



JUSTICE and HOME AFFAIRS COUNCIL

Luxembourg, 21 April 2016

The Council will be devoted solely to home affairs issues. The meeting will be chaired by **Ard VAN DER STEUR**, Minister for Security and Justice of the Netherlands, and **Klaas DIJKHOFF**, Minister for Migration of the Netherlands.

The Council will discuss **security and migration** matters. Following up on the meeting of 24 March 2016, Ministers will discuss the aftermath of the Brussels attacks. Ministers will focus on the use and interoperability of databases and the recent Commission proposals on the smart borders package.

Regarding migration, Ministers will discuss the implementation of the March European Council conclusions and the EU-Turkey statement of 18 March 2016.

They will also hold an exchange of views on the Commission's communication on the reform of the common European asylum system and enhancing legal avenues to Europe.

The Council will take stock of the work on the proposal for **a European border guard**, on which the Council adopted its position on 6 April 2016.

The Council is expected to adopt, without discussion, a directive on the EU Passenger Name Record (PNR) and a directive strengthening the rights of children in criminal proceedings.

A **press conference** will take place before lunch at +/- 13.45 and at the end of the meeting at +/- 17.30

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¹ This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the press office.

HOME AFFAIRS

IT systems for Security and Borders*

The Council will discuss, following up on the meeting of 24 March 2016, the aftermath of the Brussels attacks.

Ministers will focus on the use and interoperability of databases and the recent Commission proposals on the smart borders package.

In the wake of the Brussels attacks of 22 March, Justice and Home Affairs Ministers adopted a Joint Statement at their extraordinary meeting of 24 March 2016. There they again stressed the importance of information exchange. One of the considerations is to “increase as a matter of urgency the systematic feeding, consistent use and interoperability of European and international databases in the fields of security, travel and migration by making full use of technological developments and including privacy safeguards from the outset”. They also stated that the Presidency, the Commission, the member states, the EU Counter-Terrorism coordinator and relevant agencies and experts will join forces to present practical actions by June 2016.

On 6 April 2016, the Commission presented its Communication on "Stronger and Smarter Information Systems for Borders and Security". It provides a detailed overview of information systems and highlights the need to initiate a process towards the improved interoperability of information systems as a long-term objective . It indicates "gaps" and proposes actions to be carried out.

The Commission has proposed, as part of the Smart Borders Package, an Entry/Exit System and a targeted amendment of the Schengen Borders Code. The aim is to improve Border Management. These two initiatives, together with the provision of interoperability between the various IT systems combined with access for law enforcement purposes, constitute a further step forward for information exchange and the availability of all information needed for border guards and law enforcement.

The outcome of the ministerial discussion will be used to work towards an agreement on the requirements for an integrated European information architecture, including interoperability in the JHA domain, covering migration, security/counter-terrorism and borders, by June 2016. This agreement will include a roadmap with short, medium- and long-term actions, which will be presented during the JHA Council in June 2016.

* This item will be discussed by the Mixed Committee (the EU plus Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland), in the margins of the Council.

Databases*

Ministers will also discuss the systematic feeding and consistent use of European and international databases, following up on the Ministerial Statement of 24 March.

The EU Counter-Terrorism coordinator will present a general document setting out average data for the Union as a whole by way of a benchmark.

The systematic feeding and consistent use of databases constitutes a key component in the EU's efforts to improve the exchange of information.

For more information:

[Council website: Response to foreign terrorist fighters and recent terrorist attacks in Europe](#)

[Joint statement of EU Ministers for Justice and Home Affairs and representatives of EU institutions on the terrorist attacks in Brussels on 22 March 2016](#)

[European Commission website: Stronger and Smarter Information Systems for Borders and Security](#)

European Border Guard*

The Council will be briefed by the Presidency on the state of play on the proposed regulation establishing a European Border Guard.

The primary objective of the European Border Guard is to ensure and implement, as a shared responsibility, European integrated border management at the external borders with a view to managing migration effectively and ensuring a high level of security within the EU, while safeguarding freedom of movement within the EU.

It will consist of a European border guard agency (the current Frontex agency with expanded tasks) and national authorities responsible for border management. The restructured Agency would focus its activities on the establishment of an operational strategy for European integrated border management and on the assistance of all the member states concerned as regards its implementation.

On 6 April 2016, the Permanent Representatives Committee agreed on the Council's negotiating position. As soon as the European Parliament has adopted its position, the presidency will start negotiations.

For more information:

[Council website: Strengthening the EU's external borders](#)

[European Border Guard: Council ready to negotiate with the Parliament](#)

Migration*

Home affairs ministers will hold an exchange of views on several migration-related issues, and in particular the implementation of the 17-18 March 2016 European Council conclusions and the implementation of the EU-Turkey statement of 18 March 2016.

Ministers are expected to express their views on the current migration situation. As regards the implementation of the EU-Turkey statement, they will focus on the returns from Greece to Turkey and resettlement from Turkey. They will also address the situation of the Central Mediterranean route, the humanitarian situation in Greece, how to accelerate relocation from Greece and Italy and how to provide Greece with the necessary means, in particular border guards, asylum experts and interpreters.

For more information:

[Council website: Finding solutions to migratory pressures](#)

Reform of the Common European Asylum System

The Commission will present to the Council its recent communication "Towards a reform of the Common European Asylum System and enhancing legal avenues to Europe".

Ministers will then have an opportunity to express their views on all the aspects covered by the Commission communication.

For more information:

[European Commission press release](#)
