

[A Europe that Protects: Commission calls for decisive action on security priorities](#)

To maintain the positive momentum set by the EU Leaders at the informal meeting in Salzburg today's report outlines the security initiatives that will be decisive for the completion of the Security Union before the upcoming European Parliament elections in May 2019. In this way, the report is a contribution to the discussions on internal security during the European Council on 18-19 October.

Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship **Dimitris Avramopoulos** said: *"The security of our citizens is and should remain a priority for the EU every single day. Strengthening our external borders, improving information exchange and making all our data systems interoperable and protecting our citizens online as well as on the ground – there is no time to waste. It's time for those promises to be turned into reality, paving the way towards an effective and genuine Security Union."*

Commissioner for the Security Union **Julian King** said: *"From chemical weapons being used on our streets to state-sponsored cyberattacks, Europe is under threat like never before, and Europeans are looking to us to act. Now is the time to ramp up our efforts to finish our work on the Security Union. On terrorism, cyber and cyber-enabled threats, where the online and the real world collide, and on tackling organised crime we are stronger when we act together. Time is short: the EU institutions and our Member States need to take responsibility for driving delivery and implementation of this vital work."*

Over the past 3 years, the Commission has taken decisive action to tighten security rules within the EU and at its external borders. In his [2018 State of the Union Address](#), President Juncker announced further measures to protect Europeans – online and offline. However, attempted terror attacks, the use of chemical weapons on the streets of a Member State and most recently, the disrupted cyber-attack on the headquarters of an international organisation underline that more than ever, Europe remains a target – and it shows the ever greater importance of enhancing our collective security and resilience.

Accelerating work on priority security files

While a number of legislative proposals made by the Commission have now been approved, there are still many important files that need to be finalised as a matter of urgency before the European Parliament elections in May 2019. The Commission therefore calls for acceleration of this work and a swift adoption of the outstanding files, in particular, those identified in the Joint Declaration and the new measures proposed by President Juncker in his 2018 State of the Union Address:

- **Protecting Europeans online:** a wide-ranging set of measures to raise EU cyber resilience and increase cyber security capabilities was presented in September 2017 and followed up last month by proposals specifically aimed at protecting the security of our elections. Given the recent hostile cyber operations it is imperative that all legislative proposals are finalised as a matter of priority. In addition, to make sure that internet platforms are not misused to disseminate terrorist content online, the proposed new rules, in particular the obligation to remove terrorist content within one hour, should be agreed by the European Parliament and the Council before the May 2019 elections.
- **Interoperability of EU information systems:** allowing EU information systems for security, migration and border management to work together in a smarter and more efficient way is a core element of the Commission's efforts to close information security gaps. Presented in December 2017, the proposal on interoperability of EU information systems should be agreed by the European Parliament and the Council before the European Parliament elections of 2019. Similarly, the upgrades of different EU information systems, such as the European Criminal Records Information System (ECRIS), Eurodac and the Visa Information System (VIS) should be swiftly finalised.
- **Fighting cross-border crime:** to help police and judicial authorities to track down leads online and across borders, the Commission proposals on electronic evidence should be agreed before the May 2019 elections. The Commission also invites the European Council together with the European Parliament to extend the competence of the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) to include the investigation of cross-border terrorist offences.
- **Strengthening EU borders:** The EU's internal security depends on how we manage our external borders, and this is why the proposals to reinforce the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, the EU rules on return and the European Union Agency for Asylum, taken together, will provide for the necessary tools to better ensure the effective management of the external borders.

To support Member States' efforts to increase security within the EU, the Commission has earmarked €70 million under the Internal Security Fund (ISF) for 2018-2019 for targeted security funding, including: countering radicalisation (€5 million); fighting CBRN threats, restricting access to "home-made" explosives, and protecting public spaces and critical infrastructure (€9.5 million); and supporting implementation of existing rules such as EU Passenger Name Records (€1.5 million). This comes in addition to €100 million made available under the Urban Innovative Actions, including for the protection of public spaces (more information available [here](#)).

Background

Security has been a political priority since the beginning of the Juncker Commission's mandate – from President Juncker's [Political Guidelines](#) of July 2014 to the latest [State of the Union](#) Address on 12 September 2018.

On 14 December 2017, the presidents of the European Parliament, the rotating

Presidency of the Council and the European Commission signed a [Joint Declaration](#) on the EU's legislative priorities for 2018-2019, which underlined the central importance of better protecting the security of citizens by placing it at the heart of the Union's legislative work. Priority was given to initiatives designed to ensure that Member States' authorities know who is crossing the common EU external border, to establishing interoperable EU information systems for security, border and migration management, and to reinforcing the instruments in the fight against terrorism and against money laundering.

The [European Agenda on Security](#) guides the Commission's work in this area, setting out the main actions to ensure an effective EU response to terrorism and security threats, including countering radicalisation, boosting cybersecurity, cutting terrorist financing as well as improving information exchange. Since the adoption of the Agenda, significant progress has been made in its implementation, paving the way towards an effective and genuine [Security Union](#). This progress is reflected in the Commission's reports published on a regular basis.

For More Information

[Factsheet](#): A Europe that protects

[Factsheet](#): Building strong cybersecurity in Europe

[Communication](#): 16th Progress Report toward an effective and genuine Security Union

[Annex](#): List of legislative initiatives