European Police College (CEPOL): seat. Initiative Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, Estonia, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden

2013/0812(COD) - 16/01/2014 - Document attached to the procedure

In its opinion on the initiative for a Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council amending Decision 2005/681/JHA establishing the European Police College (CEPOL), the Commission recalled that the text is a legal translation of the political agreement reached by the JHA Council on 8 October 2013 to **provisionally relocate the seat of CEPOL from Bramshill (UK) to Budapest (HU)**, further to the announcement by the United Kingdom in December 2012 of its decision to close the Bramshill site in 2014.

The choice of Budapest as a new CEPOL provisional location was made by a specific voting arrangement proposed by the Presidency and accepted by the Member States, during the JHA Council lunch on 8 October. It was based on the 7 applications submitted by Ireland, Greece, Spain, Italy, Hungary, The Netherlands and Finland.

Commission's opinion: the Commission noted that the draft Regulation amending the CEPOL Decision does not refer to the provisional relocation of the seat of CEPOL and therefore it does not implement the abovementioned political agreement, **but goes much further**.

In that regard, the Member States' initiative is in **direct opposition** to the Commission's proposal for the Europol Regulation, including the **merger of CEPOL into Europol**, which has been and remains on the table since 27 March 2013. The Commission's proposal is driven by the aim of addressing, in a comprehensive manner, ways to improve effectiveness in police cooperation and training. It is designed to achieve functional synergies and cost savings. This is why **the issue of CEPOL's seat should not be considered in isolation from this broader context of a functional and operational reform** that would match the goals of rationalisation and operational improvement for both agencies. The Commission further noted the adverse budgetary effects of a double move and notes that the necessary additional funding would need to come from the existing budget envelope, which means that those funds could not be used for other purposes.

The Commission therefore gave a **negative opinion to the Member States' initiative**. In addition, it invited the European Parliament and the Council to avoid any adverse budgetary effects of a solution that would not achieve functional synergies and cost savings and would not be in line with the recommendations set out in the Common Approach on decentralised agencies endorsed by the three institutions.

Should this Initiative be pursued, the Commission would be obliged to make a Declaration, at the time of its adoption, on the provisional nature of this Regulation, its adverse budgetary effects and **the necessity**

of not prejudging the outcome of discussions on the Commission's own Proposal. In that regard, the Commission encourages the European Parliament and the

Council to build on the constructive progress that is being made on its proposal to reform Europol’s legal framework while reflecting on an **alternative solution to co-locate CEPOL and**

Europol that would match the goals of rationalisation and operational improvement for both agencies.