

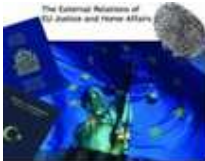


Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

## JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

Sectoral Committee  
Weekly Update  
**23.04.10**

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## **COM (2010) 171 - Communication from the Commission: Delivering an area of freedom, security and justice for Europe's citizens -Action Plan Implementing the Stockholm Programme**

Last year the Commission adopted the Stockholm Programme<sup>1</sup> wherein it laid out a comprehensive framework for EU actions on citizenship, justice, security, asylum and immigration policies for the next five years. The Stockholm Programme, which contained 170 initiatives, was adopted by the European Council on the 10-11 December 2009. To focus efforts and to translate these political objectives into concrete proposals, the Commission selected a number of key actions and has translated them into an action plan for the years 2010 – 2014.

The plan includes 10 initiatives to bring more security to Europeans and a responsible answer to migration. These relate to:

1. Internal security
2. Fight against terrorism
3. Fight against crime
4. Criminalising identity theft
5. Cybercrime
6. Visa policy and border security
7. Reinforcing border security
8. Data retention
9. Migration
10. Unaccompanied minors
11. Common EU asylum system

In the justice, fundamental rights and citizenship area, the Commission plan includes the following 10 concrete actions to help Europeans work, study and travel in the EU and to support economic activity in the Single Market:

1. Protecting personal data
2. Stronger procedural rights for suspects in criminal proceedings
3. Better protection for EU citizens abroad
4. More legal certainty for international marriages
5. Less administrative burdens for citizens
6. Helping businesses to operate cross-border
7. Fighting violence against women
8. Enhancing victims' rights
9. Protecting children
10. Better justice enforcement across Europe

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<sup>1</sup> Sectoral Committee Update 17 – 12.06.2009 – [COM \(2009\) 262](#)



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The Commission plan should be politically endorsed by the European Parliament and the Council. Following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty voting in Council will be made by qualified majority instead of unanimity. This will streamline the decision-making process.

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0171:FIN:EN:PDF>

## **Stranded passengers in the EU: special derogations to be applied for short stay Visa holders and passengers in transit**

The closure of the European airspace since 15 April 2010 has meant that journeys of a number of third country nationals subject to the visa requirement for staying in or transiting through the territory of the Schengen States have been disrupted.

The European Commission has thus issued recommendations to Member States to apply special derogations to certain categories of travellers and in particular:

### **1) Persons holding a short stay visa that has expired on or after 15 April 2010:**

These people will be allowed to remain within the territory of the Schengen States until the normalisation of air traffic without having to apply for the extension of their visas. The passport of these persons should be stamped upon exit without considering these persons as having stayed beyond the authorised period.

### **2) Persons who did not intend to enter into the area of the Member States but are forced to do so:**

The Commission recommends that these persons be issued visas at the external borders in accordance with Article 35 of the Visa Code and the Handbook for the processing of visa applications and the modification of issued visas. Since the third country nationals concerned had no intention of entering into the territory of the Member States but are compelled to do so for reasons of *force majeure*, the Commission recommends derogating from certain provisions and in particular to waive the visa fee and not to insist on the applicant being in possession of travel medical insurance.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/10/141&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>



**Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee**

## **Meeting of the JHA Council (23 April 2010)**

The Justice and Home Affairs Council (JHA) held a one-day meeting today Friday, 23 April 2010

The first day has been cancelled as a result of the problems caused by the volcano in Iceland, although the second day of the meeting on 23 April took place as scheduled.

The Council's agenda was the following:

- Adoption of a European pact to combat international drug trafficking
- Hearing on the issue of visa requirements imposed by Canada on Czech nationals
- Discussion on the proposed negotiating mandate for an EU-US agreement on the processing and transfer of financial messaging data for purposes of the US Terrorist Finance Tracking Programme (TFTP)
- Hearing on the Commission's Action Plan implementing the Stockholm Programme
- Update from the Spanish presidency on the recent EU-US JHA ministerial meeting
- Discussion on the initiative for a directive on a European protection order
- Examination of the state of play of discussions on the EU's accession to the Council of Europe's Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.
- Adoption of conclusions on actions in the field of justice in connection with the economic recovery.

The Mixed Committee (the EU plus Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland) examined the state of play concerning the development of the Schengen Information System II (SIS II) and will adopt conclusions.

The committee heard from the Austrian delegation about the European Football Championship EURO 2008 and lessons learnt for the setting up of ad hoc cooperation at sporting events.

[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/en/jha/113909.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/jha/113909.pdf)