

The Stockholm Programme

The EU's law-and-order agenda for 2010-2015. That agenda – referred to as the 'Stockholm programme' – replaced the 'Hague programme', which expired in December 2009.

Immigration is a major focus. The commission urged EU countries to adopt a common strategy so they could better manage their borders and satisfy labour market needs. It also called for laws to ensure immigrants had equal rights throughout the EU and for closer monitoring of migration patterns and labour trends.

The Stockholm Programme (2010 – 2015) is without any doubt the first step towards the adoption of a concerted Immigration and Asylum Policy within Europe. It represents the new 5-year EU programme for Justice and Home Affairs, agreed by the European Council in December 2009. There are many hopes that it could override institutional infighting and jurisdiction questions that have always slowed progress towards this common goal. Current cooperation between member states on immigration issues, where their differing priorities will not even allow consensus on the issue of labour migration, is poor.

The challenge for the Stockholm Programme will be to be more than box-ticking with little real impact. Stockholm is recognised as a necessary, but insufficient framework for future immigration policy planning. However, the fact that member states will often only take action for short term political gains and that some of those members (UK, Denmark) are uninterested in a collaborative migration policy makes a positive outlook difficult, leaving quick fixes and interim measures the only strategy on the ground. This is exacerbated by economic uncertainty.