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## **Swedish Presidency of the European Union**

### **Decisions taken in the JHA Council during the Swedish Presidency**

#### **The Stockholm Programme**

Based on the vision of a safer and more open Europe, in which individual rights are safeguarded, the Presidency's ambition was to adopt a programme in the area of justice, known as the Stockholm Programme. This programme will guide EU justice, police and migration cooperation over the next five years and highlights inter alia:

- **Safeguarded integrity:** The individual's integrity and right to privacy are more clearly in the spotlight.
- **Greater legal security:** Efforts to strengthen legal security for crime suspects and to protect personal data are being intensified. Greater cooperation: Cooperation among Member States to jointly combat serious cross-border crime, such as human trafficking and drug smuggling, is being strengthened.
- **Asylum system ambition:** In the area of migration, a clear position is being adopted on the creation by 2012 of a common asylum system that is both legally secure and efficient.

#### **Justice and home affairs issues**

- **Strengthening the rights of crime suspects:** For the first time, the EU has made progress regarding the strengthening of the rights of suspects in criminal proceedings. Unsuccessful efforts have been made since 2004. As a first step, ministers agreed on an instrument entitling crime suspects to information and language interpretation. Furthermore, decisions have been taken on how we should try to strengthen legal security over the next five years. This includes aspects such as the right to legal representation.
- **More stringent penal law to combat human trafficking:** Consensus has been reached on more stringent penal regulations against human trafficking. The concept of human trafficking is being extended to include more cases than today whilst punishments are being increased on the EU level. In addition to this, the EU has agreed on

an action-oriented plan for how cooperation with non-EU countries shall be pursued in the fight against human trafficking. The aim is to prevent people falling victim to human trafficking at an early stage.

- Better information exchange for more efficient crime-fighting: A strategy for how to make information exchange among crime-fighting authorities more efficient and legally secure has been adopted. Protection of the individual's personal data shall be strengthened.
- Visa exemptions: The decision on visa exemptions for FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia sends a strong signal about the EU perspective adopted by each of these countries.
- Support office for asylum issues: Under the guidance of the Swedish Presidency, the Council has reached agreement on the establishment of an asylum support office in Valletta, Malta. The support office is important to ensure the smooth running of the common asylum system.
- The common asylum system: We have made crucial progress in the negotiations on the common asylum system.
- Action plan for non-accompanied children: On a Swedish initiative, the European Commission has tasked the Commission to draft an action plan containing concrete measures to solve the problem of non-accompanied children. Non-accompanied children are a growing problem in many EU countries, not least in Sweden.