

Informal meeting of the Strategic Committee for Immigration, Border and Asylum (SCIFA) and the Standing Committee for Operational Cooperation on Internal Security (COSI)

High Level Experts from the Member States, representatives of the European Commission and European agencies Europol, Eurojust, Frontex, CEPOL, European Institute for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (EIGE) met in Bucharest to discuss specific ways and unity aimed at the safety of citizens in the European Union without the restriction of the right to free movement, as well as for the fight against large groups of organized crime and those specialized in various crimes.

Wednesday, March, 13th, was reserved for separate discussions within the two committees.

The Standing Committee for Operational Cooperation on Internal Security (COSI)

At the opening of the meeting, the subject of digital data mining was dealt with by Novel Actionable Information (NAI). This concept is an initiative of the Romanian Presidency, which was supported by the European Agencies and the Member States, brought to COSI's attention since February 2018.

Furthermore, the debates focused on the tools and methods available to EU countries to fight large groups of organized crime and groups specialized in various crimes. In recent years, Member States' internal security policy has focused on countering threats related to terrorism, cyber-attacks and illegal migration. In this context, the usefulness of the services provided by EUROPOL, such as operational coordination, exchange of information, the performance of starter analyzes, joint working teams, was noted. Thus, it was considered to find the funds and resources needed to continue and increase efficiency on this line and to increase the level of safety.

The Strategic Committee for Immigration, Border and Asylum (SCIFA)

At the level of the Strategic Committee for Immigration, Frontiers and Asylum, according to the agenda set by the Romanian Presidency, the debates focused on possible action directions for identifying "transitional measures" leading to the management of migration crises with major impact on EU space, with regard to Integrated State Border Management.

The European Union has an objective to ensure that citizens live in a secure environment where freedom and the rule of law are guaranteed, without internal border checks.

The Romanian Presidency has been brought to the attention of the Romanian Presidency to put into practice some "transitional measures", also discussed at the informal meeting of the JHA Council, the Internal Affairs component, in February 2019.

It is hoped that this mechanism will be operational, efficient and flexible, coordinated by the European Commission, which will benefit from the support of the European agencies and be triggered at the request of the affected EU member states.

The measures target those undergoing search and rescue operations at sea, including other humanitarian situations. State participation is voluntary and operates under the national, European and international legislation in force. Once this mechanism is activated, cooperation will be needed between all countries involved and the European agencies in order to establish the identity of migrants and to determine the procedure applicable to each individual.

The discussions on Integrated Border Management aimed at identifying the obstacles that could arise in correlating national strategies with the provisions of the Technical and Operational Strategy elaborated by FRONTEX, to be approved, as well as the perspectives of the thematic evaluations to be carried out by the European Commission on this subject.

The joint meeting on Thursday, March 14, considered the importance of the two committees working together to provide an integrated response to the threats of illegal migration and the security of European citizens, regardless of nationality. And this requires an active role for all Member States through the use of IT systems and databases in the field of Justice and Internal Affairs.

The results of the discussions held during the meetings of the two working groups from 13th-14th March will be used in future formal debates to be held in the dedicated JAI Council formats.

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The Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation on Internal Security (COSI) is governed by Art. 17 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU and is the one that facilitates, promotes and reinforces the coordination of EU Member States' operational actions on EU internal security.

It is made up of high level officials from the Ministry of the Interior and / or Justice of each EU Member State, as well as representatives of the Commission and the European External Action Service. At meetings, European agencies, such as Europol, Eurojust, Frontex, CEPOL and other relevant bodies, may be invited to participate.

The Strategic Committee on Immigration, Borders and Asylum (SCIFA) brings together high-level officials. The Committee is dealing at a strategic level with various aspects of immigration, asylum and borders.

The two entities are part of the preparatory groups of the Justice and Internal Affairs Council, which implies that before they are validated in the Council meetings, the proposed measures are subject to the disqualifications of these preparatory groups.