Resolution on a cybersecurity strategy of the European Union: an open, safe and secure cyberspace

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On 7 February 2013, the Commission and the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy issued a Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council on “the Cybersecurity Strategy of the European Union: An Open, Safe and Secure Cyberspace".

On this basis, the Council adopted a series of conclusions as follows:

Comprehensive approach: the Council regarded it essential and urgent to develop further and implement a comprehensive approach for EU cyberspace policy that:

- protects and promotes enjoyment of human rights and is grounded in the EU’s fundamental values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law,

- advances European prosperity and the social and economic benefits of cyberspace including the Internet,
- promotes effective and improved cyber security across the EU and beyond,
- advances the efforts to bridge the global digital divide and promotes international cooperation in cybersecurity,
- reflects the roles and rights of individual citizens, the private sector, and civil society in cyber issues.

In this context, the Council invited the Member States, the Commission and the High Representative to work together, respecting each others’ areas of competence and the principle of subsidiarity, in response to the strategic objectives:

(1) Values: the Council invited Member States to take all reasonable steps to ensure that all EU citizens are able to access and enjoy the benefits of the Internet.

(2) Prosperity: legislation in support of cybersecurity should foster innovation and growth according to the Council. The digital economy is a major driver of growth, innovation and employment, and cybersecurity is key to protecting the digital economy. The Council also stated the importance at national level of CIIP (Critical Information Infrastructure Protection).

(3) Cyber resilience: Member States are invited to take steps to ensure they reach an efficient national level of cybersecurity, by developing and implementing the proper policies, organisational and operational capacities in order to protect information systems in cyberspace, in particular those considered to be critical. The Council called for a series of measures such as: (i) support awareness-raising on the nature of the threats and the fundamentals of good digital practices, at all levels; (ii) support the owners and providers of ICT systems in protecting their own systems; (iii) foster pan-European cybersecurity cooperation, in particular by enhancing pan-European cybersecurity exercises; (iv) strengthen and expand cooperation between Member States and EU users, building on existing structures; (v) take into account cybersecurity issues in light of ongoing work on the solidarity clause.

(4) Cybercrime: the Council invited the Commission to support Member States, at their request, to identify gaps and strengthen their capability to investigate and combat cybercrime. It suggested the use of

the future Internal Security Fund (ISF), within its budget limit, to support relevant authorities fighting cybercrime as well as the use of the Instrument for Stability (IfS) to develop the fight against cybercrime as well as cybercriminal organisations. It also suggested continuing to facilitate cross-community cooperation, in particular by supporting Europol.

Other proposals have been made as regards the fight against cybercrime through the cooperation with third countries and the Common Security and Defence Policy.

At the same time, the Council called upon the Commission and High Representative to produce a progress report on the cybersecurity Strategy to be presented at the High Level Conference to be held in February 2014. It also proposed to hold regular meetings of the competent Council preparatory bodies, (in particular the FoP on Cyber Issues) to assist in setting EU cyber priorities and strategic objectives as part of a comprehensive policy framework.

Lastly, the Council invited the Commission to present the financing of the Strategy, taking into account the upcoming negotiations with the European Parliament.