

Press release – Agreement on EU instrument supporting border management and common visa policy



The fund will support strong and effective European integrated border management at the external borders, as well as a common visa policy to ensure a harmonised approach for issuing visas and to facilitate legitimate travel. MEPs insisted that 10% of the fund be earmarked for visa policy in national programmes.

Strengthened fundamental rights framework

During the talks, Parliament's negotiators succeeded in strengthening the provisions on fundamental rights. Actions implemented under the instrument will be carried out in full compliance with the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights and its international obligations regarding fundamental rights, in particular the principles of non-discrimination and the right to not be returned to a country where you might face inhumane treatment.

Protecting the vulnerable and unaccompanied minors

In order to better help those in need of international protection, Parliament also secured support for measures to identify vulnerable persons and unaccompanied minors . The development of integrated child protection systems at the external borders and actions supporting member states in issuing visas on humanitarian grounds will also be funded.

Quote

After the agreement, rapporteur [Tanja Fajon \(S&D, SI\)](#) said: "In future, Europe's borders will be safer and more centred around people. With more funds for visa policy, search and rescue operations, and enhanced provisions

on fundamental rights – including the protection of vulnerable persons and a referral mechanism – we will hopefully make our borders more humane.”

Next steps

The deal will now be finalised before being formally adopted by Parliament and the Council.

Background

The fund will also support the European Border and Coast Guard, the implementation of the hotspot approach, and the interoperability of various IT systems. These include the Entry-Exit System, the Visa Information System, the European Travel Information and Authorisation System, Eurodac and the Schengen Information System.

Press release – New tool to combat terrorism online agreed



The new law targets texts, images, sound recordings or videos that incite, solicit or contribute to terrorist offences, provide instructions for such offences or solicit people to participate in a terrorist group. It also aims to combat content that provides guidance on how to make and use explosives, firearms and other weapons for terrorist purposes. The definition of terrorist offences are in line with the [Directive on combating terrorism](#).

Rule to remove harmful content within one hour

Internet platforms have to remove terrorist content or disable access to it in all member states as soon as possible and in any event within one hour

after they have received a removal order. Removal orders may be sent from authorities in any member state to an internet platform set up in any other EU member state. The competent authorities in the member state where the service provider has its main establishment have the right to scrutinise the removal order and suspend it if they consider it violates fundamental rights.

Exceptions for educational and journalistic purposes

If material is disseminated for educational, journalistic, artistic or research purposes or to prevent or counter terrorism, it will not be considered terrorist content. This also includes content expressing polemic or controversial views in a public debate.

No general obligation to monitor or filter all content

Internet platforms will not be obliged to monitor or filter all content. Nonetheless, if they are exposed to terrorist content, they will have to take specific measures to protect their services against its dissemination. The service provider decides on those measures. Service providers will also need to publish annual transparency reports on action taken against the dissemination of terrorist content.

Quote

Rapporteur Patrik JAKI (ECR, PL) said: "The internet is where terrorists recruit, share propaganda and coordinate attacks. Today we delivered on the most important issues for the European Parliament. There will be no mandatory internet filtering. Content distributed for educational, journalistic, artistic or research purposes or content distributed to raise awareness against terrorist activity will be exempt. At the same time, the member states will always be able to suspend a removal order if they consider it violates fundamental rights. Under this law, parties have the right to appeal. The fight against terrorism is one of the European Parliament's priorities. It is therefore an important day for the entire European community, which is gaining a new tool for combating terrorism."

Next steps

The deal will now be finalised at technical level. Both Parliament and Council will then have to adopt it formally.

Background

The [proposal on preventing the dissemination of terrorist content online](#) was tabled by the Commission in 2018.

Press release – Artificial Intelligence: guidelines for military and non-military use



MEPs reiterate their call for an EU legal framework with definitions and ethical principles. These rules need to ensure that human dignity and human rights are respected and that AI systems are subject to meaningful human control, allowing humans to correct or disable them in case of unforeseen behaviour. Humans should therefore be identifiable and ultimately held responsible.

Military use and human oversight

MEPs agreed that lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS) should only be used as a last resort and be deemed lawful only if subject to human control, since it must be humans that decide between life and death.

The text calls on the EU to take a leading role in promoting a global framework on the military use of AI, alongside the UN and the international community.

AI in healthcare and justice

The increased use of AI systems in public services, especially healthcare and justice, should not replace human contact or lead to discrimination, MEPs assert. When AI is used in matters of public health, (e.g. robot-assisted surgery, smart prostheses, predictive medicine), patients' personal data must be protected and the principle of equal treatment upheld.

Judges use AI technologies more and more in decision-making and to speed up

proceedings. However, safeguards need to be introduced to protect the interests of citizens. People should always be informed if they are subject to a decision based on AI and should have the right to see a public official. AI cannot replace humans to pass sentences. Final court decisions must be taken by humans, be strictly verified by a person and be subject to due process.

MEPs also warn of threats to fundamental human rights arising from the use of AI technologies in mass surveillance, both in the civil and military domains. They call for a ban on “highly intrusive social scoring applications” (for monitoring and rating of citizens) by public authorities.

The draft resolution was adopted with 16 votes in favour and 4 votes against.

Background

Parliament has already adopted a wide range of resolutions in the field of AI and most recently approved [three reports](#) on Artificial Intelligence in the areas of ethics, civil liability and intellectual property. Ahead of the Commission legislative proposal on AI expected in early 2021, Parliament also [set up](#) a new Special Committee on Artificial Intelligence in a Digital Age (AIDA).

[Press release – Fighting terrorism and radicalisation: deal on budget, priorities for 2021-2027](#)



Ensuring that the European Union has a high level of security is the main aim of the strengthened Internal Security Fund (ISF). Its €1.931 billion budget for 2021-2027 should serve to prevent and combat terrorism and radicalisation, serious and organised crime, and cybercrime, as well as to assist and protect victims. Co-legislators agreed that it should also contribute to preparing for and managing “security incidents, risks and crises”.

More specifically, the new Internal Security Fund will focus on:

- improving the exchange of information among and within competent authorities of the member states and relevant EU bodies, such as Europol, and also with third countries and international organisations if necessary;
- intensifying cross-border cooperation, including joint operations in relation to terrorism and serious and organised crime with a cross-border dimension;
- enabling member states to combat and prevent crime, terrorism and radicalisation, as well as managing security-related incidents, risks and crises.

No military actions covered and no money for coercive equipment

The ISF shall not finance actions limited to maintaining public order at national level or those with a military or defence purpose nor will the money go to purchasing coercive equipment, including weapons, ammunition, explosives and riot sticks, except for training.

Quote

[Monika Hohlmeier \(EPP, DE\)](#), rapporteur, said: “The attacks on Nice, Dresden and Vienna have shown once again that intelligence authorities hold valuable information to effectively fight serious and organised crime and terrorism. The cross-border nature of these crimes requires a coordinated response and the cooperation of all competent authorities. In their programmes, member states should address the EU’s priorities and laws in the area of security, but also country-specific deficiencies such as in the area of corruption.”

Next steps

Once the text is finalised at technical level, it will have to be formally adopted by both the Parliament and the Council of Ministers.

Press release – EU tax haven blacklist not catching worst offenders



The EU's list of tax havens, set up in 2017, has had a "positive impact" so far but has failed to "live up to its full potential, [with] jurisdictions currently on the list covering less than 2% of worldwide tax revenue losses", MEPs said. In the resolution prepared by the Subcommittee on Tax Matters and adopted by the Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee on Thursday 43 votes in favour, 6 against and 5 abstentions, MEPs go on to call the current system "confusing and ineffective".

The resolution proposes changes that would make the process of listing or delisting a country more transparent, consistent and impartial. It also proposes adding criteria to ensure that more countries are considered a tax haven and prevent countries from being removed from the blacklist too hastily. Finally, the resolution says that EU member states should also be screened to see if they display any characteristics of a tax haven, and those falling foul should be regarded as tax havens too.

Quote

After the vote, the Chair of the Subcommittee on Tax Matters, [Paul Tang](#) (S&D, NL) said:

"By calling the EU list of tax havens "confusing and inefficient", the European Parliament tells it like it is. While the list can be a good tool, it is currently lacking an essential element: actual tax havens. Countries on the list account for just 2% of corporate tax avoidance! EU member states currently decide in secret which countries are tax havens, and do so based on vague criteria with no public or parliamentary scrutiny. This needs to change. If we focus on others, we also need to look ourselves in the mirror. And what we see is not pretty. EU countries are responsible for 36% of tax havens. The tax subcommittee commits itself to investigate and scrutinise all

member states that are responsible for tax avoidance. Our work is only just starting.”

Widen the scope

MEPs say that the criterion for judging if a country’s tax system is fair or not needs to be widened to include more practices and not only preferential tax rates. The fact that the Cayman Islands has just been removed from the black list, while running a 0% tax rate policy, is proof enough of this, MEPs say. Among other measures proposed, the resolution therefore says that all jurisdictions with a 0% corporate tax rate or with no taxes on companies’ profits should be automatically placed on the blacklist.

Toughen the requirements

Being removed from the blacklist should not be the result of only token tweaks to that jurisdiction’s tax system, MEPs say, arguing that the Cayman Islands and Bermuda for example were delisted after “very minimal” changes and “weak enforcement measures”. The resolution therefore calls for screening criteria to be more stringent.

Fairness and transparency

The resolution says that all third countries need to be treated and screened fairly using the same criteria. The current list indicates that this is not the case and the lack of transparency with which it is drawn up and updated adds to these misgivings, the resolution says. MEPs call for the process of establishing the list to be formalised through a legally binding instrument. They question the ability and suitability of an informal body such as the Code of Conduct Group to carry out the mission of updating the blacklist. The resolution also sets out what type of disclosure is necessary.