



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

## JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS



**28.05.09**

### **Battle against Payment Card Fraud**

Payment card fraud has become an increasing criminal phenomenon in Europe. This serious international crime can only be tackled successfully by close cooperation between the relevant law enforcement authorities and by coordination and centralisation of all information at European level.

On 13-15 of May 2009 an International Conference on Payment Card Fraud took place in Szczytno in Poland. The seminar was organised by the Higher Police Academy in Poland, VISA Europe and Europol. The main aim of the conference was to present possible ways of international cooperation and to discuss trends, threats and possible security measures. More than 160 participants from 15 countries took part in the event.

Officers from various law enforcement agencies gave presentations of successfully concluded cases. Europol explained its roles and responsibilities, offered its support and indicated examples of good practice. Europol's coordination role as well as its support within Joint Investigation Teams was also emphasized.

Representatives of card issuers - VISA Europe, MasterCard, and Diner's Club participated in the conference and presented examples of new trends and future threats. The participation of the European ATM Security Team enriched the discussions related to ATM Fraud and possible countermeasures.

The conference concluded to recommend a fast exchange of information through Europol channels as well as the use of new legal tools like Joint Investigation Teams.

Source: [Europol](#)



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### 25 May 2009 - International Missing Children's Day

**On Monday 25<sup>th</sup> May the European Commission supported International Missing Children's Day. The main purpose of this day was to encourage European citizens and the whole world not to forget all the children who are missing. It sent an international message of hope and solidarity to parents who have no news of their children.**

On the day Mr Barrot, Commission Vice-President, took part in launching a high-profile publicity campaign for the 116 000 hotline promoted by Missing Children Europe, a European federation which represents 23 NGOs active in 16 Member States in the fight against the disappearance and sexual exploitation of children. He expressed the Commission's encouragement for the initiative and its willingness to continue working closely with associations active in the field of protecting children's rights. He expressed his personal commitment to encouraging the adoption in each Member State of an "abduction alert" type of system, which could save lives.

[Read more](#)

### Macedonia a step closer to visa-free travel to EU



On Monday 25<sup>th</sup> May the European Commission presented EU member states with its assessment of how well western Balkan countries have been fulfilling the conditions for visa-free travel to the bloc, with Macedonia given the best mark, and Albania and Bosnia the worst.

According to the commission's report only EU candidate Macedonia has met all necessary conditions for its citizens to be allowed to travel visa-free into the European Union.

All western Balkan citizens except for Croats currently need a visa to travel to the EU.

The commission's criteria include "document security, illegal migration including readmission, public order and security, external relations and fundamental rights," with Skopje judged to meet the benchmarks on all the points.

Montenegro and Serbia are said to "meet most benchmarks," but both have fully complied only with the requirements regarding document security, while for the remaining criteria they have met "a large majority of benchmarks." Albania and Bosnia received the lowest grade on all points and "do not yet fully meet [any of] the benchmarks", while Kosovo was not included in the commission's assessment at all.

Source: [EU Observer](#)