

Commission Takes Stock of Security Union Progress



Thomas Wahl

News

On 20 March 2019, the European Commission presented its 18th “progress report towards an effective and genuine Security Union.” Within the framework of this series (see also [euclid 3/2016, 123](#)), this report especially takes stock of the progress made on the main building blocks of the EU’s Security Agenda – prior to the European Parliament (EP) elections in May 2019. The report also highlights the need for further action in the near future.

The report notes that 15 of 22 legislative priority files presented by the Commission have been agreed upon by the EP and the Council. These include restrictions on the marketing and use of explosives precursors and the interoperability of the EU information systems. Good progress has also been made on the Commission proposal to strengthen the security of identity cards and residence documents. The removal of terrorist content online (see [euclid 4/2018, 199](#)) and the reform of the European Border and Coast Guard remain high on the legislative agenda.

Steady progress has also been made in building up electoral resilience. Measures include the introduction of stricter rules on political party funding. One important issue in the context of electoral resilience is the fight against disinformation. Here, the Commission points out a recently introduced Rapid Alert System and its regular monitoring of the code of practice against disinformation, which is implemented by online platforms, e.g., Google, Facebook, and Twitter. A [specific progress report](#) on the code of practice was published on 20 March 2019.

In the area of enhancing critical infrastructure, the Commission plans to concentrate on common security standards for 5G networks, which are set to become the backbone of future global telecommunications.

As regards the fight against terrorism, the Commission report stresses the enhanced security of public spaces, where a [set of “good practice”](#) has been established by the Commission in close cooperation with public authorities and private companies. Better support for victims of terrorism remains vital. The Commission plans to fund a new EU Centre of Expertise – a platform for practitioners dealing with victims of terrorism; the centre is to be established in 2019.

Lastly, the Commission emphasised that Internet security and cybercrime remains an area of concern. It refers to a [Eurobarometer survey of March 2019](#) in which an increased number of Europeans expressed concern over falling victim to various forms of cybercrime. For example, seven in ten respondents fear become the victim of devices infected with malicious software, of identity theft, or of bank card/online banking fraud.

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