

MINISTERS CONCERNED

WITH IMMIGRATION

PRESS RELEASE

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At their meeting in Dublin on 15 June 1990, Ministers concerned with immigration adopted the following declaration:

Ministers of the twelve Member States concerned with immigration, together with Mr Bangemann, Vice-President of the Commission of the European Community, met in Dublin on 15 June 1990 under the chairmanship of Mr Burke, the Minister of Justice of Ireland. This was the eighth of the meetings of Immigration Ministers held towards the end of each Presidency.

Ministers reviewed events and developments since their previous meeting held in Paris on 15 December 1989, and took stock of the work which lies ahead in furtherance of the programmes of measures agreed by the European Council in Madrid in June 1989 and in Strasbourg in December 1989.

They congratulated the Irish Presidency on its efforts to further the programme of work and on the results achieved, warmly welcoming the arrangements established for informing the European Parliament.

## Asylum

The Ministers noted that the eleven Member States could now agree to a Convention setting out procedures and criteria for determining the Member State responsible for examining an application for asylum. These eleven Member States signed the Convention on 15 June. The Convention reaffirms Member States' obligations to refugees under the Geneva Convention of 28 July 1951 as amended by the New York Protocol of 31 January 1967. It will ensure that a single Member State will be identified with responsibility for examining asylum applications. In particular, the Convention will avoid the possibility of refugees being sent from one Member State to another ("refugees in orbit"). The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has been consulted upon the terms of the draft Convention and has welcomed the prospects for a constructive dialogue on this subject. The Convention forms a significant step forward in the development of co-operation between Member States in immigration matters and an essential element in the programme of measures under development in the context of Article 8a of the Treaty.

Ministers asked for work to continue also in the Ad Hoc Working Group on Immigration on an inventory of Member States' asylum policies, with a view to achieving harmonization, and resolved to pursue this matter further at their next meeting.

Ministers resolved that the fruitful contact established on asylum matters with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees should be maintained. They also agreed upon the importance of adequately explaining to public opinion the measures developed in this field, so as to avoid misconceptions, and of taking into account concerns expressed.

## Developments in Central and Eastern Europe

Ministers took note of the momentous changes which have been made and are continuing to take place in Central and Eastern Europe and resolved to adjust their policies as appropriate in response to these developments. As announced following the meeting of the General Affairs Council in May, Member States have jointly decided to lift their visa requirements for the German Democratic Republic. Member States' visa requirements for other countries will be kept under active review.

## Draft Convention on the crossing of external borders of the Member States of the Community

This draft Convention is designed to secure uniform standards of control at the external borders of Member States in relation to persons wishing to enter the Community for a short stay, and a further degree of co-operation between Member States in matters concerning visas. The latter could, inter alia, facilitate travel of visa nationals to more than one Member State by reducing present formalities which require a separate visa for each country visited.

The European Council meeting at Strasbourg in December 1989 requested that efforts should be made to conclude a Convention by the end of 1990. Discussions on the draft Convention have continued under the Irish Presidency and are to be carried further forward before the end of June. Ministers expressed their wish, now that work on the Asylum Convention is successfully concluded, that the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Immigration should now be concentrated on the External Borders Convention so that it could be concluded in accordance with the wishes of the European Council.

During the discussions on this draft Convention Member States will define the rules for a system of information exchange on non-admissible persons. Proposals for a multilateral agreement on re-admission will also be examined.

#### Other immigration matters

Ministers discussed the growing importance of immigration issues in the Member States, and exchanged information about the measures taken by member States to combat illegal immigration. They also exchanged information on ways and means of ensuring the satisfactory integration of legal immigrants in their host societies. They took note of the work under way, at the request of the Strasbourg European Council, to complete an inventory of national positions on immigration with a view to further discussion between Member States on this issue.

#### Contacts with the European Parliament

Ministers reiterated their intention of keeping public opinion informed of the principles involved in the policies they were following.

In particular, Ministers expressed satisfaction at the procedure for contacts with the European Parliament recommended by the Co-ordinators' Group on the Free Movement of Persons and adopted by the Council (General Affairs) at its meeting on 7 May.