

Package of Measures to Further Build Up Security Union



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News

On 17 April 2018, the Commission proposed a series of measures aimed at curbing security threats in the EU. The measures – under the overall title “Denying terrorists the means and space to act” – include:

- Strengthening the security of EU citizens’ ID cards and non-EU family members’ residence documents;
- Improving cross-border access by law enforcement authorities to financial information (details under “Specific Areas of Crime > Money Laundering”);
- Establishing European rules on law enforcement authorities’ access to electronic evidence (details under “Cooperation > Law Enforcement Cooperation”);
- Tightening the rules on the explosive precursors;
- Strengthening controls on the import and export of firearms.

As regards ID cards, a [proposed Regulation](#) intends to put an end to the diverging standards among the EU Member States as regards security features of ID cards as well as residence documents issued to EU nationals and/or their family members. Uniform EU legislation should minimize the risk of falsification and identity fraud. The proposed minimum common security measures for ID cards and residence documents will include the following:

- Inclusion of two different sets of biometric identifiers (facial images and fingerprints) – this follows a similar approach already taken for security features of passports;
- Establishment of phase-out rules: non-compliant cards will phase out at expiry or within a maximum of five years or two years for less secure (i.e. non-machine readable) cards;
- Introduction of an EU-wide maximum validity for ID cards of 10 years.

The proposal does not touch upon the Member States’ right to design/offer ID cards or to introduce a uniform EU ID card.

The [proposed Regulation on the marketing and use of explosive precursors](#) aims at closing gaps by which criminals, in particular terrorists, can acquire dangerous substances to make homemade explosives. Therefore the Commission proposes stricter and more uniform rules on explosive precursors that include the following:

- Adding two new substances and concentration limits to the list of banned chemicals;
- Expanding the reporting obligations to online operators and sales;
- Obliging economic operators to report suspicious transactions to authorities within 24 hours;

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- Further restricting access to the general public who will only be able to obtain certain restricted precursors with a licence: security screening and criminal-record checks of public buyers are to be carried out;
- Putting an end to current registration systems in place in some Member States.

The proposal distinguishes between “professional user” and “a member of the general public,” the latter having possibilities to obtain explosive precursors only if licenced.

Ultimately, a [recommendation proposed](#) by the Commission provides guidance to Member States regarding more effective and better implementation of the 2012 Regulation on export and import of firearms for civilian use. As a result, the Commission recommends, in particular:

- Establishment of improved control procedures, including systematic background checks of individuals by using ECRIS and by consulting the Conventional Arms export control information system (COARM), which contains notifications of refusal of export authorization;
- Enhanced information exchange among the Member States.

The package of measures presented on 17 April 2018 must be seen in the context of the establishment of a Security Union, which is one of the priorities of the *Juncker* Commission. The presentation was linked with the regular Commission progress report on initiatives in the fight against terrorism (for these progress reports, see, e.g., [eucrim 3/2016](#), p. 123).

Better protecting European citizens is also a top priority in the [Joint Declaration](#) of 14 December 2017 agreed on by the Commission President, the EP President, and the Council Presidency (see [eucrim 4/2017](#), p. 165). The Commission therefore called upon the co-legislators, i.e., Council and EP, to treat the proposals as a matter of urgency.

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