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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council

On: 15 May 2018

To: Delegations

Subject: Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation on Internal Security
(COSI)

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda as set out in 2425/1/18 REV 1 was adopted.

2. Information from the Presidency

3. Customs cooperation

3.1. Enhancing customs contribution to internal security

- Thematic discussion

The Committee expressed broad support for putting forward a more structured approach for enhancing customs contribution to internal security and to develop further the proposed work strands outlined in the Presidency paper (7705/2/18 REV 2). It tasked the Customs Cooperation Working Party (CCWP) in close cooperation with the Law Enforcement Working Party (LEWP), Europol, Frontex, associating where relevant the Customs Union Working Party (CUWP) to work on the specific measures, while taking into account the applicable legal frameworks both at Union and national level.

The Committee will revert to the subject by the end of 2018 to take stock of the progress achieved.

3.2. Synergies and opportunities for coordination between the activities developed under the EU Policy Cycle and the Ninth Customs Cooperation Working Party Action Plan for the year 2018

The Committee endorsed 5920/2/18 REV 2 outlining a number of coordination measures for the year 2018 aimed at optimising the synergies between the activities developed under the EU Policy Cycle and the Ninth CCWP Action Plan.

4. Fight against Terrorism

4.1. JHA agencies' role in counter-terrorism

= Follow-up on the Council debate of 8 March 2018

In a follow-up to the Council debate on the basis of the EU Counter Terrorism Coordinator paper and further to the discussion at the joint TWP/SIS-SIRENE meeting on 24 April 2018, COSI expressed support in principle for the issues put forward in 8482/18, while some aspects would require further clarification, e.g. deepening information exchange with FRONTEX. Prioritising engagement with third countries, e.g. the Western Balkans region, Turkey, MENA region or Sahel was underlined. The importance of the judicial dimension in counter-terrorism and the role of Eurojust in this respect was highlighted by some Member States. Structural issues, such as necessary resources, seconding national experts should be mostly assessed by the management boards of the respective agencies. It was suggested that a roadmap outlining the next steps is developed and progress is followed on that basis.

4.2. Draft Council Conclusions on strengthening the cooperation and the use of the Schengen Information System (SIS) to deal with persons involved in terrorism or terrorism-related activities, including foreign terrorist fighters

The Committee endorsed the draft Council Conclusions, as resulting from the work of the respective Council preparatory bodies (6812/3/18 REV 3), to be submitted for adoption to the JHA Council in June.

4.3. EU threat assessment in the field of counter terrorism: recommendations

The Committee endorsed the EU threat assessment recommendations set out in 7879/2/18.

4.4. Enhancing information exchange and cooperation between competent authorities

COSI took note of the current cooperation on counter-terrorism between competent authorities stressing the need for making concrete progress in the specific areas of common interest between the CTG (Counter-terrorism group) members and Europol as soon as possible. An exchange of views on that matter is also envisaged for the Council in June. The CTG could be invited at future COSI meetings, as relevant.

5. EU Policy Cycle for organised and serious international crime/EMPACT

5.1. Multidisciplinary approach in the area of internal security: contribution of the EU Policy Cycle 2014-2017

– Preparation of the Council debate

To prepare the policy debate at the Council in June, COSI discussed a number of elements related to the 2014-2017 EU Policy Cycle's contribution to a multidisciplinary approach in the area of internal security, as set out in 8103/18. Delegations have confirmed the added value the multidisciplinary component of the EU Policy Cycle has provided in terms of enhanced mutual trust, a common operational platform for a broad range of actors at national and EU level, allowing for more flexible and coordinated multiagency approach to the evolving and complex nature of crime. Delegations highlighted the role of prevention and administrative approach, role of the National EMPACT Coordinators (NECs), the need for closer cooperation with third countries, as well as for enhancing the judicial dimension of the EU Policy Cycle.

5.2. Monitoring of the implementation: closing reports OAPs 2017, NEC meeting report and Europol' findings report

- Exchange of views

In the context of the 2017 monitoring exercise and on the basis of 7912/18 COSI:

- (1) exchanged views on strengthening the identity of the EU Policy Cycle and endorsed the recommendations on improving communication on the EU Policy Cycle as set out in 7909/18, including the logo proposed by the NECs;
- (2) agreed on the need to ensure the quality and timely submission of the Operational Action Plans (OAP) implementation reports in light of the proposed by the Presidency way forward; and
- (3) exchanged views on the possible development of an online reporting tool and, in particular, agreed on the NECs' proposal to establish a pilot project for online reporting for the EU Policy Cycle in the OAP on Organised Property Crime.

The need for more involvement of OAP's drivers in the validation process of the meetings organised within the allocated EUR 1 million was underlined by some delegations. The Presidency suggested discussing further this matter in the newly established expert group on funding issues in the margins of the NEC meeting on 25 April 2018.

5.3. Better communication on the EU Policy Cycle: Recommendations

The Committee endorsed the recommendations on improving the communication on the EU Policy Cycle, identified by media contact points from Member States and EU JHA Agencies as set out in 7909/18.

5.4. Other items

The Presidency also reported that on 2 May 2018, the COSI Support Group had validated the terms of reference for the mid-term review on new, changing or emerging threats as set out in 7913/18.

6. Internal/External dimension of security

6.1. CSDP/JHA:

a) Pilot project on Crime Information Cell in EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia: state of play

The Committee took note of a presentation by the EEAS on the steps taken following the last JHA Council on 8 March 2018 on the pilot project for a crime information cell embedded in EUNAVFORMED Operation Sophia. On 14 May 2018, the Council adopted the necessary amendments in the Council decision setting out the mandate of Operation Sophia. Once the amended Operation Plan is endorsed by PSC (excepted by the end of May) all legal conditions will be met for launching the pilot project.

FRONTEX and Europol confirmed that operational meetings were taking place to prepare the deployment of staff in the course of the month of June. The Commission reiterated its support for the project.

COSI underlined the need to launch this pilot project as soon as possible. Ministers will also be informed on the state of play at the JHA Council of 5 June 2018.

6.2. Strengthening civilian CSDP capabilities: state of play

The Committee took note of a presentation by the EEAS on the state of play of ongoing reflection on the future reform of CSDP civilian missions. The Foreign Affairs Council will adopt conclusions on the matter at its incoming meeting in May.

COM expressed its support and cautioned against potential competition about resources underlining the need to inform and involve COSI on regular basis.

As far as JHA Agencies were concerned, CEPOL put the emphasis on capability development project and its good cooperation with European Security and Defense College. FRONTEX explained that on operational perspective the added value is in countries in crisis scenario or stabilisation phases. EUROPOL recalled that the agency was already cooperating with EULEX KOSOVO and EUBAM Libya, and was considering to deploy visiting experts in Niger and Mali

COSI invited all parties involved to consult JHA actors when relevant, especially when it comes to the cooperation with JHA agencies. The Committee will come back to this item in the second semester of 2018.

6.3. GAR-SI Sahel Project: operational experiences and challenges

The Committee took note of a presentation by Spanish Guardia Civil General Espinoza on operational experiences and challenges in the GAR-SI SAHEL project.

6.4. Western Balkans: next steps

The Presidency updated the Committee on initiatives concerning the Western Balkans region. The Presidency continued the practice to include the Western Balkans in operational activities under the EU Policy Cycle, thus enhancing the security of the region by improving the information exchange in combating serious and organized crime and terrorism. Since the beginning of the year several meetings were held at different levels (ministerial, expert groups, networks and working parties) with the participation of the Western Balkans. The EU-Western Balkans Leaders' Summit on 17 May 2018 will allow to address pivotal issues and pave the way for further projects.

6.5. EU – US Justice and Home Affairs Ministerial Meeting, Sofia, 22-23 May 2018

The Presidency provided an information on the upcoming EU-US JHA Ministerial meeting in Sofia on 22-23 May 2018.

7. AOB

The Slovenian delegation provided information on the 7th Brdo Process Ministerial Meeting and the 2nd Integrative Internal Security Governance (IISG) Board Meeting, which took place on 15 and 16 March 2018. The Brdo Joint Declaration and IISG Board Meeting conclusions are set out in 9063/18.

CEPOL provided an update regarding the Strategic Training Needs Assessment (STNA). COM commended the work carried out by CEPOL on this project.

The Committee also addressed the EU Policy Cycle in the context of the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU.