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The European Union-wide biometric database EURODAC continues to ensure effective management of the Common European Asylum System

The third annual report on the activities of EURODAC was published today by the Commission. The report gives essential information on patterns of asylum seeking and illegal entry in the EU and shows that 16% of all applications in 2005 were 'multiple applications' – asylum claims where the same person has already made an application in the same country or in another Member State.

Part of the European Union's Common European Asylum System, EURODAC is an EU-wide fingerprint database for the comparison of the fingerprints of asylum seekers and illegal entrants, to help determine which Member State should examine an asylum application.

Vice-President Franco Frattini, Commissioner responsible for Justice, Freedom and Security highlighted that "without this Community-wide information technology, identifying aliens who had already lodged an asylum application in another Member State would be difficult, if not impossible. EURODAC is a fundamental tool to establish an efficient Common European Asylum System.

In 2005, EURODAC processed 187.223 sets of fingerprints of asylum seekers, 25.162 sets of fingerprints of people crossing the borders irregularly and 46.299 sets of fingerprints of people apprehended while illegally staying on the territory of a Member State.

Figures show that in 2005, the number of asylum applications decreased while the number of registered irregular entrants increased significantly. The report reveals that in 16% of the total number of cases, the same person had already made at least one asylum application in the same country or in another Member State (known as a multiple application). In some cases, several applications had been made across several EU Member States by the same person.

The EURODAC Central Unit which manages the central system was operational for 99.9% of the reporting period, operating 24/24 hours and 7/7 days.

The Commission will shortly issue a report on the evaluation of the Dublin system, which legally determines which Member State is responsible for the examination of an asylum application and makes arrangements for their return there, and of which EURODAC forms an essential part.

The Report is available at the website:

http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/fsj/asylum/identification/fsj_asylum_identification_en.htm