



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 13/10/2009  
C/2009/6021

Mr. Secretary General,

Thank you for bringing to our attention the Resolution of the First Permanent Committee of the Italian Senate regarding the Commission's proposal amending Council Directive 2003/9/EC laying down minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers {COM(2008)815}.

First, allow me to welcome the fact that the Committee expresses a generally favourable opinion on the Commission's proposal. Indeed, the proposal aims to guarantee improved and more equal standards of treatment during the second stage of the asylum legislation. These objectives are fully in line with the Tampere European Council Conclusions and The Hague Programme which called for the establishment of a Common European Asylum System (CEAS) that is both efficient and ensures a higher degree of protection. More recently, the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum adopted by the European Council provided further political endorsement to these objectives, by calling for initiatives to complete the establishment of the CEAS with a view to offering a higher degree of protection.

It should also be recalled that further harmonisation of reception conditions could also prevent secondary movements linked to the divergences between national reception policies.

I welcome your support for the recently adopted Commission proposal for the creation of a European Asylum Support Office. The Commission considers that the office will substantially contribute to the implementation of the CEAS by reinforcing practical cooperation between Member States, providing high-level expertise and coordinating the necessary measures in order to assist countries under particular pressure in examining applications for international protection.

As announced in the Policy Plan on Asylum adopted on 17 June 2008, the Commission is currently preparing the proposals amending respectively Directive 2004/83/EC of 29 April 2004 and Directive 2005/85/EC of 1 December 2005, in particular with a view to raising the substantive and procedural standards of protection and to ensure their consistent application throughout the EU.

Finally, I would like to reassure you that the Commission is fully committed to find a comprehensive response to the challenge posed by migration management, ensuring that international obligations are respected while preventing abuse, fighting illegal migration and assisting third countries to better manage migration flows. Equally, the Commission believes that solidarity towards those Member States who are faced with particular strong migratory pressures needs to be reinforced and is studying concrete measures which would result in a more equitable burden sharing across the Union.

I hope you find this information useful while looking forward to continuing this fruitful exchange of information.

Yours sincerely,

Margot WALLSTRÖM  
Vice-President of the European Commission

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Dott. Antonio Malaschini  
Segretario Generale  
Senato della Repubblica  
Piazza Madama  
00186 Roma