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### **MEP welcomes Border Protection Package**

MEP Simon Busuttil has welcomed Frattini's Border Protection Package as great news for Malta.

*"After the leaps which have been made during the past year with the increase of Frontex's budget and the extension of the Nautilus III patrols to six months, this package proves that we are still gathering momentum to tackle our illegal immigration problems"* Dr Busuttil said.

The package contains three communications dealing with the evaluation and future development of Frontex, the creation of a European Border Surveillance System (EUROSUR) and tools for an integrated European Border Management Strategy.

Dr Busuttil hailed the communication on Frontex as a step forward in the right direction, particularly with regards to the proposal on "setting up of specialized branches of the Agency in the Member States, through which the Agency may operate for the practical organization of joint operations and pilot projects". Here Frattini expressed his support for Malta as an ideal location to host such branch for the agency's operations in the Mediterranean.

Dr Busuttil also supported the ambitious proposal for Frontex to acquire its own equipment for border control and surveillance whilst at the same time getting engaged in return operations.

On the communication concerning an integrated European Border Management strategy, Dr Busuttil praised the idea of an entry and exit register. The new register will enable authorities to monitor whether people whose visa have expired do actually exit or stay in the EU illegally. The so-called overstayers can then be made subject to tracing.

Dr Busuttil also expressed his support for the communication concerning EUROSUR, as it will bring more coordination, joint communication networks and state-of-the-art surveillance technology, whilst in the long run making all available pieces of information accessible through a single communication network.

*"The launching of these proposals is one other achievement for Malta. It shows that Malta's illegal immigration problems have to be solved within the EU framework and that the EU is listening to us."* Dr Busuttil said.

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