Malta Declaration
Mainstreaming of Migration in official Statistics

The Prime Minister of Malta and the European Commission’s Directorate General for Justice, Freedom and Security reported to the Conference on the ongoing development of comprehensive common migration policies for Europe. It is essential that these policies should be based on reliable statistics. The Stockholm Programme on strategic priorities in justice and home affairs for the coming five years will be adopted by Heads of State and Government later in 2009. Migration will remain a high priority issue under this Programme.

The Conference acknowledged that migration statistics must be recognised as a priority issue to be addressed by the European Statistical System.

The lines of development of an adequate system of migration statistics will have to address the need to measure the extent of migration, both flows and stocks. In addition, it also needs to be focussed on issues such as the drivers of migration and the integration of migrants within their host societies.

All these aspects require an appropriate conceptual framework to be developed, which is focussed on European needs, taking into account the global nature of the phenomenon. While addressing the needs at international level, the new conceptual framework has to encompass specific national, regional and local needs and constraints.

The challenges ahead require an integrated statistical response comprising all available tools; both surveys and administrative data have their strengths and weaknesses and should be combined to maximise the possibilities in each Member State in a cost-effective manner.

In the design of these new statistics, relevance and comparability should be key criteria of output quality. Therefore the harmonisation of concepts and definitions is very important.

As regards administrative sources, their usability has to be on the agenda as a priority for statisticians and should be recognised by policy makers and administrations. It is necessary to convince the owners of the data to permit adaptation in order to maximise their statistical potential. The legislator should facilitate the accessibility of these sources for statistical purposes. Where barriers to the use of administrative sources exist for whatever reason (e.g. data protection), innovative solutions should be found to address them.

Given the essentially cross-border nature of the phenomenon, exchange of statistical information between countries offers a considerable potential for improving statistics.

Being a key statistical issue, migration statistics need to be addressed at ESSC/PG level. The Conference calls upon the directors of social statistics to come up with a conceptual framework and draft work programme after the next DSS meeting which would be the start of a dialogue between the ESSC and the DSS.