

Brussels, 21 September 2006

Commission earmarks around €45 million to support third countries in the field of migration and asylum in 2006

The European Commission has adopted the Aeneas 2006 Work Programme for co-financing of actions to support to third countries in their efforts to ensure more effective management of all aspects of migration flows. Aeneas has a total budget of €120 million for the 2004-2006 period of which €75 million were allocated for 2004 and 2005 actions and the remaining €45 million in 2006. This year, Aeneas will support the dialogue and the cooperation on migration and asylum issues with the countries bordering on the enlarged European Union and also with the countries, in other regions of the world (ACP, North Africa, Asia and Latin America) where asylum issues are particularly acute.

Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, who is working in close cooperation with Vice President Franco Frattini, responsible for Justice, Freedom and Security matters, and Commissioner Louis Michel, responsible for Development and Humanitarian Aid, said in the aftermath of the first meeting of the Commission Task Force on Migration¹ "We must address the root causes of illegal immigration and do all we can to equip our partners, the countries of origin or transit, with the necessary means to tackle the problems linked to migration. Aeneas is a very useful instrument to strengthen cooperation between the EU, third countries and international organisations dealing with migration. Our aim is to encourage a greater understanding of the challenges and to combine our efforts to find balanced and mutually satisfactory solutions."

In 2006 Aeneas priorities are:

- Support for the development of the legal forms of migration, and promotion of pre-departure measures enabling an easier integration in the EU legal labour market.
- Protection of migrants' rights against mistreatment, exclusion, exploitation, racism and xenophobia with focus on the fight against the traffickers of human beings.
- Promotion of international standards and best practices in the field of asylum with focus on the implementation of the Regional protection programmes.

¹ IP/06/1225: First meeting of the Commission's Task Force on Migration produces a comprehensive overview of European activities to address immigration crises

- Stemming illegal migration, both through an enhanced cooperation and activity in the field of border management and through raising awareness about the risks linked to the illegal migration.
- Improvement of the capacity of the emigrants to contribute to the development of their origin countries, through facilitating circular migration, stemming brain drain, and reducing the cost of the remittances.

Community intervention under this programme will supplement action already taken under existing national and regional strategies, to underpin readmission negotiations and to develop specific initiatives, such as cooperation between countries located on the same migration route. Unlike regional instruments, Aeneas' scope is not confined to just one region.

A budget of €4 million will be specifically committed to an action aiming at the establishment of a fair and efficient asylum process in the context of a joint project with UNHCR.

The selection of the actions to be funded under this annual work programme will mainly be made through a call for proposals which was published on EuropeAid's website on 14 September and will remain opened until 7 November 2006.

More information on the Call for Proposals is available on the website:
<http://ec.europa.eu/comm/europeaid/cgi/frame12.pl>

More information on this Programme is available on our website:
http://ec.europa.eu/comm/europeaid/projects/migrations/index_en.htm