

sharing information between the Member States' special police units responsible for dealing with current Chemical Biological Radio Nuclear situations.

Third Country Missions

19. The Group observes an increase in the number of European Union peace-keeping missions throughout the world. These interventions increasingly require comprehensive support in terms of military, police, civil protection, development aid and rule of law devices. The Group recommends making the most of past experience gained in this area.
20. To this end, the Group calls for greater coordination of police, diplomatic and military action in order to improve the preparation and assessment of these missions, with closer cooperation between different Council structures. Pooling together European Union's financial resources for third country missions should also be considered. Member States participating could be asked to provide Integrated Police Units for certain missions. Future reflections should also include the integration of the "European Gendarmerie Force" and civilian police units from Member States into the legal framework of the European Union.
21. The Group also suggests improving the coherence of missions by integrating their different components right from the start, when the operation is in the planning stages. The different civil, military and judicial entities taking part in the same mission could be grouped together in Mission situation centres.
22. Finally, greater care should be taken to disseminate the information obtained by these missions in the European Union. Europol and the Member States should receive this information. Conversely, the missions should be able to access appropriate information. The Group deems it necessary to seek an effective information-sharing method.

Managing Migration, Asylum, External Borders and Integration

Migration policy

23. There seems to be a consensus in the European Union about the fact that migration is an inherent phenomenon in our increasingly globalised societies and economies. Demographic trends will create even more demand for labour migration. The Future Group is convinced that the response needs to be at a European level, and recommends the implementation of a forward-looking and comprehensive common immigration policy.
24. With regard to cooperation with partner countries and implementation of the Global Approach to Migration, an integrated approach should be applied. Dialogue, cooperation and partnership with countries of origin and transit should be deepened and broadened in terms of both actions and resources in

a fully balanced manner. The notions of a mobility partnership, circular migration and co-development should be further developed. Member States, third countries and migrants will be able to benefit.

25. The Group thinks that the principles of responsibility, solidarity and mutual trust are prerequisites for the definition of a common policy in this area. The need for implementation of these principles will have to be fully integrated into the next multi-annual programme.
26. The Group recommends designing a common immigration policy as a function of long-term demographic and economic evolutions, in line with Member States' competencies. Prerequisite for such legal migration is a demand for specific qualifications on the labour markets of the Member States on the one hand and a supply of workers from third countries possessing such qualifications on the other. Based on these principles, the Group suggests that Member States should fully exploit all possibilities of intra-European economic migration.
27. The Group agrees that general regularisations should be avoided. In the future, regularisations in exceptional circumstances and with individual case-by-case approach could be acceptable.
28. On the subject of illegal immigration, the Group encourages an effective European return policy, which would allow for an organised coordination of Member States' actions in this field. The Group suggests avoiding general and unconditional regularisations in one Member State.
29. Finally, the ways and means for successful integration need to be deepened. They are an integral part of legal migration policy. Respecting the different national competencies, a set of common minimum standards and requirements of both the immigrant and the Member State should be further implemented as a complement to national integration policies.

Asylum Policy

30. The Group notes that wide divergences in practices still exist between Member States in the granting of refugee status and subsidiary protection, despite the adoption of common minimum standards.
31. The Group recommends pursuing the implementation of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), based on the Geneva Convention, as envisaged by the Hague-Programme. Increasing practical cooperation between the Member States is a very important step. The role of the European Support Office in coordinating such practical cooperation is essential. It must help reduce the differences in the treatment of asylum seekers by different Member States and improve the support to States faced with exceptional pressure.

32. The Group deems it necessary that the Union has to continue to provide secure borders and prevent illegal immigration at the same time as ensuring that those with a genuine right to asylum are able to claim it.
33. Support for refugees in the regions of the world most concerned must become a strong European Union policy. There should be an increased emphasis on the external dimension of the asylum policy. The concept of Regional Protection Programmes should, on the basis of an evaluation, be developed and if necessary redesigned. A common resettlement instrument should be agreed.

Border Management and Cooperation with Third Countries

34. The European Union border management policy is coming to the end of its first phase, which aimed mainly at the abolition of internal borders controls. Member States admit that the cooperation of law enforcement teams on external borders is necessary to reach an effective and mutually supportive policy.
35. The Group encourages the European Union to outline an integrated border management strategy capable of coping with the increasing flows of migrants and the impressive mobility of today's world, while ensuring mutual support among Member States.
36. Fully aware that border control itself is only one element of a global policy of security management, the Group recommends integrated control of European Union borders, up and down stream. This should include one stop approach integrating all checks and controls carried out for different purposes. Possibilities offered by new technologies, hand in hand with well-trained border guards, must play a central role. As a complement, adequate data protection tools are necessary.
37. The Group thinks that Frontex must play a central role in maximising threat analysis; cooperation between Member States (Frontex should especially be in a position to manage joint operations); training of Member States' border guards and reinforcing links with third countries in this field. The resources belonging to Frontex – personnel and equipment – must be reinforced. The agency should also be given the responsibility to regularly evaluate and inspect national border forces.
38. The Group strongly recommends developing further a strategy vis-à-vis third countries particularly in the fight against illegal migration, with a focus on border management problems, and support measures such as development of mobility partnerships and circular migration. This strategy should be mutually beneficial for all partners. The Group recognises that a comprehensive European strategy on visas gives political leverage when dealing with third countries.

Developing Civil Protection

39. Civil protection is a genuine responsibility of Member States. Yet, the Group supports the development of a European policy in this area in order to improve overall consistency, better efficiency and even greater solidarity between Member States.
40. The key to the future is striking the right balance between the principle of Member States' responsibility and that of solidarity at the European level. This is all the more important since the Union today faces multiple risks – natural but also technological disasters especially in the context of terrorist Chemical Biological Radio Nuclear threats.
41. The importance of prevention has been stressed in the Group, which considers this aspect of civil protection as something that need to be developed in order to create a safer environment.
42. The Group proposes improving information management, developing common training and exercises in this area and setting up a network between schools. Better interoperability of operational techniques and systems must be sought. Similarly, the capacity of the Monitoring and Information Centre should be strengthened so as to turn it into a central coordination point and to develop its monitoring functions.
43. A European mutual assistance would develop reaction capabilities based on the Member States' resources, in order to help countries deal more effectively with major events in Europe and in the world. This system would operate on a voluntary basis. The European Union would thus be in a better position to tackle today's civil protection challenges.

Using new technologies and information networks

44. In a space where people and goods move freely, information exchange is a key component of European security. The Hague-Programme established the Principle of Availability. The Group estimates that European information networks should now be developed from a legal as well as from a technical standpoint, with a global and coherent approach taking fully into account operational needs. It therefore recommends implementing a European Union Information Management Strategy (EU IMS) promoting a coherent approach to the development of information technology and exchange of information.
45. The Group proposes putting forward a "top ten" of data categories where exchange should be developed between Member States within the scope of the Union's global information exchange strategy.
46. Efforts should be made to launch an "European Security Tool-Pool" Initiative. Such a "tool pool" would allow Member States and European Union institutions to make available tools of proven or potential use in the security

field for appraisal and or testing by authorities of other Member States and, when useful, support its mutual deployment.

47. A working group of the Council must be in charge of drafting this global strategy. This perspective, however, requires decision-making on data protection and on the authority in charge of compliance and control. Reflection should also be given to the common stance to adopt vis-à-vis third countries.

Implementing the External Dimension of Home Affairs Policy

48. The Group is aware that external and internal security issues are intrinsically linked and that the external dimension of Home Affairs policy is vital if common action is to be taken in the area of security and migration along the lines of the 2005 European Union Strategy for the External Dimension of the Area of Justice, Freedom and Security. An intensified cooperation between ministers of Home Affairs, Foreign Relations, Development and Defence shall ensure an integrated approach. European policies in this area must promote the development of the rule of law and fundamental rights in third countries. They must also help prevent threats to the European area.

49. A differentiated approach to individual third countries and regions is warranted. Measures have to follow a geographical prioritisation and political differentiation.

50. The Group advocates tightening links with the Union's neighbouring States and with its strategic partners – especially the United States and Russia. By 2014 the European Union should make up its mind with regard to the political objective to realise a Euro-Atlantic area of cooperation in the field of freedom, security and justice with the United States. Furthermore, it deems that Home Affairs issues should be linked with the Union's external relations in the political as well as technical dimensions; this is a major challenge for the internal security of the European area. The Justice and Home Affairs sector itself will have to overhaul its working methods in this respect.

Which strategy can best take up the 2010-2014 challenges?

51. In the first years of Justice and Home Affairs policies, the European Union strove to set up forms of cooperation allowing Member States to face common issues together and organised information availability between Member States. The next step must now be taken. Member States preserve essential competences in the area of internal affairs – especially law enforcement activities. The Group considers it important for Member States to continue to look for practical opportunities to co-operate together, even in areas which clearly remain the national responsibility of those states.

52. The underlying thread to a coordinated management of European migration and security issues could be the *convergence principle*. The aim of this idea is to bring Member States closer not only by means of standardisation when necessary but also by operational means. Common training programmes,

exchange networks, solidarity mechanisms, the pooling of some equipment, simpler cooperation procedures, and of course, information exchanges are essential ways of reaching true and genuine operational cooperation between the Union's Member States.

53. The *convergence principle* would apply to all areas where closer relations between Member States are possible: agents, institutions, practices, equipment and legal frameworks. These closer relations would be based on the Union's Acquis and would make full use of the European Union instruments. Added value would be systematically sought in the definition and implementation of the corresponding projects. Seeking added value and developing the convergence principle lead to the same goal. The closer Member States cooperate with each other, the clearer the shared values as well as the national reservations will be.
54. To achieve these goals, the Group deems it desirable to promote good understanding of every actor's current competences in the European Union. It therefore suggests that a structured and consolidated compilation of all law instruments in force in the area of European Home Affairs should be made available to the public on the Internet. Better coordination should be sought regarding the transposition of directives and framework decisions. Both European legislation in force and certain agreements between Member States could be codified in a user- and reader-friendly way. These Codices could provide an advanced and flexible system of legislation in the European Home Affairs and could become a key element for making the Acquis more transparent, easier to understand and to apply. Political action needs to be "disentangled", i.e. citizens need to be able to understand on which level a decision was taken and why.
55. The European Pact on migration and asylum tabled by the French Presidency is an example of the methods that could be used in the future: a collective commitment to be translated into concrete objectives and actions at European Union and national level; an approach targeting practical results that are easy to understand by our citizens. In this manner, they will better make the actions of the European Union their own.

Chapter I: Introduction

1.) The Future Group: A different way of policy-making in the area of European Home Affairs

1. Home Affairs policy has been dealt with at European level for years, and it now takes place increasingly in an international and even global environment. Policy-makers are confronted with continually shifting political surroundings requiring dynamic decision-making. The general framework requiring political action in this climate is made up of: globalisation; the right balance between mobility, security and privacy; the increasing blurriness of internal and external security; the worldwide and borderless use of information and communication technologies and, linked thereto, an increasing need to protect sensitive data in an exemplary manner.
2. In the area of Justice and Home Affairs of the European Union, there has been positive experience with formulating and promoting major political objectives in multi-annual programmes adopted by the Heads of State and Government. Based on those roadmaps, the European Commission proposes concrete implementation measures in preparation for transforming political will into legal action.
3. In 1999 the European Council adopted the first multi-annual programme for the field of Justice and Home Affairs in Tampere, enabling the European Union to make major progress e.g. in the fields of visas, asylum, border controls and illegal migration. The Hague Programme, that goes back to November 2004 and is scheduled to continue to the end of 2009, identified important priorities in European Justice and Home Affairs.
4. The timetable for a Programme following the Hague Programme is tight. In June 2009, a new European Parliament will be elected. In autumn 2009, the present European Commission will be replaced by a new College. In parallel, the Hague Programme will be coming to an end. Against this background, the proposal for a programme to follow the Hague Programme will be presented by the Commission well in advance of the elections to the European Parliament. This "post-Hague Programme" would have to be adopted by the Council in 2009. For that reason reflections on the future of European Home Affairs have already started within the Future Group.
5. In the comparatively new area of Home Affairs in the context of the European Union, which touches the core of the national constitutional orders, Member States have a special interest in maintaining a dialogue with each other as well as with the European Commission. Yet in the Justice and Home Affairs Council at times, the length of decision-making procedures on the one hand and the lack of time for substantial discussions on the other appear unsatisfactory.
6. The last enlargements of the European Union in 2004 and 2007, nearly doubling the number of Member States from 15 to 27, have helped to overcome the division of Europe. In the area of Home Affairs, the enlargement

and the ensuing extension of the Schengen area at the end of 2007 have improved freedom and security for millions of European citizens. However, they have also generated a search for new ways to facilitate substantial debate at political level. One solution is to launch preliminary discussions in informal, smaller *fora*, mandated by the Council. The degree of their acceptance will depend on transparency, a representative structure of participants, and the possibility for non-members to contribute.

7. Against this background, it was considered useful to unite the European Commission Vice-President responsible for Home Affairs and the respective Ministers in those Member States holding, in the coming months and years, the team presidencies in the Council, thereby creating a “centre of gravitation” launching a discussion about the future of Home Affairs well in advance.
8. At the informal Justice and Home Affairs meeting in Dresden on 14 to 16 January 2007 and in the margins of the JHA Council on 14 February 2007, Ministers principally endorsed a proposal of the German Minister of the Interior Dr Wolfgang Schäuble, then President of the Council, and then Commission Vice-President Franco Frattini to establish a High Level Advisory Group consisting of the European Commission; the acting, outgoing and incoming Presidencies of Germany, Portugal, Slovenia, France, the Czech Republic and Sweden; and one representative of the following presidencies of Spain, Belgium and Hungary. Further participants were a common law observer, a representative of the European Parliament and a representative of the General Secretariat of the Council. The Group was co-chaired on a rotating basis by the Minister of the Interior of the acting Presidency and the Commission Vice-President responsible for Home Affairs.
9. Accordingly, the European Council concluded in June 2007: “On the basis of the Tampere and Hague Programmes significant progress has been made in developing the Union as an area of freedom, security and justice. The European Council stresses the need to continue the implementation of those programmes and to work on the succession to them in order to further strengthen Europe’s internal security as well as the fundamental freedoms and rights of citizens.”
10. The purpose of the Group was to draft a political report with recommendations that will serve as a source of ideas for the European Commission and the Member States in preparing a new programme for the design of European Union policies in the area of home affairs after 2010. It especially examined areas where more cooperation is needed at European level, because there is an added value compared to national action, and areas where, for the period of 2009-2014, European action is considered less urgent for the time being. The Treaty of Lisbon would provide significant changes in the area of home affairs which have not been dealt with by the Group in order not to anticipate the outcome of the ratification process.
11. The Group met informally and although its opinions are not binding in any way on the European Commission with regard to the preparation of the proposal for a post-Hague Programme and do not influence the Council's decision-

making regarding the latter's treatment and adoption, they could serve as a source of reflection and ideas.

12. Membership of the Group was *ad personam*. The Group worked in accordance with the Chatham House rule. To nevertheless ensure transparency and offer the possibility of contributing, all documents and minutes were circulated to the other members of the Justice and Home Affairs Council responsible for Home Affairs. At informal dinners of Ministers in the margins of Council meetings, Ministers were regularly informed about the state of the work. Under the Slovenian Presidency at the beginning of 2008, the Justice and Home Affairs Council was presented with an Interim Report of the Group.
13. The Group prepared the present Final Report offering the European Commission and the Council an important contribution to the preparations and discussions on the "post-Hague Programme" to be proposed by the European Commission.

2.) Overarching structural challenges

Efficient Cooperation

14. The European Union has to be ambitious. But as we need a real vision for the future on the one hand, on the other hand we need to focus on efficient and practical cooperation, which allows for quick and targeted results in the interests of citizens.
15. Political efforts must aim at finding the right balance between vision and pragmatism: new entities or harmonised rules at European level are not objectives in themselves.

General Principles

16. Europe's strength and efficiency rely to a great extent on a well-functioning division of tasks between the European level on the one hand and the national and regional levels on the other.
17. The key areas of Home Affairs, e.g. the provision of security and the safeguard of liberty and privacy by the State, affect the core of national sovereignty as well as lives of citizens. At the same time, European action is needed to cope with the challenges to freedom and security of our citizens that cannot be solved by national action alone. European citizens expect policy-makers to guarantee security as one basis for freedom while at the same time offering strong standards of privacy. In accordance with these expectations, the term "European Model", commonly used in the areas of economic and social affairs as a synonym for a unique societal approach, can also be used in Home Affairs. It has become an essential part of the quality of life in the European Union. Citizens are entitled to responsible and efficient national as well as European policy-making that respects and preserves this "European Model".

18. Due to this sensitiveness it is indispensable that decision-making is transparent and comprehensible. Citizens will accept and welcome a decision taken by “Brussels” if the responsibilities are clear and the added value is obvious.
19. This requires an efficient and balanced distribution of tasks between the different levels of decision-making. Political action needs to be “disentangled”, i.e. citizens need to be able to understand at which level (European, national or regional) a decision was taken and why.

Better Regulation and Simplification

20. The existing Acquis in the field of European Home Affairs which was developed step by step is necessarily unstructured and therefore difficult to explain to European citizens. Sometimes it is hard to understand even for specialists. It is considered by some as being both too juridical and too technical: it consists of a high number and a large variety of regulations, directives and framework decisions, as well as bi- and multilateral agreements. Some of these instruments overlap, and the legal basis for some actions can be found in different acts. Finally, it is becoming increasingly difficult and time-consuming to monitor the proper implementation of European Union Directives by as many as 27 Member States.
21. On the basis of this analysis, the Group suggests the following measures aimed at improving the *status quo*:
 - Law needs to be coherent, clear, understandable and accessible. Therefore it should be examined whether a structured, consolidated compilation of all existing secondary law in the area of European Home Affairs can be made available (electronically) to the public. In addition, consideration should be given to ways of enhancing the better regulation exercise.
 - With the objective of minimising the difficulty of monitoring their proper implementation, the process of transposing European Union Directives should be better coordinated.
 - Furthermore, it should be reflected whether and to what extent existing and future legislation could be codified. One option could be to concentrate and bundle European legislation in Codices, completing them, when necessary, with a compilation of bi- and multilateral agreements, comprising all legislation for a specific area in a user- and reader-friendly way. These Codices could allow for an advanced and flexible system of legislation in European Home Affairs and could become a key element in making the Acquis more transparent, easier to understand and simpler to apply. The Visa Codex (adoption pending) is a good example in this context.
22. Since the setting up of such Codices is a multi-annual and far-reaching project, the Group suggests first launching a feasibility study immediately after the adoption of the “post-Hague Programme”. The study should also be used

for the development of further ideas on how to exercise existing European Union powers in the field of European Union Home Affairs in a simpler and more structured manner with the objective of taking them into account in the context of the evaluation of the post-Hague Programme.

Prioritisation

23. In general terms, in developing long and medium-term prior targets and possible ways of achieving these objectives, the European decision-makers should take into consideration whether European action in these fields generates an added value in accordance with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality as enshrined in the Treaties.
24. Prior to adoption of any new instruments and establishment of new mechanisms, the effectiveness of current legislation and measures should be fully exploited or, if desirable, further enhanced.
25. In this context, when taking into account the whole range of competences in European Union Home Affairs, clear political priorities have to be pre-defined in order to focus activities on selected important targets. This would also imply better oriented action and better use of available resources.

Communication

26. Communication is key to bringing the results of European Home Affairs policies closer to people's everyday life. To this end the European Commission as well as Member States should enter into a discussion on ways to better communicate the concrete results of European Home Affairs policy to citizens and to develop a concept of how to best present its contents. This would include, for example, high-profile debates with a view to forming a more aware and positive public opinion. In communicating European Union legislation and policies, all decision-makers should take into account in their public statements the fact that adoption has been a common task involving the Council, i.e. the Member States, the European Commission and the European Parliament.

Financial Resources

27. For the period of 2007-2013, more financial resources are available to Member States in the area of Justice and Home Affairs, e.g. in migration, border management and prevention of crime and terrorism, as well as in security research. Based on experience gained up to 2009, the European Commission should, at the beginning of the implementation period of the "post-Hague Programme", provide a comprehensive breakdown of Community funds available in the area of Home Affairs. In addition, efforts should be made to better tailor the available funds to the special nature of operational projects with real impact to be proposed by Member States, as well as proposing more user-friendly procedures for access from beneficiaries to such funds. Member States have to build up better functioning information channels within national governments and from them to possible applicants. In this context it would be a great benefit if the Commission could examine how to provide more

addressee-oriented information and guidance on the scope and the availability of funds.

3.) Horizontal political challenges

28. In the upcoming decade the main tasks for political leaders in the area of European Home Affairs will be to safeguard freedom, security and privacy of European citizens while at the same time shaping Europe's position in a globalised world. This includes reacting to security, migration and technological challenges as well as acting as frontrunner with regard to the chances globalisation provides. Special attention has to be paid to the new challenges resulting from internationalisation, the worldwide use of information and communication technologies and the increasing mobility of persons and goods. Our common aim must be to adapt our legal provisions and political decisions to these challenges while upholding our constitutional and legal orders and the rule of law.
29. To safeguard and complete the area of freedom, security and justice in the light of continuously changing framework conditions, the Group considers that all political concepts will have to be developed on the basis of the following three horizontal pillars:

Preserving the “European model” in the area of European Home Affairs by balancing mobility, security and privacy

30. Mobility, security and privacy (comprising private life as well as data protection) constitute a triangle influencing all areas of European Home affairs. Especially the possibilities of mobility of persons and, as a consequence, freedom, have increased over the past few years due to technological progress and political developments such as the enlargement of the Schengen area. These rapid developments require tackling the balancing not only of security and privacy, aspects to which the subject is often reduced in the public debate, but the triangle formed by mobility, security and privacy as a general underlying challenge for the post-Hague Programme. The three issues are closely interlinked and dependent on each other. For example, the general perception is that measures to enhance security (e.g. availability of data for police forces and law enforcement authorities, and increased checks at airports) undermine privacy and mobility, whilst measures to increase mobility are seen to have an adverse affect on security, etc. However, if citizens did not feel secure, then it is highly likely that they would not wish to travel at all.
31. One priority for each proposal based on the post-Hague Programme therefore will be the reflection on how to balance mobility, security and privacy in a proportionate way. There is a need to overcome the stereotype of seeing security, mobility and privacy as opposing concepts which exclude each other. Therefore, under the post-Hague Programme, an intensive public debate including a substantial inter-institutional discussion involving the European and national parliaments will have to be launched on how to address the current

equilibrium in a way that allows for significantly improved security, at the same time as equally enhanced privacy and mobility.

32. Databases and new technologies will play a central role in further developing Home Affairs policies in the areas of border management, migration, the fight against organised crime and terrorism. Even if technology can never completely replace the human factor, technological progress can provide the necessary means to optimise mobility, security and privacy simultaneously. In particular, enhanced use of technological developments can provide satisfactory solutions to the important issue of how to ensure more security for citizens and at the same time greater protection of their right to privacy. Developing innovative technologies and improving their effectiveness should therefore be a key aspect in balancing mobility, security and privacy.

Coping with the growing interdependence between internal and external security

33. A further new pillar in comparison to the Hague Programme is the increasing interdependence between internal and external security. This will make external relations a priority for the future design of European Home Affairs. In all Home Affairs policy fields, the European Union needs to shift its attention towards the emerging challenge of incorporating external aspects, and to co-operate with relevant third States. This requires a coherent external concept, especially taking into account the increasing interdependence between internal and external security.
34. The Group strongly advocates developing a holistic concept covering e.g. development, migration, security, economic, financial, trade and foreign policy aspects in this regard, allowing the European Union to play a responsible and credible role in international relations.

Ensuring the best possible flow of data within European information networks

35. We are living in a global information society covering all areas of social life. Home Affairs policies have to keep pace with this development in which the rapid exchange of information is a key aspect for efficiency and success.
36. Suitable and state-of-the-art information networks and databases are needed within European Home Affairs. Information technology management strategies and solutions have to be developed to provide the technical support for political objectives. Technical feasibility, efficiency and cost-effectiveness on the one hand and legal sensitivity of the data on the other should be decisive for the question of how systems of access should be designed. As a long-term objective, only a common European standard for data storage and transmission, including compatibility guidelines and harmonised technical data formats, can improve the conditions for more efficient information sharing. In the post-Hague Programme, these principles should be further developed especially taking the first pillar on balancing mobility, security and privacy into account.

4.) Priority policy areas

37. Based on these three horizontal pillars, the Group suggests, in the following chapters, setting the political priorities of the post-Hague Programme in the areas of police cooperation and the fight against terrorism, the management of third country missions, migration and asylum as well as border management, civil protection, new technologies and information networks.

Chapter II: Preserving Internal Security and External Stability

1.) Police cooperation

38. Police cooperation covers a broad range of common policies, aligned along three major axes: making police officers more aware of European themes and of the legal systems of other Member States; cooperating with other Member States' police forces in the field, particularly in border zones; and sharing information with other Member States' police forces, making use *inter alia* of Europol.
39. Strengthening these axes of cooperation over the coming years is an essential question for the Member States, which are confronted with security risks that often go beyond the limits of their territory. In each of these three domains, it is particularly important to take into account technological development in the area of security, in order to provide Member States' police forces with effective tools that respond to current transformations.
40. Police cooperation covers various domains which have evolved very differently over the past few years. There have been important changes regarding the improvement of police cooperation and they can be hard to understand for both security practitioners and citizens of the Union in general. It is necessary to ensure that different aspects of police cooperation progress in a coherent and coordinated way, so that certain areas, which may be very important, do not fall back in relation to the others. This principle of coordinated improvement could serve as a guideline for the work of Member States and the European institutions in the future, provided that it brings added value.
41. The Member States' police forces need to be trained also at European level, in order to ensure mutual understanding and an exchange of best practices. Indeed, it is indispensable that police forces in the Member States acquire a European dimension. Two closely linked objectives can be identified: facilitating collaborative work by acquiring knowledge of other States' systems and raising the level of professionalism of European police agents through exchange of experience. The establishment of the European Police College (CEPOL) in 2001 marked a commitment to providing European training for police officers. For the past 2 years CEPOL has provided training to 2500 police officers from Member States and should continue to further develop these activities.
 - These dimensions of training policies could be enhanced by systematising training initiatives in Member States and expanding them to include every level of the police hierarchy, in particular middle-ranking officers. It would thus be advantageous to reinforce the strategy implemented by CEPOL, of widely diffusing this knowledge within the Union.
 - Teaching methods could be diversified, with an emphasis on computer-assisted instruction. Officer exchange programmes could also be developed further by integrating "Police Erasmus programmes" into initial

- training curricula and into continuing education for police officers. Language training should also be improved so as to attain satisfactory levels of foreign language competency among police personnel.
- Finally, there is the question of the choice of a working model of CEPOL. The States seem to prefer the idea of an agency based on the network of Member States' training institutions. This principle has ensured thus far certain uniformity, standardising training policies in Member States and CEPOL activities; it would make sense for CEPOL to have a general overview of training at European level offered to police officers throughout the EU. It should develop its activities in this direction.
42. Furthermore, the Group agreed that cooperation in the field should be enhanced, in order to improve internal security within the European Union and especially in the Schengen area. The tools for that kind of cooperation should be developed and diversified.
43. Set up by bilateral or multilateral agreements between the States concerned, Police and Customs Cooperation Centres (PCCC) are support tools for direct cross-border cooperation that bring together in the same place officers of two, three or even four countries.
- PCCCs can be developed as an essential tool for police cooperation in particular in the border zones. The structure and missions of PCCCs could be re-evaluated, in order to make them real police-customs centres of crisis management capable of handling events on an international scale. Especially in the border zone, PCCCs could become a model of future police cooperation.
44. Joint Investigation Teams (JIT) are an important aspect of cross-border cooperation in crime investigation. Member States have the power to create JITs allowing officers of two or several Member States to work together on a criminal investigation, each State allowing officers of the other State to perform certain investigation activities on its territory. The involvement of Europol officers in JITs is also possible. JITs appear to be an efficient tool in large-scale, complex investigations requiring concerted, coordinated action on the part of the Member States concerned. In the existing legal context, it is crucial to take better advantage of Europol's availability, in order to benefit from its analytical strengths.
45. However, JITs do not seem to be suitable for all types of criminal investigation with an international aspect. For certain aspects of criminal investigation, it will probably be necessary to work towards a simplification of the regulations applied when an investigation needs to be carried out on the territory of another Member State. There are many ways in which police and legal cooperation – which are closely related – could be improved. One would be to allow police officers, after the simplified formalities, to perform non-coercive acts on the territory of another Member State, such as taking witness testimony on a voluntary basis. Another simplification would be a system of written requests for information by public entities or individuals from one country to another. Such a system would make today's extremely constraining