

# Informal Justice and Home Affairs Ministers' meeting

9-10 July 2015, Luxembourg

## Discussion Paper

*A brief update on the state of play of  
cooperation between security and intelligence  
services in the fight against terrorism*



In the conclusions to its extraordinary meeting on 20 September 2001, the Justice and Home Affairs Council stated that:

*“The Council emphasizes the important role of the Security and Intelligence services in the fight against terrorism. Their intelligence forms an invaluable asset for disclosing possible terrorist threats and intentions of terrorists and terrorist groups at an early stage. Therefore they have a crucial task in preventing terrorism. The cooperation between those services must be intensified. In order to speed up this process the heads of those services of the member states of the European Union will meet on a regular basis to start before 1 November 2001. They will take without delay the necessary steps to further improve their cooperation. Cooperation between the police services, including Europol, and the intelligence services will have to be strengthened.”*

During the informal meeting of the Justice and Home Affairs Ministers the Counter Terrorism Group (CTG), whose members consist of the internal security and intelligence services of the member states of the European Union, and of Norway and Switzerland, will be given the opportunity to present the actions that have been taken during the past fourteen years to strengthen their cooperation.

Ministers will be briefed on the establishment and operation of the classified information and communication network which has been created in the wake of the 9/11 attacks and which provides a means for secure, timely, and efficient communication between security services. Ministers will also be informed on on-going efforts undertaken by the heads of security services to continuously expand and deepen their cooperation.

The CTG will present some lessons identified from past attacks as well as from the threat posed by returnees from Syria and Iraq. These examples as well as the anticipated evolution of the terrorist threat will illustrate the many challenges that security services face in countering the threat and the increasing sophistication of plots and clandestine operations planned by terrorists and by terrorist groups. Despite the considerable results achieved, multilateral cooperation within the CTG must progress even further. Heads of Service of the CTG member services are committed to improve the information exchange continuously in order to face challenges, such as the expected increase in returns of battle-hardened foreign fighters to Europe. While national security remains the sole responsibility of each Member State, the CTG security and intelligence services are determined to work ever closer together in the fight against terrorism.

The crucial importance of efficient cooperation between security services and law enforcement authorities at national level will be highlighted and key differences between the work of security services and law enforcement agencies will be underlined.

In the discussion following the presentations by representatives of the Counter Terrorism Group, Ministers are invited to reflect on the following strategic issues, which are key in security services' ability to provide adequate protection to EU citizens:

- access by security services to information such as the PNR, SIS, and call detail records, as essential tools in the fight against terrorism;
- technological developments, such as point-to-point encryption posing serious challenges to security services' ability to counter the terrorist threat;
- the important role national cooperation between security services and law enforcement authorities plays in the fight against terrorism;
- ways in which policy initiatives at the EU level could take into account the concerns, opinions and suggestions from security services at an early stage in the legislative process.

Ministers are invited to note the results achieved through the strengthening of international cooperation between security services and to acknowledge the many challenges security services face in the fight against terrorism and which will need to be taken into account in the National and European legislative processes.