



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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*C(2021) 3172 final*

*Mr Ludovic ORBAN  
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Palace of the Parliament  
Str. Izvor nr. 2-4, sector 5  
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*Dear President,*

*The Commission would like to thank the Camera Deputaților for its Opinion on the Communication on the EU Security Union Strategy {COM(2020) 605 final}.*

*The EU Security Union Strategy for the period 2020-2025 addresses the European Union's security challenges through a comprehensive approach, bringing together all relevant policy and legislative initiatives under the single Security Union umbrella. It also addresses digital and physical risks in an integrated manner, reflects the security impacts and lessons learnt from COVID-19, and aims at building capabilities for preparedness, response and resilience to these threats.*

*The Commission welcomes the support shown by the Camera Deputaților for the Security Union Strategy and confirms that an effective implementation of the Strategy is a priority. The Commission adopted a first progress report<sup>1</sup> on 9 December 2020, outlining the work carried out since 31 October 2019 on countering terrorism and radicalisation, fighting organised crime, as well as cybercrime and hybrid threats, enhancing our cybersecurity and raising our collective security awareness and skills. The report also highlights areas where further progress is needed and is accompanied by a roadmap listing the main initiatives of the EU Security Strategy with their timetable for adoption and an annex with the legislation already adopted but not transposed on time by the Member States.*

*As highlighted by the Camera Deputaților, security is a cross-cutting issue, which goes into almost every sphere of life and affects a multitude of policy areas. Terrorism and radicalisation leading to violent extremism continue to evolve as a major threat to European citizens' security and their way of life. COVID-19 has also had an impact on our society, including from a security angle, with an increase in online crime,*

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<sup>1</sup> COM(2020) 797 final

*disinformation, propaganda from far right extremists and terrorists, as well as hybrid threats. It has reinforced the need to engage every sector and every individual in a common effort to ensure that the EU is more prepared and resilient in the first place and has better tools to respond when needed.*

*The Commission agrees with the Camera Deputaţilor that such an evolving threat landscape requires a forward-looking, comprehensive, coherent and collective response at EU level. The whole of society, including EU and national institutions and agencies, the private sector, local communities and individuals, needs to be engaged, equipped, and properly connected to build preparedness and resilience for all, particularly the most vulnerable.*

*The EU Security Union Strategy was prepared taking into account this evolving threat picture. It sets out the tools and measures to be developed over the next 5 years to ensure security in our physical and digital environment. It also includes the external dimension of security, as the stability and security of the EU's neighbourhood is critical to the EU's own security.*

*Guaranteeing the security of our citizens, as well as the respect of their fundamental rights, is at the heart of our work on this initiative. The Security Union Strategy is therefore firmly grounded in our common values. In this regard, and as highlighted by the Chamber, privacy, data protection and freedom of expression play a key role. The EU has set the highest data protection standards in the world and the protection of our citizens' personal data is a top priority for the Commission.*

*Another key element in the Strategy is the focus on education and skills. Awareness of security issues and acquiring the skills to deal with potential threats are essential in order to build a more resilient society with better prepared enterprises, administrations and individuals.*

*The Commission appreciates the focus that the Camera Deputaţilor places on effective communication to the public on EU security policy. Actions at EU level have been made more visible and accessible to citizens through the new website on the EU Security Strategy<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, several public consultations on security-related issues have been launched since the adoption of the EU Security Strategy, giving citizens an opportunity to directly influence policy formation<sup>3</sup>.*

*Research on security and innovation underpins a coordinated EU response to complex challenges, and allows for concrete steps to mitigate risks. Work under the new research framework programme Horizon Europe will support the implementation of the EU Security Union Strategy. EU agencies and the Commission's Joint Research Centre are*

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<sup>2</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-life/european-security-union\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-life/european-security-union_en)

<sup>3</sup> To cite a few examples, public consultations have been held on the following initiatives: Civil, defence and space industries (action plan on synergies); New Drugs Agenda; Environmental crime - reviewing the EU rules; EU police cooperation code – tackling cross-border serious & organised crime; Financial services – improving resilience against cyberattacks. All information about public consultations are available here: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say>

*currently setting up the EU innovation hub for internal security to serve as a collaborative network of their innovation labs.*

*In this context, the Commission is very pleased that Bucharest has been selected as the seat of the new European Cybersecurity Industrial, Technology and Research Competence Centre. The Competence Centre, together with the Network of National Coordination Centres, aims at strengthening European cybersecurity capacities, shielding our economy and society from cyberattacks, maintaining and promoting research excellence and reinforcing the competitiveness of the Union's industry in this field.*

*The Commission will also seek to further enhance cross-fertilisation and synergies between the work in the civilian, defence and space spheres in order to decrease vulnerabilities and create efficiencies, to the ultimate benefit of our citizens. As announced in the Action Plan on synergies between civil, defence and space industries<sup>4</sup>, the Commission will develop technology roadmaps to boost innovation on critical technologies for the defence, space and related civil sectors and stimulate cross-border cooperation using all relevant EU instruments in a synergetic way. These roadmaps will be based on assessments produced by a new Observatory for Critical Technologies that will monitor and analyse critical technologies, their potential applications, value chains, required research and testing infrastructure, desired level of EU control over them, as well as existing gaps and dependencies.*

*The implementation of the Security Strategy has now begun in earnest: already last year, the Commission brought forward a number of initiatives relating to items raised by the Camera Deputaţilor. Commission action has addressed the fight against drugs, illegal firearms, financial crime, illegal import of cultural goods, human trafficking and environmental crime, supporting Member States' law enforcement as well as judicial authorities in Member States and partners in the neighbourhood.*

*On 14 April 2020, the Commission presented a new EU Strategy to tackle Organised Crime<sup>5</sup>, focusing on boosting law enforcement and judicial cooperation, tackling organised crime structures and high priority crimes, removing criminal profits and ensuring a modern response to technological developments. The Commission also presented a new Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings (2021-2025)<sup>6</sup>, focusing on preventing the crime, bringing traffickers to justice and protecting and empowering victims.*

*Work against illegal drugs is being taken forward on several different levels. With particular regard to the risks of new synthetic drugs, the legislative package on new psychoactive substances (NPS) was adopted in autumn 2017 and became fully applicable in November 2018. The new EU Agenda and Action Plan on Drugs adopted in July 2020 sets out the political framework and priorities for action over the next five years. On 30 November 2020, the Commission also adopted an evaluation of the EU drug precursor*

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<sup>4</sup> COM(2021) 70

<sup>5</sup> COM(2021) 170

<sup>6</sup> COM(2021) 171

*policy, which concludes that additional action is needed to prevent access of organised crime groups in the EU to the chemicals they need to produce illegal synthetic drugs. In this context, the work of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction is key to ensuring the continuous monitoring of drug use and market trends across the EU.*

*On 9 December 2020, the Commission adopted an EU Agenda on counter-terrorism<sup>7</sup> which will strengthen the EU's work to anticipate, prevent, protect from, and respond to, terrorism. This will bring concrete action to help anticipate threats and risks, combat radicalisation and violent extremism, and protect people and infrastructures, in particular public spaces.*

*The Commission also adopted on the same day a proposal for a revised mandate for Europol<sup>8</sup>, the EU's police cooperation agency. Europol already brings real and tangible support to Member States in the fight against organised crime and terrorism. This new mandate will further step up its capacities by addressing specific constraints that Europol faces today – such as its dealing with the private sector.*

*On 16 December 2020, the Commission adopted legislative proposals to promote the resilience of physical and digital infrastructures and a new cybersecurity strategy to step up cooperation with Member States to increase capabilities and resilience<sup>9</sup>.*

*The Commission agrees with the Camera Deputaţilor on the importance of fighting corruption, which is the subject of regular monitoring and assessment in the Member States under the new rule of law mechanism. The first report<sup>10</sup> adopted on 30 September 2020 shows that many Member States apply the high standards of the rule of law, but major challenges persist. The report also shows that several Member States have adopted comprehensive anti-corruption strategies, while others are in the process of developing them. The Commission is also analysing the transposition by the Member States of the Directive on the fight against fraud to the Union's financial interests by means of criminal law. A transposition report will be adopted this year. In this context, the Commission welcomes the Chamber's support for the strengthening of the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) and the adaptation of EU legislation to new criminal challenges. EPPO will have the power to investigate, prosecute and bring to judgment those responsible for criminal offences against the EU budget, such as fraud, corruption or serious cross-border VAT fraud.*

*New legislation has been adopted to enhance the fight against financial crime and money laundering. The directive facilitating the use of financial and other information for the prevention, detection, investigation or prosecution of certain criminal offences<sup>11</sup> was adopted in 2019 granting access to national centralised bank account registries to law enforcement authorities and Asset Recovery Offices for the purposes of fighting serious*

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<sup>7</sup> COM(2020) 795

<sup>8</sup> COM(2020) 796

<sup>9</sup> COM(2020) 829, COM(2020) 823 and JOIN(2020) 18

<sup>10</sup> COM(2020) 580

<sup>11</sup> (EU) 2019/1153

*crime. In May 2020, the Commission adopted an action plan for a comprehensive Union policy on preventing money laundering and terrorism financing<sup>12</sup>.*

*The Camera Deputaților also raises the issue of regulation of drones. In this regard, the Commission notes that, while drones bring significant economic and employment opportunities, they also pose a significant risk to public spaces, critical infrastructures and other sensitive sites, such as prisons. Recent EU rules<sup>13</sup> in this area mitigate this risk, by enhancing the security of drone operations.*

*In 2021, the Commission will continue to strengthen the Security Union. It plans to put forward the revision of the Directive on the freezing and confiscation of the proceeds of crime, as well as the proposal for a Directive on Asset Recovery Offices and the proposal to create an EU police cooperation code to modernise existing intra-EU law enforcement cooperation. The Commission will also put forward new legislation to tackle effectively child sexual abuse online.*

*The Commission would like to use this opportunity to recall that the timely and full implementation of adopted measures is key, if the measures are to be effective on the ground. The Commission will therefore continue to monitor regularly the implementation of the Strategy and the effective transposition by Member States.*

*The Commission hopes that these clarifications address the issues raised by the Camera Deputaților and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.*

*Yours faithfully,*

*Maroš Šefčovič  
Vice-President*

*Margaritis Schinas  
Vice-President*

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<sup>12</sup> C(2020) 2800 final

<sup>13</sup> Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/947