



**COUNCIL OF
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"I" ITEM NOTE

from:	Presidency
to:	Permanent Representatives Committee
Subject:	Strategic Committee on Immigration, Frontiers and Asylum

1. At its meeting on 17 March 1999, Coreper decided upon the working structures for establishing an area of Freedom, Security and Justice following the entry into force of the Amsterdam Treaty. A new working structure was set up to prepare the Council's discussions with regard to immigration, frontiers and asylum, the so-called Strategic Committee on Immigration, Frontiers and Asylum (SCIFA). The tasks of this Committee, consisting of senior officials, was to issue strategic guidelines in matters relating to immigration, frontiers and asylum, to deal with questions arising from Articles 62, 63 and 64 of the TEC with a view to synthesising and, where necessary, solving them and to give substantive input to Coreper's discussions. (doc. 6166/2/99 REV2).

2. SCIFA was initially set up for a 5-year transitional period which will end on 1 May 2004. A lot of progress was made in the realisation of the programme approved at Tampere regarding the creation of an area on Freedom, Security and Justice. However, some aspects relating to the development of a common European policy on asylum and migration remain to be implemented. In this respect, SCIFA is committed to a global and balanced approach between, on the one hand, the need to stop illegal immigration and to fight against the trafficking in human beings and, on the other hand, the reception and integration of legal immigrants, in accordance with the principles and priorities set out in the European Councils in Brussels, Thessaloniki, Seville, Laeken and Tampere.

With the forthcoming enlargement, the Union's borders are expanding and the integrated management of the external borders of the Member States of the European Union will continue to be a priority over the coming years.

3. At the SCIFA meeting on 4 March 2004, delegations evaluated the progress made within SCIFA and agreed to continue the activities of SCIFA, whereby a new assessment will be made after two years (doc. 7237/04).
4. The Permanent Representatives Committee is invited to confirm this agreement.
