

Schengen Area - The Commission proposes to facilitate cross border surveillance and “hot pursuit” between Member States

A proposal for a Council Decision on the improvement of police cooperation between Member States of the European Union, especially at the internal borders and amending the Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement has been adopted today by the European Commission . The proposal intends to provide a general framework to improve the operational cooperation, structural coordination and information exchange between law enforcement authorities of EU Member States. The Proposal responds to the invitation of the Hague Programme to further develop cross-border police cooperation and also aims at amending the Convention Implementing the Schengen Agreement, by removing the limitation to land borders in the context of hot pursuit and extending the possibilities in which cross border surveillance and cross border pursuit can be carried out.

“Free movement of persons within the Schengen area” declared Vice President of the Commission Franco Frattini, in charge of Freedom, Justice and Security, “requires action to counter security deficits caused by the abolition of border controls, as perpetrators of criminal acts are equally able to move as freely as law abiding citizens. Impunity caused by obstacles to cooperation must be removed”.

In border regions the impact of the permeable coexistence of different jurisdictions is most felt in everyday police work. The need for appropriate cooperation mechanisms is therefore most acute in those regions, i.e. to address the security challenges exceeding those existing elsewhere in the Union. Although each region is unique, as regards demography, geography and prosperity, similarities in cooperation needs permit to develop a common framework to tackle the obstacles to cooperation, coordination of activities and information exchange.

The proposed measures intend to strengthen and improve information exchange, on request or on the own initiative of national law enforcement services, building on the experience that has been gained over the past decade in the context of the cooperation in the framework of the Convention Implementing the Schengen Agreement (“Schengen Convention”). Data protection shall comply with the relevant legal provisions laid down in Title VI of the Schengen Convention.

Structural coordination includes the examination of the interoperability of equipment, in particular in communications and surveillance technology and insists on joint training schemes, referring to work visits, exchange programmes and language training.

Operational cooperation includes joint patrols as well as joint intervention and surveillance operations, providing assistance in the establishment of joint investigation teams in border regions and assigning police task to liaison officers or to officials of the other Member States.

The proposal sets up a regulatory Committee to assist the Commission and lays down its tasks. The Committee is composed by representatives of the Member States and chaired by the representative of the Commission, who submits to the Committee a draft of the measures to be taken.

Links :

The Hague Programme

http://europa.eu.int/comm/justice_home/doc_centre/doc/hague_programme_en.pdf

Convention implementing the Schengen agreement

[http://europa.eu.int/smartapi/cgi/sga_doc?smartapi!celexapi!prod!CELEXnumdoc&lg=EN&numdoc=42000A0922\(02\)&model=quichett](http://europa.eu.int/smartapi/cgi/sga_doc?smartapi!celexapi!prod!CELEXnumdoc&lg=EN&numdoc=42000A0922(02)&model=quichett)

Declaration on EU response to London Bombings

http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/jha/85703.pdf