

JHA Ministers Conclude Debate on Future of EU Internal Security

Thomas Wahl



News

The Finnish Council Presidency summed up the outcome of discussions on the EU's way forward regarding internal security issues. The discussion was launched at the beginning of the Finnish Presidency in July 2019 (see [eu-crim 2/2019](#), p. 84). The [final Presidency report](#) was discussed at the meeting of the Justice and Home Affairs Ministers on 3 December 2019. The reflections detailed in the report contribute to the implementation of the strategic agenda 2019-2024 in the area of justice and home affairs. Future EU policy will concentrate on the following four issues:

- *Proactive Approach to new technologies*: The EU needs an integrated and comprehensive approach in this field. An innovation lab is to be established within Europol in order to assess the needs for new technologies and their risks to law enforcement and to promote communication with the industry and academia. Law enforcement authorities should be involved at an earlier stage in the technological processes, which mainly take place in universities and the private sector. Moreover, the EU should take into account internal security and law enforcement interests in new legislation relating to new technologies.
- *Effective information management*: Future law enforcement cooperation will increasingly be based on information systems and their interoperability. Law enforcement authorities will have access to a much larger volume of data and information than ever before. Therefore, the EU must ensure that information systems are supplied with high-quality, timely, and complete data and are used effectively. The EU must also develop a clear vision on crime analysis; this includes the provision of sufficient human and financial resources to process and analyse information. In addition, the new EU interoperability framework must be used effectively, which necessitates appropriate and continuous training for the end-users.
- *Multidisciplinary cross-border cooperation*: The EU needs a horizontal, integrated, and coherent approach towards tackling the evolving, cross-cutting nature of security threats, such as CBRN weapons and hybrid activities. Therefore, the EU must ensure multidisciplinary, operational cooperation that goes beyond cross-border law enforcement cooperation, thus also involving other authorities, such as civil protection actors. It must also remove obstacles to operational cross-border cooperation, e.g., differences in national decision-making processes, legislation, and operating models; differences in national data collection and data processing practices; etc. Reflections on better methods of working together and the exchange of information involving new technologies should be intensified. This could, for instance, include unmanned autonomous systems, automatic number plate recognition technologies, and single-search interfaces for available databases. The EU should also aim towards a common law enforcement culture, which involves improving language skills, learning about each other's cultures, and exchanging best practices. Another field of action is the constant monitoring of

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the EU JHA agencies' tasks and responsibilities. Cooperation among them must be increased, as they will continue to play a significant role in the future. Adaptations to their legal framework must be assessed; in particular, Europol's legal base may be further adapted in view of the request and reception of personal data directly from private parties.

- *Comprehensive approach to security:* The security threat landscape is sure to change in the future. This requires better coordination, resources and technological capacities as well as a better situational awareness and preparedness. Hybrid threats, disinformation, use of new technology and the internet for criminal activities, violent radicalisation and right-wing extremism are the major challenging areas, which EU action should be focused on.
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