



## Press Releases

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### Interior ministers want to work closely with countries of origin and transit on migration issues



At their informal meeting in Dresden, the interior ministers of the EU Member States announced their intent to work closely on migration issues with the countries of origin and transit at the EU's eastern and southern borders. To do so, they will look into the possibility of partnership agreements between individual Member States and third countries regarding migration and development. Further, they will examine how best to take advantage of the positive effects of circular and temporary migration between the EU and third countries. The ministers reaffirmed that protecting the common external borders and combating illegal migration remained their highest priority.

As Germany's Federal Minister of the Interior, Dr Wolfgang Schäuble, stressed, "Due to the continuing pressure of immigration to Europe, migration policy remains a high priority, at both the European and the national level. We must work closely together, and not just within Europe. To be able to control and manage immigration effectively, we also have to work with the countries of origin and transit. This is why we need a comprehensive, global approach. However, we not only need to help the third countries concerned build their own democratic systems of law enforcement, border protection or asylum; we also need to think about how we can help reduce the pressure of migration from these countries. This is also in our own interest. We must therefore examine at the European level how best to take advantage of the positive effects of circular and temporary migration between the EU and third countries.

We need to utilize the advantages offered by circular migration: for the migrants themselves, for the countries of origin and for the countries of destination. In doing so, of course, we have to take into account the different labour market conditions in the individual Member States. So managing legal migration should continue to be the responsibility of the Member States. The European Council in December 2006 already set us a series of tasks, from intensifying our dialogue on migration issues with countries of origin and transit at the southern and eastern borders, to fighting illegal migration and protecting the external borders. Today we initiated the discussion of carrying out the tasks assigned by the European Council. And we want to rapidly carry out the tasks related to intensifying the dialogue with the countries of origin on migration issues and to fighting illegal migration and protecting the external borders. During our presidency, we therefore want to define the core elements of partnership agreements between individual Member States and third countries. We need balanced agreements with these countries regarding cooperation on migration and development issues. And we must utilize the advantages offered by circular migration. Measures to promote circular migration could also serve as an incentive for developing countries to sign readmission agreements with the Union. At our meeting today, we also agreed that we need to keep working to improve protection of the Member States' external borders. This applies especially to strengthening FRONTEX. This agency should play a significant role in combating illegal migration to Europe. With this in mind, our presidency will initiate discussion of these issues at the Council level and press for action."

The ministers' discussion today focused on the conclusions of the European Council of 14–15 December 2006 regarding a comprehensive European policy on migration.

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