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Minister of the interior

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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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ITEMS DEBATED

Future of EU migration and asylum policy

Ministers discussed the future of the EU migration and asylum policy, on the basis of a report prepared by the Finnish Presidency. This debate wrapped up the reflection process which was started at the informal JHA ministers meeting in July and which has continued during the past months in various Council bodies.

During the debate, ministers welcomed the Commission's intention to present a new pact on migration and asylum. They confirmed the need for a comprehensive approach to migration, with a whole-of-government and whole of route approach. They also highlighted several areas where further work would be needed, including:

- Improving cooperation with third countries by building balanced and sustainable partnerships, both to prevent irregular migration and improve cooperation on return
- Setting up more efficient asylum procedures which cover all circumstances
- Further supporting member states under specific pressure, notably frontline member states
- Enhancing the link between asylum and return procedures to improve the level of returns
- Building on the central role of EU agencies, including Frontex and EASO

[Presidency report: way forward for EU migration and asylum policy](#)

[EU migration policy \(background information\)](#)

Future of EU internal security

Ministers discussed the future of EU internal security, with a view to providing guidance for future developments in the area of internal security during the next legislative cycle (2019-2024).

This discussion took place over lunch, on the basis of a report prepared by the Finnish Presidency, which summarises the main themes and work strands that have been discussed in the past six months as part of this reflection process. Key horizontal issues highlighted by the Presidency report include:

- proactive approach to new technologies: The establishment of a joint innovation lab at Europol should support EU law enforcement authorities in order to be able to benefit from new technologies, while anticipating and managing the risks associated with them.
- effective information management: Law enforcement cooperation at EU level will increasingly be based on better and more efficient technological solutions and information systems and their interoperability. It is particularly important to ensure that information systems are supplied with high quality, timely and complete data and used effectively.
- multidisciplinary cross-border cooperation: due to the constantly evolving, cross-cutting nature of various security threats (CBRN weapons, hybrid activities) the actions taken to respond to and prevent these activities require a horizontal approach, going beyond traditional cross-border law enforcement cooperation and involving other authorities and EU agencies.
- comprehensive approach to security: a comprehensive and whole-of-society approach to security necessitates better coordination, resources and technological capacities, but also depends on a better situational awareness and preparedness to address a variety of challenges.

[Presidency report: future direction of EU internal security](#)

Counter-terrorism cooperation¹

Ministers were updated, in the presence of the Counter Terrorism Group (CTG), on cooperation between competent authorities dealing with counter-terrorism.

The counter-terrorism group is an informal group outside the EU framework that gathers the security services of the 28 EU member states, Norway and Switzerland. The Council regularly holds exchanges with the group on counter-terrorism cooperation. The latest exchange between home affairs ministers in the presence of the CTG had taken place at the June 2019 Home Affairs Council meeting.

¹ Exceptionally, in the presence of the Schengen associated states

Implementation of interoperability

Ministers were informed by the Commission and the Presidency on the implementation of the interoperability regulations and held an exchange of views on this topic. Steps to be taken include:

- an overall coordination at national level, by setting up a multi-sectoral coordination group in each member state and elaborating a national implementation plan
- the planning of human and financial resources
- the development by member states of operational business processes, taking into account the needs of end users

The implementation of interoperability is a coordinated process between the Commission, the EU agency for large-scale IT systems (eu-LISA) and the member states. It requires not only the development of technical infrastructure, but also for member states to redesign business processes and build their capacity. Given the comprehensive changes involved, the Commission regularly monitors progress through a series of instruments.

The regulations establishing a framework for interoperability between EU information systems in the area of justice and home affairs entered into force on 11 June 2019. Interoperability will allow the systems to complement each other, help facilitate the correct identification of persons and contribute to fighting identity fraud.

[How interoperable databases will boost Europe's security \(infographic\)](#)

[IT systems in the area of freedom, security and justice](#)

Implementation of the European Border and Coast Guard regulation

Ministers exchanged views on ongoing work regarding the implementation of the European Border and Coast Guard Regulation, which will enter into force on 4 December. They focused in particular on the development of the multiannual strategic policy cycle for the European integrated border management (EIBM) concept, which is currently ongoing. Ministers were also briefed on the overall implementation of the European Border and Coast Guard regulation.

The EIBM concept sets out the basic principles for effective border control and return activities within the European Union. Its aim is to manage crossings of the EU's external borders efficiently and to address migratory challenges and potential future threats at those borders. The concept is applied through five-year policy cycles, for which a multiannual strategic policy is elaborated by the Commission, the Council and the European Parliament. On this basis, Frontex prepares a technical and operational integrated border management strategy, with member states then preparing national strategies.

Under the new rules, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) is being strengthened in terms of staff and technical equipment. To ensure the coherent management of EU external borders and to be able to respond to crises, Frontex will have at its disposal a standing corps. This corps, to be established gradually, will consist of up to 10 000 operational staff by 2027. The agency is also being given a broader mandate to support member states' activities, especially on border control, return and cooperation with third countries.

[Strengthening the EU's external borders \(background information\)](#)

Any other business

– ***Current legislative proposals***

The presidency updated the Council on the state of play of a number of legislative proposals, including the regulation on preventing the dissemination of terrorist content online, the JHA funds, the ETIAS consequential amendments, the regulation on the false and authentic documents online (FADO) system, the visa information system regulation, the EU civil protection mechanism and the Schengen borders code.

[Overview of the current legislative proposals under the Finnish Presidency](#)

– ***EU cooperation mechanism on the prevention of radicalisation***

The Commission updated ministers on the work of the EU cooperation mechanism on the prevention of radicalisation. This mechanism was set up mid-2018 as an outcome of the high-level expert group on radicalisation, to ensure that concrete actions on prevent policies are developed in close cooperation with all relevant stakeholders and covering all relevant areas.

– ***Salzburg forum ministerial conference (Vienna, 6-7 November 2019)***

Austria briefed ministers on the results of the Salzburg forum ministerial meeting, which took place in Vienna on 6-7 November.

[Salzburg forum ministerial meeting - joint ministerial declaration](#)

– ***Presidency report on the progress made in the fields of justice and security***

The Council took note of a Presidency report on the progress made in the fields of justice and security.

– ***EU-US justice and home affairs ministerial meeting (Washington DC, 11 December 2019)***

The Council was informed by the Presidency on the agenda for the EU-US JHA ministerial meeting which will take place in Washington DC on 11 December.

EU-Western Balkans ministerial forum on justice and home affairs (Skopje, 18-19 November 2019)

The Council took note of the information provided by the Presidency on the outcome of the EU-Western Balkans ministerial forum on Justice and Home Affairs, held in Skopje on 18-19 November.

[EU – Western Balkans Justice and Home Affairs ministerial forum - joint press statement](#)

– ***Search and rescue activities in the Mediterranean***

The Council took note of the information provided by Italy on search and rescue activities in the Mediterranean.

– ***Meeting of interior ministers of the Visegrad Group (Prague, 21 November 2019)***

The Council took note of the information provided by the Czech Republic on the meeting of interior ministers of the Visegrad group which took place in Prague on 21 November.

– ***Work programme of the incoming Presidency***

The incoming Croatian presidency presented its work program in the area of home affairs, focusing on strengthening internal security, providing for a more effective control of external borders, ensuring the full interoperability of IT systems and strengthening resilience to external threats and malicious cyber activities. Key elements include:

- Comprehensive and effective migration policy
- Strengthened control of the EU external border and return to the normal functioning of the Schengen area
- Improved internal security and interoperability of information systems
- Sustainable framework for home affairs funds
- Continued work on the EU mechanism for civil protection

Future work in home affairs

Over lunch, ministers heard from the Commission and upcoming presidencies their expected priorities in the area of home affairs.

They also held a discussion on the future of internal security.

MIXED COMMITTEE

The Council in the Mixed Committee format (the EU plus Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland) discussed the following items:

– ***Implementation of interoperability***

See above

– ***Implementation of the European Border and Coast Guard regulation***

See above

– ***Any other business***

The presidency updated the Mixed Committee on the state of play of a number of legislative proposals.

[Overview of the current legislative proposals under the Finnish Presidency](#)

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

Schengen evaluation - Estonia

The Council adopted an implementing decision setting out a recommendation on addressing the deficiencies identified in the 2018 evaluation of Estonia on the application of the Schengen acquis in the field of the Schengen Information System.

Functioning of the Schengen evaluation and monitoring mechanism

The Council invited the Commission to take due account of the views of the member states on the functioning of the Schengen evaluation and monitoring mechanism, as set out in an agreed analysis, when reviewing the functioning of the mechanism.

The current Schengen evaluation and monitoring mechanism was established by a Council regulation in 2013. Article 22 of this regulation establishes that the Commission will undertake a review of the operation of this regulation and submit a report to the Council within 6 months of the adoption of all evaluation reports regarding the evaluations covered by the first multiannual evaluation programme. The first five-year evaluation cycle under the current mechanism ends in December 2019.

Conclusions on widening the scope of PNR data

The Council adopted conclusions recommending that the Commission carry out a study that would explore, by means of an impact assessment, the need for and feasibility of the collection, storage and processing of PNR data from cross-border forms of transport other than air traffic.

[Council conclusions on widening the scope of the use of passenger name record \(PNR\) data to forms of transport other than air traffic](#)

Europol - cooperation with private parties

The Council adopted conclusions on Europol's cooperation with private parties ([14138/19](#)).

In these conclusions, the Council acknowledges the urgent operational need for Europol to request and receive data directly from private parties and agrees that reflection on possible modalities for such a transmission shall continue at all appropriate levels.

It calls on the Commission to take into account these conclusions when examining the practice of direct exchange of personal data with private parties in the framework of its review of the implementation of the Europol regulation. It also calls on the Commission to consider adapting the schedule for this review as necessary, especially in view of the need for European law enforcement to address ongoing technological developments.

Prüm data exchange - United Kingdom

The Council adopted conclusions acknowledging that the UK has fully implemented the general provisions on data protection for the purpose of Prüm automated data exchange with regard to dactyloscopic data. **[LINK TO TEXT WHEN PUBLIC]**

However, the Council also requests that by 15 June 2020 the UK review its policy of excluding suspects' dactyloscopic files. If by then the UK has not notified the Council that it makes these data available the Council will, within three months, review the situation with a view to the continuation or termination of dactyloscopic Prüm automated exchange with the UK.

Following the adoption of the above conclusions, the Council will adopt, after consultation with the European Parliament, the implementing decision, which would allow UK access to Prüm dactyloscopic data exchange.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Combating illicit trafficking in weapons, ammunition and explosives in Ukraine

The Council adopted a Decision in support of Ukraine's efforts to combat illicit trafficking in weapons, ammunition and explosives, in cooperation with the OSCE. The Decision will strengthen the capacities of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine and the State Fiscal Service/State Customs Service of Ukraine in combating illicit trafficking in weapons, ammunition and explosives.

On 19 November 2018, the Council adopted the EU Strategy against illicit firearms, small arms and light weapons and their ammunition (the EU SALW strategy). The purpose of this strategy is to guide integrated, collective and coordinated European action to prevent and curb the illicit acquisition of SALW and their ammunition by terrorists, criminals and other unauthorised actors, and to promote accountability and responsibility with regard to the legal arms trade.

[Council adopts new EU strategy against illicit firearms, small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, 19/11/2018](#)

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

Review of the supervisory framework for financial institutions

The Council adopted today a first fundamental review of the functioning of the European system of financial supervision (ESFS).

The ESFS was established in 2011 and consists of:

- three European supervisory authorities (ESAs): the European banking authority (EBA), the European insurance and occupational pensions authority (EIOPA) and the European securities and markets authority (ESMA). They supervise and provide regulatory guidance for individual sectors and institutions.
- the European systemic risk board (ESRB) which oversees the financial system as a whole and coordinates EU policies for financial stability.

The texts adopted today review tasks, powers, governance and funding of the ESAs and the ESRB, so as to adapt the authorities to the changed context in which they operate. The reform also includes provisions reinforcing the role of the EBA as regards risks posed to the financial sector by money laundering activities.

For more information, see [press release](#)
