Commission takes steps to strengthen EU cooperation in the fight against terrorism, organised crime and cybercrime

Strasbourg, 28 April 2015

Today the European Commission set out a European Agenda on Security for the period 2015-2020 to support Member States' cooperation in tackling security threats and step up our common efforts in the fight against terrorism, organised crime and cybercrime. The Agenda sets out the concrete tools and measures which will be used in this joint work to ensure security and tackle these three most pressing threats more effectively.

The recent terrorist attacks on Europe’s people and values were coordinated across borders, showing that we must work together to resist these threats, in full respect of fundamental rights. The responsibility for ensuring internal security is first and foremost with the Member States, but cross-border challenges defy the capacity of individual countries to act alone and require EU support to build trust and facilitate cooperation, exchange of information and joint action.

First Vice-President Frans Timmermans said: "Terrorism, organised crime, and cybercrime are complex and evolving security challenges that cross European borders. So it is time we Europeans work better and more closely together to make sure our citizens are safe. Through this shared EU agenda, we want to get national authorities to cooperate more effectively, in a spirit of mutual trust. Terrorists attack the democratic values we cherish. We will stand firm on fundamental rights and work to address the root causes of radicalisation, fostering a genuine culture of tolerance in our societies".

Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos said: "There can be no security without freedom, and at the same time there can be no freedom without security. The Commission is taking the lead by presenting an EU Agenda on Security which concentrates in the areas where the European Union is able to make a real difference. This Agenda is not just a response to the recent tragic events. It is the renewal of our common Security Strategy in a new political and legal environment where we all agree that we need to trust each other, to effectively coordinate and exchange information to address evolving threats. The Agenda sets out concrete actions to turn these key principles into a practical reality: a set of strong measures which range from preventive action to protection, detection and enforcement."

Working better and closer together, with three priorities

The EU has built a set of tools to help Member States’ law enforcement agencies fight crime and terrorism. Success relies on effective cooperation between EU institutions and agencies and Member States and national authorities. The Agenda will enable a better use of these tools by allowing for better exchange of information and increased cooperation.

This approach can adapt to new and emerging threats. It will be used to address three of the most pressing challenges: 1) preventing terrorism and countering radicalisation; 2) fighting organised crime; 3) fighting cybercrime.

Key Actions include:

- **Countering radicalisation:** the Commission will set up a Centre of Excellence to collect and disseminate expertise on anti-radicalisation, building upon the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), an EU-wide umbrella network launched in 2011. This will strengthen the exchange of experience among practitioners directly engaged in preventing radicalisation and violent extremism at local level.

- **Updating the Framework Decision on Terrorism:** to provide a more coherent legal framework to deal with the foreign fighter phenomenon. This will allow for intensified cooperation with third countries on this issue.

- **Cutting the financing of criminals:** cooperation between competent authorities in Europe (in particular national Financial Intelligence Units, which will be connected to EUROPOL) will be strengthened; the Commission will assess the necessity of new legislation to counter terrorist financing and improve confiscations of property derived from criminal activities.
- **Enhancing dialogues with the IT industry:** in 2015, the Commission will launch an EU Forum with major IT companies to counter terrorist propaganda on the internet and in social media and to explore ways to address the concerns of law enforcement authorities on new encryption technologies.

- **Strengthening the legal framework on firearms** to address the illegal trafficking and reactivation of weapons, to establish common standards, share more information and boost cooperation with third countries.

- **Reinforcing our tools to fight cybercrime:** the priority is to identify ways to overcome obstacles to criminal investigations online, notably on issues of competent jurisdiction and rules on access to Internet-based evidence and information.

- **Enhancing the capacities of Europol,** including through the creation of a European Counter Terrorist Centre which will help the EU Agency to step up support for national law enforcement authorities' actions to tackle foreign terrorist fighters, terrorist financing, violent extremist content online, and illicit trafficking of firearms.

**Working differently**

The new collaborative way of working in the Commission has allowed for a comprehensive approach to security, with the Agenda including measures across the full spectrum of policy sectors from justice and home affairs to financial affairs, transport and the environment.

With Justice and Home Affairs policies now **set on an equal footing** with other EU policies, one of the Commission's main priorities will be the implementation of the full range of existing instruments which are available for exchanging information, police and judicial cooperation and training and research. A strong emphasis will also be put on delivering pending proposals, such as the EU Passenger Name Record Directive and the Data protection reform.

**Background**

A recent **Eurobarometer** shows that citizens are increasingly worried about their security; the proportion of people who see terrorism as the main security challenge in the EU has jumped from 33% on average in 2013 to 49% today (see Annex).

In June 2014, the European Council called on the Commission to review the 2010 EU Internal Security Strategy, and to update it by mid-2015. The December 2014 Justice & Home Affairs Council set out its priorities for renewing the strategy.

In its Resolution of 17 December 2014, the European Parliament called for the new strategy to be forward-looking and easily adaptable to evolving situations with a joined-up approach across the Union to tackle foreign fighters, cyber-security, human trafficking, organised crime, money laundering and corruption.

President Juncker's Political Guidelines identified the security agenda as a priority for this Commission, and the 2015 Commission Work Programme committed to the delivery of the European Agenda on Security.

**Useful Links**

- Communication on the European Agenda on Security
- Questions and Answers: the European Security Agenda
- Special Eurobarometer 432: Europeans’ Attitudes towards Security
- Website of First Vice-President Frans Timmermans
- Website of Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos
- Directorate General for Migration and Home Affairs Website
- EU provides €10 million to counter radicalisation in the Sahel-Maghreb and stem the flow of foreign fighters from North Africa, the Middle East and Western Balkans

**Press contacts**

Natasha BERTAUD (+32 2 296 74 56)
Tim McPHIE (+ 32 2 295 86 02)
Milica PETROVIC (+32 229-63020)

General public inquiries:
Europe Direct by phone 00 800 67 89 10 11 or by email