2529th Council meeting

- JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS -

Brussels, 2-3 October 2003

President: Mr Giuseppe PISANU
Minister for the Interior

Mr Roberto CASTELLI
Minister for Justice

of the Italian Republic
ITEMS DEBATED

FOLLOW-UP TO THESSALONIKI

The Council had an in-depth exchange of views on the follow-up to be given to the Thessaloniki European Council Conclusions.

The Presidency took note of the broad agreement of the delegations on the importance attached to the development of a common policy on legal and illegal immigration, smuggling and trafficking of human beings, external borders and the return of illegal residents, and in particular:

- of the wide agreement regarding the creation of an Agency for the management of external borders and of the intention of the Commission to present the necessary proposal at the beginning of November 2003;
- of the common agreement on the inclusion of biometric identifiers in travel documents and on the necessity of reaching an agreement, as soon as possible, on the two proposals from the Commission dealing with biometric identifiers in uniform format for visas and in uniform format for residence permits for third-countries nationals;
- of the convergence regarding the return policy and the invitation to the Commission to present the appropriate proposals relating to the Community financing of return operations.

The question of the possible setting up of an immigration European quota system will be examined when the study to be carried out by the Commission, which is expected in Spring 2004, is available.

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