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NOTE

From:	Presidency
To:	Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation on Internal Security
No. prev. doc.:	6739/15
Subject:	Improving the use of means of fighting trafficking of firearms

Background

On 26 March 2015 the Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation on internal security (COSI) discussed concrete measures and actions to fight against the illicit trafficking of firearms. These discussions were based on the Presidency paper (6739/15) outlining four key elements: information exchange, reducing access to illegal firearms, decommissioning and de-activation of firearms as well as cooperation with third countries. Except for measures 4, 5 and 12, the measures outlined in that paper and reproduced in the annex to this note, met with wide approval by Member States.

The Council conclusions on the Renewed Internal Security Strategy 2015-2020 reaffirmed the central role of COSI in ensuring that operational cooperation on internal security is promoted and strengthened within the Union. COSI therefore has a key role to play in terms of monitoring the implementation of concrete actions in the fight against firearms trafficking.

Against this background and pending the Commission proposal for amending the 1991 Firearms Directive, the Presidency has drafted the table set out in the annex with a view to providing an overview of the relevant actors, the timeline for each measure and whether action is already being undertaken or has suggested possible action. This table was presented to COSI on 26 March 2015 and the informal COSI-CATS meeting 22-23 July 2015.

Measures

Based on the outcome of these discussions the Presidency drafted Council Conclusions (11623/15), which incorporate a large number of these measures (1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14 and 15) focusing on improving information exchange, reducing access to illegal firearms and de-commissioning / deactivation of firearms. The revised table set out in the annex refers to these Council Conclusions and takes account of the discussions held at the informal COSI-CATS meeting of 22-23 July 2015. COSI is invited to endorse the suggested actions in the table set out in annex.

1. INFORMATION EXCHANGE:

	Measure	Actor(s)	Timeline	(suggested) action
1	To systematically insert information on firearms into the Schengen Information System (SIS II), Europol Information System (EIS) and iARMS.	MS EUROPOL INTERPOL EU LISA	Immediately and update every 6 months by Europol, Interpol and EU LISA	<i>See Council conclusions</i>
2	To provide relevant information to the Europol Analysis System on current investigations concerning firearms trafficking, on offences committed using firearms and on terrorist detentions which involve firearms seizure.	MS EUROPOL INTERPOL	Immediately and update every 6 months by Europol and Interpol	<i>See Council conclusions</i>
3	To make the best use of Interpol's available tools, and commit to using iARMS (as done with Interpol's database on stolen and lost documents (SLTD))	MS	Immediately and update every 6 months by Europol and Interpol	<i>See Council conclusions</i>
4	To make better use of Interpol's Ballistic Information Network (IBIN), where available	MS		<i>See Council Conclusions INTERPOL to present IBIN to COSI.</i>
5	To make better and wider use of the Glossary of Firearms Terminology, especially in the framework of national experts' contributions to multinational databases	LEWP (EFE) MS	December 2015	<i>Following the expected finalisation of the Glossary by EFE on 13-14 October 2015¹, LEWP will be invited to endorse on 30 October 2015.</i>

¹ Requires a consensus on the drafting of the Glossary.

	Measure	Actor(s)	Timeline	(suggested) action
6	To make sure that any information provided to iARMS and/or the results of the tracing carried out by iARMS is also made available to Europol	INTERPOL	Immediately	<i>See Council conclusions</i>
7	To invite Europol to submit an updated Threat Assessment on Firearms to COSI based on Member States' contributions, with particular attention to the links between organised crime and terrorism	EUROPOL	Doc finalised by Europol - will be discussed in COSI on <u>21</u> September 2015	<i>Action under way.</i>
8	<u>To invite the Commission to update COSI on regular bases about the IARMS/SIS databases interoperability project.</u>	COM	<u>Every semester</u>	<i>[Invite Commission to do this]</i>

2. REDUCING ACCES TO ILLEGAL FIREARMS:

	Measure	Actor(s)	Timeline	(suggested) action
9	To strongly encourage Member States to participate in the OAP on Firearms and fully support it in the framework of the EU policy cycle for organised and serious international crime.	MS COSI	Immediately So far only <u>16 MS</u> are participating in the OAP FIREARMS + COM + FRONTEX, EUROPOL, EUROJUST, CEPOL and EEAS.	<i>See Council Conclusions</i> <i>Non-participating MS are invited to participate in this OAP. NEC and COSI SG are invited to monitor participation.</i>
10	To invite all the parties involved in the OAP on Firearms to take into account the present document and discussions when implementing the OAP 2015, in particular the Joint Action Days, and when drafting the upcoming OAP 2016	Relevant actors of the OAP FIREARMS	Immediately	<i>Action under way</i> <i>See Council Conclusions</i>
11	To invite Europol to engage EC3 and FP Firearms to monitor the open web and the Darknet to explore the illegal trade through these platforms and to coordinate cross-border investigations and operations against online trafficking.	EUROPOL	Immediately	<i>Action under way</i> <i>See Council Conclusions</i>
12	To invite Europol in cooperation with EFE and the OAP FIREARMS to develop a manual for combating internet-based firearms trafficking.	EUROPOL LEWP (EFE) OAP FIREARMS INTERPOL	<u>2016</u>	<i>[Invite EUROPOL, <u>EFE</u> and <u>the OAP FIREARMS</u>]</i> <i>See Council Conclusions</i>
13	To invite the Custom Cooperation Working Party (CCWP) to explore how to reduce access to illegal firearms from the Customs perspective.	CCWP	This action is already running.	<i>Action under way</i>

3. DECOMMISSIONING AND DE-ACTIVATION OF FIREARMS:

	Measure	Actor(s)	Timeline	(suggested) action
14	To invite the Commission to revise the 1991 Firearms Directive in order to improve the sharing of information on firearms, reinforce their traceability, standardise their marking, establish common <u>minimum</u> standards for the neutralisation of firearms, consider the inclusion of alarm weapons in the new provisions.	COM	End of first semester 2016	<i>Invite Commission to present proposal at the beginning of 2016.</i> <u>See Council Conclusions</u>
15	To invite the Commission to present proposals for a common <u>minimum</u> standard for the decommissioning and de-activation of weapons to avoid their reactivation for use in criminal and terrorist activity	COM	December 2015	<i>Finalise Commission regulation by the end of 2015.</i> <u>See Council Conclusions</u>

4. COOPERATION WITH THIRD COUNTRIES:

	Measure	Actor(s)	Timeline	(suggested) action
16	To invite the Commission to inform COSI on the state of play of the implementation of this Action Plan by the South East Europe partners so as to allow EU Member States to make the best use of this information in the context of the EU Policy Cycle.	COM COSI	<u>December 2015</u>	<i>Action under way</i>
17	To invite every partner in the South East Europe region to speed up the creation of a Firearms Focal Point in conjunction with Europol	EEAS	December 2015	<i>Action <u>finalised</u></i>
18	To invite the European Firearms Expert (EFE) to cooperate closely with the existing regional experts network in the Western Balkans. In this regard, EFE is expected to jointly meet them this year and then on a biannual base and report to COSI.	LEWP (EFE)	December 2015	<i>Action under way, but efforts should be stepped up.</i>
19	To invite all relevant actors to explore the feasibility of developing a similar plan (<u>as in action 18</u>) on illicit firearms trafficking between the EU and other geographical areas.	MS OAP FIREARMS <u>EEAS</u>	December 2015	<i>Action under way</i> <i><u>To be discussed in the OAP Firearms drafting session on 15/16 October 2015</u></i>