

FRENCH-BRITISH SUMMIT OF JULY 6 TH, 2009

DECLARATION ON IMMIGRATION

The situation on the Channel and North Sea coast of France is of concern due to the continued migratory pressure resulting from the presence of significant numbers of irregular migrants attempting to reach British territory.

The consequences of this situation in French port towns with sea links with the United Kingdom, especially in security and humanitarian terms, call for a determined, mutually supportive effort by France and the United Kingdom, in the spirit of solidarity and co-operation based on shared interest.

The French and British governments solemnly reaffirm their commitment to combating illegal immigration, which is a challenge for both countries and the entire European Union.

The responsibility of France and the United Kingdom in this field derives from the bilateral relationship between the two countries, but also reflects their obligations within the European Union. In this regard, the French and British governments are mindful of their commitment to implement the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum, by taking the necessary measures at national level, seeking all possible forms of bilateral co-operation and encouraging the most effective use of all European legislative and operational instruments.

1) At national level, the French and British governments reaffirm their intention to take resolute action to reduce the pull factors for illegal immigrants and the criminal networks, especially by striving to eliminate undeclared work on their territory, which cannot be tolerated in any way, and by determinedly implementing policies for returning migrants, through voluntary and enforced means, to their countries of origin.

2) At bilateral level, the French and British governments undertake to:

- Effect a significant increase in enforced returns and reintegration of illegal migrants to their countries of origin or transit, including: national programmes for effecting significant numbers of enforced returns of key nationalities; joint returns activity as appropriate; and exchanging best practice and expertise, including the negotiation of readmission agreements.

- Systematise operational co-ordination in action against illegal immigration networks, especially by exchanging information, conducting joint cross-channel police operations, and working together upstream in Europe and countries of source and transit. A joint intelligence centre charged with the exchange and operational use of information and intelligence, and the co-ordination of its tasking, will be established in Kent (United Kingdom) with a view to becoming operational by August 2009.

- Develop joint programmes to implement significant numbers of voluntary returns and provide dissuasive information for migrants in their countries of origin or transit.

- Engage in joint diplomatic action in pursuit of the above bilateral activity.

3) At European level, the French and British governments will act together to:

- Promote a European policy, in accordance with the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum, of firmness and solidarity based on the determined commitment of member

countries of the European Union to combat illegal immigration and the criminal networks that organize it and exploit migrants, as well as to construct a Europe of asylum.

- Strengthen the operational role of Frontex, in the spirit of the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum, especially through developing operational co-operation between Frontex and third countries, establishing joint European return flights and ensuring adequate resources.

- Co-ordinate their positions when negotiating the "asylum package", which is to constitute the basis of the common European asylum system, with the aim of increasing practical co-operation via the European asylum support office, and ensuring protection for those in need.

- Initiate innovative forms of co-operation between the European Union, transit countries and the High Commissioner for Refugees, by building on the EU's Regional Protection Programmes.

- In the spirit of European solidarity, and under the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum, assist those European countries most affected by migratory pressure.

- Develop co-operation with third countries, of origin or transit, and with a specific focus on key North and West African countries, including through co-development and capacity-building measures as well as conclusion and implementation of readmission agreements, within the Global Approach to Migration that represents the European Union's roadmap according to the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum.

4) The French and British governments will also strengthen security at their shared border, particularly with a view to making it impervious to illegal immigrants and immigration networks, by:

- Putting in place the latest and most appropriate technology, as well as the most efficient and systematic forms of co-ordination, in the context of a fair sharing of all operational activity and costs.

- Strengthening their joint control arrangements at the ports and stations serving the other country, building on existing bilateral obligations and any new future requirements.

- Evaluating together the development of migratory threats and routes, including considering the possible future need for new joint controls.

- Supporting, if necessary, the relocation of UK Border Agency staff to Northern France to deliver increased efficiency of staffing of controls at the shared border.

The administrative arrangement signed today by the Minister for Immigration, Integration, National Identity and Co-development, for the French government, and by the Home Office Minister of State for Borders and Immigration, for the British government, establishes the conditions for strengthening the common border