HUMAN RESOURCES IN EUROPEAN MARKET IN THE PAST DECADE A SOCIOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

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European market is known to pay particular importance to characteristics of human resources in the past decade. It is well known that these features such as unemployment rate caused deep economic and social crisis encountered in the EU member countries by the end of the last decade and continue today in most of them. The forecasts of the experts which state that crisis will last 5 to 7 years have been considered promising but still with suspicion. That is why it is extremely important that policy-makers should not lose sight in making economic, social and political decisions where the balance is always fragile in terms of interdependence of the labor market.

***Keywords*:** European market, human resources, monthly salary, number of employees, purchasing power parity (PPP), relocation-outsourcing, unemployment rat

INTRODUCTION

A short retrospective on the labor market in EU countries in the past half-decade

In most countries of Central and Eastern Europe people work more hours per week than in West European countries. In itself, this indicator is not relevant. In conjunction with security systems, less permissive than the Western ones and with much lower wages, it shows that Eastern workforce brings higher profits. The difference between the minimum wages in the economy of the old Member States and those of the new EU Member States constitutes a negative argument in favor of competitiveness of less-developed economies in the EU. Citizens of the new EU Member States are working more than those in the EU-15 to buy the same products: for example a Dutch works 16-minute for a Big Mac, 9 minutes for a loaf of bread and also 9 minutes for a kilo of rice; To the Czech citizen it takes 40 minutes for a Big Mac, 17 minutes for the bread and 16 minutes for a kilo of rice; The Polish needs, 17, and a 15-minute work to buy these products. Romanians, prospective members, are at the worst end; They work 76 minutes for a Big Mac , 22 minutes for a loaf of bread, and for a kilogram of rice, 20 minutes.

A Danish employee earns 50 times more than a citizen of the Republic of Moldova. Classified somewhere in the middle, Maltese are paid five times worse than employees in Denmark; in terms of the hourly wage, Malta is on the third position among the 10 countries that joined the EU on the 1st of May 2004, outrun in this regard only by Cyprus and Slovenia. Only the Portuguese are paid worse than the average, "of those ten", indicate the statistics. For a single skill, for example, workers in Luxembourg, Germany, Sweden, Netherlands, Italy and the United Kingdom have average salaries three times higher than the Maltese. Switzerland, Norway, Liechtenstein and Denmark are, according to the same polls, at the upper end in terms of hourly wages that they are paid, and the lowest remunerated workers are those in the Ukraine, Albania and the Republic of Moldova, who earn 50 times less than the top of the list.

Active policies in the area of human resources are the solution for the flexibility of the respective labor market. An active policy, which includes investments in training and improving human resources and development of skills, career advice, could bring incalculable benefits to the labor market. In the EU Member States who have invested in an active policy, job vacancies are occupied more quickly, and the wages are more responsive to market demand. It is also noted the greater flexibility of jobs, such as those of part-time or fixed-term positions. Vladimir Spidla, European Commissioner for employment and Social Affairs, emphasizes that, although its doubling has been achieved, the rate of employment of the unemployed in the EU, of 0.6 percent, ranks after that of the United States, which is 1.1 percent. Among European countries, The Netherlands, Ireland, Sweden, Denmark and Belgium are examples of successful implementation of active labor market policies.

However progress has not been uniform in all EU member countries. If Spain managed to reduce disparities, in Poland they were stressed. According to Eurostat, in 2005, the regional unemployment rate in the EU lies between 1.5 and 20.4 percent. Eurostat statistics show that between 1995 and 2004, the largest decline in the structural unemployment was registered in the United Kingdom (3 percent), and then in Greece, Spain, France, Italy and Finland (2 percent). Unemployment rates in major EU member countries were, in increasing order of these rates: a) 4.4 percent (in April 2005) in Japan: the lowest level of unemployment in this country, registered in the last six years; analysts foreseeing to keep the unemployment rate at 4.5 percent. The unemployment rate for women has increased from 4.2 to 4.3 percent and decreased for men, from 4.7 to 4.5 percent. The number of unemployed in Japan reached 3.1 million in April 2005, with 250,000 less than in

2004, while the number of employees remained stable 63,520,000 people. The number of workers who left their job voluntarily in hopes of finding a better commitment has increased compared to 2004, with 50,000 individuals, reaching 1.11 million people. This increase in the number of employees, seeking the best opportunities for career development, slows the unemployment decline; b) 5.2 percent in the United States (April 2005) and 5.1 percent in May 2005; 7.5 percent in Portugal; c) 10.2 percent in France (in May 2005), the third largest economy in Europe; It represented the highest rate of unemployment in the Hexagon in the last 6 years; in March 2005, the French Parliament passed a controversial reform of the labor code, which allows increasing the number of hours of work, submitted by each employee on a weekly basis, from 35 to 48 hours, the maximum permitted under EU rules; d) 12 percent in Germany (in March 2005), the first of Europe's economy; It was the highest registered unemployment rate after the second world war, the slight drop in the following months; in June 2005 there was an unemployment rate of 11.7 percent, which means about 5 million Germans out of work. The main causes of the high unemployment rates are: the decrease for many years of the economic growth, and the delocalization-outsourcing (moving of some departments of production of several companies in Asia and in South-Eastern Europe, where labor cost is low).

Between 1997 and 2004, the unemployment rate in the EU-10 has risen to 5.5 percent, reaching even the "performance" of 8.5 percent in Lithuania, Poland and Slovakia. Between 1997 and 2004, unemployment fell by 2 percent in Spain, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Hungary and Finland. Implemented active policies have resulted in improving the labor market in Denmark, Spain, Netherlands, United Kingdom and Hungary, where the unemployment rate has fallen, and the vacant jobs have been occupied more quickly. In 2004, more than 92 million Europeans were inactive, and 19 million were unemployed. Of the 92 million, 14 percent were able and willing to work. Inactive people are generally between the ages of 15 and 64, do not work, are not registered as unemployed and are outside of the labor market due to improper preparation requirements, education, family responsibilities or impaired abilities. Due to these factors, the rate of inactive people sometimes reaches 30 percent among the population able to work. In spite of the implemented policies, France, Italy, Poland, Germany and Spain have to lose due to the fairly limited incentives for those entering or returning to the labor market. A study in May 2006 by the Saratoga Institute reveals substantial differences recorded between European countries and the US for every US dollar invested in an employee for the period of a year, while in the US the benefit earned is $ 1.48, in the Central and Eastern European countries, including Romania, employers generate 1.36 dollars for every dollar they receive, in one form or another, from the company.

The situation above reflects large differences between European States and the US concerning salaries and hourly labor productivity, as well as different levels of commitment of human resources. We appreciate that the common law, the policies applied and direct investment assets will help to reduce these discrepancies, but the phenomenon will occur on the medium and long term. Some progress has been registered in the area of the strengthening of the market and improving EU employment indicators, but still remains to be done in order to enhance the competitiveness of the European economic bloc toward the American represented by USA, in order to increase the number of jobs, and for protecting the environment from the related effects of human action on it. EU Member States must take the path of economic reforms in a more convincing manner if they want to reach the ambitious targets in terms of competitiveness and jobs, as established by the revised Lisbon Agenda.

On the 1 of January 2004, the lowest level of the average monthly wage in the EU countries before enlargement was recorded in Portugal - 498 Euros per month, with only 3 Euros less than that of Spain, ahead of which was Greece with 605 euro, Ireland-1073, United Kingdom-1083 euro, France-1 173 euro, Belgium 1.186 euro, Netherlands-1 265 Euros and Luxembourg-1 403 euros. Among the new members, admitted in the EU on 1 May 2004, Malta, was best situated with an average monthly salary of 546 euro, followed by the Czech Republic-207 euros, Hungary-191 euros, Poland-177 euro, Estonia-159 euro, Slovakia-148 euros, Lithuania-125 euro, Latvia-120 euros. In Bulgaria, the minimum wage reaches the level of 61 euros, in Romania-69 euros, while in Turkey, the country which hopes to be admitted into the EU, reaches 240 euro/month.

In a report presented in Brussels, at the end of January 2005, the European Commission showed that the Member States should engage in a more resolute manner in which reforms should boost economic growth and lead to the emergence of new jobs. The Document on the employment for the years 2004-2005, shows that, despite the reforms undertaken by several Member States, there is an overall stagnation of employment in the EU, as well as in terms of the relative increase in productivity. Such trends which show that progress is uneven, both at the level of sectors and countries, have been identified since 2003, when the European Council adopted, as a consequence, "The major economic policy guidelines for 2003-2005", a report that outlines the economic strategy in order to improve the competitiveness of the European Union.

From June 2004 to February 2005, Kelly Services has conducted a survey on "The world at work", according to which, the Scandinavians are the happiest people in Europe, while Belgians are at the opposite pole. 68 percent of Norwegians, Swedes and Danes are satisfied with their employments, 61 percent of French people are happy at work, 45 percent in the Netherlands and only 35 percent of workers in Belgium enjoying the employment. By gender, men are happy at work at a percentage of 59 percent, and women-57 percent. People between the ages of 45-54 year-olds are happy with their job, compared with those aged 20-24 years of age, of whom only 54 percent are satisfied.

In mid-2005, according to Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European communities, and the main market indicator of human resources - the present unemployment rate in the Euro area is: 7.8 percent. A year ago, unemployment in the Euro zone reached 8.6 percent. In June 2006, the unemployment rate was 8.1 percent. The lowest unemployment rates were recorded in the Netherlands (3.8 percent), Denmark (3.9 percent), Ireland (4.4 percent) and Luxembourg (4.7 percent). The highest percentages were registered in Poland (16.0 percent), Slovakia (15,1%), Greece (9.6 percent), France (8.7 percent) and Malta (8.5 percent). From the EU Member States, 17 have seen a decrease in unemployment, while 7 of them have seen an increase of it . The most important decreases were experienced by Estonia (from 8.0 percent, to 4.9 percent), Lithuania (from 8.4 percent, to 5.4 percent), Denmark (from 5.1 percent to 3.9 percent) and the Netherlands (from 4.8 percent to 3.8 percent). The most significant increases in unemployment rate occurred in Malta (from 7.2 per cent to 8.5 per cent), the United Kingdom (from 4.6 percent in April 2005, to 5.3 percent in April 2006), Slovenia (from 6.2 percent to 6.5 percent) and Cyprus (from 5.4 percent to 3.5 percent).

Between June 2005 and June 2006, respectively, the unemployment rate among male workers was reduced from 7.5 percent to 6.8 percent in the Euro zone and from 7.9 percent to 7.3 percent in the European Union. How about the unemployment rate among women, it fell from 10.1 percent, to 9.1 percent in the euro zone and from 9.8 percent, to 9.1 percent in the EU. In June 2006, the unemployment rate among those aged under 25 years of age was 16.5 percent in the euro zone and 17.4 percent in the EU, compared with 17.4 percent and 18.4 percent respectively in 2005. The lowest rates for the category of under 25 years of age were recorded in the Netherlands (5.8 percent), Denmark (7.4 percent), Ireland (8.1 percent) and Estonia (9.2 percent), and the highest in Poland (32.3 percent), Slovakia (29,7%) and Greece (26.4 percent).

According to Eurostat, in June 2006, 11.5 million people were unemployed in the Euro area and 17.7 million in the European Union. In the same month, the unemployment rate in the United States of America was 4.6 percent, while in Japan-4.2 percent. In order to ensure the relevance of comparisons and studies, Eurostat calculates unemployment rate according to a harmonized treatment algorithm of the data supplied by the Member States. Eurostat also relies on definitions recommended by the International Labor Organization, which defines as unemployed persons aged between 15 and 74 years of age and meet the following conditions: do not hold a job; Are available to start work within two weeks from the date of the survey; Have been seeking for a job in the last four weeks prior to the survey. Defining unemployment differences between EU Member States: In Spain and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, unemployment covers only individuals aged between 16 and 74 years of age. In Spain this difference is due to the fact that the minimum legal age for employment is 16 years old. In the Netherlands, people who don't have a job are not included in the unemployed category, unless is expressed a desire to work.

In Romania there are seven times fewer temporary workers than in the EU; only 2 percent of Romanian workers have employment contracts for limited periods. Thus, compared to the trends in the EU and acceding countries, the Romanians are the most "attached to the company" employees in Europe. This given the fact that there are countries, such as Spain, where, for example, roughly one in three employees (33.8 percent) have signed a contract for a limited period of time. Also among the countries with a large number of employees, at given intervals, are Poland (26.5 percent), Portugal (19.5 percent) and Slovenia (17.6 percent). On average, in the EU, 14.7 percent of employees signed contracts of employment "part time" (limited in time). The labor force in Romania is atypical in terms of gender, those who commit for limited periods. Thus, in the EU States, 15.2 percent of employees signed a contract with the employer for a fixed period, while the share for men is 14.2 percent. According to Eurostat, in late 2005, in Romania 2.3 percent of men were contract employees, while the share of women with limited engagements in time was only 1.5 percent. In April 2005, European Foundation for the improvement of Living and Working Conditions, funded by the European Commission, a structure which provides information and analysis on the economic and social situation in the Member countries, began to monitor Romania as well.

While in Austria the average salary exceeds 2,500 Euros per month in Romania it's only 260 Euros, in Bulgaria – 160 Euros, and in the Czech Republic and Hungary-the average monthly wage is 600 Euros. Despite the fact that States which joined the EU in 2004 and 2007, have a growth rate higher than the Western European States, it is hoped that the gaps will be reduced in approximately two to three decades

Jacques Delors, former President of the European Commission, recommended that UNICE (Union of Industrial Confederations and Employers of Europe), at the Conference in June 2006, to be reintroduced in the European Social dialogue and to support the need to establish a common minimum wage at European Union level. The Party of European Socialists (PES) has launched the initiative to create the new Europe, in order to guarantee jobs and traditional European level of social protection, so that Europe can cope with the pressure of globalization. At the press conference organized on this occasion, Delors said that Social dialogue at EU level is not effective and has warned UNICE over the neglect of the entire process. European Institutions should encourage employers to return to the negotiation table. It is necessary to discuss concrete issues, such as the establishment of a common minimum wage and strengthening of European work councils. We should talk about a common minimum wage, as defined in proportion to the level of development of each Member State, in the context of Social dialogue, "Delors said. He rejected the assertion that the liberal views of the current President of the European Commission, Jose Manuel Barroso, could affect the PES project of promoting a new social Europe. The ones who decide policies, are “The Governments of EU Member States”, he said, recommending the EU leaders to “think in a European style” more often, adding that they should “see beyond the length of their nose”. PES President, Poul Nyrup Rasmussen explained that the EU “should mean no competition between States, but instead the construction of social bridges. Member States have a choice between several variants, but the choice of a State should not affect other States”.

The money spent for the labor force in the EU countries in Western Europe is at least four times greater than the expenditure with the human resources of the EU member countries in Central Europe. On average, labor is 15 percent cheaper in the EU than in the US. The Formula for the calculation of labor costs is based on the average national salary, social security and other benefits, and typical, including pensions, health costs and benefits for persons with disabilities. This given the fact that, specialists have discovered a massive demographic decline of the “old” Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals. According to some projections of Eurostat, the Union could lose 14.8 million people by 2030, assuming zero immigration. This would be the consequence of a low birth rate and population renewal will become impossible to be achieved for the two-thirds of EU countries, mainly in Spain (which provides for a reduction of 1.6 million people of the population), in Italy (-5 million) and Germany (-4.7 million): these are three countries where the birth rate is around 1.3-1.4 children per woman. France, on the other hand, continues to maintain its place as a demographic leader in Europe, collecting the fruits of its family policy. Its birth rate (1, 88) is only overcome by Ireland. France is followed by the United Kingdom (850.00 inhabitants more), by Belgium, the Netherlands and Finland. Immigration could work so as a counterbalance to the lower birth rates. Spain should receive by 2030 a number of 3.6 million immigrants, which will allow its population to grow. With 5.2 million entries, Germany will get close to retain its current evolution, moving from 82.6 million to 81,1 million. Overall, immigration will result in an increase of 25 million people throughout the European Union.

Calculated at purchasing power parity (PPP) in 2007, the minimum wage in Romania was 204 Euros. The lowest minimum wage, the same year was registered in Bulgaria, where it reached only 92 Euros. However, it has a purchasing power bigger than the equivalent of 216 Euros. The explanation lies in the fact that in Bulgaria the prices are much lower. Therefore, according to PPC, the minimum wage in Romania is listed in the last place in January 2007, in the EU. At the opposite pole there is Luxembourg where is the highest minimum wage, of 1,570 Euros per month, followed by Ireland with 1,403 Euros, and United Kingdom, with 1,363 Euros. In Spain, Greece, Malta, Portugal and Slovenia the minimum wage varies between 470 and 668 euro. Other countries which have low minimum wages are Latvia- with 172 euro and Lithuania- 174 Euros. However, unlike Romania, in these countries the purchasing power exceeds 300 Euros. At PPC, 1st place is also Luxembourg, where due to high prices; salary to PPC (worth 1 503 euro) is smaller than the real one, followed by the United Kingdom with 1,292 Euros, and the Netherlands with 1,244 Euros.

Directors from Eastern Europe have an average annual salary of about 35,000 Euros, less than half the average level of 82.000 euro of their counterparts of WINS. The highest salaries of managers are registered in Switzerland, where the people on the leadership of the companies earn on average 138.000 euro, while managers in Austria and Denmark receive annually, about 95,000 Euros. At the other extreme are Romanian directors, with an average salary of 30,000 Euros and their Bulgarian counterparts, with an average of 24,000 Euros. In general, directors from Eastern Europe earn far less than those in the West and, in addition, pay higher taxes. But the economies of the East usually have, faster growth rates, so that the income is likely to have a higher growth rate compared with Western countries. In terms of the cost in Europe, workers in the West may purchase, on average, 50 percent more goods and services with the net salary than those in the East. Thus, a Swiss director can buy four times as much with the money he earns, than a manager from Bulgaria.

Ever since the creation of the Federal Republic of Germany the number of unemployed was higher, i.e., over 5.2 million people with no occupation, as announced on March 2, 2005, by the Federal Labor Office. The pressures have grown unimaginably on the socio-ecologist Government of Berlin, of the Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, who was being called to remedy this plague. The worsening situation of unemployment is mainly due to job market reforms known as Hartz IV. From the 1 of January 2005, the unemployment assistance for the long-term unemployed was combined with income support. The opposition of Democratic and Liberal Christians accused the German Government of failure and demanded that the Hartz IV law to be followed and other reforms in order to improve labor market flexibility. German opposition proposes the federal Government to conclude a Pact for Germany, comprising ten emergency measures in order to reduce unemployment in the short term. In Germany, the working hour is very expensive. Abolition of jobs helps to reduce spending, but it is not a solution. The boards of enterprises and the administrative councils must make appropriate solutions so that, in the end the business climate is to not be compromised and people to not be thrown out. The unions, for their part, are called on to abandon the rigid tariff policy. They criticize businesses that don't pay debts and do not create new jobs. The State must help to create jobs for unqualified staff. It is a scandal that people of 55 years old to be retired ahead of schedule or fired.

The current tax system encourages the illegal work and discourages those with ideas. Another great evil is increasing bureaucracy. Bavarian State Prime Minister Edmund Schtoiber has called on several occasions, the reduction of taxes of the enterprises. If the investments will not increase and the Germans will not get rid of the fear to save at the maximum, the economic conjuncture cannot grow in this country, once dubbed the “locomotive of Europe”. Mass unemployment, created over the last 30 years in Germany cannot be reduced overnight; there are no miraculous recipes for fighting it. Due to the inability of employment of many positions in the industry, Germany's economy suffered losses in 2007 valued at 20 billion Euros.

In an interview in early July 2007, accorded to the publication "Die Zeit", Joaquin Almunia, European Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Affairs, stated that, although the idea may seem unrealistic, Brussels could require to EU States to adopt a proper minimum wage. Within the EU, 20 of the 27 Member States ensure a statutory legal minimum wage: Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Spain, France, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, the Czech Republic and the United Kingdom. In Luxembourg, the minimum wage is fixed at 570 Euros, while in Romania, in mid-2007, the minimum wage amounted to 204 Euros, while the minimum wage in Bulgaria is 92 Euros per month. Germany does not have a minimum wage, even though in June 2007, it signed an agreement of compromising, which extended to more sectors of the economy, the applicability of the minimum wage. This divided deeply the coalition which is in power in Germany. Chancellor Angela Merkel's Party – Christian Democrats opposes firmly, estimating that it would cost jobs, while the social Democrats want the introduction of minimum wages in the German economy.

“In order to meet the challenges of the 21st century, the labor law must be to ensure job security for life, rather than to protect their jobs in the private sector,” indicates a report presented to the European Parliament in mid-July 2007. European deputies have asked through this report an active policy of employment, which will allow greater ease in finding a job or to transfer from one job to another. The report, conducted by Jacek Protasiewicz (EPP-ED, PL) refers to a combination between flexibility and security on the labor market, enabling them to increase productivity and improve the quality of jobs, guaranteeing safety and flexibility as a response to the changing needs of the labor market. The Parliament calls for simplification of administrative procedures for businesses, especially for new, small and medium-sized enterprises. "Excessive administrative Burdens" hamper the acceptance of new workers, even during periods of economic growth. In order to combat the exploitation of workers who do not have their papers in order, labor law should be strengthened and priority should be given to legal employment.

CONCLUSIONS

Labor law in the EU must confirm the contracts of indeterminate duration as a rule. Any other non-standard forms of contracts (fixed-term, temporary, concluded through recruitment agency, repeated use of independent services) should consider and support workers who go from one to another professional status. Employment contracts should provide for work time “flexible enough” for employees, in order for them to find a balance between time spent at work and family obligations. A "flexible work time" would help improve the employment situation in Europe. Member States should review and adapt their social security systems and also apply active policies in order to improve the labor market. The European Parliament has called on Member States to remove the restrictions regarding access to the labor market, in order to ensure the improvement mobility of labor within the EU.

Improvement of the current rules in the field of social security, the Elimination of administrative barriers, reinforcement of the EURES (European job mobility Portal for employment) and raise of the awareness among Europeans about the possibility of working abroad were the main objectives of the European action plan on labor mobility (2007-2010). In 2006-2007 were created about 6.5 million jobs, and their number would still have been able to grow by another 5 million by 2009, if EU member countries haven’t been included in the economic crisis that has shocked the Western world. “Labor mobility is a fundamental right of citizens of the European Union” underlined the ex-EU Commissioner for Social Affairs Vladimir Špidla. However, while one in two Europeans is excited about the prospect of working abroad, according to a Euro barometer poll in November 2007 – very few are who make this step. In November 2007, only 2% of Europeans were working in another country of the Union. While many remain in their own country, being happy with their current situation, others are discouraged by the many administrative steps involved in establishing abroad.

On 4 May 2011, the European Commission has presented several initiatives designed to ensure a better management of migration issues. Initiatives addressing the different aspects of migration, including intensified checks at EU borders and governance Schengen, as well as completion of the common European asylum system. These initiatives are added to the urgent short-term measures, which have already been adopted by the Commission in order to deal with the pressure of migration in the Mediterranean area. “It is obvious that the EU needs a common policy in the field of asylum and migration. Migration must be managed properly – this means ensuring effective border control and the return of illegal immigrants. This means also that we should not let Member States situated along our external borders to deal with the extraordinary situation of migration alone and that we must create partnerships on migration and mobility with countries outside the EU in order to be able to work together," said Cecilia Malmstrom, Commissioner for Domestic Affairs.

Events in the southern Mediterranean in the spring of 2011 have led to the displacement of over 650,000 people as a result of acts of violence in Libya. Of these, very few asylum-seekers – about 25,000 people have chosen to go to the EU. Some EU Member States are exposed more directly than others to the massive arrival of migrants and this situation cannot be addressed only at the national level, but also requires the mobilization of all the Member States at EU level. "In order to ensure the stability of the Schengen area, it may also be necessary to provide for the temporary reintroduction of controls at the internal frontiers in limited cases, altogether exceptional, such as situations in which part of the external borders is facing unexpectedly high pressure," said Commissioner Cecilia Malmström. In this respect, the EU provides financial and operational instruments at its disposal:

– funds for the management of the emergency humanitarian situation caused by refugees and inflow from unexpected people displaced in the neighboring countries of Libya;

– funds allocated on the bilateral basis, which makes it possible to provide a temporary shelter for refugees and displaced people;

– FRONTEX launched a joint operation-EFN, Hermes Extension 2011-designed to help Italy cope with the situation of immigrants and refugees that arrive on the Italian coast;

– Europol sent to Italy a team of experts to help the Italian authorities to identify potential criminals among illegal immigrants who arrived on Italian territory;

– EU Member States most exposed to increasing flows of refugees and illegal immigrants have also received financial support.

Starting from these realities, the European Commission has proposed a number of initiatives that addresses the following issues:

– Completion of the procedures in respect of the common European asylum system, by the end of 2012, in accordance with the fundamental values as well as with the international obligations of the Union;

– Intensification of EU border controls and Schengen governance, in order to solve the problem of illegal immigration, in order to ensure that each Member State shall monitor effectively his own part of the external borders of the EU;

– A better control of legal migration to the EU in order to facilitate the immigration of people with the skills necessary to help the EU to cover the expected deficit of labor force and skills and contribute to balance the demographic decline expected in terms of its population;

– Exchange of best practices in the frame of Member States approach in order to integrate legal immigrants into the EU, in a way that ensures the maximizing of economic migration, so as to ensure social harmony in the Union.

– strategic approach to relations with third countries on issues related to migration, designed to facilitate circulation of people by means of increasing opportunities for legal migration, combined with measures to prevent illegal migration.

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