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**NOTE**

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**From:** General Secretariat  
**To:** JHA Counsellors / COSI Support Group  
Standing Committee on operational cooperation on internal security (COSI)

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**No. prev. doc.:** 7942/2/11 REV 2 COSI 16 FRONT 34 DAPIX 20 COMIX 171  
9336/2/12 REV 2 COSI 24 JAIEX 24 CORDROGUE 23 COAFR 118 FRONT 63  
COMIX 278 VISA 89 GENVAL 27  
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**Subject:** 29 measures for reinforcing the protection of the external borders and combating illegal immigration. Progress report on the achievements of the project groups.

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Delegations will find attached a progress report on the achievements of the Project Groups (PGs) of 29 measures for reinforcing the protection of the external borders.

# PROGRESS REPORT

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Following previous discussions in COSI about the activities of the PGs of "29 measures on protection of the external borders and combating illegal immigration", the project groups leaders were requested to update COSI on the state of play regarding the implementation of the actions. Three PG leaders have submitted updated information.

The current document aims at highlighting the achievements of the project groups in 2012 in addition to the ones reported in the intermediate or final reports which were already presented to COSI and contains some recommendations for the future.

## **2. ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2012 (non-exhaustive list)**

### **2.1 Measure 4 ("joint patrols", led by ES)**

The PG main outcome in 2012 was that MS (ES, PT, IT MT, FR and CY) have signed an agreement to present, with the support of the COM and in the framework of EUROSUR, a project for building a secure network to exchange information on illegal immigration matters in the Mediterranean area ("Seahorse Mediterraneo" project) during the first half of 2013. This project would no longer be dealt with in the Operational Action Plan (OAP) "Illegal Immigration".

The following new elements can be reported:

- EL has been invited to join the project.
- A "draft Action fiche" has been presented by ES and COM. The MS will be formally consulted through written procedure as a preliminary step to launch the project.
- On 29-07-2012 Libya signed a Declaration Partnership regarding its participation in the project. Talks also took place with the other three African countries (Tunisia, Algeria and Egypt), but no answer has been received yet. It is intended to concentrate efforts on Tunisia.

- The expressed willingness from the COM to support this initiative. The project could be funded by External Borders Fund (Community Actions) and the Thematic Programme for cooperation with third countries (Europe Aid), covering the African National Contact Points.

## **2.2 Measure 6 ("information exchange" led by BE)**

Following the final document of the PG (doc. 7942/2/11 REV 2), the main developments in 2012 reported by EUROJUST, EUROPOL and FRONTEX are as follows:

- Eurojust has informed that they are now connected to SIENA.
- Europol and Frontex are in the process of engaging in negotiations on an operational cooperation agreement. The main objective of such agreement is to establish provisions on the exchange/transmission of personal data. However, it should also provide a framework for wider cooperation, including harmonisation of definitions, working terms and processes for data collection from the Member States. (recommendation b of the final report 7942/2/11 REV 2).
- Europol and Frontex are also in the last stages of agreeing upon a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and a bilateral agreement, which should allow for a more active Frontex participation in operations against facilitated illegal immigration and trafficking in human beings. The MoU will provide the basis for the establishment of a secure line between both agencies and the bilateral agreement will detail the services and applications available through the secure line, including access to the Secure Information Exchange System (SIENA). (recommendation d).
- Europol has informed that virtually all the 30 JITs which Europol is currently supporting via a signed arrangement include support from Eurojust. Europol normally informs Eurojust about the establishment of a JIT in the context of the revised Europol-Eurojust cooperation agreement. At the moment Europol does not involve Frontex in JITs. Such involvement would require Frontex to sign an arrangement with an EU MS that is member of a JIT. (recommendation g)

### **2.3 Measure 12 ("common pre-frontier intelligence picture (CPIP)" led by PL)**

The feedback and the analysis of the questionnaire prepared by the PG (doc. 12542/11 and ADD 1, and item 2 of doc. 17480/11) allowed the Frontex Risk Analysis Network (FRAN) to improve the portfolio of products and services for the CPIP to meet Member States' requirements.

The work on the CPIP will be continued in the framework of preparations for EUROSUR to become operational next year, mainly through the EUROSUR Analysis Layer User Group, whose kick-off meeting was held on 9 October 2012. The findings of this group might contribute to achieve the related strategic goals of the Illegal Immigration OAP (i.e. strategic goals 1 and 2 in the 2012 OAP; doc. 14812/1/11 REV 1).

### **2.4 Measure 16 ("sharing info modus operandi networks, FADO", led by ES).**

As set out in the final report of PG "Measure 16 (9336/1/12), many actions were implemented in 2011 thanks to the efforts by all the actors involved. In 2012, the main developments consist of the following:

- Following discussions in the False Documents WP on 30 May 2012, the Council granted the Commission access to iFado (action 8 of the final report 9336/1/12 REV 1);
- The Decision 1105/2011/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011 on the list of travel documents entered into force on 24 November 2011, and the Commission, within the framework of the Travel Documents Committee set out in Article 8(1) of the Decision, is currently examining together with the Member States the list of travel documents (action 12);
- The proposal for the aforementioned MoU in item 2.2 will provide, as it has been pointed out, the basis for the establishment of a secure line between Europol and Frontex and will detail the services and applications available through the secure line, including access to the Secure Information Exchange System (SIENA) (action 16).

The FADO system continues to grow in 2012 and be further developed. A steadily growing number of document descriptions is observed. At this point, about 2000 document descriptions are in the database which represents an increase of more than 20 % compared to last year.

### **3. FINAL REMARKS**

The PGs have addressed most of the main initiatives included in the measures subjected to the PGs. Some of the PGs have led to concrete results whereas other PGs have contributed to other projects led by Institutions or Agencies. Some MS are already implementing actions undertaken by PG initiatives and have been encouraged to increasingly use the existing networks and databases.

The projects have highlighted the added value of the joint cooperation between MS and EU Agencies to tackle illegal immigration, where the sharing of information and the exchange of expertise enhance the capacity to obtain better results.

Following the recommendation stressed in the COSI meeting on 20 October 2011 about the need of avoiding duplication of efforts between the different operational measures, the relevant activities of the PGs have been transferred to the OAP Illegal Immigration, which, in addition, has a number of potential links with the EU Action on Migratory Pressures.

**The Presidency suggests that COSI takes note of this report and agrees on the following:**

- 1) To close Project Group "Measure 4" since the "Seahorse Mediterraneo Project" will continue in the framework of EUROSUR.**
- 2) To invite all parties involved in Measure 6, to continue the implementation of the recommendations set out in doc. 7942/2/11 REV 2.**
- 3) To continue the implementation of the relevant activities of the PGs, as actions of the Illegal Immigration priority within the framework of the Policy Cycle.**
- 4) To invite SCIFA to ensure that actions developed in the PGs are taken into account, where appropriate, both in the implementation of the EU Action Plan on Migratory Pressures and in the biannual updating of the list of actions.**