EUROPEAN UNION
THE COUNCIL

Brussels, 13 March 1997

6565/97

LIMITE

ENFOPOL 54

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

of :K.4 Committee

~~on :6 March 1997~~

No. prev. doc. :5338/1/97 ENFOPOL 9 REV 1 + COR 1

Subject : **Standardization of radio communications**

Introduction

In the European Union countries there are various initiatives for reaching harmonized agreements in the area of radio and data communications. In the Schengen cooperation framework, specifications have been drawn up which could form the basis for a standard to be selected (Schengen SCH/I telecom (95) 18 and SCH/I telecom (92) 21 REV 2). These specifications have been submitted to ETSI with a request to check whether European standards exist or are being developed which could satisfy the tactical and operational requirements described in the specifications. ETSI has produced a report (reference SCH/I telecom (96) 4 and SCH/I telecom (95) 35) which states that the TETRA standard satisfies all key requirements, with one small exception concerning the length of the user-to-user signal. As regards encryption, this aspect is currently being examined.

On the basis of that opinion, a decision was made to conduct a pilot test programme using equipment built to the TETRA standard, to determine whether the equipment meets requirements in practice. The test programme will be carried out in the area around the Netherlands, German and Belgian borders (Belgium will specify the extent to which it will participate in the project). Preparations for testing have now begun.

The aforementioned Schengen decision on TETRA also stipulates that, if TETRAPOL becomes a European standard, TETRAPOL will also be tested.

Current position in the EU

These developments may also be relevant within the European Union.

In order to ensure interoperability between operational services of the Member States of the European Union, the working party decided in favour of the principle of a single European standard. The result of the tests carried out within the Schengen framework will be passed on to the Police Cooperation Working Party.

Since the decision to start pilot tests on the basis of the TETRA standard, a PAS procedure has been initiated by the TETRAPOL forum.

In the meantime it has also emerged that a number of EU Member States are considering the renewal of their radio networks. In some countries a call for tenders is under discussion (see also 9865/1/96 ENFOPOL 139 REV 1).

Conclusion

Given the situation outlined above, the conclusion is that within the EU there is a need for agreement on one standard. Tests on the basis of TETRA are currently being prepared. TETRAPOL will undergo the same tests, should it be recognized by ETSI as a European standard.

The Finnish delegation pointed out that Finland was obliged to introduce a new radio network before the end of 1997, i.e. before the tests in the Schengen framework were completed. Furthermore, it drew the attention to the fact that in some Member States there are TETRA 25 tenders under evaluation. Supplying contracts based on TETRA 25 standard have already been made and some will be signed at the end of this year. Finally, it considered that all radio networks which have to be introduced before the tests are completed, and before the final decision of the EU standard has been made, should be based on an ETSI standard. This will guarantee the best possible interoperability in the future.

The Committee charged the Police Cooperation Working Party to examine the issue and report to the Committee for its meeting in April.