European Agenda on Security: First report on progress towards an effective and sustainable Security Union

Brussels, 12 October 2016

Today the European Commission is presenting the first in a series of monthly reports on progress made towards an effective and sustainable Security Union.

The report outlines the Commission's efforts in the fight against terrorism, organised crime and cybercrime and the work undertaken to strengthen the EU's resilience against these threats. It also highlights the priority areas where more work is needed and sets out concrete operational measures for the months to come.

Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, Dimitris **Avramopoulos** said: *"The fragmentation of our security framework makes us all vulnerable. The dots have to be connected within and between Member States, but also between Member States and EU Agencies, and between the different security and border management systems. The internal security of one Member State is the internal security of all. In this rapidly changing security environment, delivering on a genuine and effective Security Union means delivering on all elements."*

Commissioner for the Security Union, Julian **King** said: *"Terrorists don't target one member state or another. They target our way of life, our openness, our future. Our response needs to be comprehensive and sustainable, building on trust and the effective cooperation between institutions and Member States."*

The report underlines the need to implement existing EU legislation and to accelerate the work on security related proposals presented by the Commission. The Commission's work will focus on strengthening the fight against terrorism by depriving terrorists of the means to commit attacks and enhancing our defence and resilience against these threats. The main priority areas are:

- **Improving the legal framework and preventing and fighting radicalisation:**

- To this end, an agreement should be reached before the end of the year on the Commission's proposal for a **Directive on combating terrorism**. The Directive is vital to ensure that the EU's legal framework can tackle terrorist threats effectively, in particular threats posed by returning foreign terrorist fighters.

- An agreement should also be reached before the end of the year on the revision of the **Firearms Directive**. The Commission will continue to urge the co-legislators to maintain the level of ambition, particularly the objective to ban the most dangerous semi-automatic firearms.

- The Commission has taken action to reduce access to precursors that can be used to make homemade explosives and ensure full implementation of the **Regulation on the marketing and use of explosive precursors.** To this effect, additional precursor substances of concern to be included in the Regulation have been identified and will be added to the list of substances subject to enhanced control by the Commission in November.

- **Improving information exchange, strengthening information systems and enhancing security at the external borders:**

- Member States should urgently take the necessary steps to build their Passenger Information Units (PIUs) to ensure that they are able to implement fully the **EU PNR Directive** at the latest by May 2018, the deadline for full implementation of the Directive. To support Member States to accelerate their work, the Commission will make available an additional €70 million in EU funding and will present an **implementation plan** by November 2016 including milestones that Member States will need to meet in order to have their PIUs up and running.

- To strengthen the fight against cross border crime, the Commission has also in September initiated infringement procedures against Member States who had not yet implemented the **Prüm Decisions.**

- The Commission will also take the necessary steps to enable **the European Counter Terrorism Centre** at Europol to provide 24/7 support to Member States.

- The work of the important **High Level Expert Group** set up by the Commission in April 2016 to address legal, technical and operational aspects of different options to achieve greater interoperability of information systems needs to be accelerated. The Commission will present interim findings to the Council and to the European Parliament in the course of the next months.

- Work is also ongoing as regards the Commission's legislative proposal for an **EU Travel and Information Authorisation System (ETIAS)** to provide prior checks for visa-exempt third-country nationals travelling to the Schengen area, which will be presented by November.

- In addition, swift negotiations and adoption of the **Commission proposal for systematic checks** of EU citizens crossing the external borders by the end of 2016 and the establishment of an **EU Entry-Exist System (EES)** are necessary to enhance security at the external EU borders.

The present report is the first of a series of monthly reports on the progress made towards an operational and effective Security Union, as requested by President Juncker in his mission letter addressed to Commissioner Julian King. The monthly reports will highlight action taken by the EU institutions and EU Agencies in the area of security and will identify where more efforts are needed. The next progress report is foreseen for November 2016.

Background

Security has been a constant theme since the beginning of the Juncker Commission's mandate – from President Juncker's Political Guidelinesof July 2014, to the latestState of the Union addresson September 2016.

The European Commission adopted the European Agenda on Security on 28 April 2015, setting out the main actions to ensure an effective EU response to terrorism and security threats in the European Union over the period 2015-2020.

Since the adoption of the Agenda, significant progress has been made in its implementation. Key areas of attention have been reinforced by Action Plans adopted in December 2015 on firearms and explosives, in February 2016 on strengthening the fight against terrorist financing, the Communication of 6 April 2016 on Stronger and Smarter Information Systems for Borders and Security, and the Communication of 20 April 2016 on Delivering on the European Agenda on Security to fight against terrorism and pave the way towards an effective and genuine Security Union.

Most recently, the launch on 6 October of a European Border and Coast Guard, as announced by President Juncker in his State of the Union Speech on 9 September 2015 and only 9 months after the Commission's proposal in December, shows a clear commitment to implement the measures under the European Agenda on Migration to reinforce the management and security of the EU's external borders.

The creation by President Juncker of a specific Commissioner portfolio for the Security Union in August 2016 shows the importance the Commission has attached to stepping up its response to the terrorist threat. The Commissioner will be assisted by a cross cutting Task Force drawing on the expertise of the whole Commission to drive work forward and to ensure implementation. The first Task Force meeting was held on 22 September 2016.

For more information

Communication on progress towards an effective and genuine Security Union

Communication: Delivering on the European Agenda on Security to fight against terrorism and pave the way towards an effective and genuine Security Union

European Agenda on Security

Factsheet: Security Union

Questions and Answers: Paving the way towards a genuine and effective Security Union

Mission Letter to Sir Julian King, Commissioner for the Security Union

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