



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



6855/10 (Presse 42)

PROVISIONAL VERSION
Items discussed on 25 February

PRESS RELEASE

2998th Council meeting

Justice and Home Affairs

Brussels, 25 February 2010

President

Alfredo PÉREZ RUBALCABA
Minister for the Interior

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Main results of the Council

*Home Affairs ministers approved, after a public debate, an **Internal Security Strategy for the European Union**. Related to that, they also adopted an institutional decision on setting up the **Standing Committee on operational cooperation on internal security (COSI)**.*

*On migration issues, the Council adopted conclusions on 29 measures for reinforcing the **protection of the external borders and combating illegal immigration**.*

*Ministers also discussed the issue of **visa waiver reciprocity with Canada** and held a first orientation debate on an **European Pact Against Drug International Trafficking**. Under the agenda item **EU-US relations**, the Council heard from the Commission and discussed about the way forward regarding the cooperation with the US on the processing and the transfer of financial messaging data for purposes of the **Terrorist Finance Tracking Programme (TFTP)**.*

*In the margin of the Council session, the **Mixed Committee** (the EU plus Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland) examined the state of play concerning the development of the **Schengen Information System II (SIS II)**. The committee heard also a presentation from the Commission about a draft regulation amending the rules on the Agency **FRONTEX** and a second presentation from the Agency's director on its 2010 Work Programme. Under any other business and over lunch, ministers discussed **the issue of visas in relation with Libya**.*

*Important items adopted by ministers without discussion include the Council's position and a statement of the Council reasons concerning a regulation on establishing a **European Asylum Support Office (EASO)** as well as a decision determining the seat of the office.*

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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.

PARTICIPANTS

The governments of the Member States and the European Commission were represented as follows:

Belgium:

Mr Stefaan DE CLERCK
Ms Annemie TURTELBOOM
Mr Melchior WATHELET

Minister for Justice and Institutional Reform
Minister for Policy on Migration and Asylum Policy
State Secretary for the Budget, attached to the Prime Minister, and State Secretary for Family Policy, attached to the Minister for Employment and, for matters relating to law of persons and family law, attached to the Minister for Justice

Bulgaria:

Ms Margarita POPOVA
Mr Boyko KOTZEV

Minister for Justice
Permanent Representative

Czech Republic:

Ms Daniela KOVÁŘOVÁ
Mr Martin PECINA
M. Lenka PTÁČKOVÁ MELICHAROVÁ

Minister for Justice
Minister for the Interior
Deputy Minister

Denmark:

Mr Poul Skytte CHRISTOFFERSEN

Permanent Representative

Germany:

Ms Sabine LEUTHEUSSER-SCHNARRENBERGER
Mr Thomas de MAIZIÈRE

Federal Minister for Justice
Federal Minister for the Interior

Estonia:

Mr Rein LANG
Mr Marko POMERANTS

Minister for Justice
Minister for the Interior

Ireland:

Mr Rory MONTGOMERY

Permanent Representative

Greece:

Mr Michael CHRISOCHOIDIS
Mr Théodoros SOTIROPOULOS

Minister for Justice, Transparency and Human Rights
Permanent Representative

Spain:

Mr Francisco CAAMAÑO DOMÍNGUEZ
Mr Alfredo PÉREZ RUBALCABA

Minister for Justice
Minister for the Interior

France:

Mr Brice HORTEFEUX

Mr Eric BESSON

Minister for the Interior, Overseas Territories and Local and Regional Authorities
Minister for Immigration, Integration, National Identity and Development Solidarity

Italy:

Mr Angelino ALFANO
Mr Roberto MARONI

Minister for Justice
Minister for the Interior

Cyprus:

Mr Loukas LOUKA
Mr Neoklis SYLKIOTIS

Minister for Justice
Minister for the Interior

Latvia:

Mr Mareks SEGLIŅŠ
Mr Normunds POPENS

Minister for Justice
Permanent Representative

Lithuania:

Mr Remigijus ŠIMAŠIUS
Mr Stanislovas LIUTKEVIČIUS

Minister for Justice
Deputy Minister

Luxembourg:

Mr Jean-Marie HALSDORF

Minister for the Interior and Regional Planning

Mr François BILTGEN

Minister for Labour and Employment, Minister for Culture, Higher Education and Research, Minister for Religious Affairs

Hungary:

Mr Imre FORGÁCS
Ms Judit LÉVAYNÉ FAZEKAS

Minister for Justice and Law Enforcement
State Secretary (with special responsibility), Ministry of Justice and Law Enforcement

Malta:

Mr Carmelo MIFSUD BONNICI

Minister for Justice and Home Affairs

Netherlands:

Mr Ernst HIRSCH BALLIN

Minister for Justice

Austria:

Ms Claudia BANDION-ORTNER
Mr Hans-Dietmar SCHWEISGUT

Federal Minister for Justice
Permanent Representative

Poland:

Mr. Jerzy MILLER
Mr Igor DZIALUK
Mr Piotr STACHAŃCZYK

Minister
Deputy State Secretary, Ministry of Justice
Deputy State Secretary, Ministry of the Interior and Administration

Portugal:

Mr Rui PEREIRA
Mr Alberto MARTINS

Minister for the Interior
Minister

Romania:

Mr Vasile BLAGA
Ms Rodica CONSTANTINOVICI

Minister
State Secretary

Slovenia:

Mr Aleš ZALAR
Ms Katarina KRESAL

Minister for Justice
Minister

Slovakia:

Ms Viera PETRIKOVA
Mr Ivan KORČOK

Minister and Deputy Minister
Permanent Representative

Finland:

Ms Tuija BRAX
Ms Anne HOLMLUND

Minister
Minister for the Interior

Sweden:

Ms Minna LJUNGGREN
Mr Lars WERKSTRÖM

Secretary of State
General Director

United Kingdom:

Ms Meg HILLIER
Lord BACH

Parliamentary Under-Secretary
Parliamentary Under-Secretary

Commission:

Ms Viviane REDING
Ms Cecilia MALMSTRÖM

Vice-President
Member

ITEMS DEBATED**HOME AFFAIRS****EU Internal Security Strategy**

The Council approved, after a public debate, an Internal Security Strategy for the European Union ([5842/2/10](#)) - one of the priorities of the Spanish Presidency in the area. The European Council will be invited to endorse the document, in accordance with Article 68 TFEU, and the Commission is expected to adopt a communication on concrete actions in the area.

The strategy's main objectives are:

- to present to the public the existing EU instruments that already help to guarantee the security and freedom of EU citizens and the added value that EU action provides in this area;
- to further develop common tools and policies using a more integrated approach which addresses the causes of insecurity and not just the effects;
- to strengthen law enforcement and judicial cooperation, border management, civil protection and disaster management.

The strategy lays out a European security model, which integrates among others action on law enforcement and judicial cooperation, border management and civil protection, with due respect for shared European values, such as fundamental rights. It identifies the main threats and challenges the EU is facing, including terrorism, organised crime, cyber-crime, drug and arms trafficking, trafficking in human beings, sexual exploitation of minors and child pornography, economic crime and corruption and youth violence. Natural and man-made disasters, such as forest fires and energy shortages, also require cross-border preparedness and response. Another challenge is to address common phenomena that pose threats to citizens across Europe, for example road accidents.

The European Council of 10/11 December 2009, echoing the Stockholm Programme adopted at the same time, called for an internal security strategy that would further improve security in the EU and thus protect the lives and safety of European citizens. It asked to tackle, in particular, organised crime, terrorism and natural disasters.

Standing Committee on operational cooperation on internal security (COSI)

The Council adopted the decision on setting up the Standing Committee on operational cooperation on internal security (COSI) ([16515/09](#) and [5949/10](#)). Ministers also exchanged views on the scope and tasks, as well as some other key questions related to the functioning of this new committee, on the basis of a presidency paper and member states reactions.

The committee is expected to hold its first meeting on 11 March.

COSI is provided for in Art. 71 TFEU: "A standing committee shall be set up within the Council in order to ensure that operational cooperation on internal security is promoted and strengthened within the Union."

COSI's coordination role will concern, among other things, police and customs cooperation, external border protection and judicial cooperation in criminal matters relevant to operational cooperation in the field of internal security. The committee shall regularly report on its activities to the Council which, in return, shall keep the EP and national parliaments informed.

COSI will also be responsible for evaluating the general direction and efficiency of operational cooperation with the goal to identify possible shortcomings and adopt recommendations to address them. It can also invite representatives from EUROJUST, EUROPOL, FRONTEX and other relevant bodies to its meetings and is supposed to help ensure consistency of action by these bodies.

European Pact Against Drug International Trafficking

Ministers held a first orientation debate on an European Pact Against International Drug Trafficking. This initiative seeks to reinforce EU action in the area, based on the existing EU Drugs Strategy and the EU Drugs Action Plan for 2009-2012.

Visa requirements imposed by Canada on Czech nationals

The Council called for the early restoration of visa free travel for Czech nationals in relation to Canada and concrete progress towards the achievement of full visa waiver reciprocity. The Council agreed to continue to monitor the situation closely.

In October 2009, the Commission presented a report on the subject, three months after the Czech government had notified the Commission and the Council of the measure taken by Canada.

On 14 July 2009, Canada unilaterally introduced the visa requirement for Czech nationals. Since then and in consultation with the Czech authorities, the Commission has been examining the issue with the Canadian government with a view to restoring visa-free travel for Czech nationals.

Canada is among the third countries whose nationals are not subject to a visa requirement under regulation 539/2001. This regulation, however, as amended by regulation 851/2005, also foresees possible reciprocity measures in the case that a country enjoying visa-free travel to the EU introduces visa requirements for citizens of one or several EU member states.

Canada also continues to maintain a visa requirement for Bulgarian and Romanian citizens.

Protection of the external borders and combating illegal immigration - Conclusions

The Council adopted conclusions on 29 measures for reinforcing the protection of the external borders and combating illegal immigration ([6435/3/10](#)).

EU-US relations

Under this item, ministers heard from the Commission and discussed about the way forward regarding the cooperation with the US on the processing and the transfer of financial messaging data for purposes of the Terrorist Finance Tracking Programme (TFTP).

MIXED COMMITTEE: SIS II*, illegal immigration and Frontex

In the margin of the Council session, the Mixed Committee (the EU plus Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland) examined the state of play concerning the development of the Schengen Information System II (SIS II). Ministers agreed to come back to the issue at their April meeting when the evaluation report of the milestone 1-test carried out until the end of January is available.

The committee also held discussions in relation to:

- the draft Council conclusions on 29 measures for reinforcing the protection of the external borders and combating illegal immigration, later adopted by Council; and
- a draft regulation amending the rules on the Agency FRONTEX which the Commission adopted on 24 February and presented to the Council today.

Finally, the director of FRONTEX presented the Agency's 2010 Work Programme.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

COMMON FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY

EU special representatives - extensions and amendments of mandates

The Council adopted decisions regarding the following EU special representatives' (EUSRs) mandates:

- for Afghanistan and Pakistan, the mandate of Mr Ettore F. SEQUI will be extended for an additional month as from 1 March until 31 March 2010. Mr. Sequi's mandate has also been completed notably with a view to strengthening the overall EU political coordination in the region (6193/10);
- for the African Union, the mandate of Mr Koen VERVAEKE will be extended as from 1 March until 31 August 2010 or until the entry into force of the decision establishing the European External Action Service, whichever comes sooner. Mr. Vervaeke's mandate has also been completed notably with a view to strengthening the overall EU coordination in the region (6191/10);
- for Kosovo, the mandate of Mr Pieter FEITH will be extended as from 1 March until 31 August 2010 or until the entry into force of the decision establishing the European External Action Service, whichever comes sooner (6082/10).

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

EU-Serbia interim committee - rules of procedure

The Council adopted a decision setting up the EU position to be taken in the EU-Serbia interim committee concerning the rules of procedure of this committee ([6098/10](#)).

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

Insolvency proceedings, winding-up proceedings and liquidators

The Council adopted an implementing regulation amending the lists of insolvency proceedings, winding-up proceedings and liquidators in annexes A, B and C to regulation 1346/2000 on insolvency proceedings and codifying the annexes A, B and C to that regulation.

INSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Court of Justice and General Court - Duties of judges and advocates-general

The Council adopted a decision approving the operating rules of the panel in charge of delivering an opinion on candidates' suitability to perform the duties of Judge and Advocate-General (6176/10).

The Judges and Advocates-General of the Court of Justice and the General Court are appointed by common accord of the governments of the member states, after consultation of a panel provided for in article 255 of the Treaty on the functioning of the EU

The Council also adopted a decision appointing the seven members of the panel for a period of four years as from 1 March 2010 (6177/10).

APPOINTMENTS

President of Eurojust

The Council approved the election of Mr. Aled WILLIAMS (United Kingdom) as new President of the college of Eurojust (6653/10).

http://www.eurojust.europa.eu/press_releases/2010/17-02-2010.htm
