

# Area of freedom, security and justice: strategy for the external dimension, action plan implementing the Hague Programme

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**PURPOSE:** to present a strategy on the external dimension of the area of freedom, security and justice.

**CONTENT:** the European Commission has prepared this Communication in response to the Hague Programme, which calls on the EU to adopt by the end of 2005, a “strategy on the external dimension of the area of freedom, security and justices.”

The purpose of the strategy is two-fold: firstly, to contribute to the successful establishment of the internal area of freedom, security and justice by creating a secure external environment, and secondly to

advance the EU’s external relations objectives by promoting the rule of law, democratic values and sound institutions.

Securing internal security depends heavily on securing external security and it is this challenge which the proposed Strategy seeks to address. External threats challenging internal security are numerous and have been identified as:

- Terrorist attacks akin to those conducted in Madrid and London.
- Organised crime – money laundering, drugs trafficking, human trafficking, arms trafficking.
- Illegal immigration.
- Failing, unstable, governments
- Weak cross-border commercial transactions.

According to the Commission’s Communication, the only way to address these pernicious threats is through the establishment of a coherent and comprehensive strategy that engages third-countries. The proposed strategy would be centred on a number of core issues and guided by a set of policy principles. The political priorities identified are:

- **Human Rights:** The EU should continue in its efforts to promote human rights in third-countries. Support should be given to third-country judiciaries in order to instil impartiality and the importance of upholding human rights.
- **Good governance:** The EU should strengthen law enforcement; strengthen EU-third country co-operation on common security threats; fight corruption; and promote transparency alongside democratic accountability.
- **Migration, asylum and border management:** The EU should offer support to third-countries in their migration management policies and their refugee protection policies; support operational border management initiatives; help enhance document security; seek to prevent illegal immigration; ensure the return of illegal migrants.

- Fight against terrorism: The EU should provide third countries with assistance in institutional building; it should work with third countries to address terrorist recruitment and financing; it should support the UN and build upon the EU's relationship with the US in order to enhance co-operation efforts.
- Organised crime: The EU should support institutional capacity and develop operational co-operation.

The principles guiding the political priorities include, in summary: geographic prioritisation (for example, adopting a more comprehensive approach towards candidate countries and neighbourhood countries, whilst offering more specific, focus driven, actions with other third countries); differentiation (recognising the need for a tailored approach to the external challenges facing the EU's security and not simply a "one size fits all" approach). Other principles guiding the EU should be: flexibility; cross-pillar co-ordination and benchmarking.

The EU has, at its disposal, a number of policy instruments to help enact this strategy. They include bilateral agreements, the EU's enlargement and pre-accession process; the European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plans; regional co-operation, individual agreements; operational co-operation; institution building and twinning; development policy and external aid.

Underpinning the strategy is the need to promote the rule of law in third countries. Unstable, undemocratic and failing countries export the kind of threats outlined above thereby jeopardising the EU's establishment of an area of security justice and freedom. In following the proposed strategy on securing external security, the EU should be well placed to stem the import of threats, which undermine its internal security.