



Migration Matters

Commissioner Antonio Vitorino is to make a keynote speech at the Zaragoza Round Table on 'Migration and Cultural Identity'. Spanish Socialist Party leader José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero and Aragon Government leader Marcelino Iglesias will open the Round Table at 10h30 on 16 February in the Congress Palace. Former Spanish Premier Felipe González, President of the Global Progress Foundation, will lead the first discussion on 'Diversity and Cultural Identity'. Participants in a second discussion on 'Immigration and New Citizenship' will include Portuguese Secretary of State for the Interior Carlos Zorrinho. Swedish Secretary of State for Home Affairs Gun-Britt Andersson and Andalucía's Home Affairs Minister Alfonso Perales will lead discussion on 'A Common European Immigration Policy' from 10h00 on 17 February. EP Socialist Group leader Enrique Baron and Vice-President of the Party of European Socialists, Trinidad Jiménez will present the Round Table's conclusions at 12h30. MEPs taking part in the Round Table include EP Vice President Luis Marinho of Portugal, Sami Nair of France, Anna Terron of Spain and Anna Karamanou of Greece.

European Union acts on migration policy TOUGH BUT HUMANE

The European Commission is to propose common European standards for expulsion, detention and deportation of illegal immigrants as part of a package of immigration measures aimed at being 'efficient and humane'.

Commissioner Antonio Vitorino announced the move on the eve of the European Socialist and Social Democrat Round Table on 'Migration and Cultural Identity' in Zaragoza, Spain.

Writing in this issue of The Round Table, Mr Vitorino describes zero immigration policies as 'definitely no longer feasible' and points to Europe's need for the workforce provided by migrants.

He says: 'A key element is the fight against illegal immigration, trafficking of human beings and economic exploitation of migrants. To ensure this goal, information campaigns in



Positive new measures will combat exclusion of migrants

countries of origin and transit are being developed and further co-operation is expected on visa policy and false documents, ensuring more effective controls of the Union's present and future external borders.'

Since last year, EU migration policy has focused on four key elements: part-

nership with countries from which people travel to the EU; creation of a common European asylum system; fair treatment of third country nationals; and management of migration flows.

Integration programmes at local and national level, he writes, are helping to fight

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Premiers Round The Table Again

Prime ministers, party leaders, policy experts and senior European politicians will this week resume the European Socialist and Social Democratic programme of policy Round Table debates on key issues for the 21st century.

Three themes are to be addressed in the run-up to May's Berlin Congress of the Party of European Socialists:

'Immigration and Cultural Identity' on 16 and 17 February in Zaragoza, Spain; 'The Knowledge Economy, Education and Employment in Europe' on 23 and 24 February in Athens; and 'New Economy, New Social Challenges' on 6 March in Mons and, via a high-tech link, simultaneously in Antwerp, Belgium.

New Migrant Rules for Europe

By European Home Affairs Commissioner
Antonio Vitorino

With the adoption of the Amsterdam Treaty, the Union was finally allowed to take initiatives to create an Area of Freedom, Security and Justice.

At the European Council of October 1999 in Tampere, government leaders stated their will to create this area and expressed very clearly their firm political commitment to deal with citizens' daily problems.

Immigration policy fits naturally into this field. For the first time in the history of the European Union, it is no longer a subsidiary of the policies related to free movement of people: direct measures are being taken under chapter IV of the EU Treaty.

Lack of intervention in these matters characteristic of recent decades made the situation worse: on the one hand, immigration policies were often

'.. zero policies are definitely no longer feasible.'

confused with those on asylum and refugees and, on the other hand, illegal immigration kept growing, with all the adverse consequences that result.

Nowadays, facing the fact that migration movements deeply influence economic and social life and that Europe needs the labour force provided by migrants, zero policies are definitely no longer feasible. New rules are being set up so that controls can be put into place in this field, guaranteeing better conditions both to migrants and to native societies.

In November 2000 the Commission approved a communication on EU migration policy. It supported common action in this area based on the economic and demographic situation in the Union, the situation in the origin countries and their historic and cultural links with member states and the conditions for receiving migrants that prevailed in each country.

A new framework was established based on four main questions: partnership with countries of origin, creation of a common European asylum system, fair

treatment of third country nationals and management of migration flows.

It is now clear that an integrated approach must be promoted so that migrants and local communities can easily adapt to one another. Cultural differences exist and must be respected. But common values are always in the first line – for instance, respect for human rights and democratic system. Both migrants and native populations must be aware of the rights and obligations that community life entail.

That is the reason why integration programmes are being developed at national, regional and local levels, offering, for example, language courses and information about members states' political and social structures or allowing migrants living legally in a country after a few years to have equivalent rights and obligations to those of national citizens. Investment in this field will contribute to avoiding social exclusion, xenophobia and racism, which deeply affect migrant communities.

Co-operation between all members states, third countries and NGOs is crucial so that all the initiatives proposed by the Commission can be implemented.

Management of migration flows also involves co-operation with the countries of origin and transit and a specific approach for each country must be developed, as has happened already with six

'A key element is the fight against illegal immigration, trafficking . . .'

action plans for co-operation and co-development with third countries.

A key element is the fight against illegal immigration, trafficking of human beings and economic exploitation of migrants. To ensure this goal, information campaigns in countries of



Vitorino: keynote speaker at Zaragoza

origin and transit are being developed and further co-operation is expected on visa policy and false documents, ensuring more effective controls of the Union's present and future external borders.

Priority is also given to conditions of admission and residence – a draft directive on the right to family reunification has been proposed by the Commission – and to the voluntary return of persons who are refused admission to a Member State or who have no longer the right to remain in the EU.

The best instruments to facilitate returns are readmission agreements and the Council has recently allowed the Commission to negotiate with four countries: Russia, Morocco, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

There is also the intention to establish common standards for expulsion decisions, detention and deportation, which should be both efficient and humane and the Commission will soon bring forward proposals on these matters.

Immigration is nowadays the main factor in demographic growth in the Union and has undoubtedly a role to play in its economic and social future. We can no longer ignore this fact and the Commission can ensure that the necessary support will be given in order that an indubitable area freedom of security, and justice can be achieved.

Development of a Common European Asylum and Migration Policy

The EU member states are in the middle of the most extensive legal harmonisation since the internal market: the development of a common European asylum and migration policy.

Issues concerning asylum and migration evoke strong feelings. Some fear mass influx of immigrants, whereas others on the contrary are concerned that the EU is building a "fortress" around its borders and that the member states are getting too repressive in attempting to control migration. Both these rather extreme views are wrong.

I think we should see the absolute right to asylum and other forms of protection for people who have had to flee from persecution, war or torture as a backbone of a more wide-stretching EU migration policy. I also think we should have rules that open for some immigration to our countries. I think the development of a multicultural society – though not free from frictions – will enrich our societies in a positive way.

My long term vision is a world where we in principle can have free movement across borders. But we are not there yet, and for the foreseeable future, we need to regulate immigration to our countries. Otherwise, the strains on the systems of our present societies would be too strong – both for countries of emigration and of immigration.

A common European asylum and migration system serves three main purposes:

- That asylum seekers, refugees and others in need of protection, and other presumptive immigrants know that they will have their applications

**By Maj-Inger Klingvall
Swedish minister for
migration and asylum
policy**

screened in a similar way and get a good reception no matter which country they go to.

- A more even distribution of responsibility for asylum seekers between the member states could be achieved if reception conditions and asylum and immigration procedures and rules are similar throughout the union. In such a case it wouldn't matter which country an application is handed in.

- Common standards on a high level is a way for the EU countries to confirm their international responsibilities and values, such as solidarity, humanity and the rule of law.

Around Europe, illegal immigration is seen as a big problem. First of all, it is important to clearly state that a person who seeks asylum is not an illegal immigrant. The right to seek and enjoy asylum from persecution is a human right. Secondly, the best way to counter smuggling in human beings and irregular immigration is to help strengthen asylum systems and administrative and legal frameworks for orderly migration in the candidate countries and other so-called transit coun-



tries of Eastern Europe and in the Mediterranean region. Then, those who are really in need of protection, will be able to get it in more countries. And those who have other purposes are prevented from misusing the asylum system.

In the end, the best way to deal with involuntary migration is to do something about the root causes. A common European asylum and migration system should of course also include a strengthening of efforts made in the countries of origin, by linking migration with development co-operation, external relations, conflict prevention, etc in a holistic perspective.

Finally, I warmly welcome the last year's debate on the emerging needs of labour migration in to our countries. As shortages on the labour market occur in some sectors, and a more far-reaching demographic change develops – with an ageing population who needs to be supported by a smaller labour force – a controlled increase of immigration is interesting to look at. This could, in fact, be a way to secure both economic growth and a sustainable welfare in the years to come. As a Social Democrat, I think that any discussion on increased immigration should be accompanied by policies that guarantee everyone equal rights, and that firmly oppose social dumping.

Tough but Humane

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social exclusion, xenophobia and racism. The Commission has already proposed a draft directive on family reunification.

Readmission agreements, he adds, are the best way of ensuring the voluntary return of people refused admission or no longer entitle to stay in the EU. Talks are now in hand with Russia, Morocco, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Mr Vitorino adds: 'There is also the intention to establish common standards for expulsion decisions, detention and deportation, which should be both efficient and humane and the Commission will soon bring forward proposals on these matters.'

Bridge Over EU Digi-Divide

Fears that the knowledge economy will create new divisions in the EU and its enlargement countries are to be explored at an international Round Table conference in Athens on 23 and 24 February.

EU government ministers and senior politicians will be joined by business leaders and university professors for talks on "The Knowledge Economy, Education and Employment in Europe."

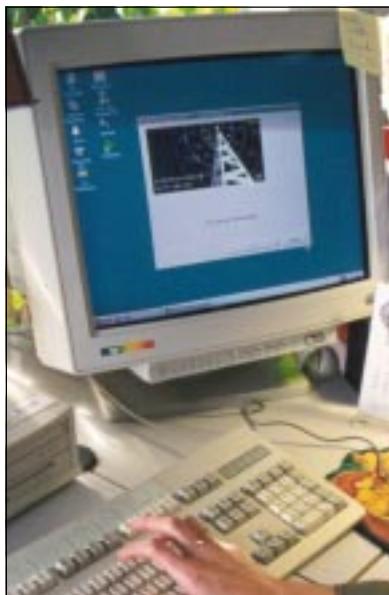
Greek Premier Costas Simitis and the former French and Italian Prime Ministers Michel Rocard and Massimo d'Alema will be among keynote speakers at the Round Table organised by European Socialists and Social Democrats in the Zappion Megaron.

A press conference will take place at 13h15 on 24 February.

Greek Socialist Party PASOK's general secretary Costas Skandalidis and the vice-president of the Party of European Socialists, Akis Tsohatzopoulos, the Greek defence minister, will open the discussions at 14h30 on 23 February.

Microsoft's Director General, Greece, John Rontiris, will be among speakers in the first discussion on 'The Challenge of the Knowledge Economy and Globalisation' from 15h15 to 17h15.

European Commissioner Anna Diamantopoulou, Greek employment minister Anastassios Giannitis and



Tapping into new digi-jobs

include Serbian deputy Prime Minister Zarko Korac and Greek development minister Nikos Christoloulakis.

European Parliament Socialist Group leader Enrique Baron and PASOK international secretary Paraskevas Avgerinos will present the Round Table conclusions at 12h45.

Senior MEPs taking part in the talks Mr Baron of Spain include Greek delegation leader Georgios Katiforis; Rolf Linkohr of Germany; Group spokesman on social affairs Stephen Hughes of the UK; Group spokeswoman on women's rights Lissy Groener of Germany; Marie-Helene Gillig of France; Myrsini Zorba of Greece; and Greek labour law professor Ioannis Koukiadis.

Presser

The Athens Round Table press conference at 13h15 on 24 February in the Zappion Megaron will be taken by PES Vice-President Akis Tsohatzopoulos, Socialist leader in the EP Enrique Baron, PASOK Secretary General Costas Skandalidis and PASOK delegation leader in the EP Giorgios Katiforis.

Trump Trumped

"If globalization is seen as the enemy to progress, we will all be losers. The Pope is right: if you want peace, work for justice". Sweden's UN Ambassador Pierre Schori, a former Socialist Group member, in a letter to Donald Trump contrasting the values of his New York Trump Tower where homes cost up to \$14 million each with those of the nearby UN building.

Anne Rebutts Welfare Fears

Fears that globalisation threatens EU welfare systems were refuted at the Stockholm Round Table. Belgian MEP Anne Van Lancker said that in production, trade and consumption, Europe was no more globalised than 20 years ago. 'Only 10 per cent of total GDP is global trade,' she said, 'the same as in the US.'

The EU has a surplus in trade and in current account where the US has a permanent deficit despite its much less developed welfare system.

'It simply is not true that social protection systems are a heavy burden destroying Europe's ability to compete. Global trade is not the problem. The problems relate to internal factors and political mismanagement inside Europe.'

Ms Van Lancker said EU welfare systems have created many of their own problems. 'By improving standards of living and life spans, they have created new needs that social services and social protection systems originally were not designed to meet.'

She called for better co-ordinated tax policies to build sustainable and modern labour market and social protection systems.

How to obtain a regular copy of 'The Round Table'

'The Round Table' is a newsletter published jointly by the Party of European Socialists and the Parliamentary Group of the Party of European Socialists in the European Parliament.

The newsletter will provide advance information about upcoming discussions and summarise the key points of those that have taken place.

To obtain a regular copy of 'The Round Table' please fax Brussels +322-2849026 or e-mail the editor Tony Robinson – TRobinson@europarl.eu.int