

# EU-US Reaffirm their Partnership to Tackle Security Threats



Thomas Wahl

## News

On 11 December 2019, representatives of the European Union – including new Commissioner for Justice, *Didier Reynders*, and the Finnish and Croatian ministers of justice and of the interior on behalf of the current and incoming Council Presidencies – met in Washington D.C. with U.S. Attorney General *William Barr* and Acting Secretary for Homeland Security *Chad Wolf* for the [EU-U.S. Ministerial Meeting on Justice and Home Affairs](#). The Ministerial Meeting is held twice a year in order to oversee transatlantic cooperation in the area of Justice and Home affairs and address common security threats.

The December meeting was the first EU-U.S. Ministerial Meeting after the EU started its new political cycle. Both sides reaffirmed their strong commitment to foster the transatlantic partnership and pursue their dialogue on Justice and Home Affairs, building on the existing operational cooperation and best-practice exchanges on matters of common interest. The following issues were discussed and considered as priority areas for future cooperation:

- Regarding the fight against terrorism (which remains the top common priority), both sides consider important the sharing of information gathered in zones of combat for use in criminal proceedings as admissible evidence. In this context, continued operational cooperation between the relevant agencies, including Europol, was highlighted;
- By referring to the EU-U.S. PNR agreement, the use of Passenger Name Records (PNR) for the purpose of preventing, detecting and investigating terrorist offenses and related travel also remains important. The EU and the U.S. will work together in order to establish ICAO standards on PNR for law enforcement purposes implementing United Nations Security Council Resolution 2396;
- Hybrid threats and risks related to new emerging technologies, in particular 5G, are the main area in which cooperation will be fostered, so that the partners can react to the changing environment of security threats;
- The U.S. and the EU will join their efforts to establish rules on lawful access for law enforcement authorities to digital evidence, including when encrypted or hosted on servers located in another jurisdiction;
- Resilience to combat interferences into electoral processes will be strengthened;

The next EU-U.S. Ministerial Meeting will be held in the first half of 2020 in Croatia.

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