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COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

EMN Status Report (2013)

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1. INTRODUCTION

This fifth EMN Status Report[1] provides information on the progress made by the EMN during 2013 where further efforts continued to improve the timing, relevance and format of EMN outputs and products The EMN increased its relevance, impact and ability to provide high quality information, relevant to policymaking on a wide range of aspects of migration and international protection.

The 2013 EMN status report first provides an overview of the EMN's main output in 2013, all of which has been made publicly available via the EMN's website.[2] The report then describes networking at EU and national level and the activities taken to promote the EMN to policymakers, in particular. The report goes on to provide information on how the EMN was managed during the year. This year, a short summary of key developments has replaced the section on concluding remarks.

Croatia has played an increasingly significant role in the EMN since its accession to the EU in 2013. Norway[3] also continued to participate in and contribute to the EMN throughout the year.

2. SUMMARY OF KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN 2013

During 2013, EMN reports and studies were widely read by a range of national, EU and international audiences, and were fed directly into the policymaking process at various stages of the cycle at EU and national level.

EU-level networking brings together EMN national contact points (NCPs) in the Member States and Norway and relevant EU institutions, agencies and external entities on a regular basis. Since 2014, this networking has included setting up the Return Experts' Group[4] within the EMN. At national level, EMN NCPs helped to bring together a wide range of national stakeholders to debate policy priorities, often helping to put these stakeholders directly into contact with policymakers.

The EMN ad hoc query tool is widely used by EU and national policymakers as a way to obtain, within a short timeframe, views from across Member States and Norway on specific issues. Some 77 EMN ad hoc queries were launched and responded to in 2013. Issues relating to international protection were the most frequently explored in 2013, accounting for 17 % of all EMN ad hoc queries.

The EMN glossary is an established source of high quality and accurate terminology in official languages used by the Member States and Norway. It helps improve the comparability of information across the EU. In 2013, the EMN glossary in Arabic aided the translation of the EU Immigration Portal into Arabic. More than 60 new terms were identified and agreed during the year for inclusion in an updated version (3.0) of the glossary, which is expected to be published in 2014

The EMN bulletin, EMN conferences, the EMN website, and national newsletters, websites and events, provide information on migration and asylum to a broad audience, including the general public. In 2013, the EMN website was redesigned and is now hosted as part of the main site for DG Home Affairs.

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[1]   As required by Article 4(5c) of Council Decision 2008/381/EC.
[2]   http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/index_en.htm .
[3]   Commission Decision C(2010)6171 of 13 September 2010 established the basis for administrative cooperation with Norway's Ministry of Justice and Police, allowing for Norway's participation in the EMN.
[4]   Building on the work of the former Voluntary Return Experts Group, funded under the EU Return Fund.

3.   EUROPEAN MIGRATION NETWORK OUTPUT IN 2013

This section provides an overview of the main EMN output, achievements and impacts, under the EMN's 2013 work programme. EMN activity focused on collecting and analysing information and statistics to support policymaking in the EU and Member States, and publishing this in a variety of formats. These included:

- synthesis reports, highlighting the main findings from an EU perspective, which were produced for the annual policy report and each of the EMN studies, based on national contributions, produced by EMN NCPs in line with agreed specifications;

- 'EMN Informs', or policy briefs, succinctly summarising key points to note on a given topic; and

- regular EMN bulletins, highlighting recent EU and national updates and the latest available statistics.

Information was also shared through a range of channels, including the EMN website, conferences and events.

3.1 2012 and 2013 annual policy reports

Each year, the EMN collects information, via the NCPs, on the most significant political and legislative developments (including those at EU level) for the EU Member States and Norway, public debates, and relevant statistics in the area of migration and international protection. During 2013, the EMN carried out two exercises for the annual policy report. In the first half of the year, information compiled in late 2012 and early 2013 was synthesised into an EU-level document. This contributed to the development of the Commission's fourth annual report on immigration and asylum[5] and, in particular, the national developments reported in the Commission staff working document that accompanied the report. NCPs also produced national reports for their respective audiences.

In the second half of 2012, specifications were developed for the 2013 annual policy report, adapted from the previous year, to ensure that information on developments at national level was collected, in line with the most recent policy developments at EU level. Information continued to be collected in 2013 to meet the needs of both the EMN and the annual reporting requirements of the European Asylum Support Office in the area of international protection and asylum, avoiding duplication of effort. This work contributed to the development of the Commission's fifth annual report on immigration and asylum.[6]

Drawing on information from the EMN's 2012 national policy report that was collected and analysed during 2013, a series of country factsheets was produced for the first time, one for each of the 28 Member States, plus Norway. The factsheets provided a succinct summary of the main developments over the year, and set out an overview of migration and international protection statistics covering 2010-12.

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[5]   See COM(2013) 422 final and SWD(2013) 210 final.
[6]   See COM(2014) 288 final.

Work on a synthesis of the EMN annual policy reports and relevant statistics from 2010-13 began in late 2013, and was completed in early 2014. This provided a descriptive analysis of national developments, helping to evaluate the impact of the 2010-14 Stockholm programme.[7] [8]

3.2 EMN studies[9]

The EMN completed and published a number of policy-related studies in 2013, and helped develop studies in 2013 which were completed in early 2014. The studies were produced in collaboration with relevant policymakers and have either contributed to or are expected to contribute directly to the policymaking process at EU and national levels. Overall, studies were shorter in length, more analytical, and provided comparative information in tables rather than descriptive text, where relevant.

Studies included:

- Intra-EU mobility of third-country nationals;

- Attracting highly qualified and qualified third-country nationals to EU Member States;

- The organisation of reception facilities for asylum seekers in different Member States; and

- Identification of victims of trafficking in human beings in international protection and forced return procedures.

The main study for 2013, Migrant access to social security and healthcare: policies and practice, was published in 2014.

3.2.1 Intra-EU mobility of third-country nationals

This study, based on national reports from 21 Member States,[10] was designed as a scoping exercise to better understand the key issues and challenges of intra-EU mobility for non-EU citizens. The study's main findings highlighted a lack of research and the limited availability of relevant statistics on the issue, as well as a lack of comparability of data. However, the study did show that, in all Member States where statistics on overall movements of non-EU citizens were available over a five-year time period, intra-EU mobility (however defined) had increased. In all but one of these Member States, this upward trend had been sharper than that of EU citizens. However, from the limited statistics available on overall movement, movement of non-EU citizens between Member States remains very small, when compared with EU citizens.

An analysis of the current provisions of the EU *acquis* revealed fundamental differences between mobility rights for EU citizens and non-EU citizens for stays exceeding three months, with more limited conditions for non-EU citizens. Differences in the conditions for entry and for stays of more than three months for non-EU citizens travelling from an EU country and non-EU citizens arriving directly from their country of origin or another non-EU country were found to be minor, despite

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[7]   2010/C 115/01.

[8]   The report is available at the EMN website http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/index_en.htm under 'EMN Outputs: EMN Studies'.

[9]   The reports are available from the EMN website http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/index_en.htm under 'EMN outputs: EMN studies'.

[10]   Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary**,** Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

provisions in the EU *acquis* to facilitate intra-EU mobility for certain categories of non-EU citizens (long-term residents, EU Blue Card holders, highly qualified workers, students and researchers). The EU Migration Directives — which allow non-EU citizens to move around the EU — leave significant discretion to Member States, and therefore to national laws, in shaping mobility. Member States, acting legally, can and do apply measures to limit or encourage intra-EU mobility, according to their national policies and priorities. This therefore creates differences in rules and practice across the Member States.

The study was presented as a discussion paper to the Council of the EU's Strategic Committee on Immigration, Frontier and Asylum in its July 2013 meeting, and it fed into reflections on the future of the Justice and Home Affairs agenda in the post-Stockholm period.[11]

3.2.2 Attracting highly qualified and qualified third-country nationals to EU Member States

This study explored national policies and practices to attract highly qualified and qualified non-EU citizens to EU Member States, to address labour and skills shortages and compete in the global competition for talent. The study was based on national reports from 23[12] EMN NCPs, and found that over the previous 10 years, most EU Member States had introduced measures to attract and facilitate entry for the purpose of employment for highly qualified non-EU citizens. This tendency increased as a result of the implementation of Directive 2005/71/EC (for scientific researchers) and Directive 2009/50/EC (specifically for highly qualified employment — the EU Blue Card Directive).

Some Member States' policies focused on certain groups of non-EU citizens (e.g. self-employed workers, researchers, intra-corporate transferees), people working in specific sectors (e.g. IT, healthcare, academia, sport), and people with niche skills, such as entrepreneurs and investors. Specific policy measures introduced to attract non-EU citizens included:

- fast tracking procedures for entry and stay;

- unrestricted access to the labour market;

- awareness-raising and information provision;

- employer sponsorship;

- more favourable conditions for family reunification;

- tax incentives;

- access to social security benefits; and

- integration measures.

Accelerated procedures for entry and allowable absences to return to countries of origin were also measures applied to entrepreneurs and investors.

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[11]   For further reference see the Commission's Communication 'An open and secure Europe: making it happen' COM(2014) 154 final.

[12]   Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

However, the study found that, for Member States to compete effectively in global labour markets, some challenges and barriers would need to be addressed. Good practices identified included effectively providing information to migrants and employers, adapting and accelerating migration procedures, introducing incentives to attract qualified and highly qualified migrants and customising labour market practices. There is only limited evidence of Member States entering into agreements with non-EU countries to attract highly qualified and qualified workers. However, some Member States have found these measures effective which suggests there may be potential for further development in this area in the future.

The study provided the Commission with valuable information on the early functioning and impact of the EU Blue Card Directive 2009/50/EU, and on new measures developed by Member States to attract entrepreneurs and investors, a growing area of policy interest for the EU overall.

3.2.3 The organisation of reception facilities for asylum seekers in different Member States

Under the common European asylum system, people should be offered equivalent levels of treatment in relation to reception conditions, regardless of the country in which their application for international protection is made. This focused study was designed to identify good practices and existing tools for running flexible, efficient reception facilities while maintaining the quality of reception conditions. The study was prepared on the basis of national contributions from 24 EMN NCPs.[13]

The study found that the organisation of reception facilities differs greatly between countries, both in the type of facilities available and in the actors involved in providing the reception. Differences are not only apparent between countries but also occur within some countries at sub-state level. Unequal treatment between and within countries may result, in some cases, in sub-standard reception conditions. The special reception needs of vulnerable people are taken into account, but further action is required to ensure that appropriate standards are met, for example on assessing special needs and providing tailored accommodation. Most countries report experiencing pressure on their asylum system between 2008 and 2012/13. This has resulted from:

- large numbers and/or a sudden influx of applicants;[14]

- fluctuations in the number of applicants;

- internal challenges in the reception system's organisation; and

- pressure resulting from other dimensions of the asylum system.

The process by which a country accommodates applicants for international protection within its territory can be an effective measure to lift pressure from certain reception facilities[15]. Countries generally decide to allocate applicants to different regions or to (re)allocate applicants depending on the stage of procedure, with both approaches offering benefits for the country and the applicants for international protection.

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[13]   Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Norway.

[14]   Either as a result of the security situation in non-EU countries and/or related to removing a visa obligation for certain Western Balkan countries.

[15]   The use of the policy of dispersal has been controversial in certain national contexts.

The study highlighted a number of good practice approaches to ensuring flexible reception systems, including strategies to prepare for, mitigate and respond to pressure on the asylum reception system and managing the reception process overall as a chain (i.e. from inflow, reception, procedure, outflow, to return/integration). Good practices identified in preparing for pressure on the asylum reception system included emergency planning and maintaining a buffer capacity in regular facilities (+/- 15 % of the total capacity). Existing practices to mitigate the negative effects of pressure included early warning mechanisms, speeding up the decision-making process, and budget flexibility. Good practices in responding to pressure on the asylum reception system included creating new facilities or new places within existing facilities.

The study found that, to address situations of temporary pressure, 'emergency structures' (e.g. hotels and unused state facilities) are used as a temporary requirement (rather than standard practice). In the concept of chain management, the reception process is an ongoing one; countries undertake measures to reduce pressure at different stages of the process by limiting country inflow, increasing capacity, making the asylum procedure more efficient, facilitating outflow, and/or operating an effective return or settlement policy. The study was carried out during 2013 and published in early 2014.

3.2.4 Identification of victims of trafficking in human beings in international protection and forced return procedures

Trafficking in human beings is recognised as 'the slavery of our times', a severe violation of fundamental rights and a serious crime.[16] The EU recognises the need to detect and identify people who have been trafficked and to offer them access to assistance, support and protection. It has recently called on Member States to improve their capacity to identify victims of human trafficking through new legislation. This EMN study was designed to examine whether, and how, potential victims of human trafficking are detected and identified during international protection and forced return procedures in EU Member States and Norway. It looked at ongoing applications for international protection and applicants in forced return procedures who have received a negative decision on their application(s) for protection or who have abandoned the procedure. The study was based on findings presented in 24[17] national reports.

The study found that EU legislation provides a holistic framework for better identifying and protecting victims. Directive 2011/36/EU requires Member States who have opted into the Directive to set up systems to detect and identify victims at an early stage and provide assistance to them, and the recently adopted EU asylum *acquis* introduces requirements to identify and provide additional support to vulnerable applicants including victims of human trafficking. Both sets of provisions increase opportunities for victims to seek protection. About half of all countries examined recorded statistics on victims detected during international protection procedures, but data sources are inconsistent and incomplete, making it difficult to give a comprehensive picture of the scope of the problem at EU level. However, the fact that there is evidence of victims going unidentified may mean they are not being granted the protection and/or assistance available to them under EU law.

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[16]   See the *EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings 2012–16*, COM(2012) 286, available at: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0286:FIN:EN:PDF.

[17]   Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Norway.

In light of this, the study found that proactive methods of detection can be considered good practice, and a number of the countries studied use such methods. These include screening all applicants for international protection, providing training for case workers, and providing information to encourage the victims to identify themselves. Many countries, logically, place greater emphasis on detection during international protection procedures than during forced return procedures, in order to detect victims at the earliest stage possible. However, recognising that the authorities who enforce returns may also come into contact with victims, most countries also provide these authorities with relevant training on identification and detection. All of the countries studied offer the possibility of referring victims on to service providers for support and some offer a choice of protection options. This study was published in early 2014.

3.2.5 Migrant access to social security and healthcare: policies and practice

This study was based on contributions from 25 EMN NCPs.[18] It examined the eligibility rules and administrative practices that govern non-EU citizens' access to social security and healthcare. It also reviewed the reciprocal agreements that exist between EU Member States and non-EU countries, affecting certain groups of immigrants' entitlement to social security and healthcare. Due to work programme rescheduling, this 2013 study was not carried out until early 2014, although a number of national contributions were submitted in 2013.

The study's initial conclusions are that significant variations exist in the range of benefits available in Member States, the eligibility rules attached to these benefits and the way the benefits are funded. Nevertheless, some trends are discernible in migrant access to these benefits. While non-EU citizens with long-term residence permits have access to most of the benefits reviewed in the study, non-EU citizens who hold fixed-term residence permits tend to be given more equal access to contributory benefits than to benefits that are funded through general taxation.

The study also identified a crucial role for bilateral social security agreements in expanding access to some social security benefits for migrants from non-EU countries. By providing a cross-EU overview of the policies and practices that govern migrant access to social security and healthcare, the study provides a useful resource for policymakers who need to promote social inclusion while managing social security budgets under increasing pressure from ageing populations and volatile labour markets. This study was published in 2014.

3.2.6 The organisation of asylum and migration policies in EU Member States

Six EMN NCPs (Italy, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta and Slovenia) updated their country asylum and migration organisations organograms to reflect recent, significant changes, based on their national reports for this study in 2013. The organograms, along with a succinct summary of the organisational arrangements for asylum and migration policies, are currently available from the EMN NCP pages of the EMN website.

3.3. 'EMN Informs'

'EMN Informs' are succinct policy briefs providing a short summary of key issues in relation to a given topic, and, where relevant, headline statistics. Information contained in EMN Informs is, in general, drawn from information that the EMN already collects to produce EMN annual policy

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[18]   Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

reports, including statistics, studies, and EMN ad hoc query responses. In total, nine EMN Informs were produced during the year. The following topics were covered:

- *Impacts of the European Migration Network*;

- *Overview of EU case law on legal migration* (to be completed in 2014);

- *Identification of victims of trafficking in human beings in international and forced return procedures*;

- *Organisation of reception facilities for asylum seekers in different EU Member States*;

- *Application of quotas in EU Member States as a measure for managing labour migration from third countries*;

- *Recent findings on return*;

- *Approaches and tools used by Member States to identify labour market needs*;

- *Attracting highly qualified and qualified migrants to the EU*; and

- *Intra-EU mobility of third-country nationals.*

The Inform from the EMN's 2012 study on immigration of international students was also finalised and published in early 2013.

Several Informs were translated into national languages by EMN NCPs (notably German, French and Slovak) to improve access for national network members. All EMN Informs, including their translated versions, are available on the EMN website.

3.4 Ad hoc queries

EMN ad hoc queries continued to be a highly responsive tool for collecting comparative information from across EMN NCPs on specific, topical issues, within a short timeframe. An ad hoc query can be launched by an EMN NCP or the Commission, with a typical response period of four weeks. After this, a compilation of all responses is produced and circulated, and made publicly available on the EMN's website,[19] subject to the agreement of the contributing EMN NCPs. A total of 77 ad hoc queries were launched in 2013, covering a wide range of migration and asylum issues, which provide a valuable information resource for the Commission, EMN NCPs, and the wider public. Almost all EMN NCPs and the Commission launched at least one ad hoc query, with each query having, on average, 19 individual Member State responses (equivalent to over 1460 individual responses from the EMN NCPs). In 2013, issues relating to international protection were explored most frequently, accounting for 17 % of all ad hoc queries launched. A number of ad hoc queries focused on the specific circumstances of asylum seekers from countries such as Syria, Russia, the North Caucasus region, Iraq and Mali. Residence accounted for a further 16 % of ad hoc queries. Other thematic areas addressed were return, implementation of the EU *acquis* and irregular migration.

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[19] http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/adhocqueries/index_en.htm under 'EMN outputs: EMN ad hoc queries'.

In 2013, the Commission launched three EMN ad hoc queries, which were used to gather direct and timely information on specific policy issues. These were:

- *First experiences with the use of the visa information system (VIS) for return purposes*, which was used in preparing a Communication on EU return policy;

- *Voluntary return policy*, which provided an up-to-date mapping of activities carried out at national level in the field of voluntary return, in preparation for the first meeting of the EMN Return and Reintegration Experts' Group in 2014; and

- *Ethical treatment of third-country health workers*, which provided information on Member States' recruitment practices regarding health professionals.

Information gathered when compiling EMN ad hoc queries was used as a source of information for policy-relevant EMN Informs. The EMN Informs *A brief overview of recent findings on return* and *Approaches and tools used by Member States to identify labour market needs* drew on, among other sources, information provided through EMN ad hoc queries. These were produced in response to policymaker requests, then disseminated to a wide audience.

EMN ad hoc queries also provide direct and timely information to policymakers at national level in their daily work, amending or developing regulations, investigating or evaluating policies, reviewing practices, or when facing specific challenges or problems. Among the EMN NCPs, Lithuania was the most active, launching seven ad hoc queries, followed by Estonia and Luxembourg, who launched six ad hoc queries each.

3.5 Glossary and thesaurus[20]

In 2013, the main output from the Glossary and Thesaurus Working Group included the identification and modification of almost 60 migration and asylum terms to contribute to version 3.0 of the EMN glossary.

The EMN glossary is currently available in six European languages (Spanish, German, English, French, Italian and Portuguese) and Arabic. EMN glossary terms are increasingly used by EU legislators and policymakers as the main source of common migration and asylum terms, to produce comparative legal and policy documents. In 2013, version 2.0 of the EMN glossary in Arabic was used as a tool to help produce the Arabic version of the EU Immigration Portal.[21]

4.   <u>NETWORKING</u>

Extensive networking took place in 2013, at EU and national level, and among the EMN NCPs themselves. In 2012, a more strategic approach was adopted towards other relevant entities in the fields of migration and international protection to better coordinate activities and avoid overlaps. In 2013, input from relevant EU agencies and other EU and international bodies increased, facilitating their involvement in EMN output, for example, the EMN studies.

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[20]   Available from http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/glossary/index_a_en.htm under 'EMN outputs: EMN glossary.'.

[21]   http://ec.europa.eu/immigration/

4.1 Networking between EMN national contact points

Five <u>EMN NCP meetings,</u> organised and hosted by the Commission, were held in 2013. These were typically attended by one or two delegates from each EMN NCP plus representatives from relevant teams in the Commission, the European Parliament, relevant EU Agencies and Eurostat. The meetings included a number of thematic discussion, as well as monitoring progress on implementing the EMN work programme, and working with policymakers to plan for, and discuss findings from, EMN studies and reports. The Commission provided regular updates on the management of EMN grants throughout the year.

EMN NCP <u>workshops</u> were held throughout 2013 in the framework of the formal EMN NCP meetings, and in response to specific identified needs. Two workshops were held on managing EMN NCP grants, on 25 April and 13 December 2013. Participants discussed the grant application, financial administration, audits and reporting, in light of the new Financial Regulation in effect from 2013. A workshop to discuss the four planned 2014 studies was held on 13 December 2013, which brought together EMN NCPs with relevant EU officials.

Two new <u>EMN working groups</u> were launched in 2013 to take forward developments in specific areas of the EMN. These particularly focused on the EMN ad hoc query tool and efforts to improve the quality and comparability of EU migration and asylum statistics. The EMN <u>Ad Hoc Query Working Group</u> held two workshops (on 25 April and 18 June 2013). They also carried out a review of the EMN Handbook (Vademecum), developed an IT solution to improve the management and accessibility of the ad hoc query mechanism, and considered how to make best use of the information collected through EMN ad hoc queries in policymaking. The <u>EMN Statistics Working Group</u> met on 18 June and 20 September 2013. The group developed and agreed terms of reference. They also reviewed and provided clarifications on the statistics annex to the 2013 annual policy report, to improve clarity and comparability. The working group will provide support to the EMN Advisory Groups responsible for developing common templates and specifications on the availability and quality of statistics for EMN studies in 2014.

<u>Workshops and cluster meetings</u> hosted by individual EMN NCPs were also held throughout the year to take forward activities identified during the EMN NCP meetings. These focused on building the EMN's capacity, for example, in relation to increasing the use policymakers make of information collected through EMN ad hoc queries (hosted by the UK), improving the quality of EMN statistics (the UK) or producing a particular EMN study (Austria, Germany and Sweden).

4.2 Networking at national level

EMN NCPs are required to develop and maintain a national network of stakeholders in the policy areas of migration and asylum, and to increase the EMN's visibility at national level, particularly in relation to policymaking, through a wide range of activities. These include organising national conferences and networking events, maintaining websites, sending out newsletters, etc. Many EMN NCPs also provide translations of EU-level EMN products into their national languages.

In 2013, almost all EMN NCPs organised at least one or more national network meeting and other events involving their network partners. In most cases, these events were used to explore different points of view from other Member States on a topic, and many events were also attended by a representative from the Commission and/or the EMN service provider, who gave an EU-level overview.

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EMN NCPs addressed national priority themes at their national network events. In some cases, events were used to promote recent EMN studies (Belgium, Estonia, Greece, Finland, France, Italy, Slovakia) or to discuss upcoming ones (Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Slovakia, the UK). Other national priority themes addressed included:

- the common European asylum system (Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Netherlands);

- visa liberalisation (Latvia);

- migration before and after the economic crisis (Ireland); and

- migration, discrimination and equal opportunities (Italy).

A national network event was also held in Italy to publicise the launch of the second version of the EMN glossary in Arabic. EMN NCPs are increasingly linking their national events to the policymaking process. In France, for example, the first national event in 2013 was on the immigration of international students to France. This was chosen to coincide with a French parliamentary debate on international students and economic migration.

EMN NCPs have reported proactive approaches to answering information requests by national Members of Parliament, journalists, researchers and students. Networks and other organisations have been similarly proactive in inviting EMN NCPs to contribute their expertise on information exchange platforms and in advisory groups. Some EMN NCPs placed emphasis on communicating to the wider public and national media. For example the Belgian, Irish and Italian EMN NCPs have encouraged press and media coverage when launching new national EMN studies.

4.3. Networking with other relevant bodies

In 2013, further work was done on improving the EMN's collaborative work with other organisations, in line with the requirement to ensure that EMN activities are consistent and coordinated with relevant EU bodies and structures. This cooperation took the form of contributions by these organisations to EMN NCP meetings and workshops and to specific EMN studies and other outputs, including a Policy Exchange Forum on migration, employment and employers. This was held as part of the 62nd EMN NCP meeting, and included guest speakers from the European Trade Union Confederation, the International Centre for Migration Policy Development, the International Organisation for Migration, the Migration Policy Centre and the European Centre for Development Policy Management. The OECD provided statistics for the 2013 EMN study *Attracting highly qualified and qualified third-country nationals to EU Member States* (see section 3.2.2 above),. Cooperation was also improved in the EMN Steering Board (see section 5 below). The EMN continued its work providing contributions to the EU Immigration Portal[22] by ensuring that the content for Member States on the portal website was correct, reliable and up-to-date.

5.   INCREASING THE EMN's VISIBILITY

In 2013, the EMN worked on increasing its visibility to policymakers at national and European level, and on informing the wider public about its objectives and outputs. EMN output continued to be made available to the wider public, principally through the EMN website and the EMN NCP websites, but output was also presented at workshops, seminars, meetings and conferences at EU and national level. The main activities undertaken in 2013, and the main progress made, are highlighted below.

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[22]   http://ec.europa.eu/immigration/

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5.1 2013 EMN annual conference[23]

The 2013 EMN annual conference, 'The Agenda for Growth in the EU: Why Migration Matters', was organised by the NCP for Lithuania on 5 and 6 November 2013 in Vilnius, under the Lithuanian Presidency of the EU Council. The conference aimed to address labour migration, including the achievements and challenges of EU labour migration policy and the role of migration in the EU's Agenda for Growth. It was attended by some 160 participants, including Mr Dailis Alfonsas Barakauskas, Lithuanian Minister of Interior, Ms Maria Asenius, Head of Cabinet for Commissioner Cecilia Malmström and Ambassador W L Swing, Director-General of the International Organisation for Migration, as well as other representatives from the Commission, the EMN NCPs, representatives from international and regional organisations, academics and researchers, and representatives from government departments in non-EU countries.

Several conclusions were drawn, including recognising that well-managed migration was an essential part of the policy response to the challenges faced by the EU's economies, and identifying a need for a long-term vision on migration policy. Enabling integration and labour market participation for all migrants, including those already present in the EU and those arriving for reasons other than work, was considered the cornerstone of a successful migration policy. In the face of populism and an enduring economic crisis, the conference recognised that migration management demands on political leadership were high. The European Commission was working with Member States to set the political direction for the next decade in the area of migration and asylum, recognising that migration touches many other policy areas and thus many issues needed to be considered, including an unpredictable future.

A number of next steps were identified. One of these was the effective implementation of the EU *acquis* by Member States. This would allow a more harmonised, coherent and consistent migration framework at EU level, including on admission conditions, admission procedures and the rights of non-EU citizens, giving priority to implementing and enforcing the *acquis* relating to irregular migration. Legislation, however, was considered to be just one aspect. The conference agreed that politicians at the national level, academics, the business sector and media had a role in explaining why migration matters to EU economies, and in contributing to policies and changing attitudes to prevent legal migration from impacting negatively on the social cohesion of EU societies.

5.2 2013 International Metropolis Conference

The EMN was represented during the International Metropolis Conference held in Tampere, Finland from 9 to 13 September 2013. The Commissioner and the Director-General for Home Affairs made presentations during plenary sessions, and EMN NCPs facilitated a number of joint workshops, notably to present the EMN's main study from 2012, *Immigration of international students to the EU*. The conference provided an effective platform to showcase the EMN's work to EU and international audiences.

5.3 EMN and national websites including the EMN Wikipedia page[24]

The EMN website serves as the main means by which the EMN's various publications are made available. In 2013, the website was migrated to the website of DG Home Affairs, and underwent a full redesign and update. This was designed to improve access to EMN output and information and to create a more 'user-friendly' and accessible gateway to the EMN. All EMN NCPs now have their own country page within the EMN website, displaying information about the EMN NCP, including

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[23]   http://emn.gov.pl/portal/ese/751/8888/EMN_Conference_2011.html includes the conference conclusions.
[24]   http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Migration_Network.

a summary and an organogram of the organisation responsible for migration and asylum policies within the relevant Member State. The revised website was launched in September 2013, and has been maintained and actively managed, with regular updates. A web-based information exchange system is used to share information and disseminate tools, and to share documents with EMN NCPs, including for meetings, studies and reference.

EMN NCPs continued to maintain and develop their own national websites during the year, linked reciprocally to the EMN website.[25] These proved effective in attracting users, who read and downloaded materials. Together, the EU and national websites provide considerable capacity for sharing information with very wide audiences.

The English-language version of the EMN Wikipedia page was launched in 2011, with the specific aim of improving the EMN's visibility through exploiting social media. EMN NCPs have continued to develop their own language versions of the page, which is now available in German, Greek, French, Italian, Latvian, Hungarian, Dutch, Portuguese, Slovak, Slovenian, Finnish, and Swedish. All of these pages remained active throughout 2013.

5.4 EMN Bulletin

The *EMN Bulletin,* introduced in 2012, has been produced regularly throughout the year. It targets policymakers at all levels, and provides an overview article on a topical issue, followed by recent EU and national developments in migration and asylum policy, plus an overview of the latest available statistics on key topics, including graphs, trends and short analyses. Four editions were produced in the time period covered by this report: in March, July and October 2013, and in February 2014.

6. MANAGEMENT OF THE EMN

The EMN Steering Board met twice in 2013 (16 May and 14 November 2013). Its role in providing strategic guidance to the EMN was strengthened through a 'tour-de-table' exchange of information at the first meeting on national and EU-level strategic priorities in the fields of migration and international protection. This provided a framework for developing the EMN's work programme for 2014, including identifying priority themes for possible study topics. Contributions were also received from the European Parliament, the European Asylum Support Office and the Fundamental Rights Agency. The Steering Board also took a number of decisions, including on developing the fourth EMN study, *Migrant access to social security and healthcare: policies and practice*, as a main study.

The second meeting of the year gave the Commission the opportunity to update Member States on the development of the new multi-annual financial framework, and to hear from Member States on their strategic priorities for 2014. The EMN Steering Board approved the 2014 work programme, including the study topics and the indicative minimum and maximum budgets for each EMN NCP in 2014, and agreed that the Voluntary Return Experts' Network should be incorporated into the EMN.

The EMN's 2014 work programme was adopted in Commission Decision C (2014) 3584, permitting the financing of the EMN NCPs in 2014. This included €6 100 000 to be allocated as grants to fund up to 80 % of the EMN NCPs' activities, The remaining 20 % will be provided by the

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[25]   Links to the various national websites are provided at http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/authorities/index_en.htm under 'EMN NCPs.'.

EMN NCP's national authority. The remainder of the total budget, €900 000, will be principally used for procurement contracts, in particular for the EMN service providers,[26] and for awareness-raising actions.

EMN NCPs regularly submitted work progress reports, allowing progress during the year, their impact, and their levels of spending to be monitored. These work progress reports were submitted in advance of each of the five EMN NCP meetings. Progress was also monitored through Final Reports for 2012, submitted in early 2013, and for 2013 submitted in 2014.

The Commission and the EMN service providers met regularly during 2013 to ensure the continued the EMN's smooth functioning. This work includes work to support the EMN NCPs, preparation and planning for EMN Steering Board and NCP meetings, developing synthesis reports, studies, EMN Informs, and ongoing development and improvement of the functionality of the EMN website and the information exchange system.

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[26]   Two EMN service providers (ICF GHK-COWI and iLiCONN), were appointed by the Commission in 2009. ICF GHK-COWI's main priorities are to prepare draft common study specifications and synthesis reports and other output, and to support the network. The main priorities for iLiCONN (Interactive Listening and CONNecting) are to develop further the information exchange system and the EMN website. ICF GHK, working with the Academic Network for Legal Studies on Immigration and Asylum in Europe (the Odysseus Network), was appointed as an EMN service provider in December 2013, for three years, with the option to extend by an additional year.