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Subject : Protection of public figures  
– Conclusions of the European seminar held in Madrid (11 to 14 November 2003)

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**FIRST EUROPEAN SEMINAR ON  
THE PROTECTION OF PUBLIC FIGURES**

*Madrid, 11 to 14 November 2003*

**Report on the conclusions and results of the questionnaires**

The establishment of the European Network for the Protection of Public Figures was a priority for the Spanish Presidency of the European Union last year, based on the belief that the constant movement of public figures within Union territory made it essential that the departments responsible for the protection of senior public figures in the Member States have at their disposal a formal channel for communication and consultation for the purposes of streamlining information exchange and enhancing relations between the departments involved.

The discussions culminated in the approval of Council Decision 2002/956/JHA of 28 November 2002 setting up a European Network for the Protection of Public Figures.

The structure of the network is based on the establishment of national contact points, making the designation of these points an essential prerequisite for the network's functioning. In that context, the Spanish authorities appreciated the need to support the launch of the network by holding a seminar which could serve as a meeting point for heads of protection departments and lend impetus to the exchange of experiences.

The seminar was organised by Spain's Police Directorate-General (Commissariat-General for Public Safety via its Central Protection Unit) and received financial support from the AGIS programme of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Justice and Home Affairs.

The seminar, held from 11 to 14 November in Madrid, was attended by 67 delegates representing all Member States, eight acceding States, candidate States, Europol, the European Commission, the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union, the United States of America, the Russian Federation, Israel, Norway and Switzerland.

The work programme for the seminar was drawn up with the aim of providing a detailed picture of the main factors influencing the protection of public figures:

- **Study of the legal regulation of activities involved in protecting public figures.**
- **Organisational aspects.**
- **Analysis of the new challenges to be faced, with particular attention to terrorism.**

It was considered particularly important to study how to develop the provisions of the Decision setting up the network for the protection of public figures. To that end, the Chairman of the Police Cooperation Working Party of the Council of the EU gave a presentation of the Decision's contents, the possibilities offered by the network and an assessment of the results of its first year of operation. In this respect, it should be highlighted that all Member States and some of the acceding States have completed their designation of national contact points.

Discussions during the three meeting days have served to identify the need for more in-depth, fundamental consideration of the following aspects:

- 1. The exchange of experiences on the different operating methods for the protection of public figures.**
- 2. Studying the possibility of establishing common operating methods for the protection of public figures.**
- 3. Studying the possibilities for establishing a database containing information on techniques used by perpetrators of attacks against public figures.**
- 4. The consolidation of a fluid system of communication between the different departments responsible for the protection of public figures.**
- 5. Studying the possibilities for harmonising criteria relating to the selection, training and updating of staff responsible for the protection of public figures.**

Delegates were given a questionnaire, to be completed anonymously, and a personalised questionnaire on legislation in the field of protection.

The first questionnaire was used in working out the above conclusions.

The replies to the anonymous questionnaire completed by 45 delegates were, with reference to those questions of greatest interest in terms of the seminar's aims, used to draw up the following CONCLUSIONS:

1. With regard to **unifying criteria on the protection of high-risk public figures**, 87% (39 delegates) either agree or fully agree, while only 4% (two delegates) either disagree or completely disagree, which means there is very wide support for unifying criteria on the protection of public figures.
2. With reference to the **establishment of European rules governing protection**, 82,1% (37 delegates) either agree or fully agree, and only 13,3% (six delegates) either disagree or completely disagree.
3. The **harmonisation of criteria for the selection, training and specialisation of staff in protection** received positive replies (either agreement or full agreement) from 86,6% (39 delegates), as against 8,8 % who registered their disagreement or complete disagreement (four delegates).
4. The **exchange of information on operating methods** is accepted by 93,3% (42 delegates), which means almost total unanimity, with only 6,6% (three delegates) opposed.
5. With regard to **creating a database on attacks perpetrated** for the purposes of preventive protection practices, 97,7% (44 delegates) either agree or fully agree, with only 2,2% opposed.
6. The **establishment of fluid communication systems between public-figure protection departments** of the visiting country and the host country is accepted by 97,7% of delegates (44 in total), with only one (2,2%) expressing indifference.
7. The **application of common operating methods** for the protection of public figures meets with the agreement or full agreement of 82,1% (37 delegates), while 11,1% (five delegates) disagree.

The questionnaire on legislation was completed by 44 delegates from 28 countries out of the 30 countries represented. Their replies lead to the following CONCLUSIONS:

Ten European Union countries have rules governing the protection of their national authorities, while four have no such rules. Nine countries also have rules governing the protection to be given to authorities and dignitaries from the rest of the Union or abroad; in the five remaining countries there is no such regulation.

As for the acceding and candidate States, out of the ten which replied, nine have internal rules for nationals and eight out of the nine also have such rules for foreign nationals.

In response to the question concerning the need for national regulation, 7% of the 44 delegates who answered the questionnaire agree, and 41% support the introduction of rules governing the protection of nationals and foreign nationals. 52% express no view either way.

With regard to the question of laying down rules, either within the European Union or at international level, governing the protection of dignitaries travelling to another country, the result is as follows:

Out of the 44 delegates who replied to the questionnaire, 43% (19 delegates) could agree to regulation within the EU; 40,9% (18 delegates) consider that regulation should be of an international nature; 9,1% (four delegates) do not feel that such regulation is appropriate, while the remaining 7% express no view either way.