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Justice and Home Affairs

Luxembourg, 6 and 7 June 2013

President **Mr Alan Shatter**
Minister for Justice, Equality and Defence of Ireland

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Main results of the Council

*On Thursday, justice ministers had an in-depth discussion on certain key issues regarding the proposal for a regulation on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data (General **Data Protection Regulation**).*

*The Council agreed on a general approach on the draft directive on the **fight against fraud to the Union's financial interests** by means of criminal law. This text constitutes the basis for negotiations with the European Parliament in order to agree the final text of the directive.*

*Furthermore, ministers held a public debate on the proposal for a regulation creating a **European Account Preservation Order** and on the proposal for a regulation on **insolvency proceedings** and approved a number of guidelines for the continuation of the work.*

*Ministers heard a presentation by the Commission on its proposal for a regulation on promoting the free movement of citizens and businesses by simplifying the acceptance of certain **public documents** in the EU.*

*The Council **adopted conclusions on fundamental rights and rule of law and on the Commission 2012 Report on the Application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights** of the EU. These conclusions take forward the debate on the possible need for and shape of a future initiative to better safeguard fundamental values of the Union. Moreover, Ministers were also briefed by the Presidency on the state of play on the **EU's accession to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR)**.*

*Finally, the Council adopted the new **EU Action Plan on Drugs (2013-2016)** and heard a presentation by the Director of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction of the **2013 European Drug Report**.*

*On Friday, home affairs ministers had an in-depth discussion on the issue of **foreign fighters and returnees** from a counter-terrorism perspective, in particular with regard to Syria, on the basis of a document prepared by the EU Counter Terrorism Coordinator (CTC).*

*Moreover, ministers were briefed by the Presidency on the final steps for the completion of the **Common European Asylum System (CEAS)** and on the state of play of the **Schengen Governance** legislative package.*

*Ministers held a public debate on the proposal for a regulation on **the European Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation and Training (Europol)** and discussed about the latest developments for the **protection of refugees from the Syria conflict**.*

*At lunch, Ministers had a discussion on the issues related to **the free movement of persons** raised in a letter sent to the Presidency by the Minister of interior from Austria, Germany, Netherlands and United Kingdom.*

*The **Mixed Committee** (the EU plus Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland), meeting in the margins of the Council, was briefed on the latest state of play in relation to **the Schengen governance**. In addition, the Greek delegation reported to the Committee on the implementation of its **national action plan on asylum reform and migration management**.*

A Joint Declaration establishing a Mobility Partnership between the Kingdom of Morocco and the European Union and its member states was signed in the margins of the Council.

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- Where declarations, conclusions or resolutions have been formally adopted by the Council, this is indicated in the heading for the item concerned and the text is placed between quotation marks.
- Documents for which references are given in the text are available on the Council's Internet site (<http://www.consilium.europa.eu>).
- Acts adopted with statements for the Council minutes which may be released to the public are indicated by an asterisk; these statements are available on the Council's Internet site or may be obtained from the Press Office.

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PARTICIPANTS

Belgium:

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Ms Annemie TURTELBOOM
Ms Maggie DE BLOCK

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for the Interior
Minister for Justice
State Secretary for Asylum, Immigration and Social
Integration, attached to the Minister for Justice

Bulgaria:

Ms Zinaida ZLATANOVA
Mr Dimiter TZANTCHEV

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Justice
Permanent Representative

Czech Republic:

Mr Martin POVEJŠIL

Permanent Representative

Denmark:

Mr Morten BØDSKOV
Mr Jeppe TRANHOLM-MIKKELSEN

Minister for Justice
Permanent Representative

Germany:

Mr Hans-Peter FRIEDERICH
Mr Ole SCHROEDER

Federal Minister for the Interior
Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister for
the Interior
Permanent Representative

Mr Peter TEMPEL

Estonia:

Mr Ken-Marti VAHER
Mr Hanno PEVKUR
Mr Matti MAASIKAS

Minister for the Interior
Minister for Justice
Permanent Representative

Ireland:

Mr Alan SHATTER

Minister for Justice and Equality, Defense

Greece:

Mr Antonios ROUPAKIOTIS
Mr Evripidis STYLIANIDIS
Mr Nikolaos DENDIAS
Mr Angelos SYRIGOS
Mr Marinos SKANDAMIS

Minister for Justice, Transparency and Human Rights
Minister for the Interior
Minister for Public Order and Protection of the Citizen
State Secretary, Ministry of the Interior
General Secretary, Ministry of Justice, Transparency and
Human Rights

Spain:

Mr Jorge FERNÁNDEZ DIAZ
Mr Alberto RUIZ-GALLARDÓN JIMÉNEZ

Minister for the Interior
Minister for Justice

France:

Mme Christiane TAUBIRA
Mr Manuel VALLS

Keeper of the Seals, Minister for Justice
Minister for the Interior

Italy:

Ms Annamaria CANCELLIERI
Mr Angelino ALFANO

Minister for Justice
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for the Interior

Cyprus:

Mr Ionas NICOLAOU

Minister for Justice and Public Order

Latvia:

Mr Jānis BORDĀNS
Ms Ilze JUHANSONE

Minister for Justice
Permanent Representative

Lithuania:

Mr Juozas BERNATONIS
Mr Dailis Alfonsas BARAKAUSKAS

Minister for Justice
Minister for the Interior

Luxembourg:

Ms Octavie MODERT

Mr Nicolas SCHMIT
Mr Jean-Marie HALSDORF

Hungary:

Mr Tibor NAVRACSICS

Mr László FELKAI

Malta:

Mr Emanuel MALLIA
Mr Owen BONNICI

Netherlands:

Mr Ivo OPSTELTEN
Mr Fred TEEVEN

Austria:

Ms Johanna MIKL-LEITNER
Ms Beatrix KARL

Poland:

Mr Michał BONI
Mr Piotr STACHAŃCZYK

Mr Michał KRÓLIKOWSKI

Portugal:

Mr Miguel MACEDO
Mr Fernando SANTO

Romania:

Mr Robert Marius CAZANCIUC
Mr Bogdan TOHĂNEANU

Slovenia:

Mr Gregor VIRANT
Mr Rado GENORIO

Slovakia:

Mr Tomáš BOREC
Mr Ivan KORČOK

Finland:

Ms Anna-Maja HENRIKSSON
Ms Päivi RÄSÄNEN, Ministre

Sweden:

Ms Beatrice ASK
Mr Tobias BILLSTRÖM

United Kingdom:

Mr Chris GRAYLING
Ms Theresa MAY

Ministre de la Justice, Ministre de la Culture, Ministre de la Fonction publique et de la Réforme administrative, Ministre à la Simplification administrative auprès du Premier ministre
Minister for Labour, Employment and Immigration
Minister for the Interior and the Grande Région, Minister for Defence

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Public Administration and Justice
Permanent Secretary, Ministry of the Interior

Minister for Home Affairs and National Security
Parliamentary Secretary for Justice within the Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security

Minister for Security and Justice
State Secretary for Security and Justice

Federal Minister for Interior
Federal Minister for Justice

Minister for Administration and Digitalisation
State Secretary, Ministry of the Interior and Administration
Deputy State Secretary, Ministry of Justice

Minister for the Interior
State Secretary of Property and Equipment, Ministry of Justice

Minister for Justice
State Secretary, Ministry of Internal Affairs

Minister of the Interior and Public Administration
Permanent Representative

Minister for Justice
Permanent Representative

Minister for Justice
Minister for Interior

Minister for Justice
Minister for Migration

Lord Chancellor, Secretary of State for Justice
Secretary of State for the Home Department

.....

Commission:

Ms Viviane REDING
Ms Cecilia MALMSTRÖM

Vice President
Member

.....

The Government of the Acceding State was represented as follows:

Croatia:

Mr Ranko OSTOJIC
Mr Vladimir DROBNJAK

Minister for the Interior
Permanent Representative

ITEMS DEBATED

Data protection

The Council discussed key issues on the proposal for a regulation setting out a general EU framework for data protection on the basis of a document prepared by the Presidency ([10227/13](#) + [ADD1](#)). Delegations generally welcomed the considerable progress achieved on the draft regulation under the Irish Presidency.

On the understanding that no part of the draft regulation can be agreed until the whole text of the regulation is agreed, it was concluded that the amended text of chapters I to IV was a good basis for further progress on the draft regulation. The Chair indicated that the legislative deliberations should take account of both the interests of citizens and of business, in particular SMEs.

Protection of the EU's financial interest

The Council agreed on a general approach on the draft directive on the fight against fraud to the Union's financial interests by means of criminal law. This general approach will constitute the basis for negotiations with the European Parliament in order to agree the final text of the directive ([10232/13](#)).

The goal of the proposal ([12683/12](#)) is to deter fraudsters, improve the prosecution and sanctioning of crimes against the EU budget, and facilitate the recovery of misused EU funds thereby increasing the protection of EU taxpayers' money.

The proposed directive provides common definitions of a number of offences against the EU budget, such as fraud, and other fraud related crimes such as active and passive corruption, the misappropriation of funds, money laundering and minimum rules on prescription periods, within which the case must be investigated and prosecuted, as well as minimum rules on sanctions, including imprisonment for the most serious cases to strengthen the deterrent effect. These common rules should, according to the Commission's proposal, help to ensure a level playing field and improved investigation and prosecution across the EU.

A clear majority of delegations have indicated that the legal basis of the proposal should be Article 83(2) instead of Article 325(4) as proposed by the Commission. The text of the agreed general approach is based on the presumption that Article 83(2) is the legal basis.

European Account Preservation Order

The Council held a public debate on the proposal for a regulation creating a European Account Preservation Order and endorsed key principles for the continuation of the work at technical level.

The package of key principles relates to the balance between the creditor's and the debtor's interests as set out in the document prepared by the Presidency ([10047/13](#)). This document addresses the following issues:

- the conditions for issuing a Preservation Order,
- the ex parte nature of the proceedings,
- the provision of security by the creditor,
- the liability of the creditor,
- the amounts exempt from preservation to protect the debtor, and
- the remedies to be made available to the parties, in particular to the debtor.

The aim of the proposed regulation ([13260/11](#)) is to facilitate cross-border debt recovery by creating a uniform European procedure leading to the issue of a European Account Preservation order ("Preservation Order"). This European procedure will be available to citizens and businesses as an alternative to national procedures, but will not replace national procedures. It will apply only to cross-border cases.

The Commission presented its proposal on 25 July 2011. The discussions in the Council's preparatory bodies are still ongoing.

Insolvency proceedings

The Council held a public debate on the proposal for a regulation amending Council regulation (EC) No 1346/2000 on insolvency proceedings the objective and took note that there was a wide agreement of the member states on the political guidelines for the future work as set out in the Presidency document ([10050/13](#)).

Consequently, the Council also called for work to be continued at technical level on the basis of those guidelines and taking into account the comments expressed by delegations.

The proposed regulation aims at making cross-border insolvency proceedings more efficient and effective with a view to ensuring a smooth functioning of the internal market and its resilience in economic crises. This objective is in line with the European Union's current political priorities to promote economic recovery and sustainable growth, a higher investment rate and the preservation of employment and to ensure smooth development and the survival of businesses.

The proposed regulation will also bring the current Insolvency Regulation in line with developments in national insolvency laws introduced since its entry into force in 2002.

Mutual recognition of public documents

The Council heard a presentation by the Commission on its proposal for a regulation on promoting the free movement of citizens and businesses by simplifying the acceptance of certain public documents in the European Union and amending Regulation (EU) No 1024/2012 ([9037/13](#)) and asked its preparatory bodies to start working on these proposals.

The proposal aims at simplifying the procedures for cross-border use and acceptance of public documents between the Member States as well as harmonising the related rules, thereby contributing towards the creation of a citizens' Europe and a well-functioning Single Market for EU businesses.

For background information see the [background note](#).

Fundamental rights and the rule of law - Council conclusions

The Council adopted conclusions on fundamental rights and rule of law and on the Commission 2012 Report on the Application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU ([10168/13](#)).

The Commission's third annual report was submitted to the Council in May 2013 ([9297/13](#)). On that basis, the Council has adopted this set of conclusions. Besides the report, the conclusions also concern general fundamental rights and rule of law issues.

The conclusions set out some elements that could be considered in taking forward the debate on the possible need for and shape of a future initiative to better safeguard fundamental values of the Union in particular the rule of law and the fundamental rights of the persons in the Union.

In this context the conclusions call on the Commission to take that debate forward still in 2013 with all member states, EU institutions and all stakeholders.

On the basis of the Commission's reflections the Council will give further consideration to the need for and possible shape of methods or initiatives to better safeguard fundamental values, in particular the rule of law and fundamental rights of persons in the Union and to counter extreme forms of intolerance, such as racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and homophobia.

Accession to the ECHR

The Council was briefed by the Presidency on the state of play on the EU's accession to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR).

In June 2010 the Council adopted a negotiating mandate and negotiations have been ongoing since then. At the last negotiating session (3-5 April 2013) an agreement at negotiators level was reached¹. Once the Court of Justice of the European Union has had the opportunity to give an opinion on the agreement, the Commission will come forward with a proposal for a Council decision authorising the signature and possibly including the internal rules and the adaptations to the EU law that need to be agreed on before the accession.

In accordance with Art. 218 of the TFEU the Council shall act unanimously, after obtaining the consent of the European Parliament. Furthermore, the decision concluding the agreement would only enter into force after ratification by all Member States. It will also need ratification by all Parliaments of the 47 Member States of the Council of Europe.

The Lisbon Treaty provides the legal basis for the accession of the EU to the ECHR. Art. 6 (2) of the TEU stipulates: "The EU shall accede to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms". According to the Stockholm program this is "of key importance". The program also called for a "rapid" accession to the ECHR.

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[http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/hrpolicy/Accession/Meeting_reports/47_1\(2013\)008_final_report_EN.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/hrpolicy/Accession/Meeting_reports/47_1(2013)008_final_report_EN.pdf)

Drugs

The Council adopted the new EU Action Plan on Drugs (2013-2016) ([9963/13](#)) that foresees 54 concrete and evidence-based actions in the areas of drug demand reduction, drug supply reduction, coordination, international cooperation, information, research, monitoring and evaluation. Each action is defined by a timetable, responsible parties and data collection/assessment mechanisms. 15 overarching indicators and a number of additional indicators have been listed to assess the implementation of this action plan.

The action plan contains the following highlights:

- Demand reduction: actions to tackle the challenge of misuse of prescribed and "over the counter" opioids and to improve health care measures available for drug users in prisons and after release are foreseen.
- Supply reduction: measures to tackle the spread and use of new psychoactive substances, to promote alternatives to coercive sanctions for drug using offenders and to develop drug supply indicators are named.
- Coordination: the on-going dialogue with civil society as well as with scientific community is encouraged.
- International cooperation: the importance of dialogues on drugs with various partners is emphasised, alternative development is encouraged and EU commitment to contribute to the the mid-term review process of the 2009 UN Political Declaration is mentioned.
- Information, research, monitoring and evaluation: the research is promoted into all areas of drug phenomenon as well as evaluation of the quality of research that has been performed. Measures to improve capacity to detect the phenomenon on new psychoactive substances are also foreseen.

This action plan is the first Action Plan implementing the recently adopted EU Drugs Strategy for 2013-2020 ([17547/12](#)), which aims to contribute to a reduction in drug demand and drug supply within the EU. It also aims to reduce the health and social risks and harms caused by drugs through a strategic approach that supports and complements national policies, that provides a framework for coordinated and joint actions and that forms the basis and political framework for EU external cooperation in this field.

Moreover, the Council heard a presentation by the Director of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) on its 2013 European Drug Report ([10215/13](#)).

Any other business

Under other business, the Council was informed about the state of play of a number of legislative proposals, including:

- the directive on the right to access to a lawyer. The European Parliament and the Council reached an agreement on the 28 of May, thus paving the way for the final adoption of the legal act in the near future (see press release [10495/13](#));
- the European Investigation Order;
- the directive on confiscation of the proceeds of crime;
- the matrimonial property regimes and registered partnerships;
- the MFF on the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme as well as on Justice Programme (2014-2020);
- the legal migration package;
- the MFF Home Affairs (Asylum and Migration Fund and Internal Security Fund - Police).

Furthermore, the Commission presented its Communication "Maximising the Development Impact of Migration: The EU contribution for the UN High-level Dialogue and next steps towards broadening the development-migration nexus".

The Swedish delegation presented its plans and priorities as Chair of the Global Forum on Migration and Development for the period 2013-2014.

The Hungarian delegation updated ministers on the recent developments in the Budapest process and in particular on the Ministerial Conference 'A Silk Routes Partnership for Migration'.

The Slovenian delegation informed ministers on the outcome of the informal ministers of the BRDO process (Brdo pri Kranju, Slovenia, 21-22 May 2013).

The Commission provided an update on the negotiations with Russia on the Justice and Home Affairs related issues and in particular on the outcome of the EU-Russia Summit which took place on 3-4 June 2013.

Finally, the Lithuanian ministers informed the Council about the priorities in the area of justice and home affairs for the forthcoming Lithuanian EU Presidency.

The incoming Presidency will continue the implementation of the Stockholm Programme and will start discussions on strategic guidelines for the future of the area of freedom, security and justice. One of the most important tasks for the Lithuanian Presidency will be to finalize the work on all Regulations in the area of Justice and Home Affairs for the new Multiannual Financial Framework at the earliest possible stage in 2013.

During the Presidency, special emphasis will be given to the efficient management of the EU external borders, to the development of a common immigration policy, to strengthen the law enforcement cooperation in the fight against serious and international organised crime as well as terrorism. It will also improve the effectiveness of civil protection.

The Presidency will also give emphasis to the Justice for Growth programme, namely through initiatives easing access to justice for citizens and businesses, establishing a new data protection framework and setting up a European Public Prosecutor's Office to fight against crimes affecting the Union's financial interests.

Concerning the external dimension, the Lithuanian Presidency will seek enhancement of cooperation on Justice and Home Affairs issues with the Eastern partnership countries and will organize first formal Eastern Partnership JHA ministerial meeting in October 2013 in Luxembourg. The Presidency will also seek to strengthen the cooperation with other EU's strategic partner countries and regions (USA, Russia, Western Balkans, etc.).

Fight against terrorism

The Council had an in-depth discussion on the issue of foreign fighters and returnees from a counter-terrorism perspective, in particular with regard to Syria, on the basis of a document prepared by the EU Counter Terrorism Coordinator (CTC).

The Council expressed broad support for the paper and the package of suggested measures and tasked its relevant working groups to prepare the implementing measures where necessary. It also invited the CTC to present a report on the implementation of the proposed measures at the Justice and Home Affairs Council that will take place in December 2013.

The issue of foreign fighters was one of the five major topics identified by the EU Counter CTC in order to steer the debate at the Council in March on the security implications of the situation in the Sahel/Maghreb. As a follow-up, the CTC has prepared the above-mentioned document with concrete proposals for action.

The actions relate to:

- the need for a common assessment of the phenomenon of these young Europeans going to Syria for the Jihad and the need to get a better picture of the different groups fighting in Syria;
- measures to prevent youngsters from departing to Syria and to offer assistance upon their return;
- detection of travel movements and the criminal justice response;
- cooperation with third countries.

Europol

The Council held a public debate on the proposal for a regulation on the European Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation and Training (Europol) and agreed on a number of guidelines for the continuation of work at the technical level ([10213/13](#)).

These guidelines relate to two main questions that arise from the Commission proposal: the proposed merger of CEPOL ([European Police College](#)) into Europol and the supply of information from Member States to Europol.

During the debate, a very large majority of delegations stated that are not in favour of the proposed merger of CEPOL into EUROPOL. Thus, the Council instructed its experts to work on the proposal on that basis. It also invited member states that would be willing to host CEPOL to submit a proposal.

The Commission submitted in April 2013 a proposal for a regulation on the European Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation and Training (Europol), thereby repealing the existing Decisions on Europol¹ and CEPOL² ([8229/13](#)).

¹ Decision 2009/371/JHA. OJ L 121, 15.05.2009, p. 37

² Decision 2005/681/JHA. OJ L 256, 1.10.2005, p. 63.

Common European Asylum System

The Council was briefed by the Presidency on the final steps for the completion of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS).

The Presidency recalled that the Council has taken another important step towards completing the CEAS by adopting its positions at first reading on the recast of three of the relevant legal instruments: the reception conditions directive, the Dublin regulation and the asylum procedures directive. The coming weeks should see the completion of the final procedural steps necessary to finalise the legislative process in relation to these proposals and the Eurodac regulation.

The European Council committed itself to establish by 2012 a Common European Asylum System based on further harmonisation of national asylum systems and higher levels of protection.

For more information see press release [10411/13](#).

Schengen Governance

The Council was informed about the state of play of the Schengen Governance legislative package, namely a regulation on the establishment of an evaluation and monitoring mechanism to verify the application of the Schengen acquis and an amendment to the Schengen Borders Code as regards the rules for the temporary reintroduction of border controls at internal borders in exceptional circumstances.

The Presidency recalled that on 30 May the Permanent Representatives Committee¹ (Coreper) endorsed the agreement reached with the European Parliament on this legislative package, opening the way for the formal adoption of both instruments in the near future. The European Parliament will approve the agreement in July and the Council is expected to adopt the package in Autumn.

For more information see press release [10239/13](#)

¹ The Permanent Representatives Committee is composed of the ambassadors of the 27 EU member states. Its role is to prepare decisions of the Council.

Syria: Protection of refugees, latest developments

The Council had a discussion on Syria with particular reference to the protection of refugees, on the basis of the latest developments.

Representatives from the EEAS and EASO updated Ministers on the latest developments. The Commission also briefed ministers on the progress achieved towards the establishment of a Regional Protection Programme (RPP).

The Council recalled the commitment of the EU to step up humanitarian assistance to all affected populations throughout Syria and neighbouring countries. It also welcomed the progress being made towards the establishment of a RPP and invited the Commission to follow-up on that work.

Issues related to the free movement of persons

During lunch, Ministers held a discussion on the issues related to the free movement of persons raised in a letter sent to the Presidency by the Ministers of Interior from Austria, Germany, Netherlands and United Kingdom.

All member states agreed that the free movement of persons was a core value of the European Union.

The Council invited the Commission to look at the implementation of the free movement rules, including guidance on fighting abuse of these rules, and to present an interim report to the Justice and Home Affairs Council by October 2013 and a final report by December 2013.

In parallel, the Council will examine the Citizenship report, presented by the Commission, which looks at some of these issues.

Mixed Committee

In the margins of the Council meeting, the Mixed Committee (the EU plus Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland) discussed the following items:

Schengen Governance

The Committee was informed about the state of play of the Schengen Governance legislative package, namely a regulation on the establishment of an evaluation and monitoring mechanism to verify the application of the Schengen acquis and an amendment to the Schengen Borders Code as regards the rules for the temporary reintroduction of border controls at internal borders in exceptional circumstances.

For more information see item above.

Greece's National Action Plan on Asylum Reform and Migration Management

The Greek minister informed Ministers about the progress in the implementation of the Greek national action plan on asylum and migration.

The Council noted that the efforts of Greece, and all those contributing to the implementation of the action plan, are resulting in considerable progress being made to improve Greece's asylum and migration systems. It also noted that there is more work to be done by all the stakeholders.

Finally, the Council invited Greece, the Commission and the competent Council bodies to pursue a follow-up on the discussion with a view to returning to the issue at a future meeting.

Any other business

Under other business, the Committee was informed about the state of play of a number of legislative proposals, including:

- the regulation for the establishment of a European Border Surveillance System (EUROSUR);
- the technical amendments to the Schengen Borders Code (Regulation 562/2006 and the Schengen Convention)

- the changes to Regulation 539/2001 (visa requirements - suspension and reciprocity mechanisms);
- the MFF Home Affairs
- the Data protection directive

Moreover, the Commission presented its third Biannual Report to the European Parliament and the Council on the functioning of the Schengen area (1 November 2012 - 30 April 2013). The Committee had an exchange of views and welcomed the work that has taken place over the past months on strengthening the Schengen area and enhancing mutual trust.

A Joint Declaration establishing a Mobility Partnership between the Kingdom of Morocco and the European Union and its member states was signed in the margins of the Council.

The declaration was signed by the Ministers of nine member states (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom), by the Commission (representing the EU) and by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Morocco.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

Protection measures in civil matters

The Council adopted a regulation on mutual recognition of protection measures taken in civil matters upon request of the person at risk ([PE-CONS 7/13](#)).

For more information see press release [10412/13](#)

Common European Asylum System

The Council adopted its positions at first reading on the recast of three important legal instruments with a view to fulfilling the commitment of the European Council to establish a Common European Asylum System. The three recast proposals are: the reception conditions directive ([14654/1/12 REV 1](#)), the Dublin regulation ([15605/2/12 REV 2](#)) and the asylum procedures directive ([8260/1/13 REV 1](#)).

Given the agreement reached in the trilogue meetings between both co-legislators, the European Parliament is expected to approve at the next plenary session (10-13 June) the three Council's positions at first reading without amendments ("early second reading agreement"). The three legal acts will be then formally adopted.

Convention Implementing the Schengen Agreement

The Council approved the reports on the implementation of Article 102A of the Convention Implementing the Schengen Agreement during the years 2010 and 2011, as set out in documents [13680/1/11 REV 1](#) and [9217/2/12 REV 2](#), and submitted them to the European Parliament.

Article 102A of the CISA allows those services in EU member states responsible for issuing registration certificates for vehicles to have access to the Schengen Information System (SIS) for the purposes of checking whether vehicles presented to them for registration have not been stolen, misappropriated or lost and that persons applying for a registration certificate are not using identity documents which have been stolen, misappropriated or lost.

CEPOL - Annual report 2012

The Council took note of and endorsed the CEPOL Annual Report for the year 2012 ([8890/13](#)) and forwarded it to the European Parliament and the Commission for information.

e-Justice

The Council took note of the report of the Working Party on e-Law (e-Justice) on progress made this semester in the area of European e-Justice ([9870/13](#)). The work was carried out on the basis of the revised roadmap endorsed by the JHA Council in June 2011 ([10331/11](#)) and in accordance with the European e-Justice action plan¹.

Mobility partnership - Morocco

The Council confirmed the agreement on the Joint Declaration establishing a Mobility Partnership between the Kingdom of Morocco and the European Union and its member states, to be signed on 7 June 2013, in the margins of the Justice and Home Affairs Council.

Rights of victims of trafficking in human beings - Council conclusions

The Council adopted conclusions ([9203/13](#)) on an EU Framework for the Provision of Information on the Rights of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings – Priority A, Action 4 of the EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings 2012–2016.

This conclusions are intended to improve the situation of victims of trafficking in human beings and to support and complement the publication presented by the Commission on 15 April 2013 on "[The EU rights of victims of trafficking in human beings](#)".

CEPOL working arrangements

The Council approved the working arrangement between the European Police College (CEPOL) and the "Academy of Management of the Ministry of Internal Affairs" of the Russian Federation, concerning training courses for police officers which aim in particular to enhance efficiency of law enforcement agencies in the fight against cross-border crime.

¹ OJ C 75 31.3.2009.

Europol's 5th activity report

The Council took note of the general report on Europol's activities between 2008 -2012 ([8659/13](#)), as prepared by the Joint Supervisory Body of Europol and will forward it to the European Parliament for information.

Security-related research and industrial policy

The Council adopted conclusions on strengthening the internal security authorities' involvement in security related research and industrial policy ([9814/13](#))

Terrorism

The Council adopted conclusions calling for an update of the EU Strategy for Combating Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terrorism ([9447/13](#)).

Organised crime

The Council adopted conclusions on setting the EU's priorities for the fight against serious and organised crime between 2014 and 2017 ([9849/13](#))

Information exchange

The Council adopted conclusions following the Commission Communication on the European Information Exchange Model ([9811/13](#)).

GENERAL AFFAIRS

Rules of procedure - Court of Justice and General Court

The Council approved amendments to the rules of procedure of the Court of Justice and the General Court aimed at adding Croatian to the list of languages of a case ([8937/13](#) + [8938/13](#)). The Court of Justice and the General Court have now to adopt the amendments so that they can enter into force on 1 July when Croatia is expected to accede to the EU.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

EU human rights policy

The Council adopted the EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World in 2012 (thematic reports), see [9431/13](#).

Democratic Republic of the Congo - restrictive measures

The Council amended the implementing legislation for the specific restrictive measures directed against persons acting in violation of the arms embargo with regard to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Changes were made so as to take into account of modifications to these sanctions adopted by the UN Security Council.

Iran - restrictive measures

The Council amended the EU restrictive measures against Iran that are motivated by the EU's serious and deepening concern about the Iranian nuclear programme. Changes were made to implement modifications of the UN sanctions regime against Iran.

FISHERIES

Ban on shark finning

Today, the Council adopted an amending regulation on the removal of fins of sharks on board vessels following a first reading agreement with the European Parliament ([76/12](#)). This text aims to eliminate existing derogations to the ban of "shark finning".

For further details, see [10419/13](#).

APPOINTMENTS

Committee of the Regions

The Council appointed Mr Peter BONELLO, Mr Paul FARRUGIA and Dr Marc SANT (Malta) as members of the Committee of the Regions for the remainder of the current term of office, which runs until 25 January 2015 ([9983/13](#)).
