



**Brussels, 28 November 2016  
(OR. en)**

**14944/16**

**POLGEN 152  
CSC 353**

## **INFORMATION NOTE**

---

To: ANTICI

---

Subject: System of Alert States in the Council

---

1. Following successive changes to security threat levels in Belgium since 2015, the EU institutions and bodies based in Brussels have undertaken a review of their system of alert states. The aim of this review was to:
  - i) have a common definition of the four alert states (taking account of the Belgian system of four tiers of threat levels);
  - ii) agree a set of common minimum measures to be applied by all, so that staff, delegates and visitors perceive measures in different institutions/bodies as consistent;
  - iii) and establish operational procedures through designated contact points to ensure that changes to alert states are implemented in as coordinated a manner as possible.
2. Delegations will find attached in the Annex the updated definition of the four alert states. Each alert state determines the security measures for protecting people, buildings and other assets against varying levels of threat. The annex briefly describes the measures that delegates can expect to see in the Council under each alert state. The system also raises awareness of measures being taken to protect staff and visitors and of the need for vigilance.
3. While common minimum security measures are applied for each alert state, specific measures may be put in place by individual institutions given the different nature of their activities.

Moreover, the actual alert state applied by any institution at a given time may not always be the same as the others because a threat could be specific to one institution.

4. Decisions on raising and lowering the alert state on Council premises are taken by the Secretary-General on a recommendation from the GSC's crisis management team. Where the change has an impact on the organisation of business, in particular whether meetings are maintained or cancelled, such decisions are taken by the Presidency Permanent Representative (or, where appropriate, the External Action Service) in consultation with the Secretary-General. The GSC Security Office will coordinate with the other EU institutions and bodies.
5. The GSC is reviewing its internal security measures in the light of the events on 22 March. The EU institutions and bodies in Brussels have also been engaged in a dialogue since last year with the Belgian interior ministry on various measures being taken by the Belgian authorities and the institutions relating to the security of the EU institutions and their immediate vicinity in Brussels.

---

<b>ALERT STATE DEFINITIONS</b>	
<b>WHITE</b>	When no particular threat or incident affecting the physical integrity of persons, premises or other assets has been identified against the European Council, the Council or the GSC, standard <b>WHITE</b> security measures are applicable. They are used on a daily basis and are designed to ensure an appropriate level of security.
<b>YELLOW</b>	When threats are made or an incident affecting the physical integrity of persons, premises or other assets occurs that may have an adverse effect on the European Council, the Council or the GSC or their functioning, the <b>YELLOW</b> alert state applies.
<b>ORANGE</b>	When threats are made, affecting the physical integrity of persons, premises or other assets, aimed specifically at the European Council, the Council or the GSC or their functioning, even though no definite target or time of attack has been identified, the <b>ORANGE</b> alert state applies.
<b>RED</b>	When threats of an imminent attack are made, affecting the physical integrity of persons, premises or other assets, aimed specifically at the European Council, the Council or the GSC or their functioning, the <b>RED</b> alert state applies.

What you can expect to see under each alert state:

Under **white alert**, standard security measures are used that provide for an appropriate level of security. Enhanced security measures under higher alert states afford a higher level of protection. Some of these enhanced measures will be visible, others will not. Generally speaking, the higher the alert state, the more constraints there will be on daily business and on access to our premises.

Under **yellow alert**, you will be expected to show your badge before you enter our buildings and you may be asked to undergo a random search by security staff. Any person without a permanent Council, Commission or EEAS access badge should be able to show an invitation together with their ID card or passport. You are likely to be aware of an increased security presence inside and outside the building by our own staff and the Belgian police and/or armed forces.

Under **orange alert**, we may further increase access controls and the rate of random staff searches. We are likely to limit the number of external visitors and non-essential meetings may be postponed. You are likely to be aware of a further increase in the presence of security staff in and around the buildings and the Belgian police and/or armed forces. Access to the car park may be limited.

Under **red alert**, business will be substantially curtailed. We will introduce strict rules for access to our buildings and curtail all access by external visitors. Everyone entering the building will be subject to a search. Working from home will be encouraged for GSC staff. All meetings involving external visitors will be cancelled. Access to the car park is likely to be severely limited.