

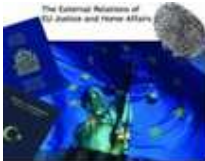


Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

Sectoral Committee
Weekly Update
30.04.10

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... Council of the EU

Meeting of the JHA Council

The Ministers of Justice and Home Affairs met in Brussels last week, on Friday 23rd April.

At the meeting:

- Home affairs ministers reached political agreement on a 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)
- The Commission briefed the Council on the issue of visa requirements imposed by Canada on Czech nationals
- The Commission presented its proposal for an action plan implementing the Stockholm Programme
- The Spanish presidency informed ministers about the recent EU-US JHA ministerial meeting
- Justice ministers discussed the initiative for a directive on a European protection order
- Justice ministers examined 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
- Justice ministers discussed the preparations of an European eJustice-portal
- The Council agreed on conclusions on actions in the field of justice in connection with the economic recovery
- In the margin of the Council 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), including a report on the results of the milestone 1 tests.

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/jha/113967.pdf

The following are links to some of the Council conclusions:

- Council conclusions on **Exchange Programme for police officers** inspired by Erasmus:
http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/jha/114013.pdf
- Council conclusions on **improving prevention to tackle violence against women** and care to its victims within the scope of law enforcement:
http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/jha/114015.pdf
- Council conclusions concerning an **Action Plan to implement the concerted strategy to combat cybercrime**:
http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/jha/114028.pdf



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... Commission

"EU Citizens' Rights – The way forward": Strengthening the rights stemming from Union Citizenship - Commission Consultation

A substantial legal framework is in place to guarantee EU citizens the rights stemming from Union citizenship and the Commission is implementing measures to ensure that citizens are aware of their rights and to secure the full implementation of these rights. However, there remains a gap between the applicable legal rules and the practical reality citizens are faced with in their daily life.

Thus the Commission has launched this consultation with a view to identifying concrete actions that need to be taken in order to remove the administrative and procedural obstacles created by national boundaries in the effective exercise of citizens' rights, with particular reference to issues such as free movement of persons, diplomatic and consular protection, electoral rights, free movement of civil status documents and consumers' rights.

The ideas put forward in this consultation will inform the policy debate at a conference which will be organised by the Commission on 1st – 2nd July 2010 and the preparation of the Communication on Citizenship scheduled for October 2010.

The questionnaire can be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/news/consulting_public/news_consulting_0007_en.htm

Replies are to be sent to the Commission, by the 14th June 2010

By email to: JLS-CITIZENSHIP-CONS@ec.europa.eu

By postal address to: European Commission

Directorate General for Justice, Freedom and Security,
Unit D2 – Citizenship
46, rue Luxembourg,
B-1049, Brussels
Belgium



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... Parliament

Protecting human rights defenders and promoting their work

The Human Rights Subcommittee of the European Parliament has drafted a resolution wherein it recommends enhancing the visibility of the work of human rights defenders and providing EU emergency visas to enable them and their families to escape oppressive regimes. The resolution also strongly condemns the use of new surveillance technologies to keep tabs on human rights defenders in their home countries.

Practical measures to protect human rights defenders: emergency visas and shelter

As human rights defenders may be at risk in their home countries, MEPs urge Member States to issue emergency visas for them and their family members, and also to provide them with temporary protection and shelter in Europe. These supporting measures could include financial resources and help with human rights activities, lecturing in European universities, and language courses.

In the resolution MEPs call on the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to finalise a European Protection and Shelter programme by the end of 2010, to be implemented in 2011.

Impact of new technologies on human rights defenders

The resolution says that the EU should denounce and reprimand international companies that provide oppressive regimes with surveillance technology, thereby facilitating persecution and arrests of human rights defenders.

New technology developments and their impact on human rights defenders need to be assessed, and the results incorporated in existing EU programmes human rights and human rights defenders, add MEPs.

More visibility for human rights defenders

To enhance the visibility of human rights defenders, the EU High Representative and all Commissioners with external relations responsibilities should systematically meet with human rights defenders when they travel officially in third countries.

Furthermore the resolution proposes that civil society should be more extensively involved in preparing the EU's human rights dialogues with third countries, public attention should be drawn to individual cases, and human rights defenders' names should be made public provided it does not put them at risk.

The resolution will probably be put to a plenary vote in June, when High Representative/Vice-president of the Commission Ashton is expected to present the EU Annual Report Human Rights.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/015-73528-116-04-18-902-20100426IPR73495-26-04-2010-2010-false/default_en.htm