

Immigration: status of third-country nationals who are long-term residents. Extension to beneficiaries of international protection

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The Council held a **debate** on this proposal which seeks to amend Directive 2003/109/EC with a view to extending the possibility of obtaining long-term resident status to beneficiaries of international protection.

The debate focused on the **scope of the Directive**. A majority of delegations could support the inclusion of both refugees and **beneficiaries of subsidiary protection** in the scope of the directive, without any difference of treatment between the categories. But some delegations argued for a broader scope of the directive to include other forms of protection granted by Member States, while others were in favour of limiting the scope to refugees only.

The Slovenian Presidency, noting that the necessary unanimity to adopt the directive could not be obtained today, concluded that the negotiations on this file should continue under the French Presidency.

To recall, Council Directive 2003/109/EC determines the status of third-country nationals who are long-term residents (residing more than 5 years in a member state). At the time of adoption of that directive, the Council welcomed the Commission commitment to follow it up with a proposal for the extension of long-term resident status to refugees and persons benefiting from subsidiary protection. The new Commission proposal, presented in June 2007, fulfils that commitment.