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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Political and Security Committee (PSC) Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation on Internal Security (COSI) - Summary of discussions held on 22 October 2015

Delegations will find enclosed the joint letter of the PSC Chair, Ambassador Walter Stevens, and of the acting COSI Chair, Jean-Louis Bordet, on the result of discussions held on 22 October 2015.



Summary of the discussions of the Joint Meeting between the Political and Security Committee and the Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation on Internal Security

Brussels, 22 October 2015

1. Disrupting Smuggling and Trafficking of Migrants

Introducing the item, the PSC Chair stressed the importance of having an operational discussion in the follow-up to the Luxembourg High-level Conference and in the run up to the Valletta summit. Many tools and instruments are already in place, such as the HRVP's High Level dialogues and EUNAVFOR MED, and should now be strengthened and integrated into a coherent and tailor-made approach. Member States were invited to reflect on the opportunities to further reinforce the internal/external coherence, on the optimisation of the instruments to be used and on the cooperation with third partner countries.

The EEAS referred to the political background and outlined the opportunities and challenges for the EU's external policies and agenda in the field. As set out during the last JHA and FAC Councils, the main challenge is to avoid artificial boundaries between the internal and external dimension and to use all available instruments towards this end. The EUMS provided the latest state of play on EUNAVFOR MED, particularly emphasising the complex environment in which the operation takes place and the need for greater maritime awareness and information sharing. The Commission updated on the EU Agenda on Migration and the follow-up and implementation of the EU Action Plan against Migrant Smuggling, in the context of which various priority initiatives have been set up. References were made to the so-called "hotspots", the work of the EU JHA agencies, the importance of a strengthened legal framework and the Khartoum process.

In the ensuing discussion, Member States stressed the importance of keeping the momentum going and the need for a coherent and integrated approach, involving all relevant instruments and the buy-in of agencies and institutions, in full cooperation with third partner countries. In terms of particular tools and instruments, most Member States pleaded for the reinforcement of existing ones such as FRONTEX, CSDP (EUCAP Sahel Niger) as well as the HRVP's high-level dialogues, whereas some expressed interest in exploring and possibly setting up new instruments (e.g. an EU Border and Coast Guard). Return and readmission and strategic communication on the risks and dangers of irregular migration are crucial areas, which the EU should focus upon. Some Member States underlined the importance of conditionality and the "more-for-more" principle in the EU's dialogues with third countries. Root causes of the current crisis (e.g. a deplorable humanitarian situation, conflicts and a lack of socio-economic development) should be tackled in the countries of origin and transit, and the EU should step up its efforts to find an urgent solution to the situation

in Libya. The crucial role of EU Migration Liaison Officers in the EU delegations, which are well placed to coordinate the EU's policies on migration and security on the ground, was also recalled.

The PSC Chair concluded that the current momentum of the high level dialogues should be seized in order to operationalise and reinforce the EU's existing instruments and tools, and to develop a coherent and effective approach, with the involvement and buy-in of all agencies and institutions, in close cooperation with countries of origin and transit. Best practices and lessons learned should guide the approach.

2. Security Cooperation with the MENA region

The Acting COSI Chair introduced the item inviting Member States to share their views on additional measures the EU could take to enhance its security cooperation with the MENA region. He recalled that the JHA Council on 8 October 2015 had invited the EEAS and the Commission, in cooperation with the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator (CTC), to retain focus and momentum and provide as soon as possible ambitious counter-terrorism assistance to states in the MENA region, such as Tunisia, as well as the Western Balkan region and Turkey, in accordance with the Conclusions of the FAC of 9 February 2015. The COSI Chair hoped to make progress by the December Council.

Recalling the political and regional context, the EEAS stressed that the EU's offer needed to be stepped up with a more effective and integrated use of existing instruments (both at EU and MS levels), to be coupled with tailor-made, bilateral actions based on each country's situation. The proposals on the security dimension of the ENP review and the recent EEAS reorganisation aimed at achieving greater integration of efforts would provide useful tools in this context. The CTC called for intensified counter-terrorism cooperation and adequate resources despite the ongoing migration crisis, highlighting the recent enhanced Security Dialogue with Tunisia as a good example to follow. He also noted that the third Euromed meeting in Baghdad on foreign terrorist fighters served to set up a multilateral framework to create trust and cooperation on important issues of common concern. The Commission described the instruments available (SSR Tunisia, Euromed Police 4, RAN and measures against firearms trafficking), emphasised the need for restructuring dialogues with third countries as proposed in the European Agenda on Security, and noted, together with the CTC, the key role of the new EU security experts in Delegations to improve coordination in the field and to create a security culture in Delegations.

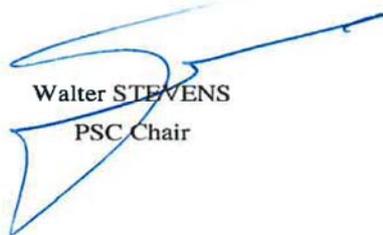
Member States emphasised the need for a long-term planning, as well as a focussed approach on capacity building, strategic communication, information exchange and prevention. The Western Balkans CT initiative, the Blue Sahel, the GCTF activities, RAN, SSCAT and IRU could serve as models. Echoing the comments by the CTC, some Member States suggested stepping up cooperation with third countries through high-level dialogues, based on the Tunisia and Morocco examples, with the aim of building confidence and country-specific implementation plans. They also stressed the need for joint training programmes and on-the-ground missions, allowing for exchanges of good practices, elaboration of lessons learnt and comprehensive analyses. More information needed to be shared at EU-level, in particular with Europol and IntCen, and the coordination between PSC and COSI had to be enhanced. The usefulness of the ENP review was underlined. Cooperating with regional organisations was important, and the potential role of the African Union could also be further explored.

In conclusion, the Acting COSI Chair noted the consensual view that CT dialogues should be further strengthened with MENA countries, with an emphasis on country-specific responses. Enhanced coordination within the EU, involving all relevant actors, was also underlined. The COSI-PSC meetings constitute the appropriate platform to take the issue forward.

3. AOB

As a follow-up to the PSC-COSI of 4 June, the EEAS provided an update on the efforts to strengthen the cooperation between CSDP and FSJ actors, describing the progress achieved notably with the EU agencies and Interpol. Some challenges remained to be addressed, particularly as regards the force generating process. CIVCOM and COSI SG will take the issue forward on the basis of an implementation report to be published shortly.

Concluding the meeting, the PSC Chair suggested that CIVCOM and COSI SG could meet more regularly. He also noted that the operational character of the joint PSC-COSI meetings could be further strengthened in the future by focussing the discussion on a limited number of issues and making the link, also as regards timing, with the decision making at the JHA and FAC Councils.



Walter STEVENS
PSC Chair



Jean-Louis BORDET
Acting COSI Chair