



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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**ENFOPOL 181
COMIX 716**

I/A ITEM NOTE

from : General Secretariat
to : Coreper/Council

No. Prev. doc. : 13716/08 ENFOPOL 176 COMIX 711

Subject : Draft Council Recommendation on improving communication between
operational units in border areas

1. Strengthening operational cooperation between Member States is one of the priorities of the French Presidency. With a view to improving the communication between operational units in border areas, the French Presidency prepared a draft Council Recommendation.
2. This draft Council Recommendation was discussed at the Police Cooperation Working Party meeting on 1 October and was subsequently submitted to the Article 36 Committee on 2 October 2008.
3. The Article 36 Committee agreed to the draft Council Recommendation, as set out in doc. 13716/08 ENFOPOL 176 COMIX 690 and decided to forward it to COREPER/COUNCIL for approval.
4. Coreper is therefore requested to invite the Council to approve the Council Recommendation on improving communication between operational units in border areas as set out in annex.

**DRAFT COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION ON IMPROVING COMMUNICATION
BETWEEN OPERATIONAL UNITS IN BORDER AREAS**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

RECALLING that:

- one of the objectives of the European Union is to strengthen operational cooperation between neighbouring States in order to combat all forms of crime more effectively, thereby participating in the consolidation of the European Union.

WHEREAS:

- Council Decision 2008/615/JHA of 23 June 2008 on the stepping up of cross-border cooperation, particularly in combating terrorism and cross-border crime (the "Prüm Decision") has entered into force;
- difficulties in the use of radio communications in border areas are caused in part by the technical shortcomings of the current systems;
- the alternative solutions introduced by operational services in border areas are not totally satisfactory in overcoming those obstacles;
- the limits on the use of radio communications systems and the alternative solutions for their incompatibility may often be detrimental to the work of the security services, but they are still essential for operational units;

- the communication difficulties encountered by the competent operational services in this area are not related solely to a problem of compatibility between communication networks, but also to inadequate familiarity with the organisation, language and working procedures of the partner State.

TAKING THE VIEW that:

- the Police Chiefs Task Force has been considering the lack of interoperability between existing communications systems;
- the technical experts group may propose new technical lines of approach to meet the emerging communication needs of police services and competent authorities, in coordination with the work of European bodies responsible for frequency planning or technical standardisation;
- implementation of the convergence principle necessitates improving operational cooperation between services on the ground through closer links between personnel, institutions, practices, equipment and legal frameworks;

RECOMMENDS MEMBER STATES

to implement measures designed to promote familiarity with the organisation, language and working procedures of the partner State; over and above the problems of network compatibility, lack of such familiarity is a difficulty often encountered by operational services in cross-border communications.

1- Dealing with the language barrier :

In the short term, the following measures could be envisaged :

- (a) increased use of Police and Customs Cooperation Centres, for example by disseminating the European guide to good practice on these centres, which promotes this operational cooperation tool;
- (b) developing a staffing policy which gives preference to the recruitment and assignment of bilingual staff in border areas.

In the medium term, the following measures could be studied:

- (a) encouraging foreign language learning by promoting incentives such as linguistic bonuses, developing joint Member State training courses and the use of language centres in particular with the support of the European Police College (CEPOL);
- (b) assigning a bilingual police officer in control rooms, and equipping the latter with translation units.

In the long term, the following measures might be proposed:

- (a) use of a common language by adjoining countries;
- (b) standardising radio exchanges, by defining pre-recorded standard messages and establishing common terminology for day-to-day communications.

- 2- Familiarisation with neighbouring States' legal and administrative rules and with cooperation procedures:

To ensure that all officers are better informed, the following measures could be envisaged, promoting :

- (a) the availability of information on the organisational arrangements of the partner State's administration, in particular through seminars;
- (b) regular exchanges between border officers, by periodically holding meetings of police chiefs, but also heads of unit, with wide circulation of the minutes;
- (c) joint training on:
 - cooperation practices and procedures in the Schengen area, through dissemination of the future revised police cooperation manual, and facilitating acquisition of this knowledge by carrying out a training course validated by a specific "Schengen" certificate;
 - the use of radio links, by organising, amongst other things, joint exercises along the border.