



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 10.5.2023
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Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Senát for its Opinion on its Communication to the European Parliament and the European Council A Europe that protects: an initiative to extend the competences of the European Public Prosecutor's Office to cross-border terrorist crimes – A contribution from the European Commission to the Leader's meeting in Salzburg on 19-20 September 2018 {COM(2018) 641 final}.

The Commission welcomes the Senát's support for the Commission's efforts to establish visible European Union instruments in order to fight terrorism within the framework of the internal security policy.

Indeed, the Communication outlines the Commission's vision as regards the possible future role of the European Public Prosecutor's Office in the area of terrorist crimes, which remain one of the most significant challenges of our time. This Communication forms part of a broader package of measures aimed at completing the Security Union and thus enhancing the security of European citizens, while being conscious of the fact that some measures will take more time to be implemented than others.

The Commission is of the view that combatting terrorist crimes in particular is a long-term challenge, which requires a comprehensive and strengthened Union response. The European Public Prosecutor's Office, as the only Union body with the power to conduct criminal investigations and prosecute criminal offences, is ideally suited to establish a Union approach in the fight against terrorism, encompassing all steps starting from investigating, prosecuting and ending with bringing the perpetrators of terrorist crimes to justice.

Crimes affecting the Union budget are often linked to serious crimes with a cross-border dimension, including terrorist as well as financial crimes, such as money laundering. These crimes pose serious threats to the security of the Union and its citizens.

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With regard to Eurojust and Europol, they play a vital role in the fight against serious cross-border crimes, including terrorism, within the scope of their respective mandates. The future relationship between the European Public Prosecutor's Office and these European Union bodies should be strong and close, aimed at creating synergies.

The Commission would also like to underline that a debate on the extension of the competences of the European Public Prosecutor's Office does not, as such, impact the current set up process of the European Public Prosecutor's Office and the Commission's efforts to make the Office operational by the end of 2020. In this respect, the Commission would like to inform the Senát that good progress is being made.

The Commission hopes that the clarifications provided in this reply address the issues raised by the Senát and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Věra Jourová
Member of the Commission*