



28 June 2010

MEETING BETWEEN BUSINESSEUROPE'S DIRECTOR GENERAL PHILIPPE DE BUCK AND COMMISSIONER FOR HOME AFFAIRS, CECILIA MALMSTRÖM

BUSINESSEUROPE's position on immigration policies – general overview

In view of the shrinking and ageing of the work force, immigration is important to ensure the competitiveness of European companies. In many Member States, companies are already facing skills shortages that hamper economic growth. Facilitating legal migration is one component in addressing these consequences of demographic change.

The added value of EU action lies in promotion of unbureaucratic, rapid and transparent procedures for entry, residence and work of third-country nationals. At the same time, it is the competence of Member States to decide on volume of immigration and on certain issues related to admission criteria (level of qualification etc.). The principle of subsidiarity should be respected.

Stockholm programme: upcoming proposals

In April, the Commission published its implementation plan for the Stockholm programme, which sets out the priorities for the European area of freedom, security and justice for 2010-2014. With respect to immigration, the main general focus is on consolidating a genuine European immigration policy and, more specifically, two important legislative proposals:

- *A proposal for a Directive on intra-corporate transferees (ICT)*

The ability of companies to redeploy staff from a territory outside the EU to the territory of one or more Member States is increasingly important for business. Multinational companies need to transfer key competencies from one affiliate to another for a certain time to undertake specialised work, meet customer demand and be able to make efficient use of human resources. The current complex and lengthy national procedures for admission of such intra-corporate transferees are imposing large costs for companies.

The upcoming proposal should not be too restrictive as to who would count as an intra-corporate transferee. A requirement of a 12-month employment within the company prior to a transfer fits badly with the needs of companies.

- *A proposal for a Directive on seasonal workers*

Sectors such as agriculture, tourism or construction face difficulties in recruiting workers to cope with the seasonal variation of activities. The EU level should seek to establish a coherent, flexible and efficient framework within which Member States can



manage the immigration of third-country nationals, including seasonal workers. Member states should be allowed to apply their national procedures regarding the requirements for filling a vacancy. However, it is crucial that employers' federations are fully involved in the assessment of labour market needs for seasonal workers.

Key messages from the business community:

- Companies need to be able to redeploy their staff efficiently and quickly; the upcoming ICT is important in this respect. The requirement of previous employment within the company for ICT should not be more than 6 months.
- Employers' federations should be fully involved in the assessment of labour market needs for seasonal workers.
