

Economic migration

Commission to launch debate this year

By Manon Malhère | Tuesday 07 February 2012

The European Commission will publish a document on economic migration during the year 2012, Internal Affairs Commissioner Cecilia Malmström said, on 6 February. "Whether it is a green paper or a communication remains to be seen," she added.

Carried out under the responsibility of Malmström and her colleague, László Andor, who is in charge of social affairs and employment, this initiative aims to bring concrete responses to difficulties caused by the shortage of workers. More generally, this initiative seeks to remove legal immigration policy from the security (home affairs) perspective and to approach it more from the perspective of employment policy. This is rather tricky to achieve in times of economic and financial crisis. It may not be the best timing, a source told *Europolitics*(4331).

Yet, the labour needs are real. For example, the EU will be short of two million workers in the health care sector by 2020, according to Commission estimates.

"Of course, we can facilitate internal circulation in Europe. And that needs to be done," said Malmström. Furthermore, "we are not going to say, now, from Brussels, that we have to open all the doors. But what we can do is work with member states and stakeholders. We can identify needs in order to publish statistics," or even "identify obstacles that prevent people from coming" to Europe, she concluded.

The dossier was on the agenda of the seminar of the College of Commissioners, which took place on 31 January and 1 February.