



Security Union: Commission presents new measures to deny terrorists and criminals the means and space to act

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Today, the European Commission is taking additional steps to further curtail the space in which terrorists and criminals operate – denying them the means needed to plan, finance and carry out crimes.

Six months after the [anti-terrorism package](#) of October 2017, the Commission is proposing measures to: bolster the security of identity cards and reduce document fraud; provide law enforcement and judicial authorities with access to electronic evidence and financial information; further restrict terrorists' access to explosives precursors; and strengthen controls on the import and export of firearms. The Commission is also reporting today on the progress made on other priority initiatives which will pave the way towards a genuine and effective Security Union.

First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** said: *"Security has been a top priority of this Commission from day one. We continue to support Member States' efforts to better protect our citizens and safeguard their freedoms. And today, we are stepping up our actions to deprive criminals and terrorists of the tools and resources they need to perpetrate their crimes – delivering on our commitment to a Union that protects."*

Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris **Avramopoulos** said: *"Today we take action to restrict explosives precursors and firearms, to step up the security of ID cards, and introduce measures to help law enforcement access information they need to fight crime and terrorism. We are building our security framework on core security measures, but also stronger border management, and more efficient judicial and law enforcement cooperation. This is how we move closer to a genuine and effective Security Union."*

Commissioner for the Security Union Julian **King** said: *"By giving law enforcement access to crucial pieces of financial information, we are closing another loophole being exploited by terrorists, and hitting them where it hurts – their finances. And together with facilitating easier gathering of electronic evidence, tightening controls on firearms and explosives precursors and strengthening the security of ID cards, we are further squeezing the space in which terrorists operate."*

Better protecting European citizens is a collective top priority agreed in the [Joint Declaration](#) on the EU legislative priorities for 2018-2019. The set of measures presented today are also included in the Joint Declaration and will further expedite the on-going efforts at EU level to improve internal security and close down identified loopholes. Today's proposals should be adopted by both co-legislators as a matter of urgency to further enhance the security of EU citizens.

Improving security features of ID cards to curb document fraud

The Commission is today proposing to improve the security features of EU citizens' identity cards and non-EU family members' residence cards. With an estimated 80 million Europeans currently having non-machine readable ID cards without biometric identifiers, the aim is to curb the use of fraudulent documents that can also be used by terrorists and criminals to enter the EU from non-EU countries, by:

- **Setting common security standards across the EU** in line with the minimum security standards set out by ICAO;
- **Making biometric data mandatory for those countries with ID cards:** EU citizens' ID cards (older than 12 years) and non-EU family members' residence cards will now include biometric data, namely fingerprints and facial images, stored on a chip in the cards. This will be accompanied with **stronger safeguards** on who can access the biometrics;
- **Carrying out an ambitious phase-out process:** the new rules provide for a relatively quick but gradual phase out of non-compliant cards at their expiry or at the latest within five years and for less secure ones (i.e. non-machine readable) within 2 years. The proposed Regulation does not introduce compulsory ID cards across the EU but upgrades the security features of existing ones, whilst leaving other aspects relating to the design of national ID cards entirely up to individual

Member States. By introducing these upgraded standards, the proposal follows a similar approach to that taken already by the EU for the security features of passports.

Cutting off terrorist financing

To allow law enforcement authorities timely access to financial information necessary for investigations of serious crimes (including information on bank accounts and financial analysis), the Commission is proposing a new Directive which will provide for:

- **Direct access to bank account information:** law enforcement authorities and Asset Recovery Offices will have direct access on a case-by-case basis to bank account information contained in national, centralised registries enabling the authorities to identify in which banks a suspect holds accounts. Data protection safeguards ensure that only limited information on the identity of the bank account holder and only in specific cases of serious crime or terrorism would be made available to law enforcement officers.
- **Better cooperation:** the Directive provides for better cooperation between national law enforcement authorities and the national Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) as well as between Member States. This includes the possibility for law enforcement to request financial information or analysis from FIUs – including data on financial transactions, as well as the possibility for FIUs to request law enforcement information from their competent national authorities.

Tightening rules on explosives precursors and imports and exports of firearms

Home-made explosives have been used by terrorists in many attacks in Europe over the past years. To close this security gap, the Commission is proposing to strengthen the current rules on marketing and use of explosives precursors by:

- **Banning additional chemicals:** the Commission proposed to add new chemicals to the list of banned substances which could be used to make home-made explosives. Since the substances can be obtained equally in brick-and-mortar shops as well as from online retailers and online marketplaces, the new rules will also apply fully to online sales;
- **Ending the current registration systems:** the new rules will put an end to the registration systems some Member States currently have in place. These systems, considered weak from a security perspective, allow members of the general public to register purchases of some restricted substance upon simple presentation of an ID card;
- **Careful licensing and screening:** Member States can choose to have a licensing system for the purchase of a limited number of restricted substances which could have a clear legitimate use. Before issuing a license to a member of the general public, each Member State will have to verify the legitimacy of such a request and run a careful security screening, including a criminal record check;
- **Quicker and better information sharing:** the new rules introduce an obligation for businesses to report a suspicious transaction to the responsible authorities within 24 hours. The new measures also provide for greater information sharing between companies, including online businesses, and awareness raising along the whole supply chain.

The trafficking of firearms remains a serious concern for Europe's security. This is why the Commission is updating EU rules on the export and import of civilian firearms to include:

- **Improved control procedures:** Member States should carry out systematic background checks on all individuals applying for export authorisations, in particular using the European Criminal Records Information Exchange system (ECRIS) to verify if the person has any previous criminal records and check the Conventional arms export control information system (COARM), which contains notifications of refusal of export authorisation,
- **Enhanced information exchange:** Member States should make more systematic and better use of information, including by regularly feeding the COARM system and keeping a single national database of authorisations and refusals. They should also provide detailed statistics related to the import and export of firearms to the Commission by 1 July each year.

The Commission has also today proposed **new tools to gather electronic evidence across borders in criminal proceedings** (see [press release](#)).

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 13 September 2017.

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 establish interoperable EU information systems for security, border and migration management, and to reinforce 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 Security Union [reports published](#) on a regular basis.

For More Information

[Frequently Asked Questions – Denying terrorists the means to act](#)

[Factsheet – Security Union – A Europe that protects](#)

[Factsheet – Security Union - Denying terrorists the means to act](#)

[Report – Fourteenth progress report towards an affective and genuine security union](#)

[Directive on the use of financial and other information for the prevention, detention, investigation or prosecution of certain criminal offences](#)

[Regulation improving security of ID cards and residence documents of EU citizens and their family members](#)

- [Impact assessment to the proposal to improve the security of ID cards and residence documents of EU citizens and their family members](#)

[Regulation on the marketing and use of explosives precursors](#)

- [Annexes to the proposal for a regulation on the marketing and use of explosives precursors](#)

[Commission recommendation on immediate steps to improve security of export, import and transit measures for firearms, their parts and essential components and ammunition](#)

[Press release: Commission presents new EU rules for access to electronic evidence](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions: New EU rules to obtain electronic evidence](#)

[Factsheet: Facilitating Access to electronic evidence](#)

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