**Follow up to the European Parliament non-legislative resolution
 on the EU Security Union Strategy**

1. **Resolution tabled pursuant to Rule 132(2) of the European Parliament's Rules of Procedure**
2. **Reference numbers:** 2020/2791 (RSP) / B9-0421/2020 / P9\_TA-PROV(2020)0378
3. **Date of adoption of the resolution:** 17 December 2020
4. **Competent Parliamentary Committee:** Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE)
5. **Brief analysis/ assessment of the resolution and requests made in it:**

The resolution addresses the various existing and emerging security challenges, as identified by the Commission for the period 2020-2025 in the EU Security Union strategy, including the fight against terrorism and organised crime, child abuse on and offline, disinformation and hybrid threats, migrant smuggling, action against illicit drugs and firearms trafficking.

Underscoring that the Union’s security policy must remain grounded in EU fundamental values and that new legislative proposals should assess fundamental rights as part of full impact assessments, the resolution welcomes the new EU Security Union Strategy and a number of initiatives adopted by the Commission, including the recent Counter-Terrorism Agenda, and calls for effective implementation and evaluation of EU legislation. On the recently tabled proposal to update the mandate of the European Union’s law enforcement agency (Europol), the resolution notes that the agency should have suitable tools to cooperate more effectively with all partners. The resolution also calls for adequate funding and staffing of EU agencies in the Justice and Home Affairs field, stressing the importance of judicial cooperation in criminal matters. Other issues addressed include end-to-end encryption, new and evolving technologies and 5G infrastructure. The resolution also stresses that gender equality is crucial to combat radicalisation, reduce domestic violence and child abuse.

The resolution makes a number of requests to the Commission and to the Member States. The Commission addresses here only those recommendations falling within its competences.

1. **Response to the requests and overview of the action taken, or intended to be taken, by the Commission:**

**Paragraph 3**

Directive (EU) 2017/541 on combating terrorism of March 2017 is the main criminal justice instrument at EU level to counter terrorism. The new Counter-Terrorism Agenda adopted on 9 December 2020 stresses the need to continue to place a relentless emphasis on implementation and enforcement. It also highlights the fundamental importance of ensuring that there are no gaps or delays in how key instruments are applied, including the Directive on combating terrorism, but also the Firearms Directive and the legal framework on combating money laundering and terrorist financing. In a report adopted on 30 September 2020, the Commission assessed the measures that Member States have taken to comply with Directive (EU) 2017/541. It concluded that transposition into national law has helped to strengthen Member States' criminal justice approach to terrorism and the rights afforded to victims of terrorism, but that gaps persist. For example, not all Member States criminalise in their national law all the offences listed in the directive as terrorist offences, as well as the provisions to criminalise travel for terrorism purposes and address the financing of terrorism, as well as to support victims. The Commission is currently carrying out further analysis of the national measures notified by the Member States for the transposition of the directive. Following this assessment, the Commission may launch new infringement procedures for non-conformity with the directive. An evaluation report on the directive will be adopted in 2021 and will review possible options to ensure the remaining gaps are closed down.

**Paragraph 4**

The Commission agrees on the need to implement a holistic approach to preventing and countering radicalisation, recognising that radicalisation leading to violent extremism and terrorism is a multidimensional and cross-border phenomenon. Promoting inclusion and providing opportunities for young people at risk through education, culture, youth and sports can further contribute to the prevention of radicalisation, and cohesion inside the EU. The Commission also endorses the importance of developing critical thinking as set out in paragraph 5.

The recent Counter-Terrorism Agenda underscores that part of preventing attacks from occurring is to counter radicalisation and extremist ideologies before they take root. It makes clear that respect for the European way of life, its democratic values and all it represents is a necessity. The Agenda sets out ways of supporting local actors and building more resilient communities as a matter of priority, in close coordination with Member States, taking into account that some attacks have also been carried out by Europeans, raised within our societies, who were radicalised without ever having visited a conflict zone.

The Agenda also recognises that our cities need to have better access to funding, guidance and training to address current challenges and to increase their resilience. The Commission is supporting local coordinators through the Radicalisation Awareness Network. Furthermore, under the initiative “EU Cities against Radicalisation”, the Commission is fostering strategic dialogues among cities.

The Commission will reinforce its support to Member States and other stakeholders’ efforts in the field of integration and social inclusion. As well as the work under the Pillar of Social Rights, the measures included in the Action Plan on integration and inclusion reflect the risk noted in paragraph 6 that exclusion acts as a catalyst for radicalisation.

**Paragraph 6**

The Commission agrees on the need to swiftly identify and remove terrorist content online. The political agreement on the proposed regulation on addressing the dissemination of terrorist content online reached in December last year and the upcoming adoption paves the way for predictable and effective measures to ensure the swift removal of such content following a removal order or through measures that platforms adopt to protect their services against the dissemination of terrorist content. Once adopted, the Commission will support online service providers and national authorities in the effective application of the regulation.

**Paragraph 8**

The Commission intends to adopt an EU agenda for tackling organised crime and a strategic approach against trafficking in human beings in 2021, in order to step up actions to successfully fight organised crime. The Commission also intends to table by the end of 2021 legislative initiatives in order to strengthen asset recovery; freezing and confiscation of the proceeds generated is one of the most effective tools to tackle organised crime.

Moreover, in order to strengthen and increase the visibility of the current cooperation models in the security area such as the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT), the Commission will seek to articulate them further, whenever appropriate, with relevant EU Security Policies. This includes the upcoming “agenda for tackling organised crime”, and the various other Action Plans and initiatives announced in the EU Security Union Strategy 2020-2025.

**Paragraphs 9 and 10**

The Commission committed in its Action Plan of 7 May 2020 to deliver a comprehensive approach to preventing and fighting money laundering and terrorist financing, which will strengthen EU rules, introduce EU-level structures in this area, improve coordination and cooperation between competent authorities and with the private sector and enhance the role of the EU in the setting of standards at global level.

The transposition deadline for the 5th Anti- Money Laundering Directive expired on 10 January 2020 and the Commission launched infringement proceedings against 17 Member States. The adoption of the Anti-money laundering legislative package is planned for Spring 2021.

With regard to the prevention and fight against corruption, this will be subject to regular monitoring and assessment of all Member States’ legal and institutional framework under the newly established Rule of law mechanism.

As for the MFF 2021-2027 and the Recovery and Resiliency Facility and in line with paragraphs 30 to 33 of the Interinstitutional Agreement, the Commission will work with Member States to enhance the quality and interoperability of the data on EU beneficiaries, in an effort to ensure an additional layer of EU budget protection. The aim is to require Member States to collect relevant data on the persons ultimately benefitting from EU funding.

**Paragraph 11**

On 20 October 2020, the Commission opened infringement procedures against the investor citizenship schemes operated by Malta and Cyprus, and sent a political letter to Bulgaria urging it to phase out its similar yet significantly smaller scheme. The Commission is currently assessing the replies of the three Member States and will take appropriate further steps. As far as a possible legislative proposal is concerned, the Commission notes according to established case-law, it is for each Member State, having due regard to EU law, to lay down the conditions for the acquisition and loss of nationality (Case C‑221/17, paragraph 30 and case-law cited).

Investor residence schemes do not raise the same legal issues as citizenship schemes, also because the rights granted to residents are not the same as those acquired when becoming a citizen. However, there is often a close interaction between the two since residence can be a prerequisite for citizenship acquisition. Moreover, as highlighted in the 2019 report on investor citizenship and residence schemes, these schemes entail similar inherent risks, in particular as regards security, money laundering, tax evasion and corruption.

Residence permits for foreign investors are not regulated at EU level and remain governed by national law. Member States remain free to regulate admission conditions and rights for categories not covered under EU law, in the absence of harmonisation at EU level. Nevertheless, as these schemes interact with EU legislation, the Commission continues to closely monitor them and their application to ensure full compliance with EU law and will take necessary actions as appropriate.

**Paragraphs 12, 14 and 15**

Child sexual abuse online and offline continues to be a growing phenomenon. As pointed out in the resolution, the Commission has put forward an EU Strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse and intends to present a new comprehensive legislative proposal requiring service providers to detect and report child sexual abuse online in 2021. The Commission has started the preparatory work with the publication of an inception impact assessment. The Commission’s services will prepare a thorough impact assessment that will assess fundamental rights and that will take into account the need to ensure that any impact upon privacy that would arise as a result of obligations to detect and report child sexual abuse online would be strictly limited to what is necessary and proportionate. As per the EU Strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse, the impact assessment will consider the possible creation of a European centre to prevent and counter child sexual abuse.

The EU Strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse also contains important initiatives focused on prevention, such as the creation of a prevention network of practitioners and researchers, on which the Commission is already working.

To avoid the risk of a gap until this long-term legislative solution is adopted and implemented, the co-legislators are negotiating the Commission’s proposed regulation on a temporary derogation from certain provisions of Directive 2002/58/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the use of technologies by number-independent interpersonal communications service providers for the processing of personal and other data for the purpose of combatting child sexual abuse online (COM(2020)568). The goal of this interim legislation is to enable, under certain conditions, the continuation of certain measures of certain online communication services to detect, remove and report child sexual abuse online provided that these measures are lawful.

Progress is also needed on the implementation of the 2011 Directive on combating child sexual abuse. As highlighted in the first Progress Report under the Security Union Strategy, the areas in which efforts are still needed include prevention, substantive criminal law, assistance, support and protection measures for child victims. Since 2019, the Commission has opened infringement procedures against 23 Member States. The Commission will continue to work closely with Member States to resolve all remaining issues as a matter of priority and ensure complete implementation of and full compliance. The Commission will also support Member States’ work in this area by continuing to facilitate the exchange of best practices and lessons learned. The Commission will also launch as a matter of priority a study to identify legislative and implementation gaps, best practices and priority actions at EU level.

Under the current Commission, the Vice-President for Demography and Democracy has been tasked to coordinate the EU action on children’s rights. This work includes the preparation of an EU Strategy on the rights of the child, which is planned for adoption on 24 March 2021.

Furthermore, in its Communication on ‘2030 Digital Compass: the European way for the Digital Decade’ (COM(2021) 118 final), the Commission referred to the protection and empowerment of children in the online space, and to a secure and trusted online environment as principles that could be included in a possible set of digital principles and rights. The Commission will propose to include such a set of principles and rights in an interinstitutional solemn declaration between the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council. The Commission hopes to achieve decisive progress with the other institutions on such declaration by the end of 2021.

**Paragraph 16**

As underscored in the resolution, encryption plays a fundamental role in ensuring strong cybersecurity and the effective protection of fundamental rights, such as privacy, including the confidentiality of communications and protection of personal data, and in ensuring trust in services and products based on encryption technologies, such as digital identity solutions. At the same time, it can also be used to conceal electronic evidence from law enforcement and the judiciary, making it difficult to investigate, detect, and prosecute crime. The Commission will work with Member States to identify possible legal, operational, and technical solutions for lawful access to electronic information in encrypted environments and promote an approach, which both maintains the effectiveness of encryption in protecting privacy and security of communications, while providing an effective response to crime and terrorism.

The Commission will further fund (via the Internal Security Fund) the development of specific training modules for law enforcement on encryption by the European Cybercrime Training and Education Group (ECTEG), which will then be delivered by the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL). The Commission will continue to support Europol’s and Eurojust’s (European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation) joint observatory function on encryption. This provides an objective outlook on the present and upcoming trends and threats with regard to criminal’s use of encryption, to help support policy developments in this area.

**Paragraph 17**

Combating disinformation is an important part of the holistic and comprehensive approach of the Security Union Strategy, which identifies disinformation as a potential hybrid threat, aiming at weakening social cohesion and curbing trust towards institutions. The Commission services and the European External Action Service (EEAS) have mapped the measures related to enhancing resilience and countering hybrid threats (SWD(2020)152). Among these, there is also the allocation of EU funding to support technologies and tools to detect and analyse disinformation. As noted in the resolution, the European Democracy Action Plan includes a comprehensive set of measures to deepen the EU’s work to combat disinformation.

**Paragraph 19**

The Commission agrees with the Parliament on the importance of secured critical infrastructure, including digital and communication infrastructure and therefore, in December 2020 the Commission presented two legislative proposals aiming at increasing the resilience of the physical and digital infrastructure (Revised Directive on Security of Network and Information Systems (NIS2) and Directive on the resilience of critical entities (CER)). It also agrees on the need to proactively plan for research, development and deployment of new technologies for ensuring EU internal security, with full respect of fundamental rights and European values. With the aim of maintaining EU’s technological edge and support its industrial base, the Commission intends to presented on 22 February the in 2021 an Action Plan on synergies between civil, defence and space industries, including as regards EU funding programmes and instruments.

Moreover, as highlighted in the new EU’s Cybersecurity Strategy, the Cybersecurity Industrial, Technology and Research Competence Centre and Network of National Coordination Centres should play a key role in developing the EU’s technological sovereignty in cybersecurity, building cyber capabilities to secure sensitive critical infrastructures such as 5G, and reduce dependence on other parts of the globe for the most crucial cybersecurity technologies.

Finally, in its Communication on ‘2030 Digital Compass: the European way for the Digital Decade’ (COM(2021) 118 final), the Commission identified secure and performant sustainable digital infrastructures as one of the four ‘cardinal points’ of a ‘Digital Compass’ to translate the EUʼs digital ambitions for 2030 into concrete targets and to ensure that these objectives are met.

**Paragraph 20**

In February 2020, in the Communication on "Shaping Europe's digital future", the Commission announced the review the 5G Action Plan with the aim to ensure that 5G unleashes its full potential contributing to the digital transformation of the European Union economy and society, attaining the objectives of digital technological autonomy, the Green Deal and Security Union. Security remains of a paramount concern, so the upcoming 5G policy initiatives will address 5G cybersecurity and strategic autonomy issues. Furthermore, the Commission will facilitate Europe’s technology capacities in 6G, via the “Smart Networks and Services partnership” in the context of Horizon Europe. The approach intends to cover a full supply chain, in view of reconstructing EU capabilities in domains such as devices and distributed computing, in addition to the connectivity domain, which is a domain of EU world-class expertise.

Under the new Cybersecurity Strategy, Member States, with the support of the Commission and ENISA, the EU Agency for Cybersecurity, are encouraged to complete the implementation of the EU 5G Toolbox, a comprehensive and objective risk-based approach for the security of 5G and future generations of networks. The Strategy has also set out key objectives and actions aimed at continuing the coordinated work on 5G cybersecurity at
EU-level.

The report on the impact of the Commission Recommendation on the Cybersecurity of
5G networks published on 16 December 2020 shows that most EU Member States are well on track of implementing the recommended measures.

Looking forward, the EU and its Member States should aim to complete the implementation of the main Toolbox measures by the second quarter of 2021 and ensure that the identified risks have been mitigated adequately and in a coordinated way, in particular as regards the objective of minimising the exposure to high-risk suppliers and of avoiding dependency on these suppliers at national and Union level, and that any new significant development, or risk, is taken into account. The Commission also calls on Member States to continue monitoring together progress made and ensuring further alignment of approaches.

The EU’s 5G Toolbox approach has, moreover, raised interest in non-EU countries currently developing their approaches securing their communications networks.

**Paragraph 21**

The Commission is in the process of preparing the EU Action Plan against migrant smuggling for the period 2021-2025 and takes good note of the issues raised by the European Parliament.

The Commission welcomes the reference to the guidance that was adopted by the Commission on the implementation of Council Directive 2002/90/EC (the ‘Facilitation Directive’ C(2020)6470), together with the New Pact on Migration and Asylum (COM(2020) 609). In the guidance, the Commission invited Member States to distinguish between activities carried out for the purpose of humanitarian assistance and activities that aim to facilitate irregular entry or transit, in order to exclude the former from criminalisation.

**Paragraph 23**

With regard to the Parliament’s call to the Member States and the Commission to look into further actions to prevent firearms trafficking on the darknet, the Commission’s current focus is on the implementation of the preparatory action proposed by the European Parliament on monitoring of the darknet. Moreover, Europol will continue to assist Member States in gathering information and building a sound intelligence picture on the use of darknet for illicit trade of firearms.

**Paragraphs 24 and 25**

On 24 July 2020, the Commission adopted a new EU Agenda and Action Plan on Drugs 2021-2025 as part of the Security Union Strategy. Based on this initiative, the Council adopted on 18 December 2020 a new EU Drugs Strategy, which applies an evidence-based, integrated, balanced and multidisciplinary approach to drugs policy and takes into account the impacts of COVID-19.

Recognising the importance of rehabilitation as well as prevention and awareness raising of the adverse effects of drugs, the Commission proposed to prioritise targeted awareness raising including promoting healthy lifestyle choices among young people and children, and increasing the resilience of the population to drug problems. Effective awareness raising should be child-friendly, take advantage of digital communication and be informed by scientific evidence. The Commission is also looking into possibly revising the mandate of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA).

**Paragraph 26**

As noted, the Commission adopted on 9 December a proposal for a regulation to amend Regulation (EU) 2016/794, as regards Europol’s cooperation with private parties, the processing of large data sets by Europol in support of criminal investigations, and Europol’s role on research and innovation. This proposal to strengthen the Europol mandate is based on an impact assessment including a thorough consideration of fundamental rights, and notably of the rights to the protection of personal data and to respect for private life. To this end, the impact assessment includes in its annex 5, a detailed assessment of policy options in terms of their limitations on the exercise of fundamental rights. The proposal is also based on an assessment of the application of Regulation (EU) 2016/794, highlighting its achievements and identifying areas that require improvement, as contained in Annex 4 of the impact assessment. The proposal would provide Europol with capabilities and tools necessary to support Member States effectively in countering serious crime and terrorism. That includes, in response to a July 2020 European Parliament resolution, a clarification that Europol may request the competent authorities of a Member State to initiate an investigation of a crime which affects a common interest covered by a Union policy, without the requirement of a cross-border dimension of the crime concerned. The proposal would also strengthen the data protection framework applicable to Europol and strengthen parliamentary oversight. To that end, the proposal contains provisions to strengthen parliamentary oversight and accountability of Europol by introducing new reporting obligations for Europol to the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group. Finally, the proposal includes a provision requiring an assessment of the impact on fundamental rights three years after its entry into force.

Pursuant to Article 68 of Regulation (EU) 2016/794, the Commission shall submit an evaluation of Europol by 1 May 2022 and every five years after that. This evaluation shall assess, in particular, the impact, effectiveness and efficiency of Europol and of its working practices. The evaluation reports shall be submitted to the specialised Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group, which politically monitors Europol’s activities in fulfilling its mission, including as regards the impact of those activities on the fundamental rights and freedoms of natural persons. The reports are to be submitted also to the Council, the national parliaments and Europol’s Management Board. Where appropriate, the main findings of the evaluation reports are made public.

**Paragraphs 27, 28, 29 and 30**

The Commission is currently reviewing the Prüm Decisions to assess how they can be adapted to make them fit for the current and future operational needs of law enforcement authorities and to align those decisions with the EU data protection legal framework.

Under the Prüm Implementing Decision (Council Decision 2008/616/JHA), Member States are to compile statistics on the results of the automated data exchange and to forward these statistics annually to the Commission and to the General Secretariat, which produces a summary overview for the elapsed year. The figures on data exchange available since 2011 demonstrate that significant and increasing use is made of the Prüm instrument to step up cross-border cooperation, particularly in combating terrorism and cross-border crime. However, statistical data submitted by Member States is not always consistent and the Commission is in contact with Member States to identify the reasons for these shortcomings. In the context of the planned revision of the Prüm legal framework, the Commission is considering ways to improve the gathering of data regarding the use of Prüm from participating Member States and ensure meaningful and comprehensive statistics allowing for the necessary transparency.

The Commission can confirm that the revision of the Prüm Decisions, as well as of the Advanced Passenger Information (API) Directive, will be accompanied by a thorough impact assessment, including fundamental rights implications.

The Commission fully agrees on the importance to ensure proper and timely implementation of the new architecture for EU information systems and their interoperability. The works on the technical development and implementation of this new centralized system are currently ongoing and its entry into force is expected in 2023.

The Commission also agrees on the importance of ensuring sufficient capacity for information processing by law enforcement and will support Member States, in line with its competence.

**Paragraphs 31 and 34**

Developing adequate IT systems for use in the field of justice requires time and, more importantly, resources. A comprehensive strategy to tackle the digitalisation of justice in the EU therefore needs to address access to funding. The new approach to the digitalisation of justice set out in the Commission Communication of 2 December 2020 identifies financial support to Member States, as a crucial component to harness the potential for creating long-term impact and to ensure the true digital transformation of their justice systems.

Every means available should be used to support the transition to digital justice, including the new cohesion policy instruments, the new ‘justice’ and ‘digital Europe’ programmes, as well as the Recovery and Resilience Facility.

With regard to the role of the European Public Prosecutor’s Office’s (EPPO) in enhancing the Security Union, the Commission wishes to reassure the Parliament that this has been duly taken into account. The Security Union Strategy confirms the key role of the EPPO in fighting economic and financial crimes. The first Progress report under the new Security Union Strategy outlines EPPO’s expected added value in the fight against corruption and fraud, including serious cross-border VAT fraud. The EPPO will have the competence to tackle these offences also when committed by organised crime groups.

The current priority is first and foremost the swift launch of the EPPO’s operational activities. Further to the Commission Communication “A Europe that protects: an initiative to extend the competences of the European Public Prosecutor's Office to cross-border terrorist crimes” (COM/2018/641), the Security Union Strategy as well as the Counter-Terrorism Agenda confirms that it remains an objective of the Commission to extend the mandate of the EPPO to cross-border terrorist crimes.

**Paragraph 35**

As mentioned in the EU Strategy on victims’ rights (2020-2025), the Commission will pay special attention to ensuring support and protection to the most vulnerable victims. In this regard, the Commission will continue promoting integrated and targeted support to victims with special needs, such as child victims, victims of gender-based violence or domestic violence, victims of racist and xenophobic hate crime, LGBT+ victims of hate crime, elderly victims and victims with disabilities, through EU funding possibilities and the EU awareness campaign on victims’ rights. The Commission currently prepares the campaign with the objective to launch in the second half of 2021. The Commission will also consider concrete support measures for victims of child sexual abuse, as part of the initiatives under the EU Strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse (2020-2025).

**Paragraph 37**

As mentioned in the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, the Commission recognises that addressing violence against women and ideologies undermining women’s rights could also contribute to the prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism and terrorism. The finalisation of the EU’s accession to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (“the Istanbul Convention”) remains the Commission’s key priority in this respect, since the Convention continues to be the benchmark for international legislation on tackling gender-based violence.

On 16 September, President von der Leyen announced in her letter of intent accompanying the State of the Union 2020 speech, that the Commission intends to issue a legislative proposal to prevent and combat gender-based violence. This is a key initiative for 2021 as also confirmed in the Commission Work Programme.

The Commission will carefully evaluate the current legislative framework to identify legislative gaps and ensure that the proposal will create added value for victims of gender-based violence and domestic violence. The legislative initiative will have the same objectives as the Istanbul Convention, within the limits of EU competence.

The EU Gender Equality Strategy also includes a set of non-legislative measures on gender-based and domestic violence. For instance, the Commission will launch an EU network on the prevention of gender-based violence and domestic violence, bringing together Member States and stakeholders to exchange good practice, and will provide funding for training, capacity building and support services.

To collect updated data, Eurostat currently coordinates the EU survey on gender-based violence and other forms of interpersonal violence. The European Commission will cover 80% of the costs of implementing this survey for the Member States. Results are expected to be available in 2023.

**Paragraphs 38, 39, 40 and 41**

As mentioned in the resolution, effective implementation is crucial to raise the overall security level in the EU. The Commission is determined to use its full powers to this effect. While the first progress report under the new EU Security Union Strategy shows that a lot has been done to support Member States in the past year, it also highlights the immediate implementation priorities and calls on Member States to step up their work to ensure there are no gaps or delays in how the key security instruments are applied. The report is accompanied by an annex containing the status of implementation of security legislation indicating the number of ongoing infringement procedures under each legislative initiative.

In general, the Commission agrees on the importance of evidence-based policy-making and bases its initiatives on appropriate qualitative and quantitative data and information gathered through the consultation of relevant stakeholders.

The Commission also agrees on the need to regularly evaluate current security policies and agreements, in line with the provisions contained therein.

The joint evaluation of the EU-U.S. and the EU-Australia passenger name record (PNR) agreements, presented by the Commission on 12 January 2021, demonstrates their operational value and effectiveness in the fight against terrorism and serious transnational crime. At the same time, the Commission’s reports acknowledges that, despite the numerous safeguards contained therein, the agreements are not fully in line with the Opinion of the Court of Justice on the envisaged EU - Canada PNR agreement, as these had been concluded before the Court delivered its Opinion. The Commission will assess the necessary follow-up action also taking into account the feedback it will receive from the European Parliament and the Council.

**Paragraph 42**

The multiannual financial framework (MFF) 2021-2027, for which the European Parliament has given its consent, sets a clear framework for the annual budgets of all decentralised agencies and bodies, including those acting in the field of justice and home affairs (JHA). The annual EU contributions make up the major part of the JHA agencies and bodies’ budget and allow them to implement their mandate. The Commission collaborates very closely with these agencies and bodies and their Management Boards to ensure that they are adequately staffed to perform their tasks and that their budget is used in the most effective manner. Moreover, the Commission and the Budgetary Authority re-assess the needs of the agencies and bodies annually, in light of evolving workload, budget availability and political priorities.