

Brussels, 11th September 2007

Commission promotes public-private dialogue to improve security of EU citizens

Six years ago today our understanding of security was fundamentally changed. Since the New York attacks, there are persistent threats to European security. Recent arrests in Denmark and Germany are a reminder of this. The European Commission today launches a communication for strengthening the public private partnership on security research and innovation with the creation of the European Security Research and Innovation Forum (ESRIF) which will meet for the first time today. By ensuring the link between security research and innovation by the private sector and research centres and security policy making, it will enable a long term approach to deliver effective policies and ultimately better security for EU citizens. Security research can lead to the development of concrete and useful technology like optical identification of explosives and video detection systems while preserving the civil liberties of our citizens.

Vice-President Günter Verheugen, responsible for enterprise and industry policy, said: "One of Europe's main objectives is to preserve its values of an open society and civil liberties, whilst addressing the increased security threat. Europe must also secure its competitiveness and economy against an increased threat. Today, to guarantee security without the support of technology is almost impossible. The launch of the European Security Research and Innovation Forum will lead to coherent security research programming and funding between European and national public authorities and the private sector."

"Security is a long term challenge. It is not enough to just react to the chaos and panic which follow a terrorist attack. Rather policy must be long term supported by research and joint working with the private sector. I believe that we in Europe can lead the way in being a true security producer for our citizens", Vice-President Franco Frattini, responsible for Justice, Freedom and Security, explained.

The European Security Research and Innovation Forum (ESRIF), a forum for the development of a Public-Private Dialogue in the area of EU security research and innovation will complement the EU legislation and funding programmes aiming to increase security for EU citizens. In a communication published today, the Commission seeks to create a foundation for mutual trust paving the way for closer integration of security-related EU initiatives and between the private, public sectors and research institutions. In particular, ESRIF can help identify priority areas for standard-setting at EU level and to streamline the scattered security research activities in the EU (see [Memo/07/346](#)). ESRIF will:

- bring together all the relevant stakeholders in order to discuss issues of cross-cutting, common concern;
- identify proposals for forming a strategic security research and innovation agenda, involving national and European stakeholders, laying out a shared and clear view of European security research needs and priorities; and

- share ideas, views and best practices in order to make better use of existing capabilities and to enhance the use of technology in security-related domains, e.g. by inter alia making the best possible use of the various funding instruments in the present financial programming period.

ESRIF is informal, voluntary, consultative and co-owned by the stakeholders from the public and private sectors, i.e. industry, research establishments, public and private end-users, civil society organisations, European institutions, in particular the European Parliament, and European organisations.

Public-private dialogue in the field of security research is of paramount importance to increase the security of infrastructures, fight organised crime and terrorism, help restore security in a crisis and improve surveillance and border control. ESRIF will present a Joint Security Research Agenda towards the end of 2009. This will contain, where appropriate, recommendations to public authorities. ESRIF will be for a limited period of time, until the end of 2009.

The European Union has responded to the need for more security research with two seven-year Framework Programmes in the area of Security, with a total funding of € 2.135 billion over the 2007-2013 period. These are the Seventh Research Framework Programme (FP7), which includes a security theme, and the EU Framework Programme on 'Security and Safeguarding Liberties'.

The Commission has just given the green light for new specific security research projects, such as optical technologies for the identification of explosives, localisation of explosives in cities, video detection of abnormal behaviours in crowds and protection of large event against terrorists. For more information, see MEMO/07/347

For more information on the activities of Vice-President Verheugen, please visit his website at:

http://www.ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/verheugen/index_en.htm

For more information on the Commission's security research programme:

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/security/index_en.htm

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For more information on funding opportunities in the Justice, Freedom and Security policy areas:

http://www.ec.europa.eu/justice_home/funding/intro/funding_intro_en.htm