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COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL

on the mid-term evaluation of the Framework Programme "Security and Safeguarding Liberties" (2007-2013)

1. INTRODUCTION

This communication consists of the mid-term evaluation of the Framework Programme "Security and Safeguarding Liberties (2007-2013) (SSL)", composed of the two Programmes "Prevention and Fight against Crime (ISEC)" and "Prevention, Preparedness and Consequence Management of Terrorism and other Security Related Risks (CIPS)".

The ISEC programme concerns prevention of and combating crime, organised or otherwise, in particular terrorism, trafficking in human beings and offences against children, illicit drug trafficking and illicit arms trafficking, corruption and fraud. The CIPS programme concerns critical infrastructure and other security issues, including operational issues in areas such as crisis management, environment, public health, transport, research and technological development.

According to the relevant Council decisions the Commission shall submit to the European Parliament and the Council an interim evaluation report on the results obtained and the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the programmes.[1] In order to fulfil this obligation the Commission has ordered a study carried out by Economisti Associati[2]. This study is based on interviews and meetings which covered 155 counterparts from 23 Member States (MS), while web surveys involved 190 entities based in all 27 MS. Moreover, the Commission has taken into account the recommendations made in the Friends of the Presidency Report on the ISEC programme which was initiated in autumn 2009 by the Swedish Presidency with multi-disciplinary participation of 16 Member States.

This report covers the 2007 – 2009 period as well as initial data related to 2010, and is aimed at assessing the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the implementation of the Programmes and the results obtained. This involves accurately mapping the programme activities, analysis of the performance of the projects financed, and a review of the instruments and implementation mechanisms, in order to identify possible corrective measures.

Budget and Management Model

Extending over the 2007 – 2013 period, the ISEC programme is endowed with a total allocation of approximately € 600 million, while € 140 million is reserved for CIPS. During the 2007 – 2009 period, ISEC allocations amounted to *€ 167 million*, while CIPS received *€ 46 million*. The Programmes are implemented through Annual Work Programs (AWP), which set thematic and/or sector priorities. Implementation is carried out in the so-called *centralized direct management*, i.e. all programming and operational work is carried out by the European Commission (EC), which retains full responsibility.

It should be noted that funds have been allocated where a demand was identified rather than setting up a pre-defined distribution. Therefore, the budget allocation does not necessarily reflect the priorities set by the Commission in its programming documents. This is also linked to a low demand in certain areas where the initially reserved budget could not be fully allocated and accordingly the funds were redistributed to other more in-demand areas. This, on the one hand, demonstrates that the programme management is flexible enough to respond

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[1] Decision 2007/125/JHA, article 15.3(c) and Decision 2007/124/EC, Euratom, article 14.3(c), OJ L58 of 24.2.2007.
[2] See report of 21.9.2010

to demands for funding. It shows, on the other hand, that it has not always been possible to dovetail EU-funding fully with pre-established policy priorities. While the CIPS and ISEC calls for proposals do reflect policy priorities, the effective budget allocation largely depends on the thematic and quality of the proposals submitted by applicants.

Financial instruments

Funding is provided primarily through ***action grants*** awarded on the basis of calls for proposals. Three types of grants are used, namely:

(i) action grants to co-finance specific initiatives awarded through open calls for proposals (CFP);

(ii) action grants awarded through restricted CFP reserved to public sector entities with whom 'framework partnership agreements' (FPA) have been established; and

(iii) operating grants aimed at supporting the activities of non governmental organisations (NGO) with a European dimension.

Other funding channels include: ***public procurement contracts***, involving open calls for tenders and ***administrative arrangements*** with the Joint Research Centre (JRC).

EU Agencies, funded by an EU subsidy, are not entitled to apply under these programs for the activities they are responsible for, as that would constitute double funding. However, EUROPOL became an EU Agency only on 1 January 2010. Before that, being another type of legal entity (inter-governmental), it was indeed funded to carry out a number of projects. However, EU Agencies may participate in projects, provided that they pay for their own costs.

2.   FINANCIAL SUPPORT

2.1.   Activities

During the 2007 – 2009 period, the Programs cumulatively supported nearly ***400 projects*** and financed approximately ***150 procurement contracts***, worth a total of ***€ 213 million.*** ISEC allocations amounted to € 167 million for CIPS to € 46 million. The bulk of the funding went to some 280 action grants, accounting for 61% of total resources, followed by approximately 100 FPA grants, accounting for 24% of funds. Procurement accounted for about 10% of the funds.

Nature of Activities

The Programs provide support for; a ***wide range of activities***, from training to the purchase of equipment, and from the preparation of technical publications to assistance to cross border police operations (including the Joint Investigation Teams).

In the case of ***ISEC***, projects tend to concentrate in five main areas, namely

(i) ***tools and infrastructure***, which is the main output for 22% of the projects,

(ii) support to ***law enforcement operations*** (18%),

(iii) *training* programmes (17%),

(iv) *publications* (17%), and

(v) *conferences* (14%).

For *CIPS,*

(i) 23% of projects have an *operational cooperation and coordination* component,

(ii)15% are focused on the *development and creation of networks*,

(iii) 49% of projects are involved in *technology and methodology transfer* and

(iv) another 44% deal with *analytical activities.*

Coherence with Objectives and Priorities

For *ISEC*, the legal basis identifies four objectives, of which two refer to operational approaches (the development of horizontal methods of crime prevention and the development of cooperation among law enforcement agencies and other bodies) and two relate to specific groups of beneficiaries (the development of best practices for the protection and support of witnesses and crime victims). Many projects target more than one objective, with the vast majority focusing on horizontal methods of crime prevention (targeted by 79% of projects) and/or on cooperation between law enforcement agencies and other bodies (74%). Protection of victims of crime and protection of witnesses tend to attract much less attention, being the focus of, respectively, 14% and 3% of projects.

For *CIPS*, reference is made to seven objectives, subsumed under two broad categories, i.e. the prevention and preparedness of risks and consequence management. Three quarters of the projects are linked to both broad objectives. Overall, prevention and preparedness is targeted by 92% of the projects, while consequence management is an objective pursued by 63% of them.

Both Programmes present a *high level of trans-nationality*. Trans-national projects account for 80% of the projects in ISEC and 64% in CIPS. The transnational orientation of the Programmes is generally highly appreciated by stakeholders, who emphasize the importance of having the opportunity to test new cooperation agreements or, in many cases, to build on pre-existing longstanding co-operation. In fact, survey results reveal that some 90% of beneficiaries envisage a *continuation of trans-national cooperation in the future*, irrespective of any further participation in the Programmes. This is positive in that it points to, on one hand, the operational impact of the Programmes in the Member States and, on the other hand, their contribution towards the establishment of a trans-national approach.

Target Groups

The Programmes are aimed at a varied audience, ranging from law enforcement officers to members of civil society organisations, and from researchers to legal practitioners.

Law enforcement officers are the main applying group in both ISEC and CIPS, accounting for, respectively, 38% and 41% of participants in projects funded under the Programmes. In relation to ISEC, other important applying groups include *NGOs and other civil society*

*organisation*s (12% of participants) and ***government officials in general*** (8%). Government officials (especially those working for security and safety-related agencies) are an important applying group also for CIPS (19%), followed by ***private sector representatives*** (10%). Many projects funded by the Programmes have been simultaneously addressed to several applying groups, thereby ***contributing to enhance mutual understanding and cross fertilization of experience***. In this respect, three types of connections are of particular relevance:

(i) the law enforcement – judiciary link, very common in ISEC projects;

(ii) the public-private link, particularly well developed in CIPS, and

(iii) the practice-science link, relevant for both Programmes.

Those are all target groups, but the above percentages reflect the number and quality of applications actually received under the calls for proposals.

Geographical coverage

In general, the geographical distribution of projects is fairly skewed, with a relatively small number of countries playing a leading role. In the case of ***ISEC***, four countries (Germany, Italy, Netherlands and UK) account for about 48% of all the projects and for 51% of project value. The degree of concentration is even greater in the case of ***CIPS***, with just two countries (Italy and Spain) accounting for 48% of projects and for 60% of projects value.

The nature of proposals submitted and approved is one factor contributing to explain the geographical distribution of ISEC/CIPS initiatives, especially in terms of value. For instance, in the case of ISEC, actions related to the implementation of the Prüm Treaty (which sometimes involve the purchase of equipment), the provision of support to Joint Investigation Teams (JIT) or the establishment of complex networks (e.g. FIU.NET) tend to request higher grant amounts. In the case of CIPS, the size of projects is mostly correlated with the nature of beneficiary organizations, i.e. larger projects tend to be proposed by commercial entities and/or research institutes, while projects promoted by public entities are comparatively smaller.

2.2.   Adequacy of programmes' financial support

For the **ISEC** programme, the following chart indicates the level of intervention among the various domains. For the period covered, the programme's activities correspond well with the EU's priorities and policies.

Figure 1 : ISEC Grants – Distribution by Domain of Intervention of the 334 funded projects
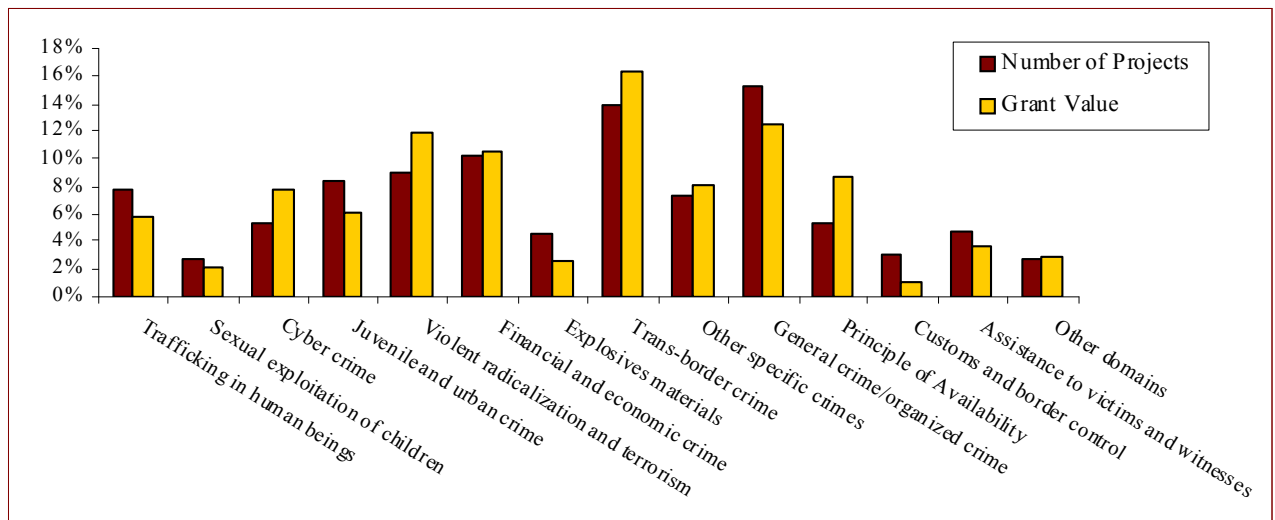
In 2008, the EU adopted an Action on enhancing the Security of Explosives which has been the basis for the funding of many projects. On the issue of CBRN threats, at the proposal of the Commission, the EU adopted a CBRN Action Plan in 2009, which forms the basis for many ISEC funded initiatives (both projects and studies). In relation to the implementation of the CBRN Action Plan, because of its strategic importance the Commission committed to making available up to 100 M€ until 2013. In addition anti-radicalisation measures are of strategic importance to the EU, as highlighted by the EU's Action Plan on Radicalisation and the strong emphasis placed on this issue by the Stockholm Programme.

The initial priorities of the ISEC programme have been *reconfirmed* in the Commission's communication of 22 November 2010 on the ***Internal Security Strategy in Action*** ("Internal Security Strategy") as part of the future strategic objectives and priority actions in the field of Internal Security. The Commission will ensure that future work programmes remain as close as possible to the Internal Security Strategy.

Also, these priorities correspond to a large extent with the priorities identified in the Hague Action Plan and with the priorities identified in the Stockholm Action Plan. As regards the fight against organised crime, ISEC has sponsored activities which contributed to implementing the "strategic concept on tackling organised crime", adopted by the Commission in 2005 in the context of the Hague Action Plan. For example, in May 2007, the Commission made a decision to propose a series of measures for better coordination in the fight against cyber crime, both between law enforcement authorities and also between law enforcement authorities and the private sector. ISEC subsequently funded two projects on cybercrime investigation and various specialised conferences and workshops for law enforcement officers. The ISEC programme funded the establishment of the Financial Coalition against Child Pornography which enables credit card issuers, law enforcement bodies and internet service providers to work together to eliminate commercial child pornography by taking action on the payment systems used to fund these illegal operations.

The "principle of availability" domain, under which information that is available to law enforcement authorities in one Member State should also be made accessible for equivalent authorities in other Member States, has not attracted as many projects as could have been expected. This can be explained by the fact that the present report covers the period 2007-

2009, which corresponds with the beginning of the implementation of the Prüm Decision[3] (deadline for implementation August 2011). Firm conclusions about the impact of ISEC funding in this area cannot be drawn yet, in particular since the Prüm Decision was adopted only in June 2008 and since the relevant funded projects are on-going. Preliminary analysis suggests, however, that the ISEC programme is supporting the implementation of the Prüm Decision.

As reaffirmed in the Internal Security Strategy, cross-border police cooperation, and in particular the setting up of Joint Investigation Team's ("JIT's"), are and will remain very important in the fight against international organised crime.

For the **CIPS** programme, the level of intervention among the various domains is as follows.

Figure 2 : CIPS Grants – Distribution by Domain of Intervention of the 65 funded projects
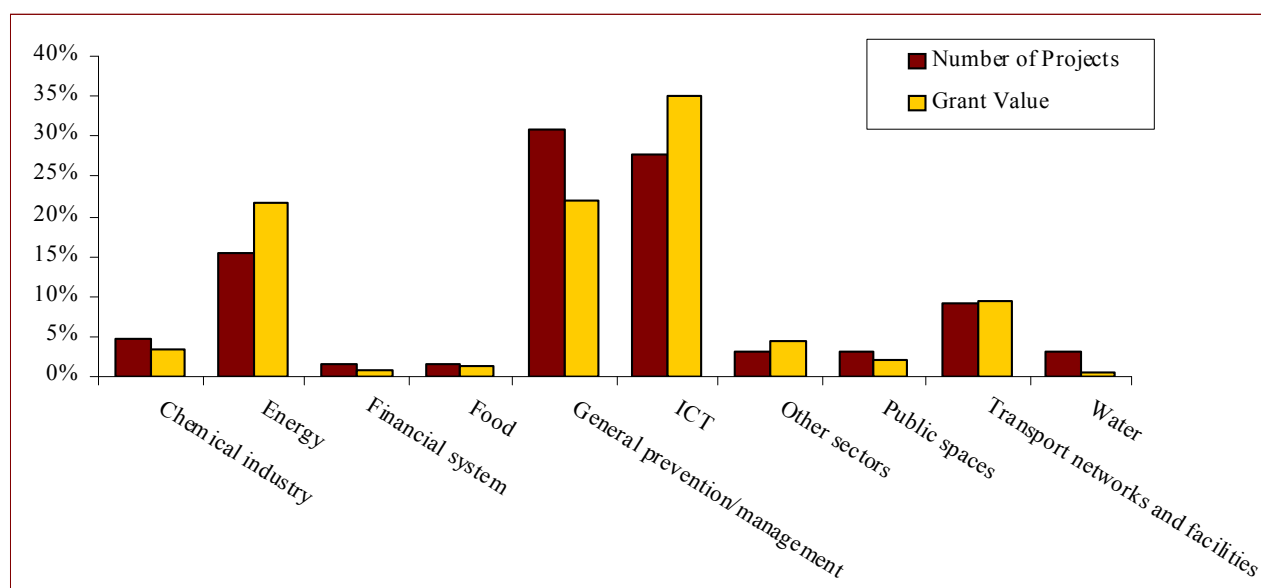
This corresponds to the priorities and policies agreed in the field of Critical Infrastructure Protection[4], which have been confirmed in the Stockholm Programme. The Commission's communication of 22 November 2010 has reconfirmed the overall importance of critical infrastructure protection, especially for energy, transport and ICT sectors.

The Commission will ensure that future work programmes in that field remain closely aligned with the Internal Security Strategy.

3. OUTPUTS AND OUTCOME : MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

3.1. Data and examples

In general, projects supported by the Programmes are *largely effective in delivering their planned outputs*. However, about two thirds of projects are not expected to use all the funds

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[3] Council Decision 2008/615/JHA of 23 June 2008 on the stepping up of cross-border cooperation, particularly in combating terrorism and cross-border crime.

[4] e.g. EPCIP, Council Directive 2008/114/EC of 8 December 2008 on the identification and designation of European Critical Infrastructure and the assessment of the need to improve their protection

available, mostly because there was an initial overestimation of costs, but also due to the cancellation of some activities. In addition, relatively lengthy administrative application procedures which are typically not aligned with the administrative budgetary procedures in Member States may have had a negative impact on the overall number of applications received. Consequently, *both programmes present an under-spending situation report of their payment appropriations every year*.

Nevertheless**, the results** sought and achieved reflect the varied nature of the projects funded, ranging from operational outcomes (e.g. arrests, seizures etc.) to less tangible results such as awareness-raising, development of new approaches. The most common types of results achieved are the *development and adoption of new tools and methodologies, such as databases,* and the *spreading of best practices*, but many projects also contributed to *furthering the knowledge of specific issues and/or solutions*. Although rarely a prime target, an increased mutual understanding of policies and legal and administrative systems across MS is also a common and widely valued 'by-product' of many projects. In certain cases, projects with an operational orientation have achieved very tangible results (examples below). Overall, the *level of achievement of results is broadly satisfactory*, being in line with initial expectations in 60% of projects and better than expected for another 34%.

Examples of projects' outcome in various areas

Police cooperation. A Joint Customs Operation involving several countries led to the seizure of 4.5 tons of cocaine. Another project supported an international operation against child trafficking. The operation is not yet completed but, by mid 2010, 26 of the some 90 suspects investigated had already been charged. Similarly, another operation against Eastern European gangs involved in illegal immigration led to the arrest of some 90 people.

Mutual understanding. This is usually a by-product but is still an important result. For example, projects aimed at networking (such as the ATLAS network of European anti-terrorism units and the Financial Investigation Units (FIU) Network) had an important role in increasing the knowledge about the different systems and legal frameworks existing in the various Member States. In these cases, first contacts and attempts to network yielded strong permanent structures. The same is true, in the terrorism field, for studies produced on radicalisation topics.

Cross-border Cooperation. An example of a **Joint Investigation Team** (JIT) is the "*COSPOL FII*" project, aimed at addressing irregular migration from Eastern Europe and dismantling the criminal gangs involved. The projects consisted of four operations involving coordinated actions in 10 countries, which led to more than 90 arrests, the interception of smuggled immigrants at the EU external borders, and the seizure of cash, vehicles, forged documents, equipment etc. An example of cross-border coordinated activities aimed at combating illicit drug trafficking is the "MAOC-N" project (Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre-Narcotics) which has contributed to the seizure of 52 tons of cocaine and 47 tons of cannabis since 2007. Also, important results in the field of **intelligence and information sharing** were achieved through the various Treaty of Prüm-related projects, such as "*Prüm implementation into EU legislation*", and "*Development of software applications to enable and improve the automated exchange and comparison of DNA profile data and vehicle ID data*", and "*Extension of the National Communication Interface NG SIS II*".

Assistance to victims. The project "*Crime Victims Support Network*" set up 15 Centres across the country that so far made approximately 37,000 interventions (legal assistance, psychological support etc.). Similarly, the project on the "*Implementation of messages for an Integral Monitoring System in cases of Gender and Domestic Violence*" contributed to the effective prevention of gender violence. Statistics indicate a significant reduction in the victims of gender violence in each country.

> ***Stakeholders' and policy-makers awareness*** of specific topics. Numerous projects consisted essentially on the organization of conferences', fora and symposia, sometimes on a yearly basis. Examples include the International Symposia for Bomb Investigators and Bomb Disposal Personnel, the Fora on Cybercrime, and the Anti-corruption Summer School. This category of outcomes also includes studies aimed at furthering knowledge on specific topics. Some JRC studies are among the most sizeable, namely: (i) the study on the "Identification and Assessment of European Critical Infrastructures"; and on the (ii) "Illicit Trafficking Radiation Detection Assessment Programme".
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> The CIPS Programme has financed the preparatory actions for the establishment and the operations of the ***Critical Infrastructure Warning Information Network*** (CIWIN). About €0.7 million was allocated to this end through public procurement contracts.

Impact. The majority of projects funded by the Programmes are still under implementation or have just been completed, and the assessment of impact is necessarily of a tentative nature. The achievement of ***changes in operational procedures/practices*** emerges as the most common impact (expected to occur in 87% of projects), but a majority of projects are also expected to achieve a ***capacity building effect*** and to assist in ***shaping the policy debate***. Of particular importance is the contribution of many projects to the ***implementation of specific EU policies or pieces of legislation***. These include the Prüm Decision (which has been extensively supported by ISEC), the Council Framework Decision on violence against children[5] (supported through studies and operational projects), the Decision on financial intelligence[6] (supported through the funding of the FIU.NET)[7], and the European Programme for Critical Infrastructure Protection [8](to which several CIPS projects contributed).

Sustainability. 70% of the beneficiaries having received a grant consider difficult to ensure the sustainability of their project results in case of no further allocation of EU funding. This is largely the consequence of the recent financial crisis that is threatening the ***budgets of many public entities*** and that could prevent the expenditure required to maintain and/or advance what has been achieved with the support of the Programmes.

Visibility and Reputation. ISEC, and particularly CIPS, are ***fairly well-known in the relevant professional circles***, although about one quarter of people surveyed believes that information about the Programmes is still scarce and does not sufficiently reach out to the potentially interested audience. The Info Days held in 2008 and 2009 contributed to the dissemination of information about the Programmes although beneficiaries have expressed that more outreach activities would be welcomed.

Implementation issues.

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[5] COUNCIL FRAMEWORK DECISION 2004/68/JHA of 22 December 2003 on combating the sexual exploitation of children and child pornography

[6] Directive 2005/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 October 2005 on the prevention of the use of the financial system for the purpose of money laundering and terrorist financing

[7] FIU.NET is a secured decentralised computer network between Financial Intelligence Units (FIU) within the EU for the exchange of subject data. FIU.NET encourages cooperation and enables FIUs to exchange intelligence quickly, securely and effectively. The main purpose of this cooperation is to further the fight against money laundering and terrorist financing.

[8] Communication from the Commission of 12 December 2006 on a European Programme for Critical Infrastructure Protection [COM(2006) 786 final

About 75% of the surveyed projects expressed difficulties of different nature during the implementation affecting to a varying extent the achievement of planned results, e.g. delays in the approval of projects and the finalization of grant agreements which have impacted beneficiaries' *resource planning and implementation timetable.* Other difficulties incurred by beneficiaries include increased / unexpected costs, sub-optimal commitment from the project partners, wrong assumptions and other changes occurred during the implementation that required a revision of activities and/or of planned outcomes.

3.2. Adequacy of programme's outputs and outcome

ISEC and CIPS programmes delivered the desired outcomes reasonably well. The chart below illustrates the various outputs, be it as a primary (desired) outcome or as a secondary (spin-off) one.

Figure 3 : Classification of ISEC and CIPS projects' outputs
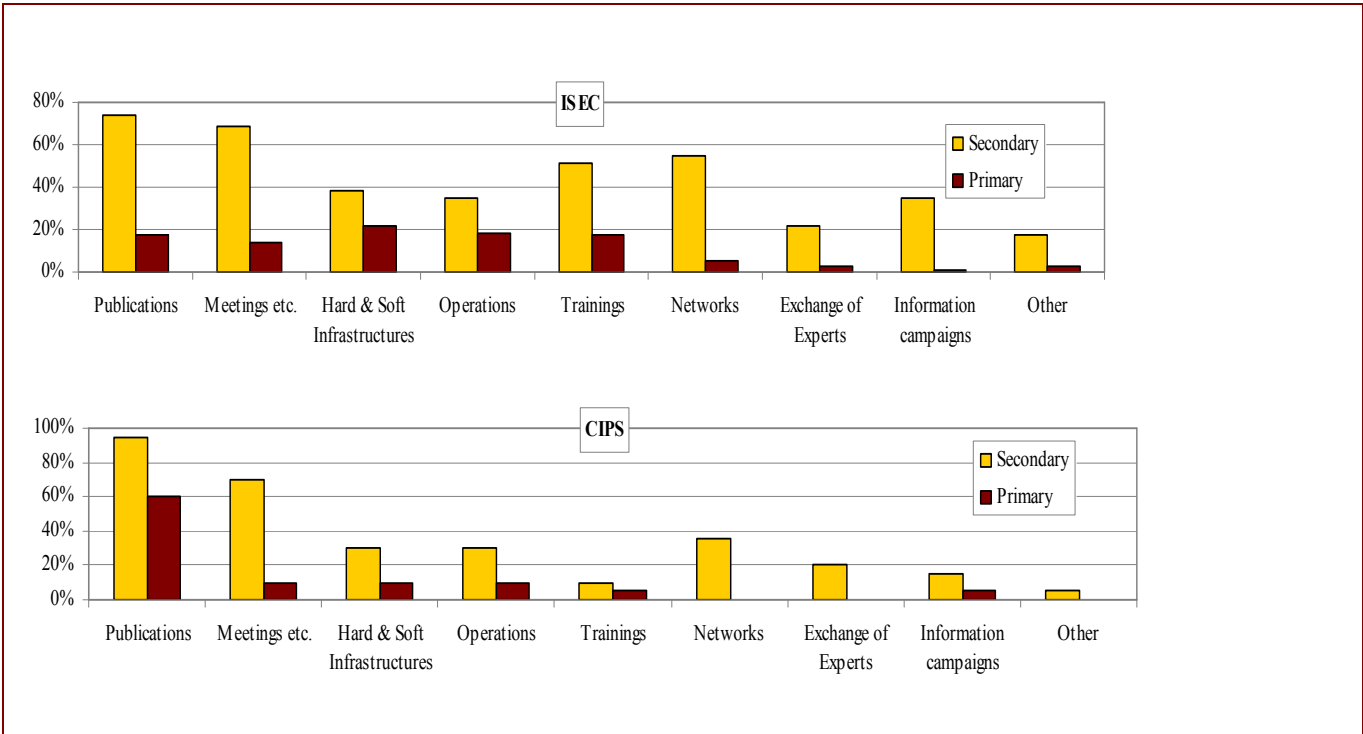
Percentages represent the proportion of projects presenting that particular output.

For secondary outputs (by-products), multiple items are possible, so the total does not add up to 100%.

Through the ISEC programme the Commission contributes to:

- The full implementation by Member States of the Prüm Decision (Council Decision 2008/615/JHA and Council Decision 2008/616) on the stepping up of cross-border cooperation, particularly in combating terrorism and cross-border crime;

- Better law enforcement cooperation through setting up and operational development of Police Custom Cooperation Centres[9];

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[9]   Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: enhancing police and customs cooperation in the European Union [COM (2004) 376 final

- The implementation of the 2005 – 2009 EU plan on best practices, standards and procedures for combating and preventing trafficking in human beings through projects aimed at promoting the exchange of best practice and information, studies and research into various aspects of the trafficking phenomenon, public awareness campaigns, training, the collection of data and enhancing forms of international cooperation.

- The fight against cybercrime and on-line child sexual abuse through projects on cybercrime investigation techniques, awareness raising campaigns on the protection of child victims, establishing international exchange of best practices and know how.

- The promotion of a horizontal approach on crime prevention through events focused on the exchange of best practices, research and studies on crime prevention techniques; knowledge transfer and operational co-operation on crime prevention.

- The prevention and fight against financial crime, including money laundering, fraud and the promotion of financial investigation techniques through expert gatherings aimed at the exchange of best practices and information, operational cooperation; training programmes on financial analysis and studies and research on new types of financial crimes and techniques.

- The setting up of Joint Investigation Teams in the fight against cross-border organised crime.

Through the CIPS programme, the Commission contributes in various ways to the implementation of *European Programme for Critical Infrastructure Protection (EPCIP)*[10], and of sectoral EU rules such as the Council Directive On the identification and designation of European critical infrastructures and the assessment of the need to improve their protection[11].

Both the ISEC and the CIPS programme have proven more successful at addressing infrastructural inadequacies – like the interconnection of Member States forces within the context of the Prüm decision or/and SIENA[12]– than at supporting operational police cooperation. However, the way of addressing this imbalance lies not in an amendment to the current objectives of the programme but in a deeper reflexion on procedural and administrative solutions to deal with programmes objectives, policy needs, and stakeholder requests in an integrated and smooth manner, taking into account the available human resources and within the respect of the financial rules.

4. IMPROVING PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

Building on the findings illustrated in the previous sections, it can be assessed that the implementation of both programmes was reasonably successful. As implementation mechanisms are key to the programme's success, this section addresses the operational aspects that the Commission - or stakeholders – consider it is important to improve, and illustrates some positive changes already in place.

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[10]   COM (2006)786 final
[11]   COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 2008/114/EC
[12]   SIENA supports Europe's Distributed Computing Infrastructure (DCI) initiatives and the European Commission in working towards the delivery of a future e-Infrastructures roadmap that will be aligned with the needs of European and national initiatives.

1. It is necessary to enable potential applicants to plan their participation in Calls for proposals (CFP) regarding the mobilization of human resources for proposal preparation and especially for securing the co-financing, more effectively. In order to achieve this, the Commission will **improve the planning of its CFP** by ensuring that they are published as announced in the Annual Work Programme. This should ensure that the potential applicants are aware and can prepare their proposals in accordance with these dates and their own programming. In more general terms, an effort should be made to *improve the timing of CFP*, in order to avoid the launch of calls too close to each other, as well as calls with deadlines falling in the last months of the year which cannot be answered by public entities. In other words, a greater effort should be made at the level of the initial planning, and on sticking such initial planning.

Related to this, the *Info Days* held in 2008 and 2009 contributed to the dissemination of information about the Programmes and particularly, to improving the understanding of practical aspects of the CFP such as project implementation, financial aspects, etc. However, it is recognised that visits to Brussels involve a not-insignificant investment in terms of time and travel costs, and this will inevitably limit attendance from potentially interested applicants across the EU. In this respect, better results could be achieved through the *organisation of a certain number of Info Days in individual countries*. In line with the need for greater MS involvement in Programmes' activities, the *Info Days should be organised in close collaboration with MS authorities*, who should be asked to disseminate information among relevant circles, send invitations to selected stakeholders, and provide logistical support.

2. Project Budget Review Exercise. The initial practice of extensively revising the budgets proposed by the applicants following the notification of awards and before the finalisation of the grant agreements was absorbing a considerable amount of time and as a result is lengthening the overall processing time. That practice of reviewing proposals' budgets is not without merit, as in the past it allowed for the reduction of some items to more realistic levels and/or the identification of ineligible costs, especially since around 2/3 of the project budgets are overestimated. However, cost effectiveness considerations suggest speeding up the process and even a radical change in the approach. *From 2010, a new mechanism was put in place* to address this concern, whereby the budget examination takes place within the evaluation process so that, once notified whether they are accepted or not, beneficiaries are also simultaneously informed about the quality/status of their budget. The Commission proposes changes (and not merely notices mistakes or inconsistencies) to the applicant that, if accepted, will be included in the grant agreement that can therefore be sent *within days/weeks* (instead of months, as under the initial practice described above)*.* The entire evaluation process currently allows the contracting of beneficiaries *within 6 months* of the deadline of the call for proposals, as compared to 12 in 2008 and 10 in 2009.

As a 6 months period remains a long time to approve projects, esp. for smaller ones and may affect the availability of Member State co-financing, the Commission is considering ways to *further reduce processing periods* and to allow a smoother implementation of the programme activities in line with the expectations of the stakeholders and meeting the needs to better coordinate with the budgetary programming within the Member States. In that context, the Commission has launched targeted call for proposals in some policy areas and is considering the possibility of authorising simplified procedures by signing **framework agreements** with specialised stakeholders or national administrations to ease the funding of projects in dedicated policy areas.

In the future, the Commission will also analyse the feasibility of further simplification of the application process, especially concerning budgets. The idea is to introduce the concept of *lump sums* for budget items encompassing a large number of small sub items, for which it is impractical to obtain detailed information ex ante. In addition, whenever projects involve carrying out certain types of standard activities, for example workshops/seminars and conferences, it should be possible to resort to *flat rates* (i.e. a certain amount per participant/day).

3. Monitoring System. The current lack of a project monitoring mechanism does not allow for the timely adoption of corrective actions. The modification of grant agreements to include an obligation that beneficiaries submit periodical *monitoring reports* has been discussed and could be adopted commencing in 2011. In order to achieve their intended purpose without constituting an excessive burden on applicants, monitoring reports should be relatively *short documents*, primarily *focusing on substantive aspects*, and submitted only at *discrete time intervals* (e.g. annually). In order to avoid the monitoring obligation becoming a mere administrative step, the review of monitoring reports should *be done by Commission officials or mandated policy experts*. This should probably include *visits to the premises of beneficiaries* so as to get a better understanding about what is in progress/being developed/being achieved. Also, the Commission representative could potentially discuss difficulties encountered by the beneficiaries and advise them accordingly.

4. Information content of the website. The DG HOME website is largely regarded as uninformative, and this extends to the 'Funding' section that should provide information on the ISEC and CIPS Programmes. The material available for both Programmes basically consists of only the CFP notices and of the AWP. In this respect, two projects appear particularly useful:

Timely publication of the results of CFP on the website. The timely publication of CFP results is regarded as important by MS, who consider it as an important contribution towards greater transparency in the management of the Programmes. Technically, this is quite simple to implement, as it involves the simple uploading of an existing document;

Publication of information on projects and beneficiaries on the website. This type of information is deemed useful by many beneficiaries, as it would allow for an easier identification of *potential partners* for the submission of applications as well as for the identification of possible synergies or overlaps. In practical terms, this could be done by including in the DG HOME's website a *database of projects*, with information on selected aspects, such as the identity of beneficiary, a description of the project, the nature of activities undertaken, the countries involved, etc. There currently exists a prototype database including these elements. The Commission envisages the upload of this useful information on its website in 2011.

5. The range of *instruments available* is broadly sufficient to enable the achievement of the objectives of the Programmes, and the same can be said regarding the budgetary allocations reserved for the various instruments. Nonetheless, some changes appear to be advisable in the case of two ISEC instruments:

• *Discontinuation of ISEC Operating Grants*. This instrument has so far been largely unsuccessful, with only one operating grant awarded over a period of three years. This has come at a considerable cost in terms of human resources devoted to the analysis of applications. Available evidence indicates that only a minority of NGOs are in a position to meet the eligibility and award criteria, and therefore demand is also likely to remain low in

the foreseeable future. This definitely *suggests the discontinuation of CFP for operating grants*.

• *Improvement of the Framework Partnership concept.* The concept of a 'framework partnership agreement' is invariably appreciated by stakeholders, and both beneficiaries and MS representatives are virtually unanimous in stressing the importance of building a long term relationship with the European Union. However, when the attention is focused on the operating modalities currently adopted, the assessment is generally less positive, leading to the impression that FPA are not distinct from 'standard' action grants. Some recent improvements took place in 2010 (e.g. simplification of application forms, more possibilities to utilize sub-contractors).

This requires the development of an 'enhanced' version of the FPA, allowing for a greater degree of flexibility in the type of activities to be performed and in use of resources. This instrument could be reserved to projects promoted by a group of public sector organisations that are willing to conduct a certain number of cross-border investigations and who could be duly pre-qualified as framework partners. The greater flexibility should be reflected in contractual arrangements, which should explicitly allow for:

(i) a broad definition of the scope of activities, so as to allow for rapid adjustment according to evolving needs,

(ii) an equally broad definition of budget items, in order to facilitate the reallocation of resources,

(iii) indicative allocation of funding among partners, again to facilitate reallocation adjustment depending upon needs, and

(iv) the possibility of freely modifying the list of personnel involved in operations.

5. FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

Up to now, financial support under the ISEC and CIPS programmes has covered a variety of areas of intervention. This support underlines the increasing importance of the Union's policies in the area of Freedom, Security and Justice, with the Lisbon Treaty in force and with the guidance provided by the Stockholm Programme and its Action Plan. The recent communication of the Commission from 22 November 2010, "*The EU Internal Security Strategy in Action: Five steps towards a more secure Europe,*" proposes, over the next four years, five strategic objectives for internal security and suggests under each of these objectives concrete actions. This communication in particular will orient priorities for financial support by the Union within the framework of the existing ISEC and CIPS programmes.

Based on the reasonable success of both programmes, the Commission suggests for the remaining period until end 2013 a continuation of the programmes without modifying the current legal bases, whilst addressing the concerns identified in the evaluation report and improving the grant approval procedure and evaluation process to enhance budget consumption of the two programmes and stimulate the submission of high quality projects.

However, when contemplating the next multi-annual financial framework for 2014-2020 and the new challenges to be undertaken with limited human resources, new approaches would

need to be envisaged. The Commission is currently reflecting on the future set-up of EU-funding in the area of Home Affairs, in particular with regard to funding priorities, delivery mechanisms and budgetary allocations. When considering various options for future EU-funding as from 2014 the valuable experience acquired with the ISEC and the CIPS programmes should be taken into account including solutions identified to address shortcoming identified in the implementation of these programmes. For the time being, the Commission intends to further implement the current programmes taking into account this evaluation report and focussing on the new policy priorities in the area of Home Affairs, as laid down in particular in its communication "*The EU Internal Security Strategy in Action: Five steps towards a more secure Europe",* insofar as these priorities are not covered by other sector-specific funding mechanisms and programmes.