share information and dissemination tools.

EMN NCPs developed and maintained their own national websites during the year, which are linked reciprocally to the EMN website and vice versa²⁴ proving effective in attracting users to review and download materials. Overall, the EU and national websites together represent considerable capacity for the dissemination and sharing on information to very wide audiences.

4.3 EMN Wikipedia Page²⁵

The EMN's Wikipedia page which has the specific aim of improving the EMN's visibility through exploiting social media, was updated to reflect the EMN Work Programme 2012 amongst other changes. The EMN Wikipedia page gives a succinct summary of the EMN, its legal basis, constitution, purpose and role, highlights its main outputs and achievements, and contains links to

²³ <http://emn.intrasoft-intl.com/Downloads/prepareShowFiles.do?entryTitle=EMN%20Conference%202012>

²⁴ Links to the various national websites are provided at <http://www.emn.europa.eu> under "EMN NCPs."

²⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Migration_Network

other relevant entities also described in Wikipedia. EMN NCPs have continued to develop their own language versions of the page, which is now available in Greek, French, Hungarian, Italian, Latvian, Netherlands, Swedish and Slovak with German, Finnish, Portuguese and Slovenian added in 2012. The language pages may be reciprocally accessed from the various translated pages.

4.4 EMN Bulletin

The *EMN Bulletin* was introduced in 2012 as a new EMN product. It targets (senior) policymakers, aiming to present, on a regular basis, the latest EU and national developments in migration policy, an overview of the latest statistics on key topics, including graphs, trends and analysis, in an accessible format, and information on and links to the most recent EMN outputs and developments. The first issue was published in June 2012, the second issue appeared in November 2012 and the third in early 2013.

5. MANAGEMENT OF THE EMN

The Steering Board met twice in 2012 (10 May and on 11 October 2012). Its role in providing strategic guidance to the EMN was further strengthened during the first meeting through an exchange of information on national and EU level on strategic priorities in the fields of migration and international protection. It also fed into the drafting of the EMN work programme for 2013, including priority themes for study topics. Contributions were also received from the EU Anti-Trafficking Co-ordinator, the European Asylum Support Office, the European Parliament and Frontex. The second meeting brought together a wide range of representatives from institutions positioned within the framework of asylum and migration policy at EU level, including for the first time, the Migration Policy Centre. A number of decisions were taken by the Steering Board during the year, in line with its remit, which included approval of the EMN Work Programme for 2013 and study topics, the indicative minimum and maximum budgets for each EMN NCP for 2013; and the EMN Status Report for 2011.

The EMN Work Programme 2013 was approved by the Steering Board for adoption by the Commission. Monitoring of the progress of EMN NCPs during the year, their impacts, and levels of spend, took place through the EMN NCPs submission of Work Progress Reports in advance of each of the six EMN NCP meetings.

The Commission and the EMN service providers met regularly during 2012 to ensure the continued smooth functioning of the EMN, including support work for the EMN NCPs, the preparation and planning of EMN Steering Board and NCP meetings, the drafting of synthesis reports, studies, EMN Informs, and the on-going development and functionality of the EMN website and Information Exchange System.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

Following the conclusions of the external evaluation of the EMN and proposals outlined in the Report on the Development of the European Migration Network²⁶ the network has responded by stepping-up to the challenges of improving timeliness, policy relevance and impact. Increasingly,

²⁶ COM(2012) 427 final

the outputs from the EMN are directly contributing to the work of policymakers who have shaped their content through early involvement at the design stage, ensuring that the information collected by the network is relevant and appropriate for take-up by policymakers. This has been particularly true for the Studies on *Misuse of the Right to Family Reunification* and *Immigration of International Students to the EU*, both of which had a direct impact on policymaking at EU level. Ad Hoc Queries have again been used to inform topical policy debates at national and EU level, and new products such as the EMN Bulletin and EMN Informs are providing timely information and statistics on topical issues on a regular basis. The Development Report called for the EMN to improve its synthesis reports, to be less descriptive and more analytical with key messages and policy implications highlighted more clearly for the target group(s). In 2012 several shorter focussed studies were developed, and key messages were highlighted and disseminated through short policy briefs, the EMN Informs.

Other issues highlighted were the fact that the development of a common EU migration policy continues to require comparative, factual information to inform policy approaches based on reliable evidence and analysis covering a wide range of perspectives, in a format that is accessible and can meet policymakers' immediate needs. The Report called for the EMN to further extend its scope of information sources in two respects: through its national networks and through its links with other relevant EU/international bodies. This requires the role of the EMN NCPs to be further enhanced so that they are each able to act as the national hub for information gathering and analysis, and for the EMN as a whole to extend its cooperation with entities such as the Migration Policy Centre; the General Directors' Immigration Services Conference; the Intergovernmental Conference on Migration and Asylum; the Organisation for Economic Cooperation & Development; the United Nations and the International Organization for Migration.

And finally, the Development Report noted the need for further change in the way the EMN outputs are presented to the wider public, in recognition of the fact that migration remains a widely debated and sometimes contentious issue in the EU, often based on misleading or incorrect information, and called for the EMN to take on this role, harnessing modern communication technologies (e.g. social media) to provide concise, factual information on a given situation, and targeting the media and other information multipliers. A role for national network members was also foreseen in this context. These development needs will continue to be addressed through the activities of the EMN during 2013.