



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Mrs Rodoula ZISSI

Chairwoman of the Special Standing
Committee on European Affairs of the
Hellenic Parliament

Dear Mrs Zissi,

The Commission would like to thank the Hellenic Parliament for its opinion of 30 July 2009 regarding the Commission's Communication to the European Parliament and to the Council on COM(2009)262 "An area of Freedom, Security and Justice Serving the Citizen" (the Stockholm Programme) and shares many of its concerns and views.

In the area of migration and integration, the Commission is working towards the full implementation of the European pact on migration and asylum as agreed by the European Council in July 2008.

As regards border control, the strengthening of Frontex will be among the Commission's priorities on which proposals will be presented in the beginning of the year 2010. The improved use of new technologies in border management is also among the Commission's priorities for the Stockholm programme.

One of the Union's key objectives for asylum, in the view of the Commission, is the creation of a genuine common area of protection and solidarity. The Asylum Support Office, whose role will be to support Member States in their existing efforts in this area, should therefore become operational as soon as possible.

As for the rights of victims and, in particular, victims of terrorism, the Commission considers that the current legislative framework could be improved and that practical measures should be developed to offer support to victims.

Regarding drug policy, the EU Action Plan on Drugs (2009-2012) sets out how the effectiveness of drug treatment and rehabilitation services can be enhanced through improving availability, accessibility and quality. The plan's global and balanced approach, based on the simultaneous reduction of supply and demand should be reiterated in the Stockholm Program.

The Lisbon Treaty envisages judicial cooperation in criminal matters based on the principle of mutual recognition, a general principle which should be emphasised in the Stockholm Programme. Nevertheless, the Commission agrees with the Hellenic Parliament that mutual recognition can only function if there is true mutual confidence between judicial authorities.

Therefore, we propose to enhance mutual confidence by improving contacts between judicial professionals, judicial training and evaluation of the effectiveness of the legal and political instruments which are adopted.

The Commission fully agrees with the Hellenic Parliament's considerations regarding the protection of personal data, the fight against organised crime, and particularly the sexual exploitation of children, child pornography and the fight against trafficking in human beings.

The views of the Hellenic Parliament will be taken fully into consideration as part of ongoing discussions on the Stockholm Programme, and on the action plan which is expected to be adopted under the Spanish Presidency in 2010.

Yours sincerely

Margot WALLSTRÖM
Vice-President of the European Commission