

## **Convergence of Internal Security – Council conclusions**

(JHA Council, October 2008)

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"Recalling the Council agreement of 1 and 2 June 2006 outlining a process for the establishment of a reference framework for the internal security of the European Union, approved by the Council at its meeting on 1 and 2 June 2006 [1],

Considering the avenues for future work and the guidelines identified by the Ministers for Home Affairs of the European Union at their informal meeting on 7 July 2008 in Cannes, Taking account of the report by the High-Level Advisory Group on the Future of European Home Affairs Policy [2],

Taking account of the strategy for the external dimension of the area of freedom, security and justice, approved by the Council at its meeting on 1 and 2 December 2005 [3],

In view of the substantial progress achieved in the area of justice and home affairs in connection with the implementation of the Tampere and Hague programmes, Given the need to strengthen the action of the European Union, by giving it a real operational aspect, to guarantee a high level of security for European citizens within the common area of freedom, security and justice,

In view also of European citizens' desire to see the added value of action undertaken at the European level,

Considering that regular evaluation would contribute to enhancing the effectiveness and coherence of actions undertaken in the area of the internal security of the European Union,

1 9596/06 JAI 271 CATS 104.

2 11657/08 JAI 373 and 11960/08 JAI 388.

3 15446/05 JAI 488 RELEX 741.

The Council of the European Union:

Supports the consolidation and reinforcement of the European Union's work in protecting the safety and security of its citizens, within the framework of a process of convergence consisting in promoting closer operational cooperation among the law enforcement authorities of the Member States,

Considers that this convergence may, in addition to the principles of mutual recognition and availability of information, constitute a guiding principle for the continued construction of the common European area of security and for improved operational cooperation between law enforcement agencies,

Invites the Member States to develop approaches that facilitate operational cooperation among their law enforcement authorities, where such cooperation will deliver practical benefit to the partners, while taking account of the legal, operational and other constraints in place in the Member States, in terms of:

- closer cooperation among personnel, promoted by
  - developing joint training programmes for the personnel of the law enforcement authorities of the Member States, taking advantage in particular of the potential offered by the European Police College,
  - establishing temporary exchanges of personnel among the law enforcement authorities of the Member States, in particular within the framework of European police stations,
  - creating and developing networks of senior personnel from the law enforcement authorities of the Member States, or of senior personnel in the judicial field,
  - fostering the learning of European Union languages in the law enforcement authorities of the Member States, – approximation of equipment and practice, promoted by

- reinforcing the interoperability of equipment, maximising opportunities to pool equipment, and developing standard approaches for its use at the level of the European Union, in border areas in particular,
- producing manuals and guides to best practice, where they will provide added value, that can be made available to all Member States,
- strengthening links with the security technology research sector,
  - approximation through joint actions, promoted by
- developing shared platforms and databases, where these represent added value for Member States,
- organising joint operations which enable operational cooperation between the Member States to be strengthened, including joint investigation teams;
- jointly preparing and organising joint exercises;
  - approximation of legal frameworks, promoted by
- establishing common legislative instruments, where these represent added value for citizens;
- establishing common definitions, in particular where the fight against organised crime is concerned,
- progressively simplifying procedures for exchange and cooperation between Member States in the context of cross-border criminal investigations within the European Union,

Wishes, in addition to these initiatives, to strengthen the coherence of existing and future arrangements in the area of security and promote a clear understanding by European citizens of the policies conducted by the European Union,

- on the basis of the common framework for analysis and action, in order to:
  - assess the threat facing European citizens,
  - identify the European Union's priorities for responding to this threat,
  - define a working method for implementing those priorities, and
  - carry out regular evaluations of action taken,

- by improving the threat assessment mechanism and particularly OCTA, but also by including contributions from the judicial authorities and assistance from agencies,
- by defining strategic and operational objectives more clearly, and having them approved at political level,
- by developing a project-based approach for achieving the strategic and operational objectives set within the above framework,
- by accepting that some of the projects may be conducted at regional level, by the Member States most concerned,
- by establishing precise rules for evaluating the actions undertaken,
- by continuing to improve the exchange of information within the European Union, in particular by implementing the provisions of the Council Framework Decision of 18 December 2006 on simplifying the exchange of information and intelligence between law enforcement authorities of the Member States of the European Union and the Council Decision of 23 June 2008 on the stepping up of cross-border cooperation, particularly in combating terrorism and cross-border crime,
- by ensuring a high level of protection of personal data in the European Union,
- by taking the external dimension of internal security into account in all actions undertaken by the European Union,
- by establishing the resources and structures needed to coordinate action by the various European Union actors in the area of security, in particular the agencies of the Union, and by making the fullest possible use of their resources for priority actions,
- by improving the definition of the architecture of internal security, particularly through taking the judicial aspect into account;
- by making greater use of the Council's working structures in pursuing those objectives and by continuing the process of reflection on their modus operandi, their mandates and the relationships between them,

Calls on the competent bodies to make regular evaluations, for example in the context of the evaluations relating to the five-year programme, of the measures set out in these conclusions."