

Press release, Justice and Home Affairs, Transport, Telecommunications and Energy

## **EU common border management strategy aims to increase cooperation between the authorities and the effectiveness of border control**

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'Significant progress has been made in developing an integrated EU border management system. Important issues here include the establishment of Frontex, the External Borders Agency, and the adoption of the Regulation concerning the movement of persons across borders (the Schengen Borders Code) and the Regulation laying down rules on local border traffic at the external land borders. It must be ensured that this favourable development will continue. With this in mind, the Presidency proposes to the Justice and Home Affairs Council political strategic guidelines aimed at establishing an EU border management strategy. The strategy includes the definition of integrated border management, which has been in use for years,' said Finnish Minister of the Interior Kari Rajamäki.

In the afternoon of 21 September, EU interior ministers discussed the EU border management strategy and measures against terrorism and organised crime at the informal Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) ministerial meeting in Tampere.

The strategy specifies the role of the JHA Council, increases the transparency of border control, reinforces cooperation between national authorities and deals with initiatives related to the development of border management.

'The current crisis over illegal immigration in the Mediterranean region raises two elements for which clear guidelines must be drawn up. The first one is the external relations element relating to border management. Countries of origin of illegal immigration should be persuaded to cooperate, because that would allow our border guards to work as effectively as possible. Another important element on which common EU-level guidelines should be issued is common operations within the framework of Frontex. The EU should define the powers of personnel, determine the costs incurred in sending equipment and consider the related reimbursement issues. The RABIT Regulation proposed by the Commission would clarify these issues. Finland is in favour of adopting this Regulation as soon as possible,' said Mr Rajamäki.

### Increasing cooperation between security authorities

'EU Member States should strengthen cooperation between their authorities at both national and transnational level in combating organised crime and terrorism. The most concrete example of current threats calling for multidisciplinary and international cooperation is a wave of drugs coming in from Afghanistan,' said Mr Rajamäki.

'In particular, citizens expect the EU to strengthen security,' said Mr Rajamäki and

added, 'EU Member States must be able to remove barriers to effective cooperation between security authorities. When assessing the fulfilment of the principle of availability, the Treaty of Prüm serves as a good example. That is why Finland wants to promote the process of making the Treaty part of the EU structures.'

Mr Rajamäki also wanted to stress the importance of key models and practices relating to operational cooperation. They include common monitoring and surveillance operations, intelligence-led policing, operations directed at commonly defined targets and joint investigation teams.

'Operational cooperation can also be strengthened by collecting and sharing our own experience of well-functioning practices. In Finland, an example of such practices is operational cooperation between police, customs and border guard authorities. It is also important to collect and share practices of regional cooperation between Member States and those implemented together with third countries. Among such practices is cooperation in the Baltic Sea region (Task Force on Organised Crime in the Baltic Sea Region), in which Russia, Norway and Iceland also participate,' said Mr Rajamäki.

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