



Remarks by Commissioner Avramopoulos after informal Home Affairs Council in Luxembourg

Luxembourg, 09 July 2015

Morning session - security

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me begin by wishing the Luxembourgish Presidency very good luck in the work ahead.

The challenges in relation to security cannot be underestimated. We cannot exclude new threats or new terrorist attacks.

What happened last month in France, Tunisia and Kuwait underlines the necessity to remain vigilant and determined.

I am confident that together with Etienne Schneider and the other Ministers we will achieve a lot in the coming 6 months in order to allow citizens to live in a secure environment. Because the challenges we face are not limited within national borders. Cooperation, therefore, is the only way to achieve the necessary level of security in Europe.

This morning our discussions focused on two specific issues: cyber-crime and cyber-security, as well as intelligence sharing to counter terrorism.

In the Commission's European Agenda on Security, we identified cybercrime as one of our main priorities and we set out a number of concrete actions to combat it.

First of all, we need better reporting and information exchange on cyberattacks and their perpetrators.

The Network and Information Security Directive, once adopted, will improve significantly EU cooperation in this area.

For example requiring companies in critical sectors – such as energy, transport, banking and health – to adopt risk management practices and report major incidents, will be a major step forward.

Europol already coordinates effective operations to fight criminals responsible for cyber-attacks and scam campaigns.

Last month, a joint international operation coordinated by Europol's European Cybercrime Centre (EC3) and Eurojust led to the dismantling of a group of cybercriminals active in Italy, Spain, Poland, the United Kingdom, Belgium and Georgia, and the arrest of 49 people suspected of committing financial fraud and email account intrusions.

Moreover, on the 1st of July, Europol launched the Internet Referral Unit (IRU). This Unit, which will become fully operational in the next 12 months, will support Member States in identifying and removing online terrorist material.

It is also essential to have strong public-private cooperation in the field of security.

To this end, the Commission will establish an Internet Forum that will bring together Member States and Internet Service Providers. The aim is to reduce the accessibility of online terrorist material and to counter the terrorist narrative and propaganda.

Workshops and preparatory meetings are already taking place and, at the same time, I am planning to travel to California in September with the aim of preparing the launch of the Forum in December.

We have to make sure that important actors from the industry will do their fair share to protect citizens and make the Internet a safer place.

I also discussed with the Ministers the issue of intelligence sharing to counter terrorism. Although a national competence, the European Commission and the EU Agencies can play a crucial role in supporting Member States and facilitating information exchange among EU actors.

At European level we need to continue to increase cooperation and intelligence sharing between national authorities.

The European Commission has defined a counter-terrorism strategy based on increased cooperation,

which is at the heart of the European Agenda on Security.

We already have in place agencies, like Europol, Eurojust, EU INTCEN and FRONTEX, which share intelligence.

Their professionalism and dedication is not always in the media headlines and should not be for obvious reasons. But their work is crucial.

The Commission also supports the European Counter-Terrorism Centre at Europol for information exchange and data-matching.

Increased cooperation also depends on the better use of all available tools – like the Schengen Information System (SIS), which is showing a significant increase in the number of alerts.

I would also like to mention the European Criminal Records Information System (ECRIS), which allows Member States to exchange, simply and swiftly, information on past criminal convictions.

To date over 100,000 messages per month are sent via ECRIS.

Moreover, the Commission – but more importantly the Council and the European Parliament - are committed to reaching an agreement on EU PNR, which can offer Member States significant added-value to their security on flights.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The challenges we face today go well beyond the response capacities of any single Member State.

So, we have no other choice. We must work together. We must cooperate.

Effective cooperation between the Member States, the EU institutions and the EU Agencies is the key to improve Europe's security while upholding our essential freedoms and values.

Thank you

Afternoon session - migration

Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to thank my good friend Jean Asselborn for the great cooperation and to offer my warmest wishes for the Luxembourgish Presidency, which will surely be excellent. ALLES GUDDES!

Luxembourg's great experience and longstanding European conviction is already evident in our work.

The Presidency already demonstrated great motivation and commitment to find practical solutions to the challenges of migration.

In the last weeks, the Commission and the Council have worked hand-in-hand to develop together solutions based on the European Agenda on Migration.

The Agenda is widely recognised and accepted as a comprehensive package that will determine Europe's migration policy for the months and years to come.

Two weeks ago, the European Council welcomed the European Agenda on Migration and agreed to relocate and resettle a total of 60,000 people in need of international protection.

Now it was now up to the Member States to put solidarity in practice.

While we had very constructive discussions at political level over the past few days and this afternoon - we made progress especially on resettlement - we are not there yet.

We are expecting Member States to make additional efforts to jointly relocate and resettle 60,000 in clear need of international protection.

Member States have committed to finalise this before the end of July and we will see each other again on 20 July in Brussels.

For the Commission, it is essential to reach the overall targets set by the European Council: 40,000 applicants to be relocated and 20,000 refugees to be resettled over the next two years.

To achieve this objective, the Commission will provide the appropriate financial support:

- an extra amount of €240 million for the relocation scheme, which will be made available to Member States through a lump sum of €6000 per relocated applicant.

- For the resettlement scheme, the EU is making available an extra €50 million in 2015-2016, which, together with the existing funds, add up to €227 million for resettlement.

In operational terms, we are mobilising our Agencies not only to prepare and actively assist with the implementation of the relocation scheme; we are also mobilising them to put in practice the "hotspot teams" in Italy and Greece.

Significant progress has been made in developing and implementing the 'hotspot' approach, ensuring that frontline Member States are given rapid support by our Agencies, particularly Frontex, EASO, Europol and Eurojust.

As I said several times before, relocation and resettlement are part of a broader strategy of the European Union to better manage migration in all aspects.

Fighting migrant smuggling, better identifying the migrants and ensuring the return of those that have no right to stay on EU territory, are also among our top priorities.

As requested by the European Council, we are working tirelessly on these issues.

That is why today, we also discussed the Action Plan against migrant smuggling.

We intend to step-up financial investigations in order to identify, seize and recover criminal assets in order to weaken the criminal networks of smugglers and their businesses.

Dear friends,

The progress we have achieved on migration over the past few months and especially today is - allow me to say - impressive.

Europe finally took the lead.

We will continue to move forward and implement fully the European Agenda on Migration.

We will do our utmost to manage migration better.

Thank you.

SPEECH/15/5342

General public inquiries:

[Europe Direct](#) by phone [00 800 67 89 10 11](tel:0080067891011) or by [email](#)