

Security needs of the EU call for more efficient border control and increased solidarity in asylum policy

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"During its Presidency, Finland seeks to open discussion on how to increase burden-sharing and solidarity in respect of illegal immigrants and asylum seekers in the EU. Increased burden-sharing and solidarity form an integral part of the enhanced migration management in the Union. Other significant parts of the same process include the development of the common European asylum system and common European rules on legal migration, in addition to the proposal for a border management strategy," said Finnish Minister of the Interior Kari Rajamäki at the informal ministerial meeting of Justice and Home Affairs in Tampere on 21 September.

"Southern EU Member States are facing an illegal immigration crisis. There have been indications of this development already for years. In the future, extending the Schengen area may generate such regions, in particular in south-east Europe, which will face similar situations at their land borders. Human factors and the impact of illegal immigration also require readiness to discuss matters of principle. It is obvious that in matters of this gravity Europe must be able to take collective action to assist Member States in distress. In addition, we must really introduce measures which enable us to tackle illegal immigration," Mr Rajamäki said.

"The crisis in the Mediterranean has demonstrated the importance of external relations in combating illegal immigration. At present, this is not primarily a question of border control. As people who have entered an EU country illegally cannot, as a general rule, be returned to the country of origin immediately, they will try to enter other EU countries even at the risk of their lives. Really effective measures require countries of origin to cooperate either by discouraging illegal movement or at least by readmitting their own citizens and citizens of other countries transiting the country concerned. When such agreements have been made, part of sea border control in the EU will be exercised in the way Spain and Malta have now been planning."

"Pending the development of external relations elements and independently of them, we must take action to develop our own joint system. We need EU measures which are sufficiently efficient to help our authorities to stop people from entering the EU illegally, assess the possible need for protection in accordance with our commitments under international law, and finally either issue a residence permit or return the person to the country of origin. In its recent Communication on illegal immigration, the Commission gives a detailed account of the different reasons and also outlines the measures to address the pull factors more effectively. The way one Member State implements common rules in the area of free movement affects the rest of the Union. This applies to the Schengen area in particular. Security needs of the Union, such as

combating terrorism and organised crime, for example the effective fight against human trafficking, require more efficient border control and immigration procedures in the future," Mr Rajamäki continued.

For further information, please contact State Secretary Kari Salmi, tel. +358 40 733 7085, Permanent Secretary Ritva Viljanen, tel. +358 40 503 6936, Director-General Antti Pelttari, tel. +358 50 357 7194, Director of International Affairs Jukka Savolainen (border issues), tel. +358 40 5599 346. Presidency discussion papers: Migration management; extended European solidarity in immigration, border control and asylum policies. Next steps in the development of the common European asylum system

Migration management; extended European solidarity in immigration, border control and asylum policies

Next steps in the development of the common European asylum system