

Key note speech by Commissioner Malmström
Does Europe need 'Homeland Security'?
Roundtable debate organised by Security and Defence Agenda
on Wednesday 12 May 2010 in Brussels

Check Against Delivery
Seul le texte prononcé fait foi
Es gilt das gesprochene Wort

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I'm honoured to have been invited by Security and Defence Agenda to be the guest speaker at this event. And it's a great privilege to have the opportunity to exchange views with such an esteemed gathering of experts and decision makers.

The title of the debate is "Does Europe need 'Homeland Security'?"

In fact, Europe now has an internal security strategy.

In the document approved in February, the Justice and Home Affairs Council outlined the challenges we face and the guidelines for our response. It also outlined the principles and values - solidarity and

respect for fundamental rights, for the protection of personal data and the right to privacy – which must underpin this response.

The Spanish Presidency deserves special credit for launching this process.

So why is this so important? There are two reasons why I believe Europe needs an internal security strategy.

First, we need a **common understanding of the threats**. This may be a simple question of the language and terminology we use. But it also requires a shared, systematic approach to threat assessment. Citizens need to know why we do certain things.

Secondly, we need an internal security strategy to **maximise the impact of our action**. A common strategy will enable us to identify the best way of dealing with problems, making full use of our resources whether at national and regional level, and at European level, including through our agencies.

We need to **avoid burdening authorities with conflicting or parallel initiatives**. This means setting objectives which resonate with the citizen, and which energise the hard working women and men who prevent and fight crime, control our external borders, and prepare and respond to crises and disasters.

It will enable us, as the Treaty requires, to act jointly in a spirit of solidarity where one Member State suffers a terrorist attack or natural or man-made disaster.

So what is the next step?

The Council has asked the Commission to outline further the priorities for Europe including action oriented proposals. I welcome this challenging task and will later this year present what I think should be the priority areas for Europe in the coming years.

The first task, however, is to determine what the main threats are.

To my mind, there are three. And for each of them I'm convinced that Europe can add value, both on a strategic and an operational level.

First, serious and organised crime. Much of the criminality experienced by citizens every day – car theft, counterfeited goods, drug dealing, burglaries - can be traced back to transnational organised crime groups.

Serious and organised crime ruins the lives of the thousands of individuals directly affected by it – that is why two of my first proposals as Commissioner were for stronger sanctions against the exploitation of children and against the trafficking in human beings. As for the latter we will also soon appoint a anti-human trafficking coordinator.

But organised crime also robs the taxpayer and the economy on an enormous scale. Organised VAT fraud and the sales of illicit drugs each amount to an estimated €100 billion EUR every year. The estimated

revenue of Italian mafia groups in 2009 was the equivalent of the GDP of a small to medium-sized Member State.

We need to work together on asset recovery, in order to **claw back these profits and return them to the citizen.**

Actions inside the EU are however not enough. We need to stop crime before it enters the territory. Serious crime often has its source outside the EU, and we should seek to deal with it there.

Europol identifies five criminal hubs in the EU with transit and feeder regions around the world. That makes cooperation with third countries indispensable, and it means that the internal security strategy must be coherent with, and share the aims of, the external security strategy.

The creation of an area without internal border controls, which now extends to 25 countries on the continent, is one of the EU's greatest achievements. With over 1600 designated points of entry to the EU's territory, integrated border management is key in preventing persons or goods posing a risk to our security from entering the EU.

Frontex through its growing number of joint operations has played a pivotal role. As has the External Borders Fund, which is providing major relief to those states which face exceptional or unforeseen challenges as a result of migratory pressures.

All too often it is the same individuals who are involved in the smuggling of people and the smuggling of often dangerous counterfeit goods. We must therefore stimulate closer cooperation between law enforcement

authorities - including customs where they are involved in border management tasks.

The second major threat is terrorism

Europol's latest terrorism situation and trend report listed 294 failed, foiled or successful attacks in 2009: a reduction on 2008, but violent separatists and Islamic extremists are still very much active and require full attention.

The Commission will in the coming months present a stocktake on what has been achieved to date under the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy, whilst looking ahead to the challenges of the future. I expect the result to show that although much remains to be done we are on the right track.

The EU has for instance acted to criminalise training and recruitment for terrorism, and public provocation to commit terrorist offences.

It has taken measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring explosives and set out an action plan for reducing the risk of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear threats. Later this year, I will present a proposal to deal with the accessibility of the chemicals used to make homemade explosives.

We have also taken the first steps towards protecting infrastructures critical for more than one Member State – but more can and should be done.

But above all, we are increasingly placing the emphasis on prevention and protection. We need to do more to address the causes of individuals on the margins of our own society becoming susceptible to radicalisation.

The third major threat is crisis and disasters caused by natural or non-intentional events. Effective crisis management must be an integral part of the internal security strategy. This goes from the recent ash crisis in Iceland to pandemics.

We seldom see these disasters coming. That's why we need to build resilience to prevent crisis but also for dealing with disasters when they occur.

I want us to build a rapid reaction capability so the EU can act swiftly in the future. And this capability should be able to act both inside and outside the Union. An important component in making this a reality will be the Commission's Monitoring and Information Centre. It should be better equipped as an operational crisis centre to prepare for different scenarios.

The implementation of the solidarity clause in the Lisbon Treaty will emphasise the need both for preparedness and for rapid response in the form of resources and assistance.

Besides these three major threats I want us to give more attention to **cyber crime and cyber security.**

The internet is a fantastic innovation but it also gives criminals and terrorists unprecedented opportunities for illicit activity, whether it's

trafficking in human beings, illegal migration, mass marketing fraud, or the sale of prohibited firearms.

The attacks on public and private websites in Estonia and Lithuania in 2007 and 2008 were only tip of a burgeoning iceberg. The Commission will in a few months propose a new Directive on attacks against information systems.

Cyber crime and cyber security is a new and rapidly evolving phenomenon to which Europe has yet to find a comprehensive response. And I want this to be clearly addressed in the internal security strategy.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Identifying the threats and challenges is a good start but what really count in the end are actions. It would have been a pleasure to share all proposals with you today. But since we are in the middle of this process and having some more months work ahead of us, I will not go into detail today on what these priority actions will be.

However, achieving these actions will require concerted efforts at EU and national level. Internal security is a shared responsibility. It requires harnessing our common policies, on police cooperation, criminal justice and border management.

It requires deploying our common tools - better training, more efficient exchange of strategic and operational information, effective deployment of our financial resources.

And let's not forget that the EU's competence in this area is still comparatively young. Most of the work is being done on a national level.

The strategy we are producing for this autumn should not be seen as a stand-alone document. It should instead be seen as the beginning of a new process. The strategy must evolve and be flexible, because the threats we face are constantly evolving.

To remain effective and relevant, we need a more systematic policy cycle for assessing threats, making decisions, implementing and evaluating.

I want to be able to report tangible progress in achieving our objectives. How can we otherwise say that we are doing the right thing?

An essential feature therefore of the internal security strategy must be evaluation and learning lessons from what has been done.

One of the first things I did when I became Commissioner for Home Affairs was to ask for two evaluations. I have already mentioned the one on stocktaking. But equally important is to provide an overview on what the EU has done to fight crime through the exchange of information. This communication is also in the pipeline.

There is a tendency that we ask for more and more information. I want to be certain that we really need everything we ask for. As we have seen in several recent incidents the problem has not primarily been the lack of information. It has been lack of cooperation between the ones having the information – and above all to make the proper analysis of the information we already have.

We also have to find a more systematic way of looking forward and make joint threat assessments. This will help us avoiding a policy being incident-driven, which sometimes lead to hasty decisions that could be difficult to change a few years down the line.

A final word on **fundamental rights**.

The Charter for Fundamental Rights is the compass - not only for me personally – but also for all EU laws and activities, particularly in relation to the rule of law and respect for procedural guarantees.

The internal security strategy should help us personalise the debate about security: it is individual people who are victims of lack of security, and individual people who commit the crimes.

We need to do more to catch criminals and bring them to justice, but we also need to protect the most vulnerable.

And if by the end of 2014, I can stand in front of you and say that our actions - against organised crime and terrorism, and for building a

Europe resilient in the face of disasters - have really made a difference for our citizens, then I will have succeeded.

Thank you for listening. And since we are still at an early stage in setting the priorities for the internal security strategy, I am very interested to hear your views on the issues I have raised.