



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 19 March 2008

7691/08

LIMITE

ASILE 6

NOTE

from:	Presidency
to:	Strategic Committee on Immigration, Frontiers and Asylum
on :	1 April 2008
No prev. doc.:	5963/08 ASILE 3
Subject :	Draft Council Conclusions on practical cooperation in the field of asylum

Delegations will find below a modified draft text of the above-mentioned draft Council Conclusions, as prepared by the Presidency following the discussions in the Asylum Working Party meeting on 17 March 2008.

Changes to 5963/08 ASILE 3 are highlighted in bold.

Draft Council Conclusions on practical cooperation in the field of asylum

The Council,

1. underlines that further enhancing practical cooperation in the field of asylum is one of the key elements contributing to the establishment of a Common European Asylum System, as foreseen by the Hague Programme;
2. recalls the need for strengthening practical cooperation in the field of asylum, in order to improve convergence in asylum **decision making** by Member States within the framework of rules set by EC legislation in this field and emphasizes that practical co-operation leads to enhanced coordination and increased efficiency [...];
3. welcomes the work already undertaken for this purpose and calls on the Commission and Member States, **in cooperation, where appropriate, with UNHCR and other relevant international organisations** to intensify activities under the existing EU [...] and other structures in this field in the near future [...] and to allocate the necessary human and financial resources to this end;
4. welcomes in that connection the feasibility study being undertaken by the Commission to look at the question of the most appropriate means to provide adequate structural support for all relevant activities in the area of practical cooperation in the field of asylum;
5. requests that the feasibility study should, in particular, examine the conditions necessary for the timely establishment of a European Support Office and outline the [...] tasks which it might undertake (such as exchange of best practice, managing the Common EU Portal on Country of Origin Information, training, activities related to the external dimension of asylum, etc.), as well as its possible financial and organisational structure, **taking into account existing forms of cooperation between Member States**, and avoiding unnecessary bureaucratic structures;
6. invites the Commission to bring forward suggestions for further strengthening practical cooperation while awaiting for a decision on the future structure for supporting practical cooperation by the end of 2008.