



Implementation of the European Agenda on Security: Questions & Answers

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The European Commission adopted the [European Agenda on Security](#) on 28 April 2015, setting out the main actions envisaged to ensure an effective EU response to security threats over the period 2015-2020. Since its adoption, significant progress has been made in its implementation.

At the same time this period has also been marked by tragic terrorist attacks around the world and notably on European soil in Paris in November 2015 and in Brussels in March 2016.

This Memo highlights the actions already completed as well as those that still need to be completed as a matter of urgency in view of the current challenges and to pave the way towards a genuine and effective Security Union.

What actions have been completed since the adoption of the European Agenda on Security in April 2015?

On terrorism

The [European Counter Terrorism Centre](#) in Europol was launched on 1 January 2016. The aim is to step up support to Member States fighting terrorism and radicalisation by facilitating coordination and cooperation between national authorities. As the Commission recalled on several occasions, sufficient expertise needs to be made available by Member States. The Commission has proposed an amending budget to increase the ECTC by 25 staff, and this proposal has now completed its legislative procedure. Given the urgency of these measures, on 13 April 2016 the European Parliament fast-tracked its approval of the funds and gave its green light for €2 million to hire new staff.

On border management

Thanks to the Commission's awareness-raising, today Member States use the Schengen Information System more intensively: there are more than 75,000 alerts for discreet or specific checks at border crossings, a 300% increase compared to the situation in June 2013. The system was searched 3 billion times in 2015 by the competent national authorities, which is a 50 % increase compared to the previous year.

Moreover, in 2015, the Commission has carried out legal and technical improvements to the Schengen Information System to provide for real-time communication from controls on the ground to the competent services in other Member States. The Commission is also implementing a new functionality that allows searches with fingerprints. In the meantime, the Commission has urged Member States to make full use of the functionalities of the system and all alert categories, including the measures involving expulsion, refusal of entry or removal from the territory of a Member State.

Concerning border controls, the Commission has revised the Schengen Handbook to clarify "non-systematic checks" and provided guidance to help border guards identify and seize false documents.

The Commission finalised in June 2015, in close cooperation with national experts, the EEAS, EU Agencies and Interpol, a first set of Common Risk Indicators concerning foreign terrorist fighters, with a view to detect terrorist travel. Common Risk Indicators support the work of national border authorities when conducting checks on persons. To operationalise the Common Risk Indicators, FRONTEX developed a handbook in January 2016 to support the border authorities of Member States and Schengen Associated countries.

On radicalisation

Building on the longstanding work of the Radicalisation Awareness Network, on 1 October 2015 the Commission launched the Radicalisation Awareness Network Centre of Excellence. The aim of the Centre is (i) to facilitate and enhance the exchange of experiences and cooperation between the relevant stakeholders through the Radicalisation Awareness Network (inside and outside the EU); (ii) to support the EU and the Member States in their prevention efforts through different support services, practical tools and policy contributions; and (iii) to consolidate, disseminate and share expertise, best practices and targeted research in the field of preventing radicalisation. The Centre has stepped up its

support to Member States and to priority third countries. It has been reinforced with a budget of €25 million for the next 4 years.

On 3 December 2015, the Commission launched the [EU Internet Forum](#), bringing together Ministers and CEOs of major internet companies and other internet actors. It provides a framework for more efficient cooperation with the industry. The aim is to contribute to (i) reducing accessibility to terrorist material online (removal of content) and (ii) empowering civil society partners to challenge the terrorist narrative (development and dissemination of narratives which counter and challenge that of the extremists, and provide positive alternative narratives). Work is now underway to improve the speed and volume of referrals, and prevent removed material from being re-uploaded elsewhere. Furthermore, the Commission is keen to bring the smaller, newer companies on-board and prevent their platforms from being exploited by terrorist networks. The EU Internet Referral Unit (see below) will play a key role in this process and the Radicalisation Awareness Network, in consultation with the industry and its network of practitioners and civil society partners, is developing a civil society empowerment programme to help drive the overall efforts. A roadmap with concrete activities is being finalised together with internet companies.

The Commission is also intensifying work to tackle the problem of online hate speech in cooperation with internet companies, Member states and civil society. Work will be completed by June in line with the statement adopted at the extraordinary JHA Council on 24 March.

On 1 July 2015, the EU Internet Referral Unit at Europol was established (pilot phase) to help reduce the volume of terrorist material online. The IRU is playing a key role in delivering the EU Internet Forum's objective of reducing accessibility to terrorist content online. It has assessed over 4,700 pieces of material across 45 platforms and made over 3,200 referrals. Whilst this is a voluntary approach, in the majority of cases the material is swiftly removed (91% removal rate). The Commission will continue to support the unit in improving the referrals process and in reaching out to more internet companies.

The Commission has also provided €8 million in 2015 and 2016 to support the development of rehabilitation and de-radicalisation programmes inside and outside prisons, risk assessment tools and training of professionals. To prevent radicalisation through education and youth outreach, under Erasmus+, priority is now given to projects fostering inclusion and promoting fundamental values. Up to €400 million have been made available for this purpose, and a specific €13 million call was launched in March 2016 to identify and spread best practices.

The Commission will report further on these and other ongoing actions against radicalisation in a Communication later this spring.

On disrupting terrorist finance

A platform bringing together Financial Intelligence Units from the Member States is in place. Its purpose is to detect and disrupt terrorist finance and money laundering activities. It meets on a regular basis with the Commission services with a view to enhance cooperation, develop common tools and better identify suspicious financial transactions. The Financial Intelligence Units have developed well-performing IT tools for direct information exchange (FIU.NET) among units, which since 1 January 2016 is embedded in EUROPOL's European Counter Terrorism Centre.

On firearms and explosive precursors

On 18 November 2015, the Commission presented a [proposal](#) for the full revision of Directive 477/91 setting the legal framework on firearms. The revision aims to restrict the availability of some of the most powerful types of semi-automatic weapons and those that could be easily converted into full automatic weapons, as well as to enhance the exchange of information between Member states, traceability and marking rules for firearms. Adoption by the co-legislators should be a priority.

The Commission also adopted on 18 November 2015 an [implementing Regulation on common firearms deactivation standards](#). It entered into force on 8 April 2016 and will ensure that deactivated firearms are rendered irreversibly inoperable. To fulfil its security objectives, the Regulation covers both domestic and cross-border situations.

Furthermore, on 2 December 2015 the Commission presented an Action Plan on firearms and explosives that called for a number of measures to prevent terrorist attacks such as those that occurred in Paris and Brussels. These include (i) specific actions on the use of detection technology and towards standardising its use (for soft targets, critical infrastructures, public areas, etc.); (ii) development of innovative detection tools, (iii) strengthening of existing measures and creation of new ones for increasing the security of passengers on different modes of transport; (iv) use of existing tools for better gathering and sharing of information, to reinforce security.

As regards explosives, the Commission has identified gaps in the implementation by Member states of Regulation 98/2013 on explosives precursors and is taking steps to address this. The Commission will also assess the need to revise this Regulation in 2016.

On the external dimension

The Commission also took action, in close cooperation with the External Action Service and the EU Counter Terrorism Coordinator, to ensure further coherence between internal and external actions in the field of security.

Security and counter-terrorism experts have been deployed in the EU delegations of Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and Turkey.

Targeted and upgraded security and counter-terrorism dialogues have been established, in particular with Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey, and concrete action plans are being agreed with those countries.

On 6 April 2016, the Commission and the High Representative presented a Joint Framework to address hybrid threats more effectively with a coordinated response at EU level by using EU policies and instruments, to build on European solidarity, mutual assistance and the full potential of the Lisbon Treaty.

On research and innovation

Over the past 12 months the Commission has granted about €200 million to over 30 research activities that will offer innovative security solutions within the Horizon 2020 Secure Societies research and innovation programme. These activities involve academia, industry and security practitioners, and pave the way for coping with evolving and innovative security threats of the future.

The European Agenda on Security underlined that a competitive EU security industry can also contribute to the EU's autonomy in meeting security needs. The EU has encouraged the development of innovative security solutions, for example through standards and common certificates. The Commission will come forward in 2016 with proposals on airport screening equipment, to remove barriers to the Single Market and to enhance the competitiveness of the EU security industry in export markets.

What other relevant actions have been launched by the Commission which need to be sped up?

Priorities for implementation

- **Action Plan on Terrorist Financing:** On 2 February 2016, the Commission announced a wide range of measures to cut terrorists off from their sources of revenue and to trace them through financial activities. Among the immediate priorities in the [Action Plan](#) are measures to enhance the effectiveness of sanctions and asset freezing measures within the EU and in third countries. **Next steps:** In the first half of 2016, among other measures, the Commission intends to propose targeted amendments to the EU Anti-Money Laundering framework to address emerging terrorist financing risks and potential loopholes, and, before the end of the year, a proposal harmonising money laundering criminal offences and sanctions. Also this year, the Commission intends to adopt a Delegated Act to identify high risk third countries with strategic deficiencies in their anti-money laundering/countering financing (EU blacklist), and propose EU legislation against illicit cash movements, including possible limits on cash or assets carried or transported across borders. Other measures include a proposal on the mutual recognition of criminal assets' freezing and confiscation orders, a proposal on combatting fraud and counterfeiting on non-cash means of payment, and, early in 2017, a proposal related to the powers of customs addressing terrorism financing related to trade in goods, and a proposal against illicit trade in cultural goods.
- **Development and dissemination of guidance on soft target protection and critical infrastructure:** In May 2014 the Commission and the EU Airport Police network completed work on an EU Airport Soft Target Protection manual containing guidance on soft target protection. This manual has been translated into the official EU languages and should be shortly distributed to all relevant police forces so that the recommendations can be used to better secure airports against attacks similar to that of 22 March 2016. Similar work has been launched in October 2015 by the Commission to develop guidance material on protection of other soft target areas such as rail and metro and other public areas of high public concentration (sport stadiums, shopping malls, etc.). **Next steps:** The finalisation of this material will be accelerated and supported by adequate training.
- **Detection and protection trials:** Detection and protection trials have been launched by the Commission together with several Member States in February 2015 in different operational environments such as transport hubs, sport events and public buildings. **Next steps:** New trials are

scheduled for 2016, including in the context of hotspots.

Recent proposals to be adopted by the co-legislators or to be implemented by Member States

- **Commission proposal for a directive on terrorism:** Following the adoption and signature on behalf of the EU of the Additional Protocol to the Council of Europe Convention on Terrorism, the Commission proposed on 2 December 2015 a [Directive](#) harmonising the criminalisation of terrorist offences. In addition to consolidating the EU acquis in this field, the proposed Directive introduces new offences to ensure compliance with international obligations and standards such as the offences of travel to another country for the purpose of terrorism, passive training, as well as a comprehensive offence of terrorist financing. The proposed new rules aim at facilitating the effective disruption and prosecution of support to terrorists and travelling of foreign terrorist fighters. The proposal also includes specific provisions on the rights of victims of terrorism. Co-legislators should finalise discussions leading to adoption of the proposed Directive as a matter of priority.
- **EU PNR Directive:** Following the positive vote of the European Parliament on 14 April 2016, Justice and Home Affairs Ministers are expected to adopt the proposal at their meeting of 21 April 2016. Member States should then ensure its implementation as a matter of urgency.
- **Revised Europol Regulation:** The final adoption of the revised Europol Regulation should be ensured by co-legislators by June 2016. Following the political agreement reached between the co-legislators on the Commission's proposal, the reform of Europol will be a decisive step towards making Europol a hub for information exchange for law enforcement authorities within the EU in support of national actions.
- **Extension of ECRIS to Third Country Nationals:** The Commission proposed on 19 January 2016 to amend the EU system for the exchange of information on criminal convictions to render it more effective for the exchange of criminal records of third country nationals. The Commission has invited the co-legislators to agree on the [Commission's proposal](#) as a matter of priority.
- **Implementation of the central fingerprint recognition functionality (AFIS) in SIS:** The Commission adopted a report on 29 February 2016 in line with Art. 22 (c) of the SIS II legal instruments about the availability and readiness of the technology to use fingerprints for identification purposes. This opens the way for the development of AFIS in SIS. AFIS is scheduled to be ready in mid-2017.
- **European Border and Coast Guard:** The [proposals presented](#) by the Commission on 15 December 2015 aim to set up a European Border and Coast Guard for integrated border management and to raise common standards at the Schengen external border. The Commission also proposed the modification of the Schengen Borders Code to impose the obligation of carrying out systematic checks at the external borders on all persons, including those enjoying the right of free movement under Union law (i.e. EU citizens and members of their families who are not EU citizens), in order to verify that such persons do not represent a threat to public order and internal security. The discussion in the Council on the package should be sped up under the Dutch Presidency, to ensure a swift adoption of the Commission proposal.
- **Revised proposals on Smart Borders:** The Commission presented on 6 April 2016 a revised proposal for establishing an Entry/Exit System (EES) as well as the subsequent technical changes to the Schengen Border Code. The EES will strengthen and at the same time speed-up border check procedures for non-EU nationals travelling to the EU. The EES will also improve the quality and efficiency of the Schengen Area external border controls, help Member States dealing with ever increasing traveller flows without having to increase accordingly the number of border guards, it will allow the systematic identification of overstayers and will reinforce internal security and the fight against terrorism and serious crime. The adoption of the proposals by the co-legislators should be finalised by the end of 2016 in order for the Entry/Exit System to be operational by early 2020, after the required three years for the implementation of the system.

What further actions are needed?

Member States have the primary responsibility to ensure security on the ground. Action at EU level must focus on where we can bring added-value to the action of the Member States.

In that regard, the Commission has devoted significant efforts under the European Agenda on Security to address the main challenges for an effective and sustainable action at EU level to fight terrorism and organised crime: (1) the exchange of information between Member States' law enforcement authorities and with the EU Agencies, and (2) the issue of the inter-operability of relevant databases and information systems.

A number of actions are being undertaken to address these challenges:

- **Further strengthening the European Counter Terrorism Centre at Europol:** today's Communication states that the European Counter Terrorism Centre should be strengthened to act as the law enforcement intelligence hub for analysing terrorism and assessing threats, and to support the development of counter-terrorism operational plans. The Commission will bring forward initiatives on how to develop the Centre into a stronger structure, with the capacity for joint operational planning, threat assessments and law enforcement intelligence coordination, staffed with personnel from the responsible institutions of the Member states as well as the Commission. Joint threat assessments on terrorism and radicalisation should start being developed by the ECTC and the Intelligence and Situation Centre (IntGen) already now as a matter of urgency.
- **Communication on stronger and smarter information systems:** The Commission presented on 6 April 2016 a Communication on Stronger and Smarter Information Systems for Borders and Security. It builds on the synergies between the European Agendas on Security and Migration. It is designed to address shortcomings identified in the current systems, gaps in the architecture and limited interoperability, while fully complying with data protection rules. In its Communication, the Commission announces the establishment of a High Level Expert Group on Information Systems and Interoperability with EU Agencies, national experts and relevant institutional stakeholders. The Expert Group will address the current shortcomings and knowledge gaps caused by the complexity and fragmentation of information systems at the European level. It will elaborate on the legal, technical and operational aspects of the different options proposed in the Communication to achieve interoperability of information systems.
- **Information exchange for law enforcement purposes:** In view of the importance of cross-border information exchange for law enforcement purposes within the EU and the challenges that such exchanges raise, the Commission continues to prioritise the enforcement of the existing Prüm framework (an information exchange tool that can offer automated comparison of DNA profiles, fingerprint data and vehicle registration data) as a matter of urgency. The first EU Pilots were sent at the end of 2015. A more systematic use of Interpol's Stolen and Lost Travel Documents database is also a high priority, in line with JHA Council Conclusions from November 2015.
- **Action plan on Schengen Information System and foreign terrorist fighters' movements and proposal for a revision of the Schengen Information System:** The Council Presidency, in close cooperation with the Commission, is preparing an action plan to be issued by the end of the current Presidency on the use of SIS in relation to foreign terrorist fighters and to address important operational difficulties. Later this year the Commission will propose a revision of the Schengen Information System on return of irregular migrants and entry bans, the use of facial images for biometric identification, and the creation of new alerts for wanted unknown persons, which will improve the added value of the system for law enforcement purposes. By mid-2017 it will also add an automated fingerprint search functionality to the system (see above), as already foreseen by the existing legal framework.
- **Jurisdiction for accessing digital evidence:** The Commission will work, together with the European Parliament and the Council, based on a consultation with experts and other stakeholders, to develop a common EU approach to determining jurisdiction of law enforcement authorities when they directly access data stored or located abroad, including legislative measures if needed.
- **Further strengthening the European Counter Terrorism Centre at Europol:** today's Communication states that the European Counter Terrorism Centre should be strengthened to act as the law enforcement intelligence hub for analysing terrorism and assessing threats, and to support the development of counter-terrorism operational plans. The Commission will bring forward initiatives on how to develop the Centre into a stronger structure, with the capacity for joint operational planning, threat assessments and law enforcement intelligence coordination, staffed with personnel from the responsible institutions of the Member states as well as the Commission. Joint threat assessments on terrorism and radicalisation should start being developed by the ECTC and the Intelligence and Situation Centre (IntGen) already now as a matter of urgency.

For more information

[Press release: European Agenda on Security: Paving the way towards a Security Union](#)

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