



Commission paves the way towards a Security Union and reports on EU-Turkey Agreement

Brussels, 20 April 2016

The College proposes to achieve an operational and effective EU Security Union and assesses progress on the implementation of the EU-Turkey Agreement. It also proposes visa-free travel for citizens of Ukraine.



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EU Security Union

The Commission presented the way forward towards an effective and genuine EU Security Union – building on the European Agenda on Security presented on 28 April 2015.

In a Communication it took stock of progress made on the actions under the European Agenda on Security, identifies implementation gaps in the fight against terrorism and sets out the actions that need to be taken to address these gaps.

The measures proposed aim at increasing the collective capacity to tackle the terrorist threat and protecting citizens.

They include addressing the threat posed by returning foreign terrorist fighters, preventing and fighting radicalisation, sanctioning terrorists and improving information exchange.

The European Counter Terrorism Centre should be strengthened to become the law enforcement intelligence hub for threat analysis and to support the development of counter-terrorism operational plans.

Cutting the access of terrorists to firearms, explosives and financing is also a top priority.

Implementation of the EU-Turkey Agreement

The Commission also reported on the implementation of the EU-Turkey Agreement and found that good progress has been made, but with continued efforts and commitments needed to consolidate this position and carry out sustained return and resettlement operations.

On 18 March 2016, EU Heads of State or Government and Turkey agreed to end the irregular migration from Turkey to the EU and replace it instead with legal channels of resettlement of refugees to the European Union.

According to this first report, this new approach has started to deliver results, with a sharp decrease seen in the number of people irregularly crossing the Aegean from Turkey into Greece. The return of irregular migrants from Greece to Turkey and resettlements from Turkey to the EU have started in early April. Legal changes have been undertaken by both Greece and Turkey to ensure full respect of EU and international law. Greece has set up accelerated procedures for the processing of all stages of asylum applications on the islands, from the initial interviews to the appeals. Programming and project preparation under the Facility for Refugees in Turkey have been accelerated.

As outlined by First Vice-President Frans Timmermans, the Commission "will remain engaged to ensure full and timely delivery of all elements of the EU-Turkey Statement, including projects for refugees from Syria in Turkey, the visa liberalisation process and compliance with EU and international laws."

The Commission will present its third visa liberalisation progress report for Turkey on 4 May and, if Turkey takes the necessary measures to fulfil the remaining benchmarks, the report will be accompanied by a legislative proposal for transferring Turkey to the visa-free list.

A second report on the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement will be presented in mid-May 2016.

Visa Liberalisation for citizens of Ukraine

The Commission proposed to the Council and the European Parliament to lift visa requirements for the citizens of Ukraine by transferring Ukraine to the list of countries whose citizens can travel without a visa to the Schengen area. Commissioner Avramopoulos underlined that "this is the result of the success of the Ukrainian government in achieving far-reaching and difficult reforms (...)". This proposal comes after the Commission gave a positive assessment last December, confirming that Ukraine successfully met all benchmarks under the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan.

Eco-design

The Commission held an orientation debate on the implementation of the eco-design framework

Antitrust

On the same day, the Commission sent a Statement of Objections to Google on the Android operating system and applications.

Related Links

- [Press release – Managing the Refugee Crisis: Commission reports on implementation of EU-Turkey Statement](#)
- [Factsheet – Implementing the EU-Turkey Agreement – Questions and Answers](#)
- [Factsheet – The Facility for Refugees in Turkey](#)
- [Press release - European Agenda on Security: Paving the way towards a Security Union](#)
- [Factsheet - Implementation of the European Agenda on Security: Questions & Answers](#)
- [Press release - European Commission proposes visa-free travel for citizens of Ukraine](#)
- [Press release - Commission sends Statement of Objections to Google on Android operating system and applications](#)
- [Factsheet - Commission sends Statement of Objections to Google on Android operating system and applications](#)
- [Agenda of the meeting](#)
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