

COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES
GENERAL SECRETARIAT

PRESS RELEASE

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MEETING OF THE MINISTERS WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMMIGRATION

Lisbon, 11 June 1992

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I. The Ministers with responsibility for Immigration met under the chairmanship of Mr DIAS LOUREIRO, Minister for Internal Affairs of the Portuguese Republic. The meeting was attended by Mr BANGEMANN, Vice-President of the Commission.

II. ABOLITION OF BORDER CHECKS

The Ministers noted the Commission representative's presentation of the communication, approved by the Commission on 8 May 1992, on the abolition of border checks.

They discussed the accompanying measures referred to in the Palma document which are designed to bring about the free movement of persons, and stressed the need to apply those measures effectively in order to maintain a sufficiently high level of security within the Community.

III. SITUATION IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

On the initiative of their colleagues from Germany and Italy, the Ministers discussed the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina and its consequences with regard to population movements.

They exchanged information on measures taken or envisaged by the Member States and the Community to deal with the situation.

They agreed to continue their contacts on the matter, in particular through the Rapid Consultation Centre, which had already met on 18 and 19 May.

IV. ASYLUM

A. Ratification of the Dublin Convention determining the State responsible for examining applications for asylum lodged in one of the Member States of the European Communities

The Ministers noted that two Member States had ratified.

As the Convention is an essential instrument for the implementation of Article 8a of the EEC Treaty, the Ministers agreed to direct their efforts towards ensuring that, if possible, all other Member States ratified the Convention by the end of 1992.

They took steps to ensure that the Convention would actually be implemented quickly following its entry into force.

B. Harmonization of asylum policies

The Ministers welcomed the progress made as regards the definition of "first host country".

In the light of certain reservations, the Ministers instructed the ad hoc Group to continue examining the issue. They also asked it to widen its discussion to the general problem of the host third country.

C. Assessment of the situation in third countries

Sound knowledge of the situation in third countries is a particularly important factor in assessing individual applications for asylum. Political Co-operation was asked to compile joint reports in order to help provide uniform documentation in this connection.

D. Centre for Information, Research and Exchange on Asylum (clearing house)

The Ministers adopted a Decision setting up the Centre within the General Secretariat of the Council. Thanks to the exchanges and contacts which will be organized within it, it will enable the objective of harmonization of asylum policy to be brought a stage nearer.

The Ministers asked the Centre to focus initially on the compulsory exchange of information resulting from the Dublin Convention.

E. Extension of the Dublin Convention

The Ministers approved a preliminary draft Convention extending the Dublin Convention to third countries as a basis for negotiations. They instructed the Presidency to establish contacts with the third countries which were particularly interested in such a Convention, especially the EFTA Member States.

F. Continuation of discussions

The Ministers asked the ad hoc Group on Immigration to continue implementing the work programme submitted to and approved by the European Council at Maastricht, bearing in mind the deadlines set.

V. EXTERNAL FRONTIERS

A. Draft Convention of the Member States of the European Communities on the crossing of external frontiers

The Ministers took note of a statement by the Presidency, informing them that it had submitted a proposal for a compromise to the countries concerned by the last issue outstanding.

These countries are at present examining that proposal, and the Ministers expressed the hope that it would soon be possible to sign the Convention.

The Ministers supported the Presidency in its intention to continue its efforts in order to reach agreement very soon.

The Ministers took note of a Commission statement emphasizing the worrying situation that would arise should this Convention - which contains numerous measures considered essential in the Palma programme - not to be signed.

B. Centre for Information, Research and Exchange on the Crossing of Borders and Immigration (CIREFI)

The Ministers called for a feasibility study on the establishment of such a Centre to be submitted for their meeting in December 1992.

VI. ADMISSION - EXPULSION

The Ministers took note of the harmonization discussions on the subject of family reunification which had been initiated as a matter of priority, and called on the ad hoc Group on Immigration to submit a draft decision to them at their meeting in December 1992. They confirmed that the purpose of the harmonization discussions was to produce common principles on the basis of which Member States would undertake to make any necessary adaptations to their national law in order to bring it into line with those principles.

VII. VISAS

The Ministers took stock of the list of countries whose nationals are subject to visa requirements, and agreed to add the following countries to that list:

Armenia	Moldava
Azerbaijan	Uzbekhistan
Belarus	Russia
Georgia	Tajikistan
Kazakhstan	Turkmeistan
Kyrgyzstan	Ukraine.

The Ministers decided to continue their consultations on the visa arrangements applicable to the Baltic States and the States which were formerly members of the Yugoslav Federation.

VIII. COMMON INSTRUCTIONS TO CONSULAR POSTS

The Ministers called for a consular manual to be drawn up, in conjunction with the bodies responsible for consular co-operation, covering in particular the requirements under the Dublin Convention and the draft Convention of the crossing of external frontiers, together with any other relevant data.

IX. EUROPEAN INFORMATION SYSTEM

The Ministers reiterated the importance they attached to the establishment of this system, which is needed to apply the Convention on the crossing of external frontiers.

X. TRAVEL DOCUMENT ABUSE

The Ministers welcomed the organization, with Commission backing, of a training seminar for instructors of staff responsible for checking travel documents.

XI. CONTACTS WITH THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The Ministers welcomed the formation within the European Parliament of a Committee on Civil Liberties and Internal Affairs and took note of a statement by the Portuguese Presidency on the contacts it had established with that Committee.

The Ministers said that, with regard to their co-operation to date as the Twelve, they had always kept their respective parliaments informed of the progress of such co-operation in the area of immigration and asylum.

Without prejudice to the application of the provisions of the Treaty on European Union, the Ministers propose to establish appropriate relations with the aforementioned parliamentary Committee.

XII. RELATIONS WITH NGOS

The Ministers noted a statement by the Presidency on the latter's talks with the Migrants Forum.

XIII. CONTACTS WITH THIRD COUNTRIES

The Ministers took note of the talks which the Presidency:

- had already held with Switzerland and Morocco;

- will be having with third countries on 12 June 1992.

XIV. NEXT MEETING

The Ministers agreed to hold their next meeting on 30 November and 1 December 1992 in London.