Security research : the next steps

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PURPOSE : to launch a fully-fledged European Security Research Programme (ESRP) by 2007, with a sufficiently large budget.

CONTEXT : events such as the Madrid railway attacks of March 2004 underline the need to enhance the security for citizens throughout Europe. In addition, enlargement to a ‘Europe of 25' demands extra efforts to ensure a consistent high level of security throughout the whole of a Union with frontiers now extending to the East and the South. To address the growing and diversifying security challenge, Europe needs to harness the combined and relatively untapped strengths of relevant industry and coordinates the research community in order effectively and innovatively to address existing and future security challenges, enhance the protection of the citizen and play an efficient role in peace-keeping activities. The threat to security which now exists can only be effectively addressed at European scale.

The above approach will ensure security research under a Community Framework that can provide strong added value.

CONTENT : this paper represents the Commission's feedback to recommendations of a high-level group of 27 top European industry executives and policymakers, published in March 2004. The report, "Research for a Secure Europe", stresses the need for increased co-ordination in this field and advocates an annual EU budget of € 1 billion for security research.

The Commission welcomes the Group of Personalities report. It subscribes to the main thrust of the recommendations and orientations, and will undertake, in collaboration with stakeholders, the necessary actions, which may be grouped in four domains:

1) Consultation and cooperation with stakeholders : the Commission will establish in Autumn 2004, a ‘European Security Research Advisory Board' to advise on the content of the ESRP and its implementation, paying due attention to the proposals of the Group of Personalities. The Board should include experts from various stakeholder groups: users, industry, and research organisations. It will establish user needs and encourage cooperation between Member States in the exchange of Intellectual Property Rights and classified information, and the protection of secure information. The Commission will ensure effective coordination of the ESRP with its own internal research capabilities and other European research activities, whether funded at Community, national or intergovernmental level. This coordination also relates to work in international organisations such as the UN, OSCE and NATO, and for the activities of European organisations such as the European Space Agency (ESA).

2) A European Security Research Programme : subscribing to the recommendation to establish a European Security Research Programme (ESRP) to commence in 2007, the Commission will initiate an inter-institutional debate for consensus on such a programme, building on the work of the Preparatory Action on security research, which it will continue until the end of 2006. Security research has been included in the Communication on the Financial Perspectives of the Union for 2007-2013. A programme proposal will be tabled in early 2005 on the content, multi-annual financial plan and institutional framework for an ESRP, as part of the 7th Framework Programme of Community Research. The ESRP should be implemented as a specific research programme with its own set of procedures (e.g. adapted to confidentiality requirements), rules for participation, contracts and funding arrangements.

3) An effective institutional setting : the Commission will ensure that the requirements of the European Security Strategy, the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), the European Security and Defence

Policy (ESDP) and other relevant Commission policies associated with internal security are fully taken into account in the development of security research.

It is determined to develop cooperation and synergies between Community security research and relevant aspects of the European Defence Agency (EDA) work. It encourages Member States to work with the Commission towards improving coordination and optimisation of use of research and technology results for civil, security and defence applications. Jointly identifying and meeting common R&D and technology needs will contribute to fostering cooperation between competent authorities at different levels in a very pragmatic and concrete way.

4) A governance structure responding to the urgency and nature of the work : the Commission will establish, in discussion with Member States and other stakeholders and based on its experiences with RTD programme management, the best mechanisms to ensure effective management of the ESRP. The Commission will put in place effective and flexible contract, participation and funding mechanisms - for example to allow co-funding of new technologies by public authorities; thereby ensuring a high degree of synergy or of complementarity, in consultation with stakeholders and deriving from experience gained on rules and procedures during the Preparatory Action.