



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL HOME AFFAIRS

Director-General

Brussels, 24 DEC 2011  
HOME/02/VA

**Subject: Information request on the mission of the International Centre for migration Policy Development in relation with the visa liberalisation for the Western Balkans**

Dear Mrs Waringo,

Thank you for your letter of 12 November 2011 requesting information on the mission of the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) in relation to visa liberalisation for the Western Balkans.

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the importance of the respect for human rights in the framework of the visa dialogues with the Western Balkan countries. This was one of the benchmarks of the Visa Liberalisation Roadmaps and remains an indispensable element of the post-visa liberalisation monitoring mechanism. The Commission continues to assess the sustainability of the reforms in this area carefully and to pay particular attention to the implementation of the recommendations of international organisations in the area of human rights.

As regards the similarity between the measures adopted by the Western Balkan countries aimed at decreasing the number of unfounded asylum seekers and limiting the abuse of visa free regime, I would like to clarify that this is a logical consequence of the consistent message that the Commission is sending to the Western Balkan countries.

The two Commission Staff Working Papers on post-visa liberalisation monitoring for the Western Balkan countries, issued this year<sup>1</sup>, identify areas where measures need to be put in place in order to tackle the increase of unfounded asylum applications. The areas of measures have been discussed at different levels, e.g. Ministerial Forums, Senior Officials meetings and meetings at technical level. Within this context, the Commission is encouraging the exchange of best practices between the Western Balkan countries.

The Commission has not given a particular mandate to the ICMPD to assist the governments of the countries concerned. However, this does not exclude the possibility for the authorities of the Western Balkan countries to be in contact with ICMPD and to cooperate on related matters.

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<sup>1</sup> SEC (2011)695 and SEC (2011)1570

As regards your requests for further information in the areas of measures, statistical data and analysis, I would like to invite you to consult the Commission Staff Working Papers mentioned above.

Yours sincerely,



Stefano Manservigi