



## EU Security Union Strategy: connecting the dots in a new security ecosystem

Brussels, 24 July 2020

Today, the European Commission sets out a new [EU Security Union Strategy](#) for the period 2020 to 2025, focusing on priority areas where the EU can bring value to support Member States in fostering security for all those living in Europe. From combatting terrorism and organised crime, to preventing and detecting hybrid threats and increasing the resilience of our critical infrastructure, to promoting cybersecurity and fostering research and innovation, the strategy lays out the tools and measures to be developed over the next 5 years to ensure security in our physical and digital environment.

Margaritis **Schinus**, Vice-President for Promoting our European Way of Life, said: "*Security is a cross-cutting issue which goes into almost every sphere of life and affects a multitude of policy areas. With the new EU Security Union Strategy, we are connecting all the dots to build a real security ecosystem. It is time to overcome the false dichotomy between online and offline, between digital and physical and between internal and external security concerns and threats. From protecting our critical infrastructure to fighting cybercrime and countering hybrid threats, we can leave no stone unturned when it comes to our security. This strategy will serve as an umbrella framework for our security policies, which must always be fully grounded in our common values.*"

Ylva **Johansson**, Commissioner for Home Affairs, said: "*Knowing you are safe, online, in public, in your home, for your children, builds trust and cohesion in society. With today's Security Union Strategy, we focus on areas where the EU can make a difference in protecting people throughout Europe, anticipating and tackling evolving threats. In the coming years, my work on the EU's internal security will build a system that delivers, starting today with action on child sexual abuse, drugs and illegal firearms.*"

This strategy lays out 4 strategic priorities for action at EU level:

### 1. A future-proof security environment

Individuals rely on **key infrastructures**, online and offline, to travel, work or benefit from essential public services; and attacks on such infrastructures can cause huge disruptions. Preparedness and resilience are key for quick recovery. The Commission will put forward **new EU rules on the protection and resilience of critical infrastructure**, physical and digital.

Recent terrorist attacks have focused on **public spaces**, including places of worship and transport hubs, exploiting their open and accessible nature. The Commission will promote **stepped up public-private cooperation** in this area, to ensure stronger physical protection of public places and adequate detection systems.

Cyberattacks have become more frequent and sophisticated. By the end of the year, the Commission should complete the review of the **Network and Information Systems Directive** (the main European cybersecurity legislation) and outline strategic cybersecurity priorities to ensure the EU can anticipate and respond to evolving threats.

In addition, the Commission has also identified the need for a **Joint Cyber Unit** as a platform for structured and coordinated cooperation.

Lastly, the EU should continue building and maintaining **robust international partnerships** to further prevent, deter and respond to cyberattacks, as well as promote EU standards to increase the cybersecurity of partner countries.

### 2. Tackling evolving threats

Criminals increasingly exploit technological developments to their ends, with malware and data theft on the rise. The Commission will make sure that **existing EU rules against cybercrime** are fit for purpose and correctly implemented, and will explore **measures against identity theft**.

The Commission will look into measures to **enhance law enforcement capacity in digital investigations**, making sure they have adequate tools, techniques and skills. These would include artificial intelligence, big data and high performance computing into security policy.

Concrete action is needed to tackle core threats to citizens, such as terrorism, extremism or child sexual abuse, under a framework ensuring the respect of fundamental rights. The Commission is

putting forward today a [strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse online](#).

Countering **hybrid threats** that aim to weaken social cohesion and undermine trust in institutions, as well as enhancing EU resilience are an important element of the Security Union Strategy. Key measures include **an EU approach** on countering hybrid threats, from early detection, analysis, awareness, building resilience and prevention to crisis response and consequence management – mainstreaming hybrid considerations into broader policy-making. The Commission and the High Representative will continue to jointly take forward this work, in close cooperation with **strategic partners**, notably **NATO** and **G7**.

### 3. Protecting Europeans from terrorism and organised crime

Fighting terrorism starts with addressing the polarisation of society, discrimination and other factors that can reinforce people's vulnerability to radical discourse. The work on **anti-radicalisation** will focus on early detection, resilience building and disengagement, as well as rehabilitation and reintegration in society. In addition to fighting root causes, effective prosecution of terrorists, including foreign terrorist fighters, will be essential – to achieve this, steps are under way to strengthen border security legislation and better use of existing databases. **Cooperation with non-EU countries** and international organisations will also be key in the fight against terrorism, for instance to cut off all sources of terrorism financing.

**Organised crime** comes at huge costs for victims, as well as for the economy, with €218 to €282 billion estimated to be lost every year. Key **measures** include an **Agenda for tackling organised crime**, including **trafficking in human beings** for next year. More than a third of organised crime groups active in the EU are involved in trafficking illicit drugs. The Commission is today putting forward a **new EU Agenda on Drugs** to strengthen efforts on drug demand and supply reduction, and reinforce cooperation with external partners.

Organised crime groups and terrorists are also key players in the trade of illegal firearms. The Commission is presenting today a **new EU Action Plan against firearms trafficking**. To ensure that crime does not pay, the Commission will review the current framework on **seizing criminals' assets**.

Criminal organisations treat migrants and people in need of international protection as a commodity. The Commission will soon put forward a **new EU Action Plan against migrant smuggling** focussing on combatting criminal networks, boosting cooperation and support the work of law enforcement.

### 4. A strong European security ecosystem

Governments, law enforcement authorities, businesses, social organisations, and those living in Europe all have a common responsibility in fostering security.

The EU will help promote cooperation and information sharing, with the aim to combat crime and pursue justice. Key measures include **strengthening Europol's mandate** and further developing **Eurojust to better link judicial and law enforcement authorities**. Working with partners outside of the EU is also crucial to secure information and evidence. **Cooperation with Interpol** will also be reinforced.

**Research and innovation** are powerful tools to counter threats and to anticipate risks and opportunities. As part of the review of Europol's mandate, the Commission will look into the creation of a **European Innovation hub for internal security**.

Skills and increased awareness can benefit both law enforcement and citizens alike. Even a **basic knowledge of security threats** and how to combat them can have a real impact on society's resilience. Consciousness of the risks of cybercrime and basic skills to protect oneself from it can work together with protection from service providers to counter cyber-attacks. The [European Skills Agenda](#), adopted on 1 July 2020, supports skills-building throughout life, including in the area of security.



## Background

In recent years, new, increasingly complex cross-border and cross-sectorial security threats have emerged, highlighting the need for closer cooperation on security at all levels. The coronavirus crisis has also put European security into sharp focus, testing the resilience of Europe's critical infrastructure, crisis preparedness and crisis management systems.

President von der Leyen's [political guidelines](#) called for improved cooperation to protect all those living in Europe. Today's EU Security Union Strategy maps the priority actions, tools and measures to deliver on that objective, both in the physical and in the digital world, and across all parts of society.

The strategy builds upon progress achieved previously under the Commission's European [Agenda on Security](#) 2015-2020 and focuses on priorities endorsed by the European Parliament and the Council.

It also recognises the increasing inter-connection between internal and external security. Many work strands will build on a joined up EU approach and implementation of the strategy will be taken forward in full complementarity and coherence with EU external action in the field of security and defence under the responsibility of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

The Commission will regularly report on the progress made and will keep the European Parliament, the Council and stakeholders fully informed and engaged in all relevant actions.

## For More Information

[Communication](#) on the EU Security Union Strategy

[Questions and Answers](#): Delivering on a Security Union

[Press release](#): Delivering on a Security Union: initiatives to fight child sexual abuse, drugs and illegal firearms

[Security Union – Commission website](#)

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