

**6th Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group (JPSG) on the European Union Agency for
Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol)**

Contribution by the Cyprus delegation

We wish to express our satisfaction over the possibility that has been given to delegations to exchange information and views through electronic means, thus ensuring the continuation of the JPSG's substantial work. This proves to be even more urgent, in the face of increased security risks, at the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, which require commensurate responses, but also enhanced democratic oversight of enforcement authorities. Hopefully, we can return to normality the soonest possible.

We very much welcome Europol's reports issued during the pandemic, which concern the impact of Covid-19 on the criminal landscape.

We were also very glad to see the written report concerning the Innovation Lab that we very much hope can soon deliver on its aims.

We would wish to get some more input regarding the following issues:

-Taking into consideration Europol's mandate to combat firearms smuggling and its experience with supporting EU military operations, but also its activity in combating human smuggling and trafficking, will Europol have any participation in operation EU NAVFORMED Irini?

-In view of a significant shortfall in Europol's budget compared to the initial estimate, as well as of unforeseen difficulties that may have arisen, as a result of the pandemic, what are the initial thoughts of the Management Board regarding deprioritization and adaptations to the Programming Document 2020-2022, and specifically the Work Programme 2020, which were adopted?

-In 2019, Cyprus requested Europol's support to control the increasing irregular migrant flows into the country, which has proved to be very important in efforts to identify persons with a terrorist background. We wish, however, to reiterate, once again, that the overwhelming majority of irregular migrants arrive in Cyprus from Turkey by sea or through the areas of the Republic of Cyprus under Turkish military occupation and are victims of smuggling networks. In view of the Commission's new proposals regarding asylum and migration policy, what further role could Europol assume, in cooperation with FRONTEX or national law enforcement authorities, to disrupt migrant smuggling networks?