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From: Presidency

To: Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation on Internal Security
(COSI)

Subject: EU Innovation Hub for Internal Security

On 8th October 2019, Ministers at the JHA Council “expressed their overall support for the creation of an Innovation Lab at Europol¹ which could act as an observatory of new technological developments and drive innovation, including by developing common technological solutions for member states in the field of internal security. [...] Ministers highlighted the need to ensure alignment and cooperation of all relevant actors, including other relevant research bodies and EU agencies, and to avoid duplication of existing structures.”²

In order to advance the work towards the establishment of an EU Innovation Hub for Internal Security in line with the Council mandate, this document outlines the mission statement, main features, tasks and governance of the Hub.

¹ The initiative will be referred hereinafter as the **EU Innovation Hub for Internal Security** ("the Hub") to distinguish it from the individual research and development capacities of some JHA agencies in the form of innovation labs.

² 12837/19; 12496/19; WK 11032/2019 REV 1

1) Mission statement

As a collaborative network of innovation labs³, the EU Innovation Hub for Internal Security will provide a joint EU platform to support the delivery of innovative cutting-edge products for the security of citizens in the EU, with a view to better assess the risks and foster the use and development of advanced and emerging technologies. The Hub will promote a culture of innovation and knowledge sharing across internal security actors in the EU and its Member States.

2) Main features

The following main features will define the Hub concept:

1. The Hub will have a **comprehensive focus on internal security**. The Hub will serve a wide community of stakeholders in the JHA area, notably in the field of law enforcement, border management, criminal justice and the security aspects of migration and customs.
2. In order to make best use of existing structures and their complementarities, and to foster synergies in driving innovation, the Hub will act as a **network of innovation labs**, based on peer cooperation between the key EU agencies. It will draw on the innovation, research and development capacities of existing and future innovation labs operated by relevant EU agencies, Member States, the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission and other relevant entities. The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights will be part of the Hub to ensure that fundamental rights compliance of future products is factored in throughout the innovation process. The Hub should contribute to the alignment of innovation and security research efforts across Europe, including by ensuring coherence with the overarching Security Research and Innovation programme managed by the Commission.
3. Recognising that innovation labs have their own dedicated networks in their field of expertise, e.g. the European Network of Law Enforcement Technology Services (ENLETS)⁴, the Hub shall benefit from the cooperation between the innovation labs and such networks and other **specialised innovation networks**.

³ EU agencies and Member States have different forms of innovation entities that will cooperate in the Hub.

⁴ Other practitioners networks could be also relevant, e.g. I-LEAD, ILEAnet, etc.

4. Building on that, the Hub will **engage with other partners**, notably with other actors playing a role on security, the European Data Protection Supervisor, the private sector and academia. It will also engage with entities acting in other security-related and technological areas where relevant (e.g. space and defence).
5. The Hub's objective is to **facilitate the delivery of common solutions**, while avoiding duplication, increasing synergies and cooperation, maximising the impact of security research programmes and promoting uptake of innovative solutions among practitioners in the area of internal security.⁵ The Hub will seek to leverage creative research and innovation methods, serving as a testing ground for innovative practices.
6. The Hub will not interfere with the **autonomy of the participating stakeholders**. It will allow existing structures to continue developing innovative solutions in their own field of competence⁶ and will not affect existing structures and processes.
7. The Hub will be hosted by **Europol**.

3) **Tasks**

In its inception phase (2020/21) the Hub will develop its operational and financial modalities, and focus on the following base tasks:

1. **Mapping** of existing and future projects to foster synergies and optimize use of resources.
2. Assessing **gaps and needs** in key areas of relevance for security practitioners.
3. **Supporting innovation and research** activities on internal security.⁷
4. Advising stakeholders on the availability, eligibility and access method to the wide range of existing **EU funding sources** and funding opportunities under the current and next MFF.⁸

⁵ Including by recommending relevant trainings to maximise the impact of innovation.

⁶ For example, Frontex within its mandate organises demonstrations of technology, conducts technical feasibility studies and runs pilot projects for borders, to test potential solutions and assess their capabilities as well as identify future needs.

⁷ E.g. by providing suggestions to prioritise domains for research and development, providing guidelines that will foster interoperability and common approaches in projects, assessing results of relevant projects and mainstreaming the dissemination of relevant materials.

⁸ Beyond, the Hub will contribute to a reflection on the design of new funding instruments.

Alongside its inception, the Hub will gradually expand its tasks⁹, notably with regard to:

1. **Foresight capacity and horizon scanning**, to monitor technological developments, including an analysis of the risks, threats and opportunities of emerging technologies in the area of internal security. This function should take place in close collaboration with JRC and drawing on foresight capacities of EU or international actors. Based on this, the Hub and/or the participating stakeholders, should, alert and if so requested, **provide inputs to policy making**.
2. **Development of common technological solutions**, by facilitating and driving the piloting of projects. This task will be based on an inclusive and decentralised working model¹⁰ fostering synergies, ownership and specialization with the objective of accelerating the deployment of innovative solutions. As such, the Hub will seek to contribute to bridging the gap between research results, innovative actions and actual uptake by security practitioners.

4) **Governance**

While being hosted by Europol, **the governance** of the EU Innovation Hub for Internal Security should be of a **collaborative nature**. It should be adapted to the tasks assigned to the Hub, and should respect the following general orientations:

1. The Hub will have a **light governance structure**, promoting transparency, flexibility and inclusiveness, with a balanced representation of stakeholders.
2. The Hub will work under the direction and responsibility of a **Steering Group** with a limited number of seats, composed of representatives of participating EU agencies, participating Member States and the European Commission. Europol will hold the secretariat of the Steering Group, whereas it will be co-chaired by a Member States representative nominated by COSI and the European Commission (DG HOME), to establish a direct link with the EU policy level. The functioning of the Steering Group will be set out in rules of procedures.

⁹ See also the EU CTC paper Embracing new and disruptive technologies in internal security and justice with an EU innovation Hub, 6158/20

¹⁰ Agencies and EU MS with relevant expertise will be invited to participate and if interested, to lead specific innovation projects. Tools and solutions resulting from such development work will be shared among stakeholders with a view to improve operational results.

3. The Hub's activities will be supported by a **Hub Team** located at and headed by Europol, with Europol staff supplemented by staff of relevant EU agencies and Member States, contributing with adequate skills and operational experience to the tasks of the Hub.

COSI is invited to confirm the aspects outlined above with a view to consolidating the main principles for the establishment of the EU Innovation Hub for Internal Security.
