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NOTE

From: General Secretariat

To: Standing Committee on operational cooperation on internal security (COSI)

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Subject: Report of the Annual Heads of JHA Agencies Meeting on 3 December 2012

Delegations will find in annex the report of the Heads JHA of Agencies meeting on 3 December 2012, submitted by Frontex which provided the secretariat of the Heads of JHA Agencies in 2012.

The annual meeting of the Heads of JHA Agencies bringing together CEPOL¹, EASO, EIGE, EMCDDA, EUROJUST, EUROPOL, FRA, “IT Agency” and FRONTEX took place on 3 December 2012 under the Chairmanship of Frontex at its HQs in Warsaw.

The Commission (DG HOME, DG JUST and OLAF), the Cypriot and incoming Irish Presidency, the Council Secretariat and the European External Action Service also participated at the meeting.

The main objective of the meeting was to take stock on the various Agencies multilateral cooperation strands and activities as laid down in the Cooperation Scorecard (doc. 5969/13° allowing also for discussion on some particular topics which are of shared interest to the JHA Agencies. The Multilateral Cooperation Scorecard is a “living” document regularly updated by the Agency in charge of chairing the JHA Agencies meeting.

The Heads of JHA Agencies annual meeting started with a Tour de Table where all the Heads briefed about the most critical strategic, operational or organisational developments for their Agencies in 2012. This overview was completed by the other JHA Partners reporting about their own priorities.

The Agencies had the opportunity to be briefed on the follow-up given by the Commission to the Joint Statement and Common Approach to the EU Agencies adopted by the European Parliament, Commission and Council in July 2012. The Agencies noted the efforts from the EU policy makers to streamline and further improve the governance, efficiency, accountability and overall coherence of the Agencies. The new “alert-warning system” of the Commission, the key performance indicators and the multiannual work programmes or strategies were mentioned as tools in this context.

However, it was also highlighted the importance for the Agencies of maintaining the required operational and legal autonomy in order to effectively implement their mandates and respond flexibly to operational needs of the Member States. Furthermore, a fluent communication and cooperation between the Agency and its Partner DG within the Commission is critical.

¹ CEPOL could not participate due to the visit of Commissioner Malmström the same day to CEPOL’s HQs at Bramshill.

The review of the Multilateral Cooperation Scorecard focused on the following JHA Dossiers:

- Data Protection: Frontex in cooperation with CEPOL, Eurojust, Europol, FRA and the Commission organised an experts' conference focusing on data protection in the JHA domain as annual thematic event. All participants agreed on the importance of supporting each other in such a highly specialised domain requiring also appropriate consultations with Data Protection Officers and Supervisory Authorities and tailored made training activities for the European and National Law Enforcement Communities.
- Trafficking in Human Beings: The Agencies renewed their Commitment to their Joint Statement made at the occasion of the EU Anti-trafficking Day in 2011 in Warsaw and their continued efforts have become integral part of the recent EU Strategy towards the eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings.
- Strategic Planning Coordination: The participants took note of some established good practices regarding mutual consultation on their draft work programmes and the possibility in the future to enhance consultation and coordination on shared thematic priorities (e.g. trafficking in human beings, law enforcement training, etc).
- External Relations: The assessment and main recommendations in the discussion paper on the JHA Agencies External Action prepared for the meeting were largely shared by all participants. The EU could make more and better use of the Agencies e.g. as operational or capacity building actor or in an advisory role taking into account their expertise in critical JHA fields. Furthermore, the JHA Agencies as EU bodies are accountable to the EU and its policies and regulations and therefore in an excellent position to “fly the EU flag” vis-à-vis the Third Countries when acting as implementing partner in the JHA external dimension. A mechanism for regular exchange of information, consultation and coordination among the Agencies, Commission and External Action Service would enhance the effectiveness and coherence of the EU External Action and deliver more against the JHA and External Relations Policy objectives.

The JHA Agencies also reviewed other multilateral cooperation strands laid down in the Scorecard such as the implementation of the financial instruments and regulations, fundamental rights tool boxes or training, awareness raising and communication of the work of the Agencies and joint training for National Law Enforcement Communities.

The meeting ended by the Chair communicating the main priorities transmitted for the meeting by CEPOL as incoming Chair of the JHA Agencies meeting for 2013:

- strategic planning and external relations;
- the implementation of the inter-agency job market;
- the annual thematic event will focus on the European Training Scheme Communication after the proposal would have been tabled by the Commission.