



EUROPEAN COMMISSION - PRESS RELEASE

New report and survey give a snapshot of migration, asylum and free movement in the EU

Brussels, 1 June 2012 – Today, the Commission is publishing a Report on the 2011 developments in the areas of immigration and asylum, accompanied by a Eurobarometer on European citizens' attitudes towards cross-border mobility, migration and security. According to the survey, 8 out of 10 Europeans agree that EU Member States should offer protection and asylum to those in need and that rules for admitting asylum seekers should be the same across the EU. A large majority of Europeans (67%) think it is important to be able to travel within the EU without internal border controls.

"The figures of the Report and the result of the opinion poll support the Commission's view that the European Union needs a strong and coherent migration policy, responding both to short term and long term needs. We need to effectively manage our external borders, to safeguard free movement within the EU, to provide genuine protection to those in need whilst at the same time providing channels for legal migration and mobility", said Cecilia Malmström, Commissioner for Home Affairs.

Here are some highlights of the report and of the Eurobarometer (EB):

Legal migration

REPORT: There are some 20.2 million third-country nationals in the EU, around 4% of the total EU population (502.5 million) and 9.4% of the estimated 214 million migrants worldwide.

EB: 68% of the poll thinks that legal immigrants should have the same rights as their own national citizens. Four in ten Europeans (42%) think the EU should encourage labour migration from non EU countries to help tackle demographic challenges and labour shortages, with 46% disagreeing.

Irregular migration

REPORT: In 2011, some 343 000 persons were refused entry to the EU, a decrease of 13% from 2010. Also in 2011, some 468 500 persons were apprehended (a decrease from 2010 when it was about 505 000) and Member States returned around 190 000 third-country nationals (15% less than in 2010).

EB: Eight Europeans in ten (80%) think that the EU should increase its assistance to Member States to handle irregular migration. 78% think that the cost of handling irregular migration should be shared among EU Member States.

Integration

REPORT: in 2010, the average employment rate of third-country nationals aged 20-64 was 58.5%, compared to 68.6% of the total population aged 20-64.

EB: 53% of the poll thinks that immigration enriches EU countries economically and culturally. 60% of the Europeans believe immigrants may face integration difficulties because of discrimination.

Asylum

REPORT: In 2011 EU Member States recorded just over 302 000 asylum applications, a significant increase of 16.2% compared to 2010. This remains however far below the peak of 425 000 applications received in 2001.

EB: 80% of the poll thinks that EU Member States should offer protection and asylum to those in need. Eight Europeans in ten think that the number of asylum seekers should be more equally shared among EU Member States.

Schengen and free movement

REPORT: Some 12.7 million Schengen visas were issued in 2011, the majority in the Russian Federation (40.7%), followed by the Ukraine (8.7%), China (8.1%) and Turkey (4.7%)

EB: Just fewer than six in ten respondents (57%) agree that it should be easier for non EU citizens to travel to the EU for tourism or business. The possibility to travel within the EU without internal border controls is important for 67% of the respondents.

Background

Annual Reports on Immigration and Asylum follow the request made by the European Council when adopting the 2008 Pact on Immigration and Asylum. The third Annual Report on Immigration and Asylum (for 2011) highlights the main developments at EU and national levels to tackle these challenges, in particular to:

- Ensure that opportunities for **legal migration and mobility** respond to the needs of the EU.
- Continue work towards effective **integration** to fully benefit from the potential offered by migrants, not only in economic terms but also socially and culturally.
- Respond to **migratory pressures** through the effective implementation of existing measures to reduce irregular migration, including through dialogue and cooperation with non-EU countries, solidarity with Member States most affected plus well-functioning border controls and visa procedures.
- Achieve a **Common European Asylum System** in 2012 in order to provide protection to those who need it. Only via a coherent policy, which addresses all these aspects, can the EU fully benefit from the positive contributions of migration.

In this context, EU support through **financial assistance on migration and mobility** remains an important aspect of intra-EU solidarity and of cooperation with non EU countries (see [MEMO/12/399](#))

For more information

Third Annual Report on Immigration and Asylum:

http://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/doc_centre/immigration/docs/COM%202012%20250%20final%201_EN_ACT_part1_v5.pdf

Commission Staff Working Document accompanying the report:

http://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/doc_centre/immigration/docs/SWD%202012%20139%20final%201_EN_autre_document_travail_service_part1_v3.pdf

[MEMO/12/399](#): Financial assistance to non-EU countries in the area of migration and mobility

Eurobarometer report

http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm

Homepage of Cecilia Malmström, Commissioner for Home Affairs

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/malmstrom/welcome/

Homepage DG Home Affairs

<http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/>

European Migration Network

<http://www.emn.europa.eu>

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