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From:	Working Party on Latin America and the Caribbean
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 2)/Council
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Subject:	Action Plan: Proposed Lines of Action of the EU Strategy on Citizen Security in Central America and the Caribbean

1. On 30 July 2014, the Council adopted an EU Strategy on Citizen Security in Central America and the Caribbean. On 30 April 2015, the Commission submitted to the Council a corresponding draft Action Plan.
2. The Working Party on Latin America and the Caribbean discussed this file on several occasions and endorsed, on 2 June 2015, draft Council conclusions on the Action Plan.
3. Under these circumstances, the Permanent Representatives Committee is invited to recommend to the Council to adopt, as an "A" item on the agenda of one of its forthcoming meetings, the Council conclusions on the Action Plan, as well as the Action Plan itself, as set out in Annex.

**Draft Council Conclusions on the Action Plan: Proposed Lines of Action of the EU Strategy
on Citizen Security in Central America and the Caribbean**

The Council adopts today the annexed Action Plan for the EU Strategy on Citizen Security in Central America and the Caribbean. The Strategy, endorsed on 30 July 2014, aims at supporting both regions in their efforts to address citizen security challenges with a comprehensive approach. The proposed Lines of Action are an important step towards achieving the Strategy's objectives: building a shared political agenda on citizen security, strengthening the ability of governments to deliver quality public services in the area of security through capacity building, and fostering international cooperation on those operational activities.

The Council invites the High Representative and the Commission to approach the partner countries in Central America and the Caribbean, both individually and through their regional organisations, on the basis of these Proposed Lines of Action and of the already established security strategies of both regions, in order to maximise the complementarity of actions for greater effectiveness.

**CITIZEN SECURITY STRATEGY FOR CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
ACTION PLAN: PROPOSED LINES OF ACTION**

Introduction

On 30 July 2014 the Council of the European Union adopted an EU Strategy on Citizen Security in Central America and the Caribbean¹. The Strategy draws on a Joint Communication² issued by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR/VP) and the European Commission on 19 May 2014. In its conclusions, the Council invited the HR/VP and the European Commission to prepare a draft Action Plan.

In the context of the long-standing partnerships of the EU with Central America, on one side, and the Caribbean, on the other side, the Strategy constitutes a major step forward. It aims to accompany both regions in their respective strategies to respond to security challenges: the Central American Security Strategy (*Estrategia de Seguridad de Centroamerica - ESCA*) on the one hand and the Caribbean Security Strategy on the other hand. With regard to the latter, the strategy takes into account commitments already made in the EU-Caribbean Joint Strategy³. It sets out the objectives of an EU Comprehensive Approach⁴ in the area of Citizen Security in support of the above-mentioned existing frameworks. It puts forward three main objectives:

- a) Further develop a shared citizen security agenda with the region,
- b) Strengthen the ability of governments to deliver quality public services and,
- c) Foster regional and international cooperation on operational activities in order to fight insecurity in Central America and the Caribbean.

¹ Council Conclusions on the EU Strategy on Citizen Security in Central America and the Caribbean of 30 July 2014.

² Joint Communication of the Commission and the HR/VP to the European Parliament and the Council of 19 May 2014 "Elements for an EU strategy on public security in Central America and the Caribbean" (JOIN(2014) 21 final).

³ Council Conclusions on the Joint Caribbean-EU Partnership Strategy of 19 November 2012.

⁴ In line with the Joint Communication of the Commission and the HR/VP to the European Parliament and the Council "The EU's comprehensive approach to external conflict and crises" of 11 December 2013 (JOIN(2013) 30 final). The present Lines of Action are one of the examples for an EU comprehensive approach mentioned in the Joint EEAS/Commission Staff Working Document "Taking forward the EU's Comprehensive Approach to external conflict and crises – Action Plan 2015" of 10 April 2015 (SWD(2015) 85 final).

This document contains proposals (see table in annex) which aim at bringing together the various stakeholders to share contributions, facilitate coordination and deliver on the main objectives of the Strategy in the short, medium and long term. While leaving enough space for flexibility, the proposed Lines of Action comprise cooperation actions as well a political dialogue with partners in Central America and the Caribbean, respectively, as well as at the international level.

State of play

Since May 2014, the EEAS and the European Commission services developed a comprehensive set of activities to reach out to stakeholders. The political dialogue on security-related issues, both with national and regional authorities, was intensified. This allowed for a rich exchange of views on the steps required for a fruitful EU engagement with the countries in both the Caribbean and Central America and identified connections and common elements that should allow for improved coordination, greater synergies between activities planned or undertaken in the two regions, as well as enhanced complementarities with other initiatives.

On 17 October 2014 in Tegucigalpa, during the first EU-Central America Joint Committee Meeting of the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement (PDCA), with the participation of the 8 SICA (Central American Integration System) Member States, the EU made a detailed presentation of the EU Strategy on Citizen Security in Central America and the Caribbean. Both sides held a thorough exchange of views on the security challenges in the respective regions and underlined the importance of the Communication as well as the need to discuss further with the EU during an ad-hoc meeting on democratic security.

The Human Rights Strategies and their implementation reports, developed by the EU Delegations and the Member States in every country, contribute to ensure that citizen security initiatives adequately consider the human rights dimension.

Regarding cooperation, in August 2014, the European Commission adopted the Multiannual Indicative Regional Programme for Latin America 2014-2020 (EUR 805 million for Continental programme for this period, on which EUR 70 million are allocated to the "Security-development nexus"), including the Multiannual indicative programme for sub-regional cooperation with Central America (EUR 120 million for 2014-2020, on which EUR 40 million are dedicated to "Security and Rule of Law"). The Regional Indicative Programme for the Caribbean is currently being finalised with CARIFORUM; one of the agreed sectors of concentration should concern "Crime and Security", with a focus on prevention and from a comprehensive perspective. These programming documents set out the key priority areas of EU funding for cooperation. For Central America in particular, the importance of citizen security is clearly reflected in the priority area related to "security and Rule of Law". In this framework, the priority actions focus on prevention, reinsertion and rehabilitation of inmates and law enforcement. Initiatives include as well actions targeting economic growth and social inclusion that are part of the wider concept of citizen security.

As requested by Member States in the EU Strategy, a mapping exercise on EU cooperation related to citizen security (including Member States' activities) was carried out by the European Commission.

Challenges

The activities and documents mentioned above offered valuable information to prepare for the way ahead. They also led to a better overview on the challenges to respond to the specific needs of the two regions and their respective security environment.

In this context, a first challenge is to avoid the pitfall of the one size fits all approach by adopting a context-based approach to citizen security issues in Central America and in the Caribbean. While differences between the two regions are important, a common understanding of the scale and features of threats is an added value both to the national and the (sub-) regional political agendas. A common analysis and an intensified political dialogue will help strengthen linkages between the two security strategies adopted by both regions as well as between national, EU and EU Member States initiatives.

A second challenge concerns the political timetable. Citizen security is high on the agenda of political leaders. However, they are confronted with the dilemma of either implementing initiatives with a short-term impact or promoting structural reforms that are much needed but that will yield results only in the long term. Long term reforms are a crucial challenge, as the short-term perspective is subject to the pressures of democratic life and the countries' electoral cycles. The challenge for political leaders is to transform long term reform projects into concrete reforms needed for a population which is impatient and needs to build trust in the State's capacity to deliver quality public services.

In accordance with the EU Comprehensive Approach to external conflict and crises and the EU Human Rights-based approach to development cooperation, as well as the joint Caribbean-EU Partnership Strategy, our action should concern the most important areas relevant to crime including prevention and root causes: citizen security, inclusive socio-economic development, education, crime-related health issues, challenges from urbanisation, political and economic governance and others, and ensure the integration of human rights principles into our operational activities.

The regional dimension can bring an important contribution in this regard. It breaks the limitation of national boundaries and provides a space for further improvements which link the short, medium and long term perspective. In this context, it will be important to closely link the political agenda-setting with seminal projects for cooperation, and to foster mutually reinforcing engagements at the national and the regional level. EU political dialogue and cooperation can bring substantial incentives to the regional dynamics, especially in continuing to pay close attention to bilateral relations and specific national agendas. In addition, in the case of Central America, with the entry into force of the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement, and that of the Association Agreement when the current ratification process is completed, the adequate framework will be put in place to develop a substantial political dialogue at all levels.

Finally, the reconciliation of the different processes (regional and national dialogues, programming cycles at EU and national levels and EU Member states) is of particular importance for the EU Comprehensive Approach.

At a more operational level, it entails the need to ensure policy coordination between three levels:

- a) interventions at national/bilateral level (ongoing or planned);
- b) actions at Central America / Caribbean sub-regional level (ongoing or planned);
- c) continental interventions (ongoing or planned).

Overall objective: a comprehensive and coordinated EU contribution to tackle the serious security challenges in Central America and the Caribbean

The efforts to confront security threats in the regions and help establish a shared security agenda should encompass the full use of EU strategies⁵, EU national and sectorial dialogues and cooperation mechanisms (e.g. drugs, security, migration, human rights, gender), both at the EU-level and at the level of its Member States. Information sharing and joint analysis among EU actors and Member States will be essential to make the best use of the comparative advantages and skills available in the EU and in Member States.

The array of available EU tools (political dialogue, conflict prevention, development cooperation, humanitarian aid, trade and external dimension of EU policies, Member States policies and activities) and actors need to be taken into account. It is also important to link political dialogue and cooperation activities to address in a balanced manner, mixing appropriately preventive and operational approaches, transnational threats in a wider context, such as organised criminal groups and their wide array of activities. Apart from core activities for capacity building in the security and justice sector, prevention-focused projects related to community/civil society empowerment, as well as those promoting economic growth (customs union, economic and social development) fully contribute to the strengthening of citizen security in the regions and should also be part of the agenda of the political dialogue and operational coordination. In this context, the lessons learned from the long-standing cooperation of the EU and its Member States in the regions will be valuable when defining future initiatives.

Political dialogue between the EU on one side and the Caribbean and Central America on the other side will have to be intensified, making best use of meetings already scheduled regularly at different levels in the regions. Furthermore, specific regional platforms for exchange of best practices and views will have to develop out of these meetings, taking well into account already existing procedures of programming and project identification.

The EU and the countries in both regions will make joint efforts to identify seminal projects which will help expanding/linking national political agendas into/to a regional dimension, promote cooperation among relevant actors within each region and between them and are effective in tackling common threats. This can contribute to developing a shared vision and common approaches toward the challenges that the regions face. Eventually, it might lead to significant steps in building common policies.

The proposed actions in annex are structured around, on the one hand, political dialogue and exchange of information and, on the other hand, cooperation programmes and projects. The Lines of Action will be reviewed regularly, taking into account recent developments and lessons learnt in the various countries and sectors.

⁵ Such as the Cybersecurity Strategy of the EU: Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions "Cybersecurity Strategy of the European Union: An Open, Safe and Secure Cyberspace" Of 7 February 2013 (JOIN(2013) 1 final).

OBJECTIVE 1. Further develop a shared citizen security agenda with the region

Specific objective: Develop a common understanding of the citizen security threats, their root causes and consequences and the national and regional priorities to tackle them through political and expert level dialogues.

Expected results	EU / Member States possible actions
1. A shared political agenda within the partner countries.	Develop regular dialogue and consultations between EU (incl. EU Member States), country State authorities and civil society on citizen security developments and policies, ideally based on national initiatives, linking them also to the promotion of the resilience agenda so as to address the root causes of insecurity.
2. Information exchange and coordination on citizen security agenda are improved.	Include citizen security in Central America and the Caribbean in regular EU political dialogues with both regions.
3. A shared regional political agenda.	<p>Central America: Regular political dialogue with SICA General Secretariat, Pro Tempore Presidency and SICA Member States; with the SICA Democratic Security Commission and the ESCA (Estrategia de Seguridad para Centroamérica) Group of Friends; political dialogue in the framework of the PDCA and, pending ratification, of the Association Agreement</p> <p>Caribbean: Regular political dialogue with Cariforum, incl. under Article 8 of the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement, and more specifically with the Implementing Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) and the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (CFATF)</p>

<p>4. Suitable mechanisms for linking the two regions, agreed with SICA and CARICOM members, are created.</p>	<p>Promote participation at joint SICA-Caribbean meetings; make proposals on CA-Caribbean cooperation.</p>
<p>5. A common EU-CELAC understanding of the main challenges is elaborated, including identification of shared principles guiding joint action, and main lines of agreed bi-regional work-programmes.</p>	<p>Discuss citizen security at the preparatory meetings of EU-CELAC events and explore possibilities to include citizen security issues in further EU-CELAC Action Plan.</p>
<p>6. Information exchange and coordination on citizen security agenda with multilateral and international organisations as well as with other strategic partners and civil society is improved.</p>	<p>Intensify discussions on citizen security with relevant multilateral, international/financial organisations possessing significant expertise and implementing programmes in this domain, including i.a. the OAS, the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank, the COMJIB relevant UN bodies and civil society organisations, in particular in the framework of existing regional initiatives related to the impact of insecurity.</p> <p>Promote coordination with other relevant actors in the regions, in particular with the US and Canada.</p>

OBJECTIVE 2. Cooperation: Strengthen the ability of governments to deliver quality public services

Specific objective: Join efforts (EU, EU Member States, partner countries and regional institutions) to improve legislative and governance mechanisms, to support reforms of the judiciary, law enforcement and security institutions of partner countries as well as to strengthen protection mechanisms and the capacity to maintain basic services in violent areas, to enhance human rights and accountability and empower communities in order to foster socio-economic development, to provide opportunities and alternatives to crime, to contribute to improve governance (including fiscal and revenue governance) and Rule of Law and ultimately prevent and reduce violence.

Expected results	EU / Member States possible actions
<p>1. The coordination between EU and Member States' cooperation on citizen security, the root causes and consequences of insecurity and use of best practices is improved.</p>	<p>Identification and further implementation of the best practices and lessons learned taken from the analysis of the Mapping exercise of EU and EU Member States' security and justice related programmes/projects in Central America and the Caribbean.</p> <p>Regular meetings of EU/MS staff involved in cooperation programmes or projects on Citizen security issues.</p> <p>Joint Programming between the EU and MS (already initiated in Guatemala, Honduras and Haiti with Joint Programming exercises).</p>
<p>2. Capacity in the regions to collect and analyse crime-related data and statistics to identify and respond to new criminal trends and their consequences on the population is strengthened.</p>	<p>Support the development of structures responsible for the collection and analysis of data, relevant regulations in this field and sharing of trends and best practices for the formulation of public policies.</p> <p>Exchange of experiences and know-how on threat assessments in order to strengthen the capabilities to prevent and fight crime.</p>

<p>3. The cooperation in justice and security sectors, including support to legislative and regulatory reforms and capacity development as well as fight against Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) is strengthened.</p>	<p>Strengthen i.a. education and crime prevention, access to justice with focus on vulnerable groups, victims & witness protection. Promote i.a. joint operational actions and Joint Investigations Teams, enhance judiciary coordination and cooperation (e.g. mutual legal assistance, extradition, common arrest warrant), fight against crime, fight against new security threats (e.g. cybercrime), Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) ethics training for security forces. .</p> <p>Promote i.a. improved management of migration and borders, better management of forced displaced persons and cross-border flows within full respect of Human Rights and international legal standards; harmonised approaches against gender-based violence and violence against minors.</p>
<p>4. The cooperation in the fight against human and drug trafficking and money laundering, including on legislative and regulatory reforms, is strengthened.</p>	<p>Improve the fight against money laundering mechanisms, support the establishment of national asset recovery legislation and bodies, confiscation of criminal assets and their mobilisation for public benefit purposes extending criminal liability of crime perpetrators and facilitators, and in general ensuring the disruption of illicit financial flows, depriving criminals from profits.</p> <p>Comprehensive drug demand and supply reduction programmes and programmes against human trafficking including prevention, education, assistance to victims of trafficking and the fight against health and social impacts of drugs, promoting evidence-based policies.</p>

<p>5. The cooperation in fight against corruption is strengthened, including transparency of security-related expenditures and reinforcement of democratic oversight.</p>	<p>Enhance citizens' access to justice, including for those belonging to vulnerable groups, combat corruption in all its forms, and enhance respect for the Rule of Law along the security and judiciary chains, including with ethics training.</p>
<p>6. The fight against impunity is strengthened.</p>	<p>Work towards the elimination of cases of exemption from punishment or denial of victims' right to justice and redress with a particular emphasis on bringing perpetrators of Human Rights violations to justice.</p>
<p>7. Initiatives presenting alternatives to crime and support to victims are supported.</p>	<p>Reduce risk of crime by addressing root causes and promoting violence mitigation, support victims of violence, promote reconciliation, rehabilitation and reinsertion initiatives, develop community programmes and activities, foster alternative livelihood opportunities (including youth employment, professional training and entrepreneurship); Support the provision of basic services including protection, targeted health and education programmes focused on violence affected and potentially violence-vulnerable population and socially deprived areas.</p>
<p>8. Penitentiary systems improved, respecting inmates' rights and fulfilling their role as social reintegration, rehabilitation and reinsertion mechanisms.</p>	<p>Modernise penitentiary systems and maximise their rehabilitation role, including by improving respect for prisoners' rights, working towards the eradication of overcrowding, supporting reinsertion and reintegration systems, education programmes and psychosocial care for inmates, improving prison management and administration in line with international best practices and UN standards, and providing alternatives to imprisonment for lesser crimes.</p>

<p>9. Civil society oversight and capacity to mitigate the impact of violence improved; mediation and peace-building mechanisms functional and contributing to violence prevention; education against violence improved and widespread; restorative justice developed.</p>	<p>Promote independent public and civil society oversight (i.a. watchdogs, observatories) and mechanisms of transparency (such as access to prisons, information and data of public interest).</p> <p>Contribute towards breaking the circle of violence (i.a. mediation, peace-building, community support).</p> <p>Develop community education, information and prevention programmes, including on gender violence.</p> <p>Promote alternative models to violence, peaceful conflict resolution and prevention of gang culture, drugs and hate crimes, promotion of safe schools and health services anti-bullying policies.</p>
<p>10. As a specific but also a cross-cutting issue: the protection, promotion and improvement of Human Rights, especially towards most vulnerable groups (women, children, indigenous peoples and population living in areas affected by conflicts and/or illegal armed groups, persons exposed to trafficking in human beings or in need of international protection) through support to regulatory and/or policy reforms and awareness campaigns.</p>	<p>Improve the respect of Human Rights by law enforcement institutions, security forces and the judiciary, enhance the role and protection of Human Rights Defenders, integrate binding and effective codes of conduct and vetting systems, promote shelters and other forms of protection for the population (with specific attention for women, children and indigenous peoples), victims of violence and promotion of public programmes against domestic violence.</p>

For the expected results - from 2 to 9 - the implementation of these actions could draw on a range of instruments which may include EU Member States' initiatives as well as EU geographic and thematic instruments.

Specific attention will be paid to supporting national dialogue initiatives and multi-sectorial processes with particular focus on transparency, accountability and broad civil society involvement, in order to guarantee national ownership.

OBJECTIVE 3. Foster regional and international cooperation on operational activities in order to fight insecurity in Central America and the Caribbean

Specific objective: Share knowledge and intelligence between regional institutions and international actors on trans-regional aspects of regional crime to make joint actions more effective.

Expected results	EU / Member States possible actions
1. Improved exchanges and cooperation between regional institutions and international actors , especially with regard to trans-national activities to fight organised crime.	Foster operational cooperation between the EU, EU Member States, Central American and Caribbean law enforcement and citizen security agencies.
2. Increased involvement of EU Agencies within their remits and in stronger cooperation with regional organisations/initiatives.	Ensure cross-fertilisation and complementarity between the work of EU Agencies and cooperation programmes and with regional initiatives (exchange programmes, support for trans-regional cooperation).
3. Enhanced operational capability to combat cybercrime and improved data protection.	Strengthen cybersecurity and promote efforts to achieve a high level of data protection, including for transfer to a third country of personal data.