



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate General Justice,
Freedom and Security

CITIZENS' SUMMARY

Action plan to strengthen chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear security in the EU

What's the issue?

Most terrorist attacks in the last 50 years have used explosive devices or firearms. But today there is a risk that terrorist organisations may start using **chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear** (CBRN) materials – resulting in numerous casualties and economic disruption. Early action is needed to minimise this threat.

What exactly would change?

Measures in the CBRN action plan include:

- providing **financial assistance**
- preparing **studies and meetings**
- activities to
 - prioritise the most dangerous CBRN substances
 - identify **good practices** in various areas
 - establish **information exchange systems**.

Who would benefit and how?

EU citizens would be **better protected** against CBRN incidents. The action plan sets out over 130 measures in three key areas that could be taken by the EU, member countries and industry:

- **prevention** – making unauthorised access to CBRN materials as difficult as possible; protecting materials to limit the risk of their being lost or stolen
- **detection** – improving the use of CBRN materials detection systems across the EU
- **preparedness and response** – responding effectively and recovering quickly; improving the exchange of information between EU countries so as to react more swiftly; providing responders with the necessary tools to save lives and limit damage to property.



Why does action have to be taken by the EU?

The EU is increasingly open and its member countries increasingly interdependent. People, ideas, technology and resources move freely within Europe, potentially making it an attractive area for terrorists to operate.

Security is the responsibility of national governments, but EU **coordination** is needed because:

- **international terrorism** requires an **international response**
- in an EU without internal borders, all countries must have **similar minimum security levels** so that lower standards in one country do not have adverse effects in another
- **economies of scale** can be achieved by identifying and spreading good practices at EU level.

When is the action plan likely to come into effect?

June 2009 – adoption by the Commission

2nd half of 2009 – discussion with representatives of EU countries in the Council

2010 – implementation.

