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NOTE

From: Presidency

To: Working Party on Frontiers/Mixed Committee
(EU-Iceland/Liechtenstein/Norway/Switzerland)

Subject: Foreign Terrorist Fighters

- Application of the Schengen Border Code - Follow-up
- Update on progress on the preparation of risk indicators

DOCUMENT PARTIALLY ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC (11.06.2015)

A. Political guidelines

At the high - level meetings devoted to counter-terrorism following the Paris and Copenhagen attacks (in particular, the informal meeting of JHA Ministers in Riga on 29 and 30 January 2015, the meeting of Heads of State and Government on 12 February 2015 and the JHA Council on 12-13 March 2015), various measures to combat terrorism were discussed and endorsed.

At the informal meeting of JHA Ministers in Riga on 29 and 30 January¹ it was highlighted that the then recent terrorist attacks, the counter-terrorism measures which were then in force and the growing threat posed by the foreign terrorist fighters all over the world sent a clear and strong message that counter-terrorism efforts have to be reinforced both at national and EU level. In the context of the Riga Joint Statement, Ministers concluded regarding Schengen framework as follows:

“- We consider that beyond the current efforts to make full use of existing Schengen framework, a targeted proposal to amend the Schengen Borders Code is a necessary step to reinforce external borders by making it possible to proceed to systematic checks on individuals enjoying the right of free movement against databases relevant to the fight against terrorism based on the common risk indicators.”

At their informal meeting on 12 February 2015, the Heads of State and Government underlined that the security of citizens is an immediate necessity and that existing tools must be better implemented and further developed, in particular in order to detect and disrupt terrorist-related travel, notably of foreign terrorist fighters.

In the same meeting a statement on terrorism pointed out the following regarding the Schengen regime:

"- full use [must] be made of the existing Schengen framework to reinforce and modernise external borders' control: we agree to proceed without delay to systematic and coordinated checks on individuals enjoying the right of free movement against databases relevant to the fight against terrorism based on common risk indicators;"

¹ doc. 5855/15.

The JHA Council on 12 and 13 March 2015¹ discussed the implementation of the measures contained in the aforementioned Statements and focused on a number of areas identified by the Presidency where results could be achieved in the coming months.

Ministers stressed the importance of the Council making progress in all these areas and agreed to return to all these issues at their next meeting, with a view to reporting to the European Council in June 2015.

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It was also noted that implementation of these measures would be assessed and monitored by the Working Party on Frontiers as a matter of priority, with a view to reporting to the JHA Council in June 2015.

B. Implementation of the agreed measures

The Commission, in close cooperation with the Member States (Member States) and other stakeholders, has taken up two tasks, which are being carried out in parallel:

- one task having a wider scope – the implementation of the measures in order to enhance border checks to better identify foreign terrorist fighters, and
- one specifically focused task – the drawing-up of the common risk indicators, which would serve to better identify foreign terrorist fighters.

¹ doc. 7166/15.

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Following the above discussion at the Frontiers Working Party on 8 May 2015, on the basis of the summary of the implementation actions undertaken by Member States, the Presidency would like to highlight the following:

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Taking into consideration all the above points, the Presidency considers that, although substantial progress has been made, many of the measures agreed by the JHA Council on 12-13 March 2015 are still at the implementation stage. Member States are on the right track but there is still work to be done.

By way of conclusion, the Presidency would like to stress the necessity to put more effort into full implementation of the measures agreed. **DELETED**.
