



Commission launches discussion on future framework for stronger and smarter information systems for border management and internal security

Brussels, 6 April 2016

The European Commission has adopted today a Communication on Stronger and Smarter Information Systems for Borders and Security, setting out options on how existing and future information systems could enhance both external border management and internal security in the EU. Today's Communication initiates a process of structurally improving the EU's data management architecture in full compliance with fundamental rights, in particular the protection of personal data. The Communication sets out actions to improve the functioning and interoperability of existing information systems and potential new systems to address information gaps.

First Vice-President **Frans Timmermans** said: *"Border and law enforcement authorities in the EU must have appropriate access to all the existing databases when needed to help them do their specific jobs. Better information sharing is a priority of the European Agenda on Security and the recent attacks confirm our resolve. We will find a way to do this whilst ensuring that individuals' data is safe and that there is no infringement of their right to privacy. This is about the intelligent, proportionate and carefully regulated access all our information border and security authorities need to do their job - to protect us and the freedoms we defend."*

Commissioner for Migration and Home Affairs **Dimitris Avramopoulos** added: *"Terrorist attacks on our soil have shown the threat to our security, at the same time as we face a migratory crisis of unprecedented proportions. Information sharing is at the nexus of both. Our border guards, customs authorities, police officers and judicial authorities must have access to the necessary information and the right tools to tackle these issues rapidly, efficiently and effectively."*

There are a number of information systems at EU level that provide border guards and police officers with information on persons crossing borders, but for institutional, legal and political reasons the access for the relevant authorities and the data management architecture needs enhancing for facing today's threats. The interoperability of information systems has been highlighted as a priority challenge by the European Agenda on Security, as well as by the European Council and the Justice and Home Affairs Council.

The work launched today will complement existing proposals on the creation of a European Border and Coast Guard, the Passenger Name Record Directive and the revised proposals for an Entry-Exit System tabled today. The Commission has decided to set up an **Expert Group on IT Systems and Interoperability** at senior level with EU agencies, national experts and institutional stakeholders to start the process. Based on the work of the Expert Group, the Commission will present concrete ideas to the European Parliament and the Council as basis for a joint discussion on the way forward.

As part of this reflection process, the Commission will also seek the input of the European Data Protection Supervisor and national data protection authorities coming together in the Article 29 Working Party. Compliance with fundamental rights will require well-designed and correctly-used technology and information systems. Technology and information systems can help public authorities to protect the fundamental rights of citizens. The Commission's goal is the development of a strategy which better protects its external borders and enhances its internal security in full respect of data protection requirements.

Background

Europe is a mobile society. Millions of EU citizens and third-country nationals cross internal and external borders every day. In 2015, more than 50 million non-EU nationals visited the EU, accounting for more than 200 million border crossings at the external borders of the Schengen area. Beyond these regular travel flows, in 2015 alone, conflict in Syria and crises elsewhere triggered 1.8 million irregular border crossings at Europe's external borders.

The creation of the Schengen area without internal borders has brought important benefits to European citizens and businesses alike. In order to ensure a high level of internal security and the free movement of persons within Schengen, the absence of internal borders in the Schengen area

requires strong and reliable external borders.

There are a number of information systems at EU level that provide border guards and police officers with relevant information on persons. Existing information systems should be fully used by Member States and relevant EU Agencies and the necessary technical connections to all these information systems and databases should be established where this is not yet done. It is also urgent to address persistent shortcomings in the feeding of EU databases and the exchange of information across the Union.

Where necessary and feasible, information systems should be interconnected and interoperable in the future. Simultaneous searches of systems should be facilitated, to ensure that all relevant information is available to border guards and/or police officers when and where this is necessary for their respective tasks.

The architecture of data management should pursue a modular approach, making full use of technological developments and building on the principle of privacy by design. Full respect of all fundamental rights of both EU citizens and third country nationals should be ensured from the outset in line with the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

For more information

[Communication: Stronger and Smarter Information Systems for Borders and Security](#)

[MEMO: Smart Borders Package: Questions & Answers](#)

[Press Release: Stronger and Smarter Borders in the EU: Commission proposes to establish an Entry-Exit System](#)

[FACTSHEET: Stronger and Smarter borders for the European Union. The Entry-Exit System](#)

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