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List of Acronyms

ADEP	Automation of Data Exchange Processes	HR	Human Resource
AML	Anti-Money Laundering	HRCN	High Risk Criminal Networks
AP	Analysis Project	HVT	High Value Targets
ARO	Asset Recovery Office	IAC	Internal Audit Capability
BPL	Basic Protection Level	ICT	Information and Communications Technology
CA	Contract Agent	IM	Information Management
CBRN	Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear	IRU	Internet Referral Unit
CEPOL	European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training	ISF	Internal Security Fund
CFT	Countering Financing of Terrorism	J-CAT	Joint Cybercrime Action Taskforce
COSI	Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation on Internal Security	JHA	Justice and Home Affairs
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy	JIT	Joint Investigation Team
CT	Counter-Terrorism	JRC	Joint Research Centre
DPF	Data Protection Function	LEA	Law Enforcement Authorities
EC3	Europol Cybercrime Centre	MB	Management Board
ECA	European Court of Auditors	MENA	Middle East and North Africa region
ECTC	European Counter Terrorism Centre	MS	Member State
EEAS	European External Action Service	MTIC	Excise and Missing Trader Intra Community
EES	Entry-Exit System	NEO	New Environment for Operations
EFECC	European Financial and Economic Crime Centre	OAC	Operational and Analysis Centre
EIS	Europol Information System	OAP	Operational Action Plan (under EMPACT)
EMAS	Europol Malware Analysis Solution	OCG	Organised Crime Group
EMAS	EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme	OLAF	European Anti-Fraud Office
EMCDDA	European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction	OSINT	Open Source Intelligence
EMPACT	European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats	OSP	Online Service Providers
EMSA	European Maritime Safety Agency	OTF	Operational Task Force
EMSC	European Migrant Smuggling Centre	PERCI	Plateforme Européenne de Retraits de Contenus illicites sur Internet (European platform for takedown of illegal content online)
EPE	Europol Platform for Experts	PIU	Passenger Information Unit
EPPO	European Public Prosecutor's Office	PNR	Passenger Name Record
ESOCC	European Serious and Organised Crime Centre	QUEST	Querying Europol's systems
ETIAS	EU Travel Information and Authorisation System	R&D	Research and Development
EUCP	EU Crisis Protocol	SIENA	Secure Information Exchange Network Application
EUIPO	European Union Intellectual Property Office	SIS	Schengen Information System
Eurojust	European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation	SNE	Seconded National Expert
Eu-Lisa	European Agency for the Operational Management of large-scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice	SOC	Serious and Organised Crime
FIU	Financial Intelligence Unit	SOCTA	Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment
Frontex	European Border and Coast Guard Agency	TA	Temporary Agent
GE	Guest Expert	TFTP	Terrorist Finance Tracking Programme
GO	Guest Officer	THB	Trafficking in human beings
		TP	Third Parties
		UMF	Universal Message Format
		VIS	Visa Information System

Mission Statement

Europol's mission is to support its Member States in preventing and combating all forms of serious international and organised crime, cybercrime and terrorism.

Executive summary

Europol's Programming Document is prepared on the basis of Article 12 of the Europol Regulation and Articles 32 and 33 of the Financial Regulation applicable to Europol. An overview of the current and anticipated future policy factors influencing or impacting Europol's work in the coming years is presented in Section I.

The strategic programming of Europol, including resources programming, is provided in Section II - Multi-annual programming 2023-2025. Special focus is placed on five main strategic priorities which have been identified as part of the Europol Strategy 2020+. These priorities will guide the work of the Agency in the years 2023-2025 to:

- be the EU criminal information hub making full use of data from an extensive network of partners;
- deliver agile operational support;
- be a platform for European policing solutions;
- be at the forefront of innovation and research for law enforcement;
- be the model EU law enforcement organisation with robust performance, good governance and accountability, promoting diversity and staff engagement.

In Section III, Europol's Work Programme provides a comprehensive overview of the full work portfolio of the agency, including its regular (recurrent) work and specific annual objectives and actions for 2023; the work is organised around the different areas of operation (Activities).

2023 will be a dynamic year in terms of new initiatives and emerging tasks as by then the **Europol Regulation Recast** should have entered into force and the implementing legislation, where required, would be in an advanced stage, if not completed. Depending on the final provisions of the Recast, Europol will be implementing new opportunities and providing new services:

- Enabling the agency to analyse **large and complex datasets**, and thus improve the exploitation of the exponentially growing information flow of data captured during law enforcement investigations;
- Allowing for the establishment of **joint operational analysis** between Europol and Member States in particular when conducting specific investigations against HVTs;
- Fostering effective cooperation with **private parties** and the setting-up of public-private partnerships, especially in areas where information provided by the private sector is essential for preventing and combating crime;
- Facilitating the provision of the result of Europol's analysis of data received from third countries to the frontline officers by entering or assisting MS in entering the data into the **Schengen Information System**;
- Facilitating Europol's cooperation with **third countries** with regards to the transfer of personal data;

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- Fostering identification of key research themes, implementation of **innovation** and the provision of support to Member States in the use of emerging technologies in preventing and countering crimes.

Given the ongoing negotiations on the **Europol Regulation Recast** at the time of the preparation of this document, the agency will revisit its planning before the final adoption by the Management Board (in November 2022) in order to reflect fully the final content of the new legal provisions.

In 2023, Europol will continue providing the Member States with high quality operational support to investigations in the priority areas aligned with the EU Security Union Strategy and following the objectives of the EU Strategy to tackle Organised Crime, the EU Cybersecurity Strategy for the Digital Decade, the Anti-Money Laundering package and the Counter-Terrorism Agenda, among others.

The planned work of Europol's Operational Centres, as well as the horizontal support functions, is extensive and striving towards further evolvement of capabilities, expertise and tools, in order to offer the necessary support to MS' operations. In addition to regular tasks and responsibilities, the key highlights in Europol's planning for 2023 are summarised below:

- The priorities of the European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats (**EMPACT**) **2022-2025** will remain the key driver for the operational support provided to the MS' competent authorities in 2023. The agency will continue facilitating the work of EMPACT and will support the digitalisation of the platform, in view of improving the efficiency of its planning and reporting aspects.
- Europol will aim at providing quality support to Member States in identifying **High Value Targets** (HVT) representing the highest risk of organised and serious crime, and in facilitating continuously increasing in complexity and resource intensity investigations against HVTs through the consistent implementation of the standard HVT/OTF concept and the setting up of **Operational Task Forces** (OTF). In parallel, the **European Serious and Organised Crime Centre (ESOCC)** will assume the coordinator's function for the EMPACT's Common Horizontal Strategic Goal **for High Risk Criminal Networks** (HRCN). As such, the Centre will ensure the overall coherence of actions targeting key criminal structures and individuals (HRCN/HVT).
- **Criminal analysis** remains at the core of Europol's business and the agency will be further reinforcing analysis coordination through enhanced attention to quality output and control, standardisation and training. In 2023, the agency will increase the support to the in-house criminal analysis work by enhancing the Data Management Portal and analysis tools, and by creating a pool of analysts specialised in technical analysis and specialised methods to support all crime areas with expertise. Europol will also address the training needs of all its relevant staff with regards to the **new analysis environment**.
- The **Information Management Strategy** developed in 2020 will guide the streamlining and development of information management at Europol in the coming years. The multiannual **New Environment for Operations (NEO) programme**, which encompasses the bulk of agency's technology development work, will continue consolidating the most substantial transformation in Europol's analysis capabilities since the inauguration of the agency. Subject to the adoption of the Europol Regulation Recast, the joint analysis platform will represent another significant development. Europol will also be further improving, as needed, capabilities used directly by Member States such as SIENA and QUEST. Through NEO, Europol will continue contributing to the EU Interoperability in line with the European Commission planning and in close cooperation with eu-LISA. Finally, Europol will continue working on governance and administration ICT tools with the aim to make these processes more efficient. The pace of this work will be determined by the level of investment necessary to deliver - as a top priority - the capabilities necessary for the operational work of Europol.

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- In line with the Europol Strategy 2020+, Europol seeks to be at the forefront of **law enforcement innovation and research**. The agency, through its **Innovation Lab**, will facilitate innovation in the wider law enforcement community and support Member States in addressing the risks and opportunities of emerging technologies. The Innovation Lab will act as the secretariat for the **EU Innovation Hub for Internal Security** and lead the Hub Team in collaboration with other JHA agencies to implement the tasks and functions adopted by COSI in 2020. Furthermore, it will be of utmost importance that the new Artificial intelligence regulation does not have a negative effect on the use of AI-based techniques in law enforcement activities.
- For Europol's **Operational and Analysis Centre** the first priority remains the handling of the continuously **increasing incoming information, data intake and hit management**. In 2023, with the initiation of **ETIAS and VIS** systematic checks against Europol data, the Centre will also have to deal with the huge challenge of providing on a 24/7 basis swift follow-up on hits of travel authorisation and visa applications. Given that the ETIAS Regulation, the Interoperability Regulation and Europol Regulation recast did not foresee additional resources for Europol for ETIAS purposes, this new service will be possible to implement only to the extent that Europol's level of resources allows.
- Europol will be implementing the **Guest Experts** concept in support of OTFs operations and other major investigations. The agency will explore further areas where it may deploy Guest Experts to support Member States' operational needs and the agency's priorities, and will continue expanding the pools with Seconded National Experts (SNEs) with specific profiles.
- Combating **drugs trafficking** remains a priority for Europol. The ESOCC is planning to enhance its work with regards to the implementation of special tactics targeting the logistical facilitators involved in the production, transportation or financing of the drug related illicit activities and to further progress with the establishment of joint drug intelligence fusion platform within Europol with Member States, partner organisations and third countries constituting drug trafficking hubs.
- In the area of **firearms trafficking**, the ESOCC will increase focus on analysis of open source intelligence to identify patterns of firearms-related violence and firearms trafficking, and on developing its weapon tracing capacity. In parallel, the European Migrant Smuggling Centre (EMSC) will be contributing to the objectives of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, and will pursue internet- and Dark Web-enabled **irregular migration, THB and document fraud**, which is expected to bring forward joint investigations.
- Looking ahead towards the evolution of the threat landscape, it is anticipated that the demand for services of **European Cybercrime Centre (EC3)** will continue to grow across the board. This support and coordination applies to cybercrime cases as well as to other forms of serious and organised crime, but contain a vital digital component as a linking pin. EC3 services such as decrypting communication devices, Dark Web investigations or tracing cryptocurrency will require more investment for the benefit of all Europol's crime areas.
- In addition, provided that there will be a positive impact of the Europol Regulation Recast regarding the **analysis of large and complex datasets**, EC3 should reinforce the work on data extraction, transformation and loading services for the large datasets contributed by the EU MS and other Europol's crime centres. Achieving progress in machine learning and data science is essential in that respect and requires further strengthening of Europol's capacities.
- Europol Regulation Recast is also expected to boost Europol's support to MS investigations in the area of **child sexual exploitation** by remedying the current inability of the agency to receive personal data directly from the private sector, whose infrastructure is abused

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by perpetrators to host and share child sexual abuse material. In the context of the rapidly growing challenge of CSE, Europol will work closely with private sector partners, NGOs and others to ensure that data relevant to countering CSE in multiple MSs is appropriately collected, analysed and reported on to enable actions against it.

- In the area of **counter-terrorism**, efforts to achieve greater information exchange among the relevant partners at EU level will continue. In parallel, the **European Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC)** is expecting an increasing number of operations to be supported in the Terrorist Identification Task Force and the OTFs established in the CT area. The Centre will also step up the work to address the upward trend of **right wing terrorism** and the scope of the referral work will open to other types of terrorism going beyond jihadist terrorism.
- In 2023, Europol will further develop the technical aspects of the **EU platform for referrals and removal orders (PERCI)** as a communication and coordination tool between MS and online service providers for handling online terrorist content. PERCI's scope should expand to process other type of illegal content related to crime areas covered by the Digital Services Act. In 2023, PERCI will also mature as the operational platform for the **EU Crisis Protocol (EUCP)** enabling 24/7 real time crisis response to viral spread of terrorist content. This will enable the European Union Internet Referral Unit (EU IRU) at the ECTC to establish a real time engagement with online service providers and have effective role as a crisis response coordinator.
- The EU IRU will continue efforts to facilitate Member States' access to digital data from online service providers through the implementation of the Cross-Border Access to **Electronic Evidence** (SIRIUS) Project. 2023 will be the last year of the project and Europol will have to undertake arrangements in order to ensure the continuation of SIRIUS services.
- **The European Financial and Economic Crime Centre (EFECC)** is striving to increase Europol's responsiveness and operational performance in the areas of fraud, money laundering, asset recovery, corruption and counterfeiting. The centre will expand its horizontal operational support in financial investigations to Operational Task Forces and High Value Targets in all crime areas and will invest in improving its capabilities in virtual asset tracing and analysis.
- In 2023, the work of the EFECC will be affected by the setting up of a new EU AML Authority and new tasks arising from the EU **Anti-Money Laundering** legislative package. The agency should also establish structured collaboration with the future Cooperation and Support Mechanism (CSM) for the FIUs and continue its efforts in improving the cooperation with the **FIUs** in view of increasing the contributions of financial intelligence to Europol. Strengthening the centre's partnership with the MS **Asset Recovery Offices** is a recurrent objective, which should also result in growing volume of contributions.
- The EFECC will be further developing cooperation with the EPPO and OLAF in line with the requirements of the Europol Regulation Recast. Fostering operational collaboration and exchange of strategic and technical information with the EU bodies will ensure an effective multiagency approach in the fight against financial and economic crimes, with particular emphasis on countering attempts of serious and organised crime to target the **financial interests of the EU** and the EU recovery funds.
- In 2023, Europol will deliver a mid-term review of the implementation of its **External Strategy 2021-2024** and the progress achieved in pursuing cooperation with selected high-priority third countries and organisations. In addition, the agency will be looking into the effectiveness of already existing agreements and will prepare strategic reviews of its cooperation with the UK and the Western Balkan countries. Furthermore, following the Europol Regulation Recast, the organisation will investigate how to benefit from the new provisions reinforcing the cooperation with the private sector.

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- The implementation of the multiannual **Strategic Housing Roadmap** will continue and in 2023 Europol should be operating from its existing headquarters and two temporary satellite buildings. The work for a new additional permanent building will advance in collaboration with the Host State. In 2023, Europol will also continue improving its **processes and methods**, in particular by modernising/automating performance measurement, reporting, electronic workflows, etc.

Table: Overview of Europol’s objectives for the year 2023

Work Programme Activity	Objective 2023
A.1. Development of information technology and information management capabilities	A.1.1 Continue the implementation of the Information Management Strategy.
	A.1.2 Further develop ICT capabilities for Europol’s operations.
	A.1.3 Implement improvements to core MS-facing operational capabilities.
	A.1.4 Advance interoperability and connectivity with information management systems at EU level to enhance information exchange.
	A.1.5 Further implement Europol’s Innovation Strategy and consolidate the structures and processes of Europol’s Innovation Lab.
	A.1.6 Further improve corporate information management and related administrative ICT capabilities.
	A.1.7 Develop and maintain reliable and secure ICT and IM capabilities.
A.2. Operational Coordination	A.2.1 Ensure the effective functioning of the Operational Centre in managing operational information.
	A.2.2 Provide support to operations and crisis management.
	A.2.3 Build-up Europol’s capabilities in the area of travel intelligence towards a fully-fledged European Travel Intelligence Centre (ETIC).
	A.2.4 Operationalise Europol’s functions in the ETIAS and VIS systems and processes.
	A.2.5 Provide support to EU Member States in the area of special tactics.
	A.2.6 Provide support and funding opportunities to EMPACT priorities and actions.
	A.2.7 Manage and support medium to long-term deployments, incl. Europol’s Guest Officers capability.
	A.2.8 Implement the Guest Experts concept.
A.3. Combating Serious and Organised Crime	A.3.1 Ensure the effective functioning of the ESOCC in providing strategic and operational support to EU Member States’ investigations on SOC and the implementation of EMPACT priorities.
	A.3.2 Strengthen coordination and operational efforts against High Value Targets.
	A.3.3 Provide support to EU Member States’ investigations on drug production and trafficking.
	A.3.4 Provide support to EU Member States’ investigations on weapons and explosives.
	A.3.5 Provide support to EU Member States’ investigations on high risk and cross border Organised Crime Groups.
	A.3.6 Provide support to EU Member States’ investigations on property crime.

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Work Programme Activity	Objective 2023
	<p>A.3.7 Provide support to EU Member States’ investigations on environmental crime.</p> <p>A.3.8 Provide support to EU Member States’ investigations on organised crime related to migrant smuggling.</p> <p>A.3.9 Provide support to EU Member States’ investigations on trafficking in human beings.</p>
<p>A.4. Combating cybercrime</p>	<p>A.4.1 Ensure the effective functioning of EC3 in providing strategic and operational support to EU Member States’ investigations on cybercrime and the implementation of EMPACT priorities.</p> <p>A.4.2 Provide digital forensics support to EU Member States’ investigations.</p> <p>A.4.3 Provide document forensics support to EU Member States’ investigations.</p> <p>A.4.4 Provide cyber intelligence support to EU Member States’ investigations.</p> <p>A.4.5 Provide support to EU Member States’ investigations on cyber-dependent crimes.</p> <p>A.4.6 Provide support to EU Member States’ investigations on child sexual exploitation.</p> <p>A.4.7 Provide support to EU Member States’ investigations on payment fraud and online fraud schemes.</p> <p>A.4.8 Provide support to EU Member States’ investigations on criminal online trade and use of online environments for criminal purposes.</p> <p>A.4.9 Provide support and operational coordination to the J-CAT operations and activities.</p> <p>A.4.10 Proactively develop expertise and solutions related to challenges in cybercriminal investigations.</p>
<p>A.5. Counter-terrorism</p>	<p>A.5.1 Ensure the effective functioning of the ECTC in providing strategic and operational support to EU Member States’ investigations related to counter-terrorism.</p> <p>A.5.2 Provide support to EU Member States’ counter-terrorism investigations.</p> <p>A.5.3 Provide support to EU Member States’ investigations on war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity.</p> <p>A.5.4 Provide support to EU Member States’ CT investigations with terrorism-related financial information.</p> <p>A.5.5 Provide CBRN/E support to EU Member States’ investigations.</p> <p>A.5.6 Provide support to the ATLAS Network.</p> <p>A.5.7 Provide internet referral services.</p> <p>A.5.8 Further develop the EU platform to tackle illegal content online (PERCI) as a communication and coordination tool for referrals and removal orders within the EU.</p> <p>A.5.9 Further develop and implement the EU Crisis Protocol (EUCP) on a collective response to viral spread of terrorist and violent extremist content online.</p> <p>A.5.10 Provide operational support to EU Member States’ CT internet-based investigations.</p> <p>A.5.11 Provide technical support to CT internet-based investigations and referrals.</p>

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Work Programme Activity	Objective 2023
	A.5.12 Further expand the scope of the Cross-Border Access to Electronic Evidence (SIRIUS) Project.
A.6. Combating Financial and Economic Crime	A.6.1 Reinforce the European Financial and Economic Crime Centre (EFECC) to extend the provision of strategic and operational support to EU Member States’ investigations on financial and economic crime.
	A.6.2 Provide support to EU Member States’ investigations on fraud.
	A.6.3 Provide support to EU Member States’ investigations on money laundering.
	A.6.4 Increase cooperation with FIUs.
	A.6.5 Provide support to EU Member States’ investigations in identifying and tracing proceeds of crime.
	A.6.6 Provide support to EU Member States’ investigations on corruption.
	A.6.7 Provide support to EU Member States’ investigations on the production and distribution of counterfeit goods.
	A.6.8 Provide support to EU Member States’ investigations on Euro counterfeiting.
A.7. Strategic and Analysis Coordination	A.7.1 Reinforce criminal analysis coordination and expertise at Europol to ensure provision of quality analysis support to Member States’ investigations.
	A.7.2 Ensure data and analysis quality control at Europol.
	A.7.3 Reinforce analysis training capabilities and coordination at Europol.
	A.7.4 Deliver quality strategic reports.
	A.7.5 Manage cooperation with Member States.
	A.7.6 Manage cooperation with third countries.
	A.7.7 Manage cooperation with EU institutions, agencies or bodies.
	A.7.8 Manage cooperation with international and regional organisations, and private parties.
A.8. Governance, support and administration	A.8.1 Continue optimising Europol’s corporate functions.
	A.8.2 Ensure efficient internal and external communication.
	A.8.3 Ensure efficient human resources and budget management.
	A.8.4 Ensure the necessary level of physical, personal and information security at Europol.
	A.8.5 Progress towards the rationalisation and expansion of Europol’s facilities services and capabilities.

SECTION I – General Context

This section presents policy factors that are expected to influence Europol's work in the coming years.

1. Security Union

1.1. The new EU Security Union Strategy

The new EU Security Union Strategy¹ adopted on 24 July 2020 lays out four strategic priorities for action at EU level:

- A future-proof security environment: this priority comprises the establishment of new EU rules on the protection and resilience of critical infrastructure, the revision of the Network and Information Systems Directive and setting up of a Joint Cyber Unit as a platform for structured and coordinated cooperation. It will promote public private cooperation to ensure stronger physical protection of public places and detection systems against terrorist attacks.
- Tackling evolving threats: the Commission will make sure that existing EU rules against cybercrime are fit for purpose and will explore measures against identity theft and to enhance law enforcement capacity in digital investigations, which would include artificial intelligence, big data, etc. The Commission put forward on 24th July 2020 a strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse online and will provide next an EU approach on countering hybrid threats.
- Protecting Europeans from terrorism and organised crime: Steps are under way to strengthen border security legislation and cooperation with non-EU countries and international organisations. The EU Agenda on Counter-Terrorism, EU Agenda on Drugs and a new EU Action Plan against firearms trafficking were issued in 2020, while the EU Agenda for tackling organised crime, including trafficking in human beings and a new EU Action Plan against migrant smuggling, were put forward in 2021.
- A strong European security ecosystem: Key measures include strengthening Europol's mandate and further developing Eurojust to better link judicial and law enforcement authorities. Working with partners outside of the EU is also crucial. Cooperation with Interpol will be reinforced through the planned EU-Interpol Agreement. Research and innovation are powerful tools to counter threats and to anticipate risks and opportunities.

1.2. European Police Partnership

The European Police Partnership has been initiated by the German Presidency with the overarching goal to ensure that every police officer in Europe has access at all times to the information they need to do their job. The document has three pillars:

- 1) Applying artificial intelligence to make better use of ever growing flow of data. In this context Europol is mentioned as a key hub for information and innovation, which must be further strengthened and expanded in terms of its capacities.
- 2) Reinforcing European police partnership within the EU, by making full use of the possibilities for EU-wide alerts/information sharing for crimes.
- 3) Anchoring Europe as an active partner in police cooperation around the world. In a globalised world, European law enforcement must be able to share data with countries whose legal systems are not entirely in accord with that of the EU. More effective tools and processes with third countries are needed to share information with trustworthy third countries in real time.

¹ COM/2020/605 final

1.3. EU Police Cooperation Code

On 8 December 2021, the Commission published an EU Police Cooperation Code to enhance law enforcement cooperation across and among Member States and give EU police officers more modern tools for information exchange. The proposed measure includes the Recommendation on operational police cooperation and the Directive on information exchange. The Recommendation refers to a common list of crimes for which hot pursuits across borders are possible and secure messenger tools for police officers to communicate with their counterparts when conducting operations in other EU countries. While police operations and criminal investigations remain MS' responsibility, these common standards will make it easier for police officers to work in other EU countries. The Recommendation will also promote a common EU culture of policing through joint training, including language courses or exchange programmes. The Directive on information exchange contains direct references to Europol, incl. Article 12, 13, and 15 (composition of Single Point of Contact, mentioning ENU). New rules on information exchange between law enforcement authorities of Member States should ensure that police officers in one Member State should have equivalent access to the information available to their colleagues in another Member State, under the same conditions. Member States should put in place a single point of contact, operational 24/7, adequately staffed and acting as a "one-stop shop" for information exchange with other EU countries. The information requested should be made available within 8 hours (for urgent cases) up to maximum 7 days. SIENA, managed by Europol, should become the default channel of communication.

1.4. European Commission's Communication: Enhancing the accession process – A credible EU perspective for the Western Balkans

In February 2020, the European Commission adopted a communication on "Enhancing the accession process – A credible EU perspective for the Western Balkans"², which foresees stronger commitments by the EU and the Western Balkans. Credibility should be reinforced through an even stronger focus on fundamental reforms, starting with the rule of law, the functioning of democratic institutions and public administration as well as the economy of the candidate countries.

1.5. Joint Communication: Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020: Reinforcing Resilience – an Eastern Partnership that delivers for all

The Commission-EEAS joint communication Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020³ was published on 18 March 2020 and comprises a new policy framework aiming at strengthening resilience in partner countries in light of today's challenges, foster sustainable development and deliver tangible results for citizens. The EU, Member States and partner countries are invited to work together for accountable institutions, the rule of law and security as a long-term objective in the Eastern Partnership countries. In particular, the EU shall work towards reinvigorating its support for fighting corruption and economic crime and improving cross-border cooperation to better protect people against organised crime as well as stepping up support for security dialogues and cooperation.

1.6. Strengthening cooperation with CSDP missions and operations

Council Conclusions on the implementation of Civilian Compact⁴ were adopted by Council on 9 December 2019 and also endorsed by the European Council in the same month. Among others, the Conclusions highlighted that the closer cooperation and synergies between relevant civilian CSDP structures, Commission services and JHA actors in line with the Compact and their respective legal mandates, should be intensified at multiple levels and through the competent working groups.

² COM/2020/57 final

³ JOIN/2020/7 final

⁴ 13571/20

2. Serious and Organised Crime

2.1. EU Strategy to tackle Organised Crime 2021-2025

On 14 April 2020, the Commission presented a Communication on the EU Strategy to tackle organised crime 2021-2025⁵ that sets out the strategic framework goals of the Commission to enhance the fight against organised crime in the EU. The Strategy builds on four main thematic blocks: (1) boosting law enforcement and judicial cooperation, (2) effective investigations: disrupting organised crime, (3) eliminating profits generated by organised crime and preventing infiltration into the legal economy and society and (4) making law enforcement and judiciary fit for the digital age. The Europol Regulation Recast, the revision of the Prüm framework, and the creation of an EU Police Cooperation Code are recognised as major pieces of legislation. Europol is an important actor when it comes to the implementation of the Strategy, especially in connection to High-Value Targets, High-risk organised crime groups and digital investigation tools.

2.2. EU Drug Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2025

The new EU Drugs Strategy⁶ provides the overarching political framework for the Union's drugs policy for the period 2021-2025 and is complemented by an EU Drugs Action Plan 2021-2025⁷, which sets out concrete implementation actions. The Action Plan underscores the role of Europol as a central actor for the implementation of the part on supply reduction. The Strategy puts forward the following priority areas: targeting high-risk organised crime groups and disrupting criminal business models especially those that foster collaboration between different OCGs; proceeds and instrumentalities of organised crime groups involved in the drug markets, and social reuse of confiscated assets; international cooperation with third countries and involvement of relevant EU agencies. Further efforts are needed to address smuggling of drugs in and out of the EU by using established trade channels and illicit crossing of the EU borders. The Strategy requires measures for more effective monitoring of logistical and digital channels exploited for drug distribution in close cooperation with the private sector (digitally enabled drug markets; postal and express services, cross-EU rail and fluvial channels and the general aviation space). Dismantling of drug production and processing, preventing the diversion and trafficking of drug precursors for illicit drug production, and eradicating illegal cultivation are also one of the objectives.

2.3. EU Action Plan on Firearms Trafficking 2020-2025

In its EU Action Plan on Firearms Trafficking 2020-2025⁸ the Commission invites Member States and south-east Europe partners to improve cooperation among law enforcement authorities (customs, police and border guards), but also with prosecutors and forensics specialists, to tackle the principal sources and routes of illicit firearms. The Commission will also improve cooperation between law enforcement and parcel and postal operators, to ensure stricter oversight of shipments containing firearms. Cooperation between the EU and non-EU partners need to be stepped up in particular with countries in North Africa and the Middle East. The Commission will take action to establish a systematic and harmonised collection of data on seizures of firearms, and publish annual statistics. In cooperation with Europol, the Commission will explore the feasibility of rolling out at EU-level a tool to track in real-time firearms-related incidents and develop a permanently up-to-date picture. The Commission invites Europol and Member States to keep a focus on firearms cases in the framework of cyber patrolling operations and actions against dark web marketplaces.

2.4. New Pact on Migration and Asylum

⁵ COM(2021)170 final

⁶ Council 14178/20

⁷ Council 9819/21

⁸ COM(2020) 608 final

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On 23 September 2020, the European Commission presented the New Pact on Migration and Asylum⁹. Of relevance for Europol will be the proposals for a Regulation introducing a screening of third country nationals at the external borders which can serve to collect information and intelligence on smuggling; Regulation on the revision of Eurodac; Recommendation on an EU mechanism for Preparedness and Management of Crises related to Migration; Guidance on the implementation of EU rules on definition and prevention of the facilitation of unauthorised entry, transit and residence; Regulation on introducing a screening of Third Country National at the external borders and others.

2.5. Renewed EU Action Plan against migrant smuggling 2021-2025

Europol will play an active role in implementing the Renewed EU Action Plan against migrant smuggling 2021-2025¹⁰, as was the case during the first Action Plan. In terms of the reinforced cooperation with partner countries and international organisations, Europol is called to offer assistance in line with its mandate. Operational support in cases of instrumentalisation of migration should also be rapidly made available by the Agency. Optimal use of the EMSC should be made, in particular through the Information Clearing House and the sharing of information from immigration liaison officers, common operational partnerships and CSDP mission and operations. The Commission is due to step up negotiations on cooperation between Europol and partner countries in order to facilitate the exchange of personal data for investigators. EMPACT is also a key tool to implement the Action Plan, where Europol plays an active role. The judiciary (e.g. Eurojust) should be closer involved with the Joint Liaison Task Force on Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking in Human Beings, while the capacity of law enforcement and judicial authorities to target the online presence of smugglers, with the support of EU IRU, should be stepped up. The support of the European Economic and Financial Crime Centre should be used to include a financial investigation element in to migrant smuggling cases. Finally, joint reports on migrant smuggling with Frontex are encouraged, as well as the establishment of cooperation with the private sector.

2.6. EU Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings 2021-2025

The EU Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings¹¹ encourages national authorities to strengthen cooperation with labour inspectorates and/or social partners and EU Agencies, in particular with Europol and within its remit with the European Labour Authority and to carry out concerted and joint inspections. Europol's role is highlighted also when it comes to breaking the criminal model to halt the exploitation of victims, since Europol facilitates Member States' intelligence-lead and financial investigations and supports effective cross-border operational cooperation. This would also be the case for the Western Balkans countries and where possible with the countries in the EU's neighbourhood. Europol's role is also mentioned when it comes to detection of internet content used by traffickers.

3. Cybercrime

3.1. EU's Cybersecurity Strategy for the Digital Decade

The EU's Cybersecurity Strategy for the Digital Decade¹² adopted on 16 December 2020 seeks to enhance the EU's resilience to cyber threats. Initiatives include enhancing cooperation and information-sharing amongst the various cyber communities - civilian, law enforcement, judicial, diplomacy and defence. The Strategy foresees also the establishment of the Joint Cyber Unit. Furthermore, special attention should be given to preventing and countering cyberattacks with systemic effects that might affect EU supply chains, critical infrastructure and essential services, democratic institutions and processes and undermine economic security. The Commission will, together with the EU Intellectual Property Office, Europol, ENISA, Member States and the private sector, develop awareness tools and guidance to increase the resilience of EU businesses against cyber-enabled intellectual property theft. In

⁹ COM(2020)609 final

¹⁰ COM(2021) 591 final

¹¹ COM(2021)171 final

¹² JOIN(2020) 18 final

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the area of capacity building, the Commission should put forward an action plan to improve digital capacity for law enforcement agencies while Europol is expected to further develop its role as a centre of expertise to support national law enforcement authorities combatting cyber-enabled and cyber-dependent crime, contributing to the definition of common forensic standards. Cooperation with third countries and multilateral fora is also foreseen.

3.2. European Commission's e-evidence package

In April 2018, the Commission proposed a legislative package aiming at accelerating law enforcement and judicial cross-border access to electronic evidence (data stored in an electronic format that is relevant in criminal proceedings). The objective of the package is to establish a consistent legal framework and avoid conflicting obligations with the law of non-EU countries, as well as to protect the fundamental rights of individuals. Conceived as a judicial cooperation tool, the e-evidence legislation could have implications for Europol, since the SIRIUS capability is mentioned in the Draft Regulation as a possible platform to transmit and facilitate the authentication of orders and as a de-confliction tool.

3.3. EU Strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse for 2020-2025

The Strategy published in July 2020 presents a framework for EU action in 2020-2025¹³ to respond to the increasing threat of child sexual abuse both online and offline. The key initiatives foreseen are:

- In a first stage, to ensure that providers of electronic communications services can continue their current voluntary practices to detect in their systems child sexual abuse after December 2020.
- In a second stage, by Q2 2021, the Commission will propose the legislation by requiring relevant online services providers to detect known child sexual abuse material and report it to public authorities.
- The Commission will launch a study on the creation of a European centre to prevent and counter child sexual abuse.
- The Commission will establish a prevention network of practitioners and researchers.

3.4. Digital Services Act

On 15 December 2020 the European Commission adopted the "Digital Services Act (DSA)¹⁴, a legislative proposal to set harmonized new rules for all digital services that operate in the European Union. The DSA proposal puts forward horizontal provisions, setting common rules for all digital services, codifying notice and action measures, as well as other due diligence obligations to ensure, among others, consumer protection and removal of illegal online content. The DSA proposal covers issues of immediate relevance to law enforcement, most notably in relation to measures for countering illegal content online, and is built, to a large extent, upon the provisions of the recently endorsed Regulation on addressing the dissemination of terrorist content online (TCO). The proposed legislation is underlined by the premise that illegal content online should be tackled with the same rigor as illegal content offline and foresees a role for Europol in its implementation.

3.5. AI package

The Commission presented on 21 April 2021 the so-called 'AI package', setting out its ambition to make Europe a global leader in the field by being the first to set clear guidelines. The proposal envisages to put forward the first EU legal framework intended to regulate artificial intelligence applications at European level. This package will have a strong impact in law enforcement agencies and at Europol, in particular due to the paradigm according to which AI-based techniques are forbidden for law enforcement activities, with some exceptions (e.g. immediate threat to life, research of suspects, missing children, etc.). The broad

¹³ COM(2020) 607 final

¹⁴ COM(2020) 825 final

classification of “high risk” processing operation and the related foreseeable EDPS prior consultation mechanism constitute several challenges in practice.

4. Terrorism and radicalisation

4.1. A Counter-Terrorism Agenda for the EU: Anticipate, Prevent, Protect, Respond

On 9 December 2020, the Commission presented a new Counter-Terrorism Agenda¹⁵ for the EU to step up the fight against terrorism and violent extremism and boost the EU's resilience to terrorist threats. Europol is expected to deliver better operational support to Member States' investigations under its revised mandate proposed on the same day. The legislative initiative should enable Europol to cooperate effectively with private parties, provide support to national CT investigations with the analysis of large and complex datasets ('big data') and step up the work on decryption. Under the future Research Programme Horizon Europe, Europol could assist in identifying key research themes relevant for law enforcement to help national authorities in using modern technologies in counter-terrorism. The Commission, in cooperation with Europol, will support the development of further guidance for the implementation of the EU Crisis Response Protocol. There will be also a specific proposals for the establishment of a mechanism of information exchange in CT cases among JHA agencies, and for a network of CT financial investigators involving Europol, to help follow the money trail and identify those involved.

4.2. Council Conclusions on EU External Action on Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism

On 15 June 2020, the Council adopted Conclusions on EU External Action on Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism. Key areas include the Western Balkans, North Africa and the Middle East, Sahel and the Horn of Africa. The misuse of the internet and new technologies for terrorist purposes are specifically addressed, as well as the need to cut off sources of terrorism financing. Furthermore, the Council recognises that Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) will remain a major common security challenge which should be better tackled through enhanced and timely cooperation and information sharing among Member States, INTCEN, Europol, Eurojust and Interpol.

4.3. Policy recommendations in counter-terrorism

On 15 June 2020 COSI approved a set of conclusions and updated policy recommendations for counter-terrorism which include calls to, *inter alia*:

- further develop EU IRU capabilities to support Member States' actions to prevent the dissemination of all types of terrorist content;
- ensure preparedness for situations of viral spread of terrorist content through the implementation of the EU Crisis Protocol;
- address the digitalisation of security and disruptive technologies; and
- establish the innovation hub for EU JHA agencies as soon as possible.

In 2020, COSI also endorsed the Terrorism Working Party (TWP) protocol¹⁶ setting out a process for evaluating and possibly entering information from third countries on suspected Foreign Terrorist Fighters in the Schengen Information System.

4.4. Right-wing violent extremism and terrorism

On 7-8 October 2019, the JHA Council held a debate on right-wing violent extremism and terrorism and endorsed the need for further work on the following issues:

- create a better situational overview of right-wing violent extremism and terrorism;

¹⁵ COM(2020)795 final

¹⁶ Defining a process for evaluating and possibly entering information from third countries on suspected Foreign Terrorist Fighters in the Schengen Information System, EU Council 13037/20.

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- continue to develop and share good practices on how to strengthen the prevention, detection and addressing of violent extremism and terrorism;
- address the spread of unlawful right-wing extremist content online and offline; The role of the national Internet Referral Units (IRUs) and the EU IRU was emphasised in this context; and
- cooperate with key third countries (i.e. Western Balkans).

4.5. EU Crisis Protocol (EUCP)

On 7 October 2019, during the 5th Ministerial Meeting, the EU Internet Forum committed to a common approach in addressing the online dimension of terrorist and violent extremist attacks as set out in the EU Crisis Protocol (EUCP). The EUCP requires the EU IRU to assume a central role in the co-ordination of the emergency responses in the event of a terrorist attack with a significant online component. In addition, the EUCP points out that for effective crisis coordination and implementation of the protocol, a designated platform is needed that would enable two-way communication among Europol, Member States authorities and online service providers. Such a platform would facilitate and coordinate the referral of terrorist content online (TCO) to OSPs while ensuring that duplication is avoided and enhancing the standardisation and auditing of the referral process.

4.6. Regulation on preventing the dissemination of terrorist content online (TCO Regulation)

The Regulation on preventing the dissemination of terrorist content online¹⁷ requires Member States to inform and cooperate with each other and may make use of channels set up by Europol to ensure co-ordination with regards to removal orders and referrals. In addition to referrals, the Regulation equips Member States with an additional tool called Removal Orders which will require hosting service providers to remove terrorist content within one hour. Once the Regulation becomes applicable from 7 June 2022, the EU IRU will be expected to support its implementation and in particular, to facilitate and coordinate referrals and Removal Orders.

4.7. EU anti-racism Action Plan 2020-2025

On 18 September 2020 the Commission presented a new EU anti-racism Action Plan¹⁸ promoting among others fair policing and protection against discrimination. Member States are encouraged to step up efforts to prevent discriminatory attitudes by law enforcement authorities and to boost the credibility of law enforcement work against hate crimes. The Commission will work together with Member States towards a better addressing violent extremist groups, incl. a mapping of national responses to violent extremism. Commission is also working with IT companies to counter online hate speech; a next step will come with the Digital Services Act, which would increase and harmonise the responsibilities of online platforms and information service providers and reinforce the oversight of platforms' content policies in the EU.

5. Financial crime

5.1. Directive laying down rules facilitating the use of financial and other information for the prevention, detection, investigation or prosecution of certain criminal offences

The directive has entered into force on 31 July 2019 and has to be implemented in national regulation by 1 August 2021. This legal initiative aims at improving the cooperation between Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs) and law enforcement authorities (LEA), including Europol. The directive provides two possibilities to Europol:

¹⁷ (EU) 2021/784

¹⁸ COM(2020) 565 final

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- Europol will have the right to request bank account information through Europol National Units or by direct contact with competent authorities (such as Asset Recovery Offices, if allowed by the MS) and the latter will be entitled to reply.
- Europol will have the right to request financial information and financial analysis to FIU through Europol National Unit or by direct contact (if allowed by the MS) and FIUs will be entitled to reply, i.e. no legal barrier will anymore be preventing this cooperation.

5.2. European Public Prosecutor’s Office (EPPO)

The European Public Prosecutor’s Office was established in 2020 and on 1 June 2021, the EPPO launched its operations and started to investigate and prosecute crimes affecting the Union’s financial interests. Europol is required to assist the office in its mission by providing information and analytical support to specific investigations.

5.3. EU’s anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism legislative package

On 20 July 2021, the European Commission presented a package of legislative proposals¹⁹ to strengthen the EU’s anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) rules. The AML package consists of four legislative proposals: New regulation on AML/CFT, 6th Directive on AML/CFT, revision of the 2015 Regulation on Transfers of Funds (crypto-assets and limit large cash payments) expanding traceability requirements to crypto-assets and a new EU AML Authority, including a Coordination and Support Mechanism for FIUs. Strong operational cooperation is needed between Europol and the new Authority, in order to mitigate the potential risk of duplication of activities and still enhance the fight against money laundering and terrorism financing.

5.4. Tax Package

The European Commission adopted on 15 July 2020 a new Tax Package to ensure that EU tax policy to boost the fight against tax abuse, curb unfair tax competition and increase tax transparency. The most relevant initiative for Europol would be to get two-ways communication channel with Eurofisc, the network of MS liaison officers facilitating multilateral efforts against cross-border VAT fraud. The Commission will propose a legislative initiative (2022-2023) amending the Regulation 904/2010 to establish in Eurofisc a EU capability against VAT fraud in cross-border transactions serving not only VAT purposes, but also financial market authorities, customs, OLAF and Europol.

5.5. The Customs Action Plan

On 28 September 2020, the Commission launched a new Customs Union Action Plan, setting out a series of measures such as improved use of data, better tools and equipment, the promotion of compliance, and more cooperation within the EU and with customs authorities of partner countries. The Commission aims to ensure that customs will be able to leverage the new payment data reporting obligations to be imposed as of 1 January 2024 on payment service providers for VAT purposes. Access to these data would help customs to trace goods back to their source and thus to detect undervaluation of imported goods. Commission will also launch an impact assessment (with an outcome by 2023), on the pros and cons of establishing an EU customs agency.

5.6. Council conclusions on enhancing financial investigations to fight serious and organised crime

On 17 June 2020, the Council approved conclusions on enhancing financial investigations to fight serious and organised crime, where the Commission is called to strengthen the legal framework for virtual assets; on the management of property frozen with a view of subsequent confiscation; and on the interconnectivity of national centralised bank account registries. Furthermore, the Commission is invited to re-engage in a discussion with MS

¹⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/210720-anti-money-laundering-countering-financing-terrorism_en

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regarding the need for a legislative limitation on cash payments. The Council also calls on MS to ensure that financial investigations, as a horizontal priority in the EU policy cycle for organised crime - EMPACT, form part of all kinds of criminal investigations. It calls on Europol to fully use the potential of the newly created European Financial and Economic Crime Centre.

6. Information exchange and interoperability

6.1. Regulations establishing a framework for interoperability

On 20 May 2019, the Commission tabled two Interoperability Regulations were adopted to set up a framework for interoperability between existing and future EU information systems for police and judicial cooperation, asylum and migration. The new regulations establish:

- A common identity repository (CIR) that would create an individual file for each person recorded in the EES, the VIS, the ETIAS, Eurodac or the ECRIS-TCN.
- The European search portal (ESP) to enable the simultaneous querying of EES, VIS, ETIAS, Eurodac, SIS, the ECRIS-TCN as well as of Europol's and Interpol's databases.
- A shared biometric matching service (shared BMS).
- A multiple-identity detector (MID).
- A central repository for reporting and statistics for large-scale EU IT systems in the area of freedom, security and justice.
- A new framework for MS law enforcement authorities' and for Europol's access to the EES, VIS, ETIAS and Eurodac provided by the CIR and ESP.

6.2. Recast of Eurodac Regulation

The 2020 proposal of the Eurodac Regulation builds on the provisional agreement between co-legislators reached with regard to the 2016 proposal and aims at transforming Eurodac into a common European database to support EU policies on asylum, resettlement and irregular migration. Amongst others, it will better assist the control of irregular migration and the detection of unauthorised movements by counting individual applicants in addition to applications. Technical developments, especially Europol's direct connection to Eurodac, will depend on the final text of the regulation.

6.3. Regulation on the establishment, operation and use of the Schengen Information System (SIS) in the field of police cooperation and judicial cooperation in criminal matters

The new SIS Regulation was adopted on 28 November 2018 and will enter into operation in June 2022. It will bring forward, among others, the following changes:

- Create new alert categories;
- Extend Europol's access rights in SIS to all alert categories, including alerts on missing persons and on persons who are refused entry or stay within the territory of a MS either on criminal grounds or because of non-compliance with visa and stay conditions;
- Introduce the obligation for MSs to report to Europol hits on alerts related to terrorist offences;
- Allow Europol to exchange supplementary information with SIRENE Bureaux through the SIRENE Communication Infrastructure and in accordance with the SIRENE Manual.

6.4. Recast of the Visa Information System

The VIS Regulation Recast was adopted on 7 July 2021. The new regulation foresees a more structured access to VIS for Europol and other MS' law enforcement authorities. Europol would need to undertake preparatory work enabling future systematic check of all visa applications against Europol data (18.2.a ER) including to search biometric data. As specifically mentioned in the draft legislation, Europol would be entitled to receive about €30 million between 2021 and 2027 for the development of an ABIS (Automated Biometrics Identification System)

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necessary to cross-check fingerprints/facial images included in VIS against Europol's biometric data. The VIS Recast Regulation is planned to enter into operation in December 2023.

6.5. European Travel Authorisation System (ETIAS)

On 12 September 2018, the Regulation establishing ETIAS was adopted, which will allow visa-exempt third country nationals to obtain a travel authorisation prior to their travel to the Schengen Area. The data provided by applicants will be automatically cross-checked, amongst others, against Europol data. ETIAS travel authorisation requests will be processed by ETIAS National Units in MSs in close cooperation with Frontex and Europol. Europol will be able to request access to data stored in the ETIAS Central System and is expected to provide a reasoned opinion to the ETIAS National Units on hits against Europol data and Europol entries in ETIAS Watchlist. Europol can also contribute data to the dedicated ETIAS Watch List. ETIAS is expected to be fully operational in May 2023, while its functioning will start with a grace period during which the travel authorisation is not yet mandatory.

6.6. Entry-Exit System (EES)

The new Entry/Exit System will replace the stamping of passports and will apply to all non-Schengen nationals who are admitted for a short stay into the Schengen area. Expected to be operational in September 2022, the system's objective is to improve the management of external borders; prevent irregular immigration and facilitate the management of migration flows; detect over-stayers and support the identification of undocumented persons in the Schengen area. Europol would be able to request access to the EES under specific authorisation and data protection rules.

6.7. ECRIS-Third Country National (TCN) system

Established in 2012, the European Criminal Records Information system (ECRIS) enables national judicial authorities to receive information on previous criminal convictions in other MS. On 17 April 2019, the Regulation establishing a centralised system for the identification of MS holding conviction information on TCN was adopted to supplement the ECRIS. Europol is granted direct access to the ECRIS-TCN system in order to identify the MS holding information on previous convictions of third-country nationals. The ECRIS-TCN will enter into operation in May 2023.

6.8. Revision of the Advance Passenger Information Directive

The revision of the Advance Passenger Information (API) Directive could allow for more effective use of the information (notably with EES and ETIAS), while facilitating the use of API data for law enforcement purposes and streamlining the use of API data and PNR data. A new legislative proposal is expected in 2022.

6.9. Prüm Revision

The proposed revision aims to reinforce and modernise the existing Prüm framework by improving the technical architecture, introducing two new categories of data (facial images and police records), improving the follow-up communication process, and involving Europol. The proposed involvement of Europol aims to enable (1) Member States to automatically search and cross-check the third country biometric data held by Europol and (2) Europol to cross-check data received from third countries with the Member States' databases. By allowing for a systematic, structured, and efficient exchange of third countries data between Europol and the Member States, the proposal will enhance the Agency's role as the EU criminal information hub in support to Member States' operational needs. Additionally, Europol is tasked to develop in cooperation with Member States and maintain EPRIS (European Police Record Index System) to enable the exchange of police records. More detailed impact of the legislative proposal on Europol's operational activities and resources is being carried out, as the negotiations progress.

7. EMPACT 2022-2025

The Council adopted in 2021 the EU's priorities for the fight against serious and organised crime for the period 2022-2025 and these comprise:

- 1) High-risk criminal networks
- 2) Cyber-attacks
- 3) Trafficking in human beings
- 4) Child sexual exploitation
- 5) Migrant smuggling
- 6) Drugs trafficking: the production, trafficking and distribution of cannabis, cocaine and heroin; the production, trafficking and distribution of synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances (NPS)
- 7) Fraud, economic and financial crimes: Online fraud schemes, excise fraud, MTIC fraud, Intellectual property (IP) crime, counterfeiting of goods and currencies, Criminal finances, money laundering and asset recovery
- 8) Organised Property Crime
- 9) Environmental Crime
- 10) Firearms trafficking

As well as Document Fraud as a cross-cutting threat.

SECTION II - Multi-annual programming 2023 – 2025

1. Multi-annual programme

The priorities of the Europol Strategy 2020+ will guide the work of the Agency in the years 2023-2025 to:

- be the EU criminal information hub making full use of data from an extensive network of partners;
- deliver agile operational support;
- be a platform for European policing solutions;
- be at the forefront of innovation and research for law enforcement;
- be the model EU law enforcement organisation with robust performance, good governance and accountability, promoting diversity and staff engagement.

The areas of specific focus for the years 2023-2025 are presented below:

Strategic Priority 1: Be the EU criminal information hub

Europol has established itself as the EU criminal information hub and will continue to enhance the value of its network by providing Member States with access to a growing number of partners and sources of information. Europol will further evolve from collecting to connecting information; in the coming years, the focus will be on reinforcing this position by advancing Europol's information management architecture and rapidly embracing new methods and technologies as they become available. Europol will also work with the relevant EU agencies, the European Commission and the Member States to implement its roadmaps related to travel intelligence and to EU systems interoperability.

Highlights:

- A prominent information position through an improved information management architecture with fully integrated data management and advanced capabilities.
- Efficient intake of information, freeing up resources for analysis and operational support.
- Exploit the opportunities made available by the interoperability of EU systems such as increased use of biometrics.
- Implementation of Europol's External Strategy.

Strategic priority 2: Deliver agile operational support

To increase operational impact by dismantling terrorist networks and increasingly poly-criminal organised crime groups, Europol will develop an agile operational support model, building on its existing experience of the Joint Cybercrime Action Taskforce (J-CAT), Joint Operational Team (JOT) Mare, Counter Terrorism Joint Liaison Team (CT-JLT), High-Value Targets (HVTs), Operational Taskforces (OTFs) and guest officer deployments.

Enhanced analytical capabilities will be at the core of Europol's operational support. In addition, Europol will develop a complete operational support model to identify, organise, coordinate and deploy multi-disciplinary teams to work with Member States and support priority investigations against high-value targets. Europol will also further enhance its rapid response to terrorist attacks and other major crime incidents.

The most dangerous organised crime groups corrupt and infiltrate the public sector and carry out complex money laundering schemes to conceal their illegal profits. To tackle these top

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criminals successfully, Europol will put more focus on investigating high-value targets, financial investigations and asset recovery.

Highlights:

- Identification and increased support to priority investigations.
- Development of standard operating procedures for rapid response and operational deployments.
- Expanding the EU law enforcement toolbox especially in niche technical and forensic capabilities.
- Creation and support of an environment for multi-disciplinary teams and transnational investigations.

Strategic Priority 3: Be a platform for European policing solutions

Europol will act as the broker of law enforcement knowledge, providing a hub through which Member States can connect and benefit from each other's and Europol's expertise and training capabilities. Europol's evolution from a systems-based organisation to a specialised law enforcement service provider by progressively advancing from processing to producing knowledge will be pursued.

Europol will bring together Member States to drive the development of EU analysis standards and strengthen analysis for law enforcement in the EU. The aim will be to deliver, in close cooperation with Member States, analytical products and services with actionable intelligence, which are recognised and can be used by Member States' jurisdictions.

Highlights:

- A dynamic knowledge platform, able to exploit the information Europol holds and that which it can access.
- Development of a common methodology and standards of analysis.
- A central inventory of skills available across Member States' law enforcement agencies in view of connecting expertise, promoting best practices and delivering joint training activities.
- A platform for complex EU policing solutions such as decryption and cryptocurrency.

Strategic Priority 4: Be at the forefront of law enforcement innovation and research

The advent of new technologies and the increasing sophistication of crime, the exponential growth of data types and volume are major challenges for today's law enforcement community. Making incremental changes to existing solutions is not enough; to remain relevant and effective, it is necessary to invest in and actively pursue new solutions. Europol will become a central contact point for law enforcement innovation, bringing together the most suitable partners to build a network of innovation, tailored to the needs of Member States' law enforcement agencies. New methods to leverage the full value of available data and the application of innovative business models in law enforcement will be co-developed, tested and hosted by Europol for the benefit of the Member States.

Highlights:

- Common understanding of innovation and research needs of Member States
- Identification of best innovation partners.
- Development of an innovation strategy defining the priority fields for investment.
- A culture of innovation including an innovation lab.

Strategic Priority 5: Be the model EU Law Enforcement organisation

Europol will work closely with all its partners to develop synergies ensuring the most efficient and effective use of its resources. The agency will maintain the highest governance standards while remaining accountable to its EU law enforcement partners and EU institutional stakeholders, ensuring that our work is visible to EU citizens at large.

Europol will create the conditions for a culture of innovation by nurturing an environment of transparency, communication, creativity and diversity, where staff engagement, motivation and well-being are key.

Highlights:

- Further strengthening a workforce with the skills to drive the organisation forward.
- Managing resources in a transparent, trusted and compliant way.
- Develop new communication strategies.
- A diversity and inclusion strategy.

Table: Key Performance Indicators for measuring multi-annual performance of the agency

Key Performance Indicator	Target	Indicative targets	
	2023	2024	2025
Number of searches through EIS and QUEST			
Number of SIENA messages exchanged			
Number of Operations Supported by Europol			
Number of Accepted Contributions by Europol			
Number of Action Days organised/supported by Europol			
Number of Operational Analysis Reports produced by Europol			
Number of Cross Match Reports and SIENA hit notifications produced by Europol			
Number of Strategic Analysis Reports produced by Europol			
Number of Thematic Reports produced by Europol			
Satisfaction with Operational Support delivered by Europol			
Satisfaction with Strategic Analysis Reports produced by Europol			
Satisfaction with Operational Training delivered by Europol			
Emissions (CO2)			
Workplace Flex Ratio ²⁰			
Vacancy Rate			
% Female staff			
Budget Commitment Rate			
Implementation of Audit Recommendations			

²⁰ Defined as number of workplaces per FTE

2. Human and financial resource outlook for the years 2023-2025

2.1. Overview of the past and current situation

Europol’s role in the security landscape of the EU has been recognised over the last few years and, as a result, the agency was entrusted with several important functions such as the European Cybercrime Centre, the European Migrant Smuggling Centre, the European Internet Referral Unit within the European Counter-Terrorism Centre and most recently, the Innovation Lab and the European Financial and Economic Crime Centre. Although some resources were provided to perform these new tasks, Europol has depended heavily on the internal re-allocation of operational staff and on the shifting of posts from support functions to the Operations Directorate. In December 2020 the European Commission put forward a proposal for a Europol Regulation Recast²¹ which also addresses the need for Europol to be reinforced with an appropriate level of human and financial resources. The legislative financial statement accompanying the Commission’s proposal foresees, therefore, a significant top-up, beyond the MFF 2021-2027 resource allocations for Europol, i.e. additional funds of € 178M, an increase of 160 TAs and a steady level of 235 CAs and 71 SNEs, covering the period between 2022 (as the expected entry into force of the new Europol Regulation) and 2027.

2.2. Outlook for the years N+1 - N+3

Most of the resources foreseen in the Europol Regulation Recast of 2020 are expected to become available in 2022. For the years 2023-2025, more moderate increases are envisaged.

2.3. Resource programming for the years N+1- N+3

HUMAN RESOURCES

Temporary agents

Starting from the 2022 Establishment Plan of 686 posts, the net number of posts in 2023 is envisaged to increase with 30 Temporary Agent (TA) posts. For 2024 and 2025, a further increase of 26 and 19 TA posts, respectively, is foreseen.

The following allocation of grades is envisaged for the new posts, based on the approach of having most resources dedicated to non-managerial tasks.

	2023	2024	2025
AD9		1	
AD7	6	5	5
AD6	19	20	14
AST2	5		
Total	30	26	19

Contract Agents

The number of CAs in 2023-2025 will remain at the same level as in 2021, thus maintaining the number at 235, in line with the Regulation Recast and the MFF 2021-2027.

²¹ European Commission reference COM(2020) 796 Final - 2020/0349 (COD)

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Seconded National Experts

The number of Seconded National Experts (SNEs) in 2023-2025 is foreseen to remain at the same level as in 2021, thus maintaining the number at 71. As of 2022, next to the existing SNE categories, an additional 50 SNE FTE are envisaged for short term deployments during the year (GE/OTF, costed, short term SNE).

For detailed data and numbers per staff category, see Annex IV.

Staff financed with Grant Agreements / Contribution Agreements / Service Legal Agreements (SLAs)

For 2023 Europol will continue having a number of Contract Agents (CAs) and SNEs directly funded via grant, contribution or service legal agreements. For detailed information and numbers per agreement and staff category, see Annex XI.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Revenue:

The main financial source of Europol is the regular Community subsidy. The proposed revenue for 2023 is € 203.9M.

Item	Heading	Revenue 2021	Revenue 2022	Draft Estimate 2023	Envisaged 2024	Envisaged 2025
9000	Regular subsidy from the Community	168,964,254	192,380,773	203,905,172	212,850,244	218,057,507
9010	Other subsidies and grants		P.M	P.M	P.M	P.M
9101	Denmark contribution ²²		P.M	P.M	P.M	P.M
9200	Other revenue		P.M	P.M	P.M	P.M
	Total Revenue	168,964,254	192,380,773	203,905,172	212,850,244	218,057,507

Expenditure:

Title	Heading	Outturn 2021	Budget 2022	Draft Estimate 2023	Diff 2023/2022	% of the budget
1	Staff	92,464,192	103,065,273	109,034,672	5,969,399	53.5%
2	Other Administrative Expenditure	10,689,182	14,653,500	17,014,500	2,361,000	8.3%
3	Operational Activities	63,641,173	74,662,000	77,856,000	3,194,000	38.2%
	Total expenditure	166,794,547	192,380,773	203,905,172	11,524,399	100%

Title 1 – Staff expenditure:

Staff expenditure in 2023 amounts to € 109.1M and represents 53.5% of the total budget. It reflects a € 6M or 5.8% increase compared to 2022 which is mainly due to the additional staff envisaged for 2023 (+ 30 TAs), the full year effect of the new staff in 2022 (+71 TAs) and salary adjustments²³.

The staff and salary budget foresees the expenditure for overall 716 TAs, 235 CAs and 71 SNEs. For new staff the costs are calculated for part of the year only to take into account the time it takes to complete their recruitment.

²² It is envisaged that the budget will be amended later in the year with an additional contribution from Denmark via a separate procedure.

²³ Salary adjustments consider a 2% salary increase plus the weighting coefficient for The Netherlands at the same level as 2022 (111.4).

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The direct salary and allowances related budget (including recruitment expenditure and relocation allowances) for TAs and CAs (Chapter 11 – Staff in active employment) comes to € 99.2M, an increase of 4.9%/ € 4.6M compared to the year 2022.

The budget for Socio-medical infrastructure (Chapter 13) and Training (Chapter 14) is 6.9%/ € 84K higher than the budget 2022 (amounting to € 1.1M), while the budget for other staff related expenditure (Chapter 15) is envisaged to increase by 17.8%/ € 1.3M from the 2022 baseline of € 7.2M. The increase is foreseen to cover higher costs for external security officers, as a consequence of taking extra support for the Temporary Satellite Building (TSB) 1, TSB 2 and the Headquarters (HQ). Moreover, additional consultancy services are planned for the continuation of the mid and long term housing measures as part of the Strategic Housing Roadmap, especially regarding the development of a new Hot Data Centre (HDC) Site. Additional fees for the European School are foreseen in 2023 due to a higher number of enrolled pupils.

Title 2 – Other Administrative Expenditure:

The budget for administrative activities comes to € 17M and represents 8.3% of the total Europol draft estimate. The increase for administrative expenditure compared to 2022 amounts to € 2.4M or 16.1%.

An increase compared to the Budget 2022 of € 3.5M or 44.5% for Rental of buildings and associated costs (Chapter 20) is mainly due to the development works for the HDC, for which the ICT infrastructure work related to the data connectivity between the HQ and the HDC is required (€ 2.9M). Moreover, the remaining increase is due to higher building-related running costs for the implementation and entering into function of the second TSB.

The budget for administrative ICT (Chapter 21) amounts to € 1.6M and represents a decrease of 28.7%/ € 641K compared to 2022. The budget is envisaged to cover corporate priorities for business enablement related to Corporate Governance as well as ICT infrastructure costs such as administrative hardware and software licenses management.

An amount of € 2.9M is foreseen for the continuation of other governance, administrative and telecommunication expenditure (Chapter 22 – 24). These Chapters include open source and database subscriptions, legal expenses, administrative expertise, uniforms, furniture, car fleet, office supplies, postal and courier services. The decrease in this Chapter of € 548K or 15.9% is mainly due to the implementation of the flex-ratio concept, with the purchase of extra lockers and furniture for the Open office concept planning to be completed in 2022.

The budget for activities of the Management Board and its Working Groups under Chapter 25 is almost at the same level compared to 2022 and follows the same planning of four physical MB meetings plus two additional virtual meetings in January and November. Travel costs for delegates are kept at the same level compared to the previous year.

Title 3 – Operational activities:

The budget for Operational activities adds up to € 77.9M and represents 38.2% of the total budget. The increase for operational activities compared to 2022 amounts to € 3.2M or 4.3%.

To continue the support to MS investigations, an increase of € 1.9M or 8.5% is foreseen for Chapter 30 – Operations, with a total budget of € 24.7M for 2023. This additional budget will enable Europol to further develop MS support in areas highlighted in the Europol Strategy 2020+. A budget of € 4M and € 3.5M respectively is foreseen for EMPACT grants and Deployments, with no change compared to 2022. An increase of € 500K is foreseen for the OTF/ HVT (Operational Task Force/ High Value Targets) activities, with a total budget of € 3M in 2023. An increase of € 934K is also envisaged for the ATLAS community, with a final budget

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of € 3.73M in 2023. Additional support to MS is also provided in operational and strategic meetings, missions and training.

From 2023 onwards, Europol plans to gradually introduce differentiated appropriations for the budget items that will be used to award grants. This will enable Europol to support grant beneficiaries (mainly law enforcement public bodies) with multi-annual funding and planning.²⁴

The budget for operational ICT services and programmes under Title 3 (Chapters 31 and 32 together) comes to € 45.2M, which is an increase of € 1.6M compared to 2022. The budget will be used to continue the multi-annual delivery of ICT top strategic priorities.

An amount of € 6.2M is foreseen under Chapter 33 which is intended to cover for the allowances for 71 Seconded National Experts (€ 4.2M) as per the agreed annual staffing levels, as well as the dedicated support to MS investigations, achieved via the introduction of the Guest Experts concept (dedicated short-term Seconded National Experts, SNEs) (€ 2M). Relevant planning information will continue to be included in the programming and budget documentation while Europol will report on the budgetary and HR related implementation in the regular updates to the MB throughout the respective financial year, the consolidated annual activity reporting and in the annual accounts. The short-term Seconded National Experts will be filled with MS' experts as per the rules on the secondment of Seconded National Experts adopted by the MB in October 2021 and in accordance with the corresponding Guest Experts concept (thus the short-term Guest Experts will not be deployed to perform tasks of the regular 71 Seconded National Experts).

The budget under Chapter 34 and 35 for high level external stakeholder meetings (HENU and the Europol Police Chiefs Convention, EPCC) amounts to € 470K as in 2022.

An amount of € 1.3M is envisaged in the 2023 budget, under Chapter 38 - Decryption platform, to cover for the operational running costs of the platform, mainly electricity, with a minor increase of € 90K or 7.6% over the previous year.

2.4 Efficiency gains

Initiatives and practices that are used to achieve efficiency gains include:

- Implementation of the strategy, incl. digitalisation of services, work-life balance through teleworking/smart working and ensuring the right skills for Europol's workforce, utilising e-recruitment and appropriate training and development programmes.
- The nGage programme encompassing a set of administrative ICT solutions such as e-procurement, e-signature, new automated activity based budget reporting solution, etc.
- A robust monitoring of budget implementation and regular forecast exercises to ensure the most efficient use of financial resources, together with the implementation of new automated reporting tools for a faster data analysis as well as enhanced cost allocation capabilities.
- Close monitoring of the vacancy rate in an effort to maximise the use of resources made available to the agency.
- Shared procurement procedures with other agencies and introduction of the ABAC legal commitments module (LCK) bringing added control on Europol spending and contractual ceilings.

²⁴ Further details are provided in the annex on grants (Annex XI)

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- Use of Video conferencing capabilities, limiting increases to the mission and meeting budgets.
- Green energy and long term replacement plan reducing cost for maintenance and risk of equipment failure.

2.5 Negative priorities/decrease of existing tasks

No substantial negative priorities or decrease of existing tasks is foreseen.

SECTION III - Work Programme 2023

Actions on a white background are recurrent actions i.e. the business-as-usual tasks of Europol.

Actions on a grey background are non-recurrent actions i.e. new or specific actions which indicate a change, a new initiative or a specific undertaking in 2023, or a project of limited duration.

Actions on a grey-blue background are related to the Europol Regulation Recast²⁵, which has not been adopted yet at the time of preparation of this document. These actions are therefore subject to the final text of the Regulation’s legal provisions and its entering into force.

Activities

A.1. Development of operational information technology and information management capabilities

Overview

As the European criminal information hub, and in order to provide operational support to MS investigations, Europol makes a continuous effort to evolve its information management and information technology capabilities following a business-driven approach in line with the Europol Strategy 2020+.

Europol’s Information Management (IM) Strategy developed in 2020 will guide the streamlining and development of information management at Europol in the coming years.

A significant part of Europol’s work in this domain is realised through the New Environment for Operations (NEO) programme. In 2023, NEO will continue to enhance existing capabilities and develop new ones, including those necessary for the implementation of the Europol Regulation Recast (expected to enter into force in 2022).

The work on EU Interoperability will also continue as part of NEO, in line with the European Commission planning and in close cooperation with eu-LISA. The Europol Roadmap on EU Interoperability (endorsed by the MB) and subsequent implementation plan will be regularly

²⁵ As the legislative process is ongoing, the legislative proposal of the EU Commission (COM(2020) 796 final) was used as the basis for the planning.

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reviewed and, as required, adjusted following new developments, such as adoption of new legal instruments, adoption of new implementing acts or re-planning of activities by the European Commission and/or eu-LISA.

In line with the Europol Strategy 2020+, Europol seeks to be at the forefront of law enforcement innovation and research. The Innovation Lab will facilitate innovation in the wider law enforcement community and will support Member States in addressing the risks and opportunities of emerging technologies. The Innovation Lab will act as the secretariat for the EU Innovation Hub for Internal Security and lead the Hub Team in collaboration with other JHA agencies to implement the tasks and functions adopted by COSI in 2020.

Additionally, Europol has put in place the next generation Administrative and Governance Environment (ngAGE) programme to renovate the way the agency operates in the administration domain. The target is to rationalise the diverse application landscape by streamlining the corporate processes and by leveraging and integrating in a coherent manner EU Commission-developed, in-house and cloud solutions. The pace of the programme is dictated by the availability of resources, in light of major developments in the operational domain, which remain the agency's highest priority.

The implementation of all initiatives will duly incorporate data protection safeguards as prescribed in Europol's Regulation. Any work on interoperability and connectivity with information management systems at EU level will build on the provisions for protection of fundamental rights and freedoms of natural persons in the legal instruments of the respective systems and other relevant EU law (e.g. on data protection, privacy, non-discrimination, etc.).

Milestones for the NEO and nGage programmes will be further refined before the final adoption of Europol's programming Document 2023-2025, taking into account the work done in 2022.

2023 Objectives

Information Management Strategy
Objectives and actions
A.1.1 Continue with the implementation of the Information Management Strategy²⁶. <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Further develop and enforce information management standards and a single information management governance for Europol.○ Continue aligning the Catalogue of Products & Services and underlying information such as process landscape, data flows, and performance reporting.○ Further connect expert user communities through specialised tools and platforms, in particular by advocating EPE as the central inventory of skills available across MS.○ Continue efforts to promote best practices in relation to Member States' information management capabilities and strategies.○ Maintain one comprehensive multiannual business capabilities roadmap and a business roadmap for every business capability, while ensuring evolution in alignment with Europol's strategy and needs.○ Continue monitoring the roles and interactions of stakeholder bodies & streamlining reporting and consultations, in agreement with Member States.○ Integrate relevant changes in Europol's revised Regulation (expected entry into force 2022) in the Information Management Strategy of Europol and the ICT planning.

²⁶ Strategic objectives 1 and 2 of the Information Management Strategy are implemented through the initiatives under the Work Programme's annual objectives A.1.3, A.1.4 and A.1.5.

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- Further develop benefits management within IM/ICT planning and prioritisation, in order to support strategic alignment of initiatives.
- Continue strengthening the overall management coordination for information management at Europol and improving the coordination of operational demand for information management capabilities.

Expected results: Core Business Systems and the Member States receive a reliable and secure service with minimal interruptions.
Business needs are met in an appropriate and coordinated manner, in line with Europol's revised Regulation.
Operational users at Europol and in the Member States benefit from improved information management capabilities, for use in criminal investigations and related information exchange and analysis.
Europol contributes to the objectives of relevant EU policies.

Develop the New Environment for Operations (NEO) - Europol operations core capabilities

Objectives and actions

A.1.2 Further develop ICT capabilities for Europol's operations.

Analysis Capability

Analysis is one of the core services that Europol provides to the Member States. In 2023, Europol will:

- Develop further the Visualisation Analysis Tool by adding new elements to the toolbox and will assess opening up these tools for MS in the future when required.
- Ensure that developments are in line with security and accreditation rules, DPF, EDPS feedback and in particular new rules arising from the Europol Regulation Recast.

Data Management Capability

The new analysis capability includes a new Data Management Portal (DMP). In 2023, work will continue, to:

- Develop a new module regarding bulk import in order to facilitate the ingestion of large datasets in the Data Environment.
- Develop a new module to include a complete data review process within the DMP.
- Further enhance the Case Management module to allow Europol to improve its reporting on operational support; further develop the Search module including more advanced query search.
- Develop the strategic analysis module in the DMP and adjust the new tools to the needs of strategic analysis.
- Further develop the visualisation module.
- Develop additional functionalities in line with the needs of the investigations supported at that time.

SMART Capabilities

- Further develop new smart capabilities, including those to further automate data quality review.

Specialised Capabilities

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- Continue the development of the EU platform for referrals and removal orders (PERCI) by enhancing its functionalities.
- Transition EU IRU's Sirius platform to an ICT managed setup, enabling it to rely on central datasets and other collaboration and knowledge sharing platforms for the law enforcement domain.
- Integrate the Internet Facing Operations Environment (IFOE) capabilities with the central NEO environment, leveraging existing services and avoiding data / processing silo conditions.
- Further develop the existing Image and Video Analysis Solution (IVAS).
- Design and develop an on premise solution for the gathering and processing of Dark Web OSINT related intelligence.

New Forensics Environment and capabilities

- Complete the second phase of the NFE Project, aiming to a full accreditation to operate and developing better forensic extraction and reconstruction capabilities, shortening time-to-delivery of forensic extractions and completing cross-domain interactions, and services integration.
- Progress with the development of a Malware Information Sharing platform.

Operations support capabilities

- Provide ad-hoc capabilities to support law enforcement operational needs, incl. engineering and deploying of ad-hoc processing environments and data pre-processing tools.
- Improve the operational collaboration environment among Trusted Expert Communities (TEC) and/or investigators (e.g. in the context of HVT taskforces).

Expected results: An improved set of capabilities to maximise the value of data.
Enhancement of analysis products.
Improved investigation collaboration and support to Member States.

Develop the New Environment for Operations (NEO) - MS-facing core operational ICT capabilities

Objectives and actions

A.1.3 Implement improvements to core MS-facing operational capabilities.

Information exchange, knowledge sharing and collaboration – SIENA, EPE, VCP, VCOP

- Support the roll-out of SIENA to more law enforcement communities and competent authorities such as Police Customs Cooperation Centres (PCCCs).
- Connect more authorities to SIENA, including at SIENA BPL, Restricted and Confidential levels via system-to-system integration (web services) or web application.
- Establish connection to SIENA of third parties with newly signed working arrangements with Europol.
- Maintain SIENA's high level of performance and support to the data intake and data processing operations of Europol.
- Continue improving the SIENA user experience, for example by user interface changes, notifications through other channels, integrated smart services, or better use of structured information.
- Ensure alignment of the SIENA training and production environments.

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- Finalise the development effort to establish Large File Exchange (LFE) interoperability with SIENA and continue establishing the interoperability of SIENA with other Europol capabilities.
- Continue automating immediate follow-up processes through SIENA for successful searches and hits resulting from cross-checks against Europol data and between Member States.
- Review the existing SIENA Organisational Entity and Organisational Sub-Entity concept, with a view to allowing more flexibility in the use of SIENA for MS internal communication flows.
- Ensure that the Europol Platform for Experts (EPE) and its counterpart in the Operations Network (ONEP) deliver additional business benefits to their users, for example by adding new capabilities or enhancing existing ones.
- Ensure the EPE and ONEP solutions remain secure and relevant.
- Utilise EPE and ONEP as a gateway to (national) Law Enforcement specialist databases.
- Continue with the VCP-Connect pilot project that will provide participating Member States access to VCP for operational day-to-day communication.
- Continue enhancing VCP in line with business demand.
- Continue enhancing VCOP in line with business demand and keep the VCOP ecosystem up-to-date with latest technological developments.
- Continue supporting improvement of the UMF standard through participation in UMF governance and initiatives. Increase the use of structured data by Europol and further facilitate the provision of structured data by MS by using UMF.
- Design a technical solution to facilitate the secure information exchange between EU MS and private parties in relation to the new possibilities offered by the Europol Regulation Recast.

Search, cross checking & (self-)data management – EIS, QUEST

- Advance with redesigning the EIS from a technical perspective as a future component of the Europol Data Sharing Capability in accordance with the new ICT environment.
- Continue improving data quality in the EIS including by implementing automated data compliance checks.
- Continue improving the interoperability between EIS and QUEST.
- Revise and expand automated data loading services. Initiate the development of a new generation dataloader; explore the possibilities for a new service extending the capacity for the direct loading of EIS data by third parties.
- Continue improving the search mechanism of QUEST according to MS needs.
- Initiate integration of biometric searching capability integration with the (new) EIS, in line with the results of the feasibility analysis done in 2022.
- Continue supporting rollout of QUEST (BPL and EU-RESTRICTED) in all Member States.
- Extend QUEST with searches on additional objects.
- Further roll-out Member States access to Europol's Analysis Projects through QUEST (web service) on a hit/no hit basis (dependent on the QUEST+ pilot outcome).
- Enable hit/no-hit access to Europol data for JHA Agencies, within the legal provisions of their mandates and the Europol Regulation (dependent on the outcome of the inter-Agency work carried out exploring the best way forward).
- Finalise development work to support QUEST BPL searches from ETIAS via the European Search Portal.

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- Dependent on the outcome of the legal discussion on the use of European Search Portal (ESP), further develop QUEST BPL allowing MS to query Europol data via the ESP for law enforcement purposes.
- Dependent on the outcome of the legislative proposal related to Prüm Next Generation, initiate the implementation of a biometric search and cross check capability (QUEST BIO).

Identity and access management (IAM)

- Harmonise further the IAM landscape of Europol by integrating more systems with IAM and taking further steps towards establishing single enterprise identity.
- Continue improving IAM functional capabilities, providing more flexibility in IAM workflows and enhance further implementation of attribute based access control.
- Design and implement federated identity management allowing users single-sign-on (SSO) when using different Europol systems and services.

Expected results: An improved secure communication service to Member States and other partners.
A re-designed and robust data sharing capability fit for future use with new search services.
Increased efficiency of compliance checks on data.
A streamlined way for users to access Europol's systems.
Europol contributes to the objectives of relevant EU policies.

Develop the New Environment for Operations (NEO) - Europol Roadmap on EU Interoperability

Objectives and actions

A.1.4 Advance interoperability and connectivity with information management systems at EU level to enhance information exchange.

A number of key actions from the Interoperability implementation plan are highlighted below:

- Contribute to the work on interoperability and connectivity of IM systems at EU level. by participating in relevant committees, advisory groups and project boards, e.g. IXIM, SIS II, VIS, EURODAC, EES, ETIAS, ECRIS-TCN, UMF, and EPRIS.ADEP. Provide technical advice on initiatives related to the implementation of the EU Interoperability Agenda.
- Ensure readiness for the entry into operation of ETIAS: Participate in ETIAS compliance test, business testing and end user training. Launch into operation the Europol internal solutions supporting the ETIAS processes, including automated searches against Europol data, automated notifications in relation to hits against certain data sets, manual processing of hits and provision of reasoned opinion, management of the ETIAS Watchlist, and access by Europol to ETIAS data for law enforcement purpose. Participate in the ETIAS Screening Board and ensure close cooperation with Frontex.
- Finalise the work enabling the systematic check of all visa applications against Europol Regulation Article 18.2(a) data, including biometric data. Participate in VIS Screening Board under the lead of Frontex. Implement solution for manual processing of hits and provision of Europol's opinion in the context of VIS.
- Further enhance Europol's capabilities related to biometrics, in particular Fingerprints and Facial Recognition to meet the business needs and technical requirements in the context of the EU Interoperability framework.

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- Continue exploring and developing innovative and interoperable technical solutions for the scaling of the processing of travel related information taking into consideration the exponential growth of data volumes.
- Implement and launch into operation Europol access to ECRIS-TCN data.
- Depending on the outcome of the negotiations on Europol Regulation Recast, implement business processes and technical solutions for Europol inserting or assisting MS in inserting alerts in SIS.
- Launch into operation Europol's connection to and use of the interoperability components European Search Portal and Central Identity Repository, and ensure interoperability with other components as required. Launch into operation Europol's access to the CRRS (Central Repository for Reporting & Statistics).
- Follow up the proposals of the Eurodac Recast and the Screening Regulation and take appropriate actions based on the obligations and opportunities stemming from these.
- Start preparations for Europol's participation in Prüm in line with the outcome of the negotiations on the legislative proposal on the revision of the Prüm Decisions.
- Continue the support of Europol to EPRIS.ADEP, in line with developments in 2022.
- Upon delivery of the building by the Host State, complete the implementation of the new Europol Data Centre in support of the ETIAS solution.
- Support CEPOL, eu-LISA and Frontex in EU interoperability and large-scale EU systems' related training activities.

Expected results: Europol is a fully integrated part of the European security architecture in accordance with respective EU legislation.

The Member States' needs in terms of efficient access to information are better met.

Interoperability and complementarity of Europol systems and tools with other EU information management systems leads to increased and more efficient exchange of information.

Enhanced Europol contribution to relevant EU policies.

Innovation Lab

Objectives and actions

A.1.5 Further implement Europol's Innovation Strategy.

- Subject to the adoption of the Europol Regulation Recast, implement the strengthened Europol mandate in the field of research and innovation, in line with the Europol Regulation Recast. Establish an Innovation and Development Environment. Factor in fundamental rights compliance throughout the innovation process.
- Further develop the foresight and horizon scanning activities of the EU Observatory for innovation. Create dedicated Strategic groups of national foresight experts with the EuCB. Deliver relevant input to strategic analysis and produce regular reports on trends and foresight.
- Act as the secretariat for the EU Innovation Hub for Internal Security and lead the Hub Team in collaboration with other JHA agencies, implement the tasks and functions adopted by COSI on 15 May 2020²⁷.
- Act as the secretariat of the European Clearing Board (EuCB), a coordination and prioritisation structure composed of EU Member States' representatives. The EuCB

²⁷ EU Innovation Hub for Internal Security main principles for establishment, Council Secretariat reference 7829/20 LIMITE COSI 77 ENFOPOL 109 CYBERE 69 JAI 341.

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<p>should channel their needs and operational requirements to the Lab, discuss the creation of core groups and decide on priorities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Expand the work of the Projects function of the Innovation Lab by supporting an increasing number of initiatives. Establish corresponding Core Groups with participation of MS and other relevant stakeholders to contribute to the project implementation. Foster the co-creation of innovative tools with Member States. ○ Further develop networks of relevant partners in the industry and academia and organise Industry Days in partnership with existing LEA and industry networks. ○ Subject to the adoption of the Europol Regulation Recast, assist the European Commission in identifying key research themes, drawing up and implementing the Union framework programmes for research and innovation that are relevant to Europol’s objectives. ○ Coordinate the implementation of selected H2020 projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project AIDA aims to develop a solution aimed at delivering a descriptive and predictive data analytics platform using machine learning and artificial intelligence methods to prevent, detect, analyse, and combat criminal activities. AIDA focuses on cybercrime and terrorism. - Project GRACE aims to develop a platform to process referrals from electronic service providers of child sexual exploitation material. - Project INFINITY aims to deliver a mixed-reality immersive analytical environment to provide LEAs with cutting-edge intelligence extraction, analysis, visualisation and collaboration tools during and after criminal investigations. - Project STARLIGHT aims to deliver a set of AI tools for LEA purposes. The Innovation Lab will coordinate the input of the 15 LEAs involved in the research project. ○ Maintain dedicated Innovation EPEs (Lab, Hub, Core Groups, Observatory etc.). ○ Manage the Europol Code Repository (ECR) in support of Core Group projects. ○ Maintain the repository of tools developed by the Europol Innovation Lab, the EU MS or external stakeholders. ○ Facilitate the training of law enforcement in the field of innovation in close cooperation with CEPOL. ○ Support ICT and actively contribute to the NEO Programme to identify and adopt innovative and novel technologies, to improve the efficiency and pertinence of Europol’s services to the EU MS LEAs. ○ Ensure close involvement of ICT in the Innovation Lab’s work to facilitate the rapid embedment of emerging technology solutions in Europol’s overall information management landscape in line with architecture and compliance standards. 	
Expected results:	<p>A substantiated overview of the risks, threats and opportunities of emerging technologies.</p> <p>Coordinated efforts in research and development leading to greater realisation of common projects and technical solutions.</p> <p>Alignment of EU funding for security research with the needs of law enforcement.</p> <p>Europol contributes to the objectives of relevant EU policies.</p>

Corporate information management and ngAGE programme	
Objectives and actions	
A.1.6 Further improve corporate information management and related administrative ICT capabilities.	

Corporate Information management

- Improve IM for non-operational information as well as the underlying IM capabilities to increase the efficiency of documents management (DM), records management (RM) and archiving.
- Manage and enhance corporate IM capabilities and collaboration tools for non-operational information including end-user support and –training.
- Maintain the central archive of official documents and corporate records in hard copy and electronic format.
- Progress with the restructuring of the corporate archive facilities and the implementation of a historic archive (EU Archive Regulation 2015/496 amending Council Regulation 354/1983).
- Maintain the overall organisational structure and support business stakeholders when defining and implementing organisational change; define and coordinate the implementation of organisational changes in IM capabilities to guarantee consistent information ownership and information security.
- Advance Europol’s Process Landscape and ensure its alignment with organisational strategy and IM strategy; facilitate the development, analysis and improvement of business processes in prioritised areas of organisational development in line with the Europol Regulation Recast.
- Enhance business process management at Europol. Ensure that all processes and protocols for new initiatives are in place to guarantee the methodological consistency of the work and compliance with internal and external requirements.

next generation Administrative and Governance Environment (ngAGE)

- Finalise the implementation of the corporate risk management and audit tool.
- Progress with the development of a corporate analytics and reporting capability.
- Progress in establishing IM capabilities that enable electronic workflows, electronic approval and e-Signature.
- Continue the transition to a new electronic document-, records and workflow management platform.
- Subject to European Commission’s project team confirmation, implement new modules in SYSPER.
- Implement additional features for the e-recruitment system.
- Further improve the activity based management tool for budget administration.

Expected results: Effective processes, systems and tooling are in place to ensure proper corporate risk and internal control management.
Reduced bureaucracy and time spent on document and records management and reporting while ensuring the availability of reliable information on decision-making, corporate performance and level of compliance.
Rationalisation of the application landscape by streamlining corporate processes and leveraging and integrating in a coherent manner EU Commission-developed, in-house and cloud solutions.

Provide and maintain ICT and IM capabilities

Objectives and actions

A.1.7 Develop and maintain reliable and secure ICT and IM capabilities.

- Manage business applications, their processes and their evolution in alignment with the relevant strategies, legal requirements and stakeholder expectations.
- Develop and maintain the Business and Information architecture, and the portfolio of Business and ICT capabilities, and the landscape of business solutions with their respective roadmaps, while ensuring evolution in alignment with Europol’s strategy, business needs of the end users, and applicable compliance standards.
- Establish requirements for ICT solutions aligned to business needs and the Business and Information Architecture. Provide end-to-end design of individual solutions.
- Develop a timely, comprehensive ICT portfolio work plan, including demand management and resource allocation, and monitor its implementation.
- Manage ICT and IM projects and ensure their delivery according to schedule, scope and cost.
- Manage an overall Solution Portfolio, in sync with the intended capability portfolio.
- Create enabling technology roadmaps, including retirement / replacement of obsolete solutions and identification of technology-driven innovation opportunities.
- Define and monitor Security standards.
- Design, build and operate ICT Security improvements.
- Provide application development services across multiple delivery models.
- Ensure consistent software engineering practices (including secure coding).
- Define delivery methods, tools, and standards and quality assurance processes.
- Perform functionality, performance, continuity, and security testing related to software solutions and infrastructure changes. Continuously develop automated testing approaches.
- Maintain Solutions on a regular basis in line with the Service Level Agreements (SLAs) in force.
- Implement all changes into all environments of the Europol ICT Landscape.
- Manage a system for Solution deployment in Production, Pre-Production, and Testing environments. Develop and maintain processes and tooling for automated deployments of solutions.
- Provide tools used during the Software Development Cycle.
- Continue optimising license spending and ensuring right-size security measures, and right-size availability.
- Maintain infrastructure including upgrades and replacements of end-of-life hardware and network equipment. Perform lifecycle management for all infrastructure components.
- Perform periodic patching of all network, server, storage, middleware and application components. Create and periodically test backups.
- Provide workplace-related services and customer service and support to users of all Europol ICT capabilities, in-house, in MS and Third Partners. Maintain an up-to-date Service Catalogue.
- Maintain a periodic overview of all services and solutions in terms of costs and capacity.
- Further review, as needed, existing SLAs for the full range of storage, networking and processing capacity in view of the business needs for quality of service.

Expected results: Core Business Systems and the Member States receive a reliable and secure service with minimal interruptions.
Business needs are met in an adequate and coordinated manner.

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Indicators	Latest result (Q2 2022)	Target 2023 ²⁸
Core Business Project Delivery		
Operational Stability - Uptime of Core systems		
% of Active Users on the EPE		
Number of Cross Border Crime Checks in the EIS related to persons		
Number of Searches through EIS and QUEST		
Number of SIENA Cases initiated		
Number of SIENA Messages exchanged		

²⁸ A number of indicators throughout the Work Programme also depend on MS demand for Europol’s products and services.

A.2. Operational Coordination

Overview

Europol's Operational Centre is responsible for handling all incoming information and for managing the workflow of non-prioritised cases in terms of data processing, data handling and hit reporting. In addition it handles and compares the biometric data received across the different cases (prioritised and non-prioritised), managing the existing dedicated databases for fingerprints (ABIS) and DNA.

The Centre provides support to specific operations and action days both from the Europol headquarters and on the spot. In case of serious incidents, it initiates emergency procedures and coordinates Europol's immediate response.

Internally, the Operational Centre presents up-to-date business intelligence to Europol's management, enabling decision making on a permanent 24/7 basis and assures the continuity of the operational business outside office hours.

In parallel, the Operational Centre is also responsible for the SIRENE Office of Europol. In this capacity – among other tasks – it acts as a single point of contact for SIRENE Bureaux, managing communications with them and all criminal information exchanged through the SIRENE communications infrastructure in line with the SIS regulations.

An increasingly important and considerable part of the Operational Centre's work is the implementation of Europol's role in the EU PNR, EES, ETIAS, VIS and other relevant information management initiatives on the movements of persons and goods (referred as travel intelligence). In particular, with the ETIAS and VIS-recast mechanisms becoming operational in 2022-2023, Europol is expected to have in place a 24/7 service providing swift follow-up and reasoned opinion on hits of visa or travel authorisation applications against Europol data.

Special Tactics in the Operational centre at Europol offers specialist law enforcement techniques assisting Member States' investigations in any of the three priority areas of serious and organised crime, terrorism and cybercrime. Whilst remaining open to new developments, the following areas of knowledge and expertise are being currently supported: covert human intelligence sources, covert surveillance, covert entry, counter-kidnapping and -extortion, hostage negotiation, specialist intervention, witness protection and fugitive active search.

Europol supports the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) by facilitating the development, monitoring and reporting of the EMPACT operational action plans. With dedicated funds integrated into Europol's regular budget the agency is in a position to financially support actions of the OAPs on annual basis in the format of EMPACT grants. Further support is provided in the form of organising and funding the EMPACT strategic meetings. From 2020 onwards, Europol is also able to extend this funding support to EU Neighbouring countries from the Eastern Partnership on the basis of a new programme funded by the European Neighbourhood East Instrument.

Finally, the Deployment Management Team provides horizontal support to Europol's operational centres by dealing with Europol's large scale/long term deployments as well as deployments linked to first responses requested by MS and partner countries. Currently, one of the main tasks of the team is to manage and coordinate the training and deployment aspects of the Guest Officer project with deployments to migration hotspots and areas of interest in Greece, Italy, Cyprus, Malta and other future hotspots.

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It is envisaged that the Operational Centre will also be responsible for implementing the upcoming Guest Experts Concept, which will see the secondment of MS experts to support external operations as well as other activities that would be Europol HQ-based, such as HVT investigations and OTFs.

2023 Objectives

Operational Centre
Objectives and actions
A.2.1 Ensure the effective functioning of the Operational Centre in managing operational information.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Monitor operational data on 24/7 basis as the single point of entry for any incoming information from stakeholders.○ Decide on the acceptance of information into Europol's databases.○ Process and handle urgent messages in priority cases, in close cooperation with competent analysis projects.○ Handle non-priority cases and manage hits on related information including evaluation and reporting of matches.○ Process and compare the biometric data received at Europol (fingerprints and DNA profiles), being the Agency's point of contact and knowledge hub for handling biometric data (to the extent possible given the availability of resources). Search and compare biometric data against external systems such as SIS, VIS and EES.○ Provide permanent monitoring and reporting of Open Source information about incidents related to the mandate of Europol.○ Manage EIS operational data including the insertion of data on behalf of third parties and hit management.○ Manage operational information exchange with third parties.○ Search operational data provided by third partners in the VIS, EES and SIS on a case by case basis and include the relevant information retrieved in the operational outputs.○ Prepare daily situation and weekly criminal intelligence briefing reports to inform internally about main operations, trends and patterns. Host the daily briefing of operational heads of units (TOT meeting).○ Maintain dashboards for management to provide business information for decisions.○ Further develop, maintain and deliver the 3-month induction training for newly recruited analysts. Contribute to the delivery of the criminal analysis, EIS and SIENA trainings.○ Accommodate the potentially significant task of following-up to MS hits with Europol's analysis data once MS obtain hit/no hit access to the Analysis Projects via QUEST.○ Following the establishment of the EU platform for referral and removal orders (PERCI, as described in Activity 5), scale up the capacity of the Operational Centre to handle MS requests on 24/7 basis in case of activation of the EU Crisis Protocol in coordination with the ECTC/EU IRU.○ Operate the SIRENE office within Europol to handle hits on SIS II alerts and the communication with MS SIRENE Bureaux. /The Operational Centre needs to operate the communications with the SIRENE Bureaux as well as to handle the intake of hits on terrorist alerts and other supplementary information on 24/7 basis. Given the SIS II Recast going live in 2022 and the intake of information from SIRENE reaching full scale, this action will be implemented to the extent current resource levels allow./

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- Provided that Europol is granted with new capabilities in the field of SIS-SIRENE as a consequence of the Europol Regulation Recast, ensure the setting-up of necessary modalities and their implementation.

Expected results: Increased quality and completeness of Europol’s criminal intelligence picture allows for more effective response to MS operational cases and crisis situations.
Europol contributes to the objectives of relevant EU policies.

Operational Centre

Objectives and actions

A.2.2 Provide support to operations and crisis management.

- Act as 24/7 contact point for urgent operational requests from MS Liaison bureaux/ Europol’s National Units/competent authorities and for officers’ reporting during on-the-spot deployment.
- Initiate the emergency procedures and crisis response steps in case of operational emergencies / terrorist attacks within the EU or affecting the security of the EU.
- Ensure a coordinated application of the crisis response mechanism and the different protocols in the cybercrime, counter-terrorism and migrant smuggling areas.
- Coordinate Europol’s immediate response together with other relevant units and stakeholders.
- In close cooperation with the Special Tactics team and other Operational centres, guarantee 24/7 access to expertise and specialised operational knowledge, such as the European Tracking Solution.
- Liaise with Europol’s partners (MS and third parties) affected/involved.
- Provide remote support to on-going actions/operations/major international events/on-the-spot deployments.
- Fulfil the role of business product manager of the mobile office solution. Manage the overview of mobile offices and other operational equipment.
- Support the coordination of operations and large-scale joint actions.

Expected results: Member States’ operations and emergency cases and crisis response receive quality operational support.

Travel Intelligence

Objectives and actions

A.2.3 Build-up Europol’s capabilities in the area of travel intelligence towards a fully-fledged European Travel Intelligence Centre (ETIC).

- Utilise opportunities stemming from the EU PNR, EES, ETIAS and other relevant information management initiatives on the movements of persons and goods in order to enrich the criminal intelligence picture of law enforcement.
- Define, develop and deliver concrete operational and strategic products and services on the basis of travel information and intelligence to support the Member States.
- Provide operational support to Member States’ investigations.

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- Support the extension of the dedicated liaison network with direct connection with relevant travel intelligence entities in the MS and other partnering countries (subject to the availability of sufficient office space).
- Provide support to PNR related projects of Member States and other relevant partners.
- Host the Secretariat for the informal working group on PNR and participate in the IWG-PNR events.
- Subject to technical and EDPS assessments, provide support to the connectivity and data exchange among the Passenger Information Units (PIUs) in MS.
- Contribute to the coordination and delivery of dedicated training for the analysis of travel related information in partnership with CEPOL.
- Enhance cooperation with private partners relevant for the collection of travel intelligence. Utilise, if applicable, any positive effect of Europol Regulation Recast regarding information exchange with private parties.

A.2.4 Operationalise Europol's functions in the ETIAS and VIS systems and processes.

- Following the initiation of ETIAS operations, ensure the implementation of Europol's tasks (to the extent possible given the availability of resources)²⁹, which include:
 - 24/7 availability to process the hits of ETIAS applications against Europol data and provision of reasoned opinion within 60 hours;
 - Participation in the ETIAS Screening Board hosted by Frontex; Contribution to the definition of ETIAS screening rules and security related risk indicators; management of Europol's entries in the ETIAS Watchlist;
 - Making (justified) searches in the data stored in the ETIAS Central System.
- Ensure readiness for the implementation of Europol's tasks (to the extent possible given the availability of resources) under VIS Recast, which include:
 - 24/7 availability to process the hits of visa applications against Europol data (including biometrics) and provision of opinion within 60 hours;
 - Participation in the VIS Screening Board hosted by Frontex; Contribution to the definition of security related risk indicators;
 - Making (justified) searches in the data stored in VIS.

Expected results: Increased quality and completeness of Europol's criminal intelligence picture with regards to travel information.

Member States' investigations receive the required support for the processing of travel data and the results of such processing through Europol's operational products.

Operational readiness for the implementation of ETIAS and VIS.

Special tactics

Objectives and actions

A.2.5 Provide support to Member States in the area of special tactics.

- Act as the EU knowledge and expertise broker on specialist law enforcement techniques supporting MS investigations in the area of SOC, terrorism and cybercrime.
- Continue developing and maintaining expertise on covert human intelligence sources, covert surveillance and controlled delivery, covert entry, counter-kidnapping and -

²⁹ LFS of ETIAS Regulation did not foresee resources for Europol; LFS for Interoperability and LFS for Europol Regulation Recast did not foresee additional resources for Europol for ETIAS purposes.

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extortion, fugitive active search, specialist intervention, witness protection and undercover policing.

- Develop and maintain expertise about all counter measures used by OCGs to defeat police operations in general and special tactics policing operations in particular.
- Act as Europol entry point for all Unmanned Aerial Vehicle related requests and analysis.
- Manage the EU Most Wanted List containing high-profile internationally wanted criminals. Deliver operational support in fugitive search cases by using Europol's core capabilities. Update the EU Most Wanted website.
- Manage the High Risk Informant Database (HRIDB) - a coded database allowing a more accurate risk assessment when working with foreign informants.
- Manage and monitor the European Tracking Solution (ETS). Ensure the operational availability at large and aim to connect all interested MS and third parties.
- Manage the Virtual Command Post tool for live information exchange during special tactics operations. Initiate the upgrade of the tool if operational needs arise.
- Follow up on the research on the operational use of geospatial images (Copernicus Programme, Frontex, EMSA and EUSATCEN) and other space assets for law enforcement by:
 - Extending the use of Europol's access to Integrated Maritime Services Portal at the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) to the MS;
 - Implementing a central point of access for LEA to use the European Commission's Copernicus services; and
 - Supporting the informal network of experts on the use of geospatial images for law enforcement purposes.
- Support the drafting and implementation of OAPs through the involvement in joint investigations, large-scale operations, on the spot deployments and/or joint action days.
- Organise strategic expert meetings, training, awareness raising and prevention activities in the area of knowledge management and in support of specialist networks.
- Explore new areas of special tactics support which Europol could potentially provide.
- Utilise the new Guest Experts concept to create a pool of experts in the area of special tactics.
- Develop in-house expertise on crowd-sourcing tools and special tactics open source intelligence.
- Manage additional EPE networks under the sosXnet³⁰ umbrella and give guidance to the related networks.
- Contribute to the delivery of training by CEPOL, e.g. on Witness Protection and Informant Handling.

Expected results: Member States' investigations receive quality special tactics support.

EMPACT support

Objectives and actions

A.2.6 Provide support and funding opportunities to EMPACT priorities and actions.

³⁰ Specialist Operational Support Exchange Network

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- Contribute to identification of key issues and good practices related to EMPACT and provide input to the Council's Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation on Internal Security (COSI).
- Provide methodological, administrative and logistical support to the drafting of the Operational Action Plans (OAPs).
- Facilitate communication and collaboration between the crime priorities and horizontal goals having common objectives and/or interdependencies.
- Support the implementation of the EMPACT Common Horizontal Strategic Goal on Criminal intelligence picture, assuming the coordinator's functions.
- Contribute to the implementation of Operational Action Plans; provide stakeholder management and support to operational meetings.
- Manage the EMPACT Grant scheme and inform MS systematically about funding opportunities.
- Maintain contacts with stakeholders in order to identify and report on issues of general relevance for the successful implementation of EMPACT.
- Coordinate and support the planning of Joint Action Days.
- Monitor the implementation of the Operational Action Plans.
- Establish a digital/online EMPACT platform (EMPACT Goes Green) which should contribute to more efficient planning and reporting.
- In cooperation with CEPOL, contribute to the delivery of training to the Western Balkan countries on EMPACT priorities within the framework of the EU funded project WB Partnership against Crime and Terrorism (WBPaCT).
- Continue implementing the funding mechanism³¹ earmarked for (Member-States-led) EMPACT-related projects for the benefit of the law enforcement authorities of the EU Eastern Neighbourhood countries. Through capacity building enable the beneficiary countries to incorporate the EMPACT methodology in their national and regional planning.

Expected results: Member States receive efficient support for the implementation of their OAPs.

Administrative aspects of EMPACT are improved in efficiency due to digitalisation.

Europol's support to EMPACT increasingly contributes to operational outcomes in the Member States.

Strengthened partner countries' institutional knowledge of and criminal intelligence capacity in the EMPACT priority crime areas.

Enhanced operational cooperation of partner countries with EU Member States and agencies.

Deployment management and support

Objectives and actions

A.2.7 Manage and support medium to long-term deployments, incl. Europol's Guest Officers capability.

- Manage and support medium to long-term deployments by Europol, as well as deployments linked to first responses requested by Member States or partners, such as deployments to hotspots.

³¹ Funded through a grant from the European Neighbourhood East Instrument and based on an agreement with the European Commission on concrete priorities to be pursued by the programme.

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- Coordinate, manage and support the guest officer (GO) deployments, including:
 - Maintaining a pool of GOs ready for deployment;
 - Managing ongoing deployments of GOs;
 - Delivering the GO training programme which encompasses hands-on training on Europol systems and the mobile office, as well as getting GOs up to speed to operate under the aegis of Europol;
 - Providing input to the development and common training materials of the Migration Management Support Teams (MMST) together with FRONTEX and EASO;
 - Implementing mobile team arrangements and rapid deployments when required;
 - Extending the network of national contact points to ensure that more disembarkation points/areas of interest agreed upon with host states, have a designated national contact point;
 - Maintaining and updating operational plans with the host MS/partner states in areas where Europol is deploying GOs;
 - Liaising with and raising awareness amongst seconding states so as to ensure a sustainable level of secondments to the GO deployment pool.

A.2.8 Implement the Guest Experts concept.

- Ensure that all modalities are in place for the implementation of the Guest Expert concept.
- Fully exploit the possibility to deploy short-term, costed SNEs in support of OTFs (for immediate activation) as a part of the standardised HVT/OTF concept.
- Maintain and further extend (if required) the pool with short-term costed SNEs for the pool of GEs for future deployments requiring specific expertise (remaining on stand-by after recruitment to be activated when necessary) on the basis of the profiles indicated in the Implementation Plan for the GE Concept.
- Explore additional areas where Europol may deploy Guest Experts to support Member States’ operational needs and Europol’s priorities.
- Provide basic training to selected GEs according to the specific operational purposes that would include a general overview of Europol’s activities, legal framework, data protection and data/ICT security issues, respect for human rights/values, were relevant, Europol tools such as SIENA and the EIS, etc.

Expected results: Provision of efficient support to and management of deployments, implementation of safe and effective deployments, and smooth collaboration with the authorities in host and seconding countries.

Enhanced support to OTFs operations and other major investigations through the deployment of Guest Experts. Enhanced exchange of expertise and specialised support according to MS operational needs and Europol’s priorities.

Indicators	Latest result (Q2 2022)	Target 2023
Speed of first-line response to MS requests		
Number of Accepted SIENA contributions by OAC		
Number of Europol Requests for PNR data (Art. 10 PNR Directive)		
Number of deployments of Guest Officers		

A.3. Combating Serious and Organised Crime

Overview

The work of Europol in the fight against serious and organised crime is delivered through the European Serious and Organised Crime Centre (ESOCC). The centre aims at providing the most effective operational support to priority cases and this encompasses criminal intelligence analysis, on-the-spot and real time information exchange and expertise, and operational capabilities support to Member States.

The ESOCC's primary goal is to deliver operational support to MS priority cases and High Value Target investigations focusing on individuals and poly-criminal networks posing the highest risk of serious and organised crime to the EU. This will be achieved by implementing a case prioritisation mechanism and High Value Target (HVT)/Operational Task Force (OTF) concept, ensuring a standardised application of operational services on the basis of case categories, improving internal and external coordination, allocating resources in a flexible manner and using a Task Force/project based working method with horizontal support from other centres to respond to emerging threats.

Europol has embedded the principles of criminal intelligence-led policing in its structure, processes and resources. The agency has facilitated already the implementation of three EU Policy Cycles for organised and serious international crime and is currently working on the next one - EMPACT 2022-2025 - which will be again a key driver for the operational support provided by Europol to MS competent authorities in 2023. In addition to the current planning, Europol will include its tasks and responsibilities stemming from the Operational Action Plans for 2023 once those are finalised.

In 2023, ESOCC will continue targeting high-risk and cross-border Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) active in the areas of drugs, weapons and explosives, property crime and environmental crime. Within each crime group the Analysis Projects (APs) are clustered and aligned to the EMPACT priorities. In addition, the agency has assumed the coordinator's function for the EMPACT Common Horizontal Strategic Goal for High Risk Criminal Networks (HRCN) and thus ensure the overall coherence of actions targeting key criminal structures and individuals (HRCN/HVT).

The ESOCC also includes the European Migrant Smuggling Centre (EMSC) that encompasses Europol's work on criminal activities related to irregular migration. The goal of the EMSC is to have a decisive role in proactively supporting MS to target and dismantle organised crime networks involved in migrant smuggling, with special attention provided to EU hotspots, and secondary and third movements within the EU, where OCGs are establishing their business model. A closely linked dedicated analysis project on Trafficking in Human Beings deals with different forms of human exploitation.

Europol is following closely the EU policy developments and in 2022 it will be contributing to the implementation of the EU Strategy to tackle Organised Crime 2021-2025, the EU Strategy and Action Plan on Drugs 2021-2025, the EU Action Plan on Firearms Trafficking 2020-2025, the EU Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings 2021-2025, the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, and the EU Action Plan on migrant smuggling 2021-2025.

2023 Objectives

<u>European Serious and Organised Crime Centre (ESOCC)</u>	
Objectives and actions	
<p>A.3.1 Ensure the effective functioning of the ESOCC in providing strategic and operational support to EU MS’ investigations on SOC and the implementation of EMPACT priorities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Handle ESOCC information; monitor information flows; coordinate ESOCC operations. ○ Support MS with operational capabilities and expertise that are not available widely at national level to enhance cost-effectiveness; the focus should be on developing actions bringing high operational added value to the investigations. ○ Ensure collaboration with front-line investigators by providing real-time operational analysis, operational coordination, information exchange and tactical expertise, including short and longer-term deployments of Europol experts. ○ Use data from real-time investigations supported by the ESOCC to maintain an intelligence picture on SOC. ○ Support the implementation of Operational Action Plans (OAP) under EMPACT priority threats. ○ Develop the capacity of the ESOCC in financial investigations and the tracing of proceeds of crime with the horizontal support of the EFEC. ○ Develop the capacity of the ESOCC in open source and social media monitoring with the horizontal support of the ECTC/EU IRU. ○ Further develop crime specific intelligence fusion platforms (in the area of Drugs, Migrant smuggling and THB) that includes MS representatives to facilitate the exchange of real time intelligence, analysis and support to and coordination of live operations targeting HRCN affecting the EU. ○ Utilise, where appropriate and subject to available capacities, new funding opportunities stemming from the eligibility of Europol to apply together with MS to the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy (BMVI) and the Internal Security Fund (ISF). ○ Support the preparation of prevention materials and campaigns. 	
<p>Expected results: Member States’ investigations receive quality analytical and operational support related to SOC.</p> <p>Improved law enforcement coordination of action and operational cooperation in the EU against organised crime groups constituting the highest risk for the internal security.</p> <p>Europol contributes to the objectives of relevant EU policies.</p>	
<p>A.3.2 Strengthen coordination and operational efforts against High Value Targets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase the provision of support to Member States in identifying High Value Targets (HVT) - individuals and criminal organisations constituting the highest risk of organised and serious crime. ○ Support Member States in setting up and operating Operational Task Forces (OTF) facilitating complex and high profile resource-intensive investigations against HVTs, which also require specialised skills and expertise in multiple domains, including seizure and confiscation of criminal assets. ○ Support the application of the standardised HVT/OTF concept within Europol and EMPACT. 	

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- Utilise the dedicated OTF grant to finance the application of special investigative techniques and other resource demanding activities in MS. Ensure the complementarity of the grant mechanism to the EMPACT funding provided by Europol.
- Coordinate the allocation of adequate resources at Europol and the provision of horizontal support to MS's investigations on HVT.
- Contribute to the development of innovative tools in view of facilitating data processing and analysis in support of HVT and priority cases.
- Utilise the newly-set pool with short-term SNEs in support of OTFs (in the framework of the Guest Experts concept) in view of improving operational support for HVT and priority cases.
- Utilise new opportunities enabling joint operational analysis between Europol and Member States when conducting specific investigations against HVTs (subject to the final text and the entry into force of Europol Regulation Recast, and the corresponding technical advancement).

Expected results: Improved law enforcement coordination of action and operational cooperation in the EU against organised crime groups constituting the highest risk for the internal security.

Member States receive better and extended support in relation to their investigations on High Value Targets and the establishment of Operational Task Forces.

Arrests of High Value Targets, identification and seizures of criminal assets, and disruption/dismantling of criminal networks.

Operations on Drugs

Disrupt the Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) involved in cocaine trafficking and distribution.

Disrupt the OCGs involved in heroin trafficking and distribution.

Disrupt the OCGs involved in the production, trafficking and distribution of synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances, as well as the supply of relevant materials and precursors.

Disrupt the OCGs involved in Cannabis cultivation, trafficking and distribution.

Objectives and actions

A.3.3 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on drug production and trafficking.

- Support the activities of the Programme Board on drug supply reduction, the drug-related EMPACT projects and the implementation of the EU Drugs Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2025³² while ensuring their coherence.
- Identify HVT(s) active in the field of drug production and trafficking; proactively support the coordination and the conduct of investigations on these individuals by applying standardised HVT/OTF concept.
- Perform data processing, criminal intelligence analysis and support MS with operational capabilities and expertise, including on-the-spot support.
- Set up operational meetings and support priority and HVT investigations, and EMPACT-related actions.
- Collaborate closely with the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) to ensure a full coherence of the work of the two agencies. In cooperation

³² COM(2020) 606 final.

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with the EMCDDA support the EU Early Warning System on new psychoactive substances.

- Contribute with the support of EC3 Dark Web team to the joint project with EMCDDA and JRC for development of a tool for monitoring and analysis of drug activity on Dark Web markets.
- Reinforce the outreach towards the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre – Narcotics (MAOC-N) by promoting participation in Europol’s Programme Board on drug supply reduction, awareness sessions, workshops and joint operations in order to improve effectiveness of information flow and operational collaboration.
- Support the implementation of special tactics targeting the drug logistical facilitators involved in the production, transportation or financing of the drug related illicit activities.
- Strengthen operational cooperation with major seaports that are being abused for large-scale drug trafficking.
- Utilise new opportunities stemming from the Europol Regulation Recast enabling more effective cooperation with private parties and foster the setting-up of public-private partnerships such as with relevant EU courier/parcel post companies, aviation and maritime authorities concerning trafficking of drugs or precursors; or with relevant chemical and pharmaceutical industries concerning suspicious orders or purchases.
- Prioritise cooperation with high-risk countries³³ from a drug production and smuggling perspective in order to support MS investigations, and trace and identify drugs-related criminal proceeds.
- Support EU dialogues on drugs that focus on specific drug trafficking routes, involving producer, transit and consumer markets³⁴.
- Further develop drug intelligence fusion platform within Europol that includes Member States representatives, and has contact points with secured information exchange capacities in third countries and regions constituting drug trafficking hubs. Facilitate the exchange of intelligence in real time, analysis and support to live operations targeting international drug trafficking organised crime groups affecting the EU.
- Supporting MS in identifying, tracking and dismantling illicit drug producing facilities in the EU, including by targeting precursors and designer-precursors, by improving and making better use of forensic investigations, criminal intelligence and by developing and expanding detection techniques.
- Support MS investigations against environmental crime related to illicit drug production and trafficking.
- Conduct regular communication and awareness campaigns highlighting EU drugs threats as well as the EU efforts for combating this phenomenon, in coordination with EMCDDA.
- Organise and fund the annual Drug Conference.

Expected results: Arrests of High Value Targets, identification and seizures of criminal assets, and disruption/dismantling of criminal networks.
Reduction of the drug supply by facilitating arrest and prosecution of its main criminal actors.
Improved law enforcement coordination and efficiency of action in the EU in the area of drug supply reduction.

³³ Colombia, Brazil, Mexico and China.

³⁴ Regular EU dialogues should be conducted with the Western Balkan region and countries, Eastern Partnership countries, Central Asia region and countries, Russia, USA, Latin America and the Caribbean regions and countries. In addition, dialogues on drugs should be launched with China, Iran and Colombia.

Operations on Weapons & Explosives

Disrupt illicit trafficking in firearms and explosives.

Objectives and actions

A.3.4 Provide support to EU Member States’ investigations on weapons and explosives.

- Support the activities of firearms-related EMPACT projects and the implementation of the 2020-2025 EU action plan on firearms trafficking³⁵.
- Identify HVT(s) active in the field of weapons and explosives trafficking and proactively support the coordination and the conduct of investigations on these individuals by applying standardised HVT/OTF concept.
- Perform data processing, criminal intelligence analysis and support MS with operational capabilities and expertise, including on-the-spot support.
- Set up operational meetings and support priority and HVT investigations, and EMPACT-related actions.
- Use of biometric technologies (facial recognition) to support surveillance work targeting international weapons trafficking networks.
- Conduct proactive criminal intelligence gathering on (dark) online weapons and explosives trade, with a horizontal support of EC3 DarkWeb team.
- Support the implementation of special tactics targeting the weapon/explosives production and trafficking logistical facilitators (defined as facilitators involved in the production, transportation or financing of the weapons related illicit activities).
- Develop capacities for weapons and explosives tracing and utilise the access to CAR’s iTRACE and Interpol’s iARMS. Resume discussions with the US ATF’s eTRACE in view of establishing access.
- Contribute to the collection of intelligence, analysis and reporting on used/seized terrorist weapons.
- Support MS investigations to counter the diversion of firearms and explosive precursors with the help of the counter diversion information cell collecting and cross-checking information on suspicious dealers and brokers.
- Focus on trafficking of weapons through postal and fast parcels.
- Focus on the analysis of open source intelligence to identify and analyse patterns of firearms-related violence and firearms trafficking by utilising horizontal support from the EU IRU.
- Develop, in cooperation with the European Commission, an EU-level firearms reference table enabling an easy classification of firearms according to EU categories.

Expected results: Member States’ investigations receive quality analytical and operational support related to illicit trafficking weapons and explosives.
Arrests of High Value Targets, identification and seizures of criminal assets, and disruption/dismantling of criminal networks.

Operations on High Risk and Cross Border Organised Crime Groups (OCG)

Disrupt Mafia-structured OCGs originating in Italy and impacting other MS.

³⁵ COM(2020) 608 final

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Disrupt Ethnic Albanian³⁶ Organised Crime Networks.
Disrupt Eastern European Organised Crime Networks.
Disrupt Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs.
Disrupt High Risk OCGs.

Objectives and actions

A.3.5 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on high risk and cross border OCGs.

- Support Member States' investigations against clan-based and other new type criminal networks, especially those operating in several countries and using extreme violence.
- Support the implementation of the Common Horizontal Strategic Goal and the Operational Action Plan (OAP) under the EMPACT priority High Risk Criminal Networks (HRCN), assuming co-driver's and coordinator's functions.
- Proactively support the coordination and conduct of HRCN investigations using the standardised HVT/OTF concept.
- Contribute to the development of innovative tools in view of facilitating data processing and analysis in support of HVT and priority cases.
- Utilise the pool with short-term SNEs in support of OTFs (in the framework of the Guest Experts concept) in view of improving operational support for HVT and priority cases.
- Perform data processing, criminal intelligence analysis and support MS with operational capabilities and expertise, including on-the-spot support.
- Set up operational meetings and support priority and HVT investigations.
- Organise and fund the Annual Plenary Meetings.
- Support the implementation of special tactics targeting the illicit activities of the members of high risk OCGs.
- Further develop Europol's capacity to address encrypted communication and other new technology-related methods used by organised crime groups to prevent and protect criminal activities and to conceal related communications.
- Use data from real-time investigations supported by the ESOCC to maintain an intelligence picture on the HRCN.
- Provide dedicated support to EU-financed project ³⁷ targeting the identification, investigation and dismantling of mafia-type organised crime structures and criminal networks through intelligence-led action, centralised analysis and effective use of forensic tools.

Expected results: Member States' investigations receive quality analytical and operational support related to high risk and cross border OCGs.
Arrests of High Value Targets, identification and seizures of criminal assets, and disruption/dismantling of criminal networks.

Operations on Property Crime

Combat organised property crime committed by Mobile Organised Crime Groups.

Objectives and actions

³⁶ For the purpose of this section, 'Ethnic Albanians' are understood as persons who identify themselves as Albanians due to their culture, history, language, traditions or descendance, irrespective of whether they live in Albania or elsewhere.

³⁷ Such as the ONNET project supporting 11 international mafia-type investigations, mostly focussed on Italian and Albanian speaking OCGs, including two OTFs.

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A.3.6 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on property crime.

- Identify HVT(s) active in the field of property crime and proactively support the coordination and the conduct of investigations on these individuals by applying standardised HVT/OTF concept.
- Perform data processing, criminal intelligence analysis and support MS with operational capabilities and expertise, including on-the-spot support.
- Set up operational meetings and support priority and HVT investigations, and EMPACT-related actions.
- Organise and fund the Annual Plenary Meeting.
- Organise a conference on a particular crime field depending on emerging trends.

Expected results: Member States' investigations receive quality analytical and operational support related to property crime.

Arrests of High Value Targets, identification and seizures of criminal assets, and disruption/dismantling of criminal networks.

Operations on Environmental crime

Disrupt the capacity of OCGs involved in environmental crime.

Objectives and actions

A.3.7 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on environmental crime.

- Identify HVT(s) active in the field of environmental crime and proactively support the coordination and the conduct of investigations on these individuals by applying standardised HVT/OTF concept.
- Perform data processing, criminal intelligence analysis and support MS with operational capabilities and expertise, including on-the-spot support.
- Set up operational meetings and support priority and HVT investigations, and EMPACT-related actions.
- Provide support to the EnviCrimeNet Secretariat and the activities of the network.
- Organise and fund the Annual Plenary Meetings.
- Organise and fund a high level conference to a particular topic of environmental crime.
- Support the mapping of the specialised public or private technical support resources (such as reliable laboratories, sampling companies, etc.) in the EU which could be used to address concrete operational needs of MS investigations on environmental crimes.
- Establish cooperation and joint actions with the European Environmental Agency.

Expected results: Member States' investigations receive quality technical, analytical and operational support related to environmental crimes.

Arrests of High Value Targets, identification and seizures of criminal assets, and disruption/dismantling of criminal networks.

European Migrant Smuggling Centre

Migrant Smuggling: Disrupt OCGs involved in the facilitation of illegal immigration into and within the EU Member States.

Trafficking in Human Beings: Disrupt OCGs involved in intra-EU human trafficking and human trafficking from the most prevalent external source countries for the purposes of

labour and sexual exploitation; including those groups using legal business structures to facilitate or disguise their criminal activities.

Objectives and actions

A.3.8. Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on organised crime related to migrant smuggling.

- Support large scale investigations into criminal networks involved in migrant smuggling by consolidating cooperation with source, transit and destination countries as well as EU Agencies and International Organisations.
- Identify HVT(s) active in migrant smuggling and document fraud. Proactively support the coordination and the conduct of investigations on these individuals by applying standardised HVT/OTF concept.
- Perform data processing, criminal intelligence analysis and support MS with operational capabilities and expertise, incl. on-the-spot support.
- Set up operational meetings and support priority and HVT investigations, and EMPACT-related actions.
- Monitor irregular migration flows from the perspective of organised crime involvement and their impact on crime; identify links between migrant smuggling and other crime areas and terrorism.
- Manage migrant smuggling-related operational information received from the guest officers deployed at the hotspots.
- Actively participate in the EU's efforts to combat the organised smuggling of migrants through emerging migration corridors, while acting as Europol's central point of contact for EU Regional Taskforce (EU RTF).
- Support MS to tackle the facilitation of irregular migration with a focus on secondary and third movements within the EU, where OCGs are establishing their business model.
- Contribute to the objectives of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, in the area of dismantling migrant-smuggling networks and including the cooperation with third countries, in particular with the Western Balkans.
- Provide operational support aimed at improving the law enforcement response against Dark Web enabled irregular immigration and Document Fraud through a co-ordinated and multi-disciplinary approach. Enhance criminal intelligence picture regarding the use of Dark Web to facilitate irregular immigration and document fraud and build joint investigations.
- Participate in the EU Migration Preparedness and Crisis Management Mechanism Network and support the implementation of the Migration Preparedness and Crisis Blueprint.
- Support the Joint Liaison Task Force on migrant smuggling embedded within the EMSC and composed of a permanent operational team of MS liaison officers.
- Maintain the Mobile Analytical Support Teams' (EMAST) deployments, as a flexible mechanism allowing Europol to send experts to the most relevant hubs in the most needed time given that migration hubs are essential source of information and their location is rapidly changing.
- Collaborate with Frontex to utilise the synergies in the work of the two agencies with regards to migrant smuggling counteraction and THB.
- Set up modalities for cooperation with relevant multi-actor platforms, acting as an intelligence collection hub, such as possible future Regional Joint Operational Platforms (similar to the Joint Operational Office Vienna) or any controlled centres, if established.
- Support the Joint Operational Office Vienna with operational data, investigative findings.
- Seek further possibilities to obtain criminal intelligence from non-EU origin and transit countries in the absence of legal agreements by increasing the number of interactions

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with the relevant CSDP entities and through cooperation with future Criminal Information Cells.

- Integrate new partners to the Information Clearing House (ICH) where a high potential to add value to the work of the ICH has been identified, e.g. the European Union Agency for Asylum (ex. EASO) and the International Criminal Court (ICC) once the negotiations for establishing cooperation progress.
- Support the investigative and referral work in the area of social media, which are frequently abused by criminal groups by selling stolen or lost travel documents by utilising horizontal support by the EU IRU.
- Utilise the new tool for document comparison identifying common origin of fraudulent documents.

Expected results: Europol is able to base its operational support functions on real time information and to respond swiftly on changing organised migrant smuggling trends.

Member States' investigations receive quality analytical and operational support in relation to dismantling of organised crime groups active in migrant smuggling.

Arrests of High Value Targets, identification and seizures of criminal assets, and disruption/dismantling of criminal networks.

A.3.9 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on trafficking in human beings.

- Support Member States investigations concerning trafficking of children within, into or through the EU; and the trafficking of adults within, into or through the EU for the purposes of labour or sexual exploitation, or forced criminality.
- Identify HVT(s) active in THB. Proactively support the coordination and the conduct of investigations on these individuals by applying standardised HVT/OTF concept.
- Perform data processing, criminal intelligence analysis and support MS with operational capabilities and expertise, including on-the-spot support.
- Set up operational meetings and support priority and HVT investigations, and EMPACT-related actions.
- Develop knowledge on key organised criminal groups (such as Nigerian confraternities and Chinese Organised Crime Groups) involved in THB in the EU.
- Support the implementation of the EU Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings 2021-2025.
- Support investigations where the internet is used as an enabler (e.g. to recruit victims on social media and to advertise them as sex workers) and where false and fraudulent documents are used by utilising horizontal support of the EU IRU.
- Improve the use of PNR data in THB investigations to identify victims and suspects and further develop effective targeting rules for red-flagging aviation-related trafficking situations.

Expected results: Member States' investigations receive quality analytical and operational support related to THB.

Arrests of High Value Targets, identification and seizures of criminal assets, and disruption/dismantling of criminal networks.

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Indicators	Latest result (Q2 2022)	Target 2023
Number of Accepted contributions by ESOCC		
Number of Operational Task Forces established		
Number of Operational Reports delivered by ESOCC		
Number of Operations supported by ESOCC		
Number of Action Days coordinated/supported by ESOCC		
Satisfaction with Operational Support and Analysis provided by ESOCC		
Number of Operational Reports delivered by EMSC		
Number of Operations supported by EMSC		
Number of Action Days coordinated/supported by EMSC		
Satisfaction with Operational Support and Analysis provided by EMSC		

A.4. Combating Cyber Crime

Overview

In 2023 the European Cybercrime Centre (EC3) will have completed ten years of operations devoted to combating cybercrime by delivering operational and investigation support to the services in the Member States competent to fight organised crime and terrorism. The Centre is tasked to focus on three main areas, namely:

- Cybercrimes committed by organised groups, particularly those generating large criminal profits such as online fraud,
- Cybercrimes which cause serious harm to their victims, such as online child sexual exploitation and
- Cybercrimes (including cyber-attacks) affecting critical infrastructure and information systems in the European Union.

EC3 supports the EU Member States in preventing and combating different forms of cyber criminality affecting critical infrastructure and information systems, such as malware, ransomware, hacking, phishing, intrusion, identity theft and internet related fraud. The support provided to MS extends also to tackling criminality on the Dark Web and alternative platforms.

EC3 works towards preventing and combating all forms of criminality associated with the sexual exploitation and abuse of children. It provides assistance and expertise in combatting the creation and distribution of online child abuse material as well as tackling forms of criminal online behaviour against children, such as grooming, self-generated indecent material, sexual extortion and live distant child abuse.

Another area of focus for the EC3 services is international payment fraud investigations. The aim is to effectively respond to new threats and target the criminal networks that affect electronic payments and ensure customers' security and trust in electronic and online payments inside a fast-growing payment card market.

The EC3 Digital Forensics Laboratory provides on-the-spot and in-house computer forensic support services, including decryption, vehicle forensics, network, mobile device and counterfeit banknote analysis. Gathering forensic data is of utmost importance for collecting evidence for investigations, and for the better understanding of cybercriminals' tools and methods, thus providing valuable knowledge for use in prevention.

Concerning cybercrime intelligence, EC3 focuses on information collection from a wide array of public, private and open sources in order to enrich available law enforcement data. The goal is to expand the intelligence picture on cybercrime across Europe in order to rapidly identify emerging trends and threats, and update the stakeholders accordingly.

EC3 hosts the Joint Cybercrime Action Taskforce (J-CAT) which is composed of liaison officers from various EU Member States, non-EU law enforcement partners and EC3. The Taskforce members propose, select and work in collaborative manner on high-profile cases for investigation.

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Needs in Research and Development (R&D) and innovation are considerable for the evolution of combating cybercrime. EC3 has established a forum to consult digital forensics experts from the EU Member States to understand their needs and actively cooperate on R&D requirements as input for projects funded under the EU Commission's Programme Horizon 2020.

EC3 contributes to aligning law enforcement engagement within the EU Member States, working on a collective overview, which will be important with a view to contributing to and affecting policies, in particular regarding IP address resolution, domain name system criminal abuse, registration of accurate data and a strong compliance mechanism for accredited registrars and registries.

One of EC3's main goals is to increase its preventive capabilities in the fight against cybercrime, while, at the same time, helping the Member States' law enforcement in being one step ahead of cybercriminals. An important part of this effort is specialising in early warnings, cybercrime threat assessments, and awareness-raising methods.

2023 Objectives

European Cybercrime Centre (EC3)
Objectives and actions
<p>A.4.1 Ensure the effective functioning of EC3 in providing strategic and operational support to EU Member States' investigations on cybercrime and the implementation of EU Policy Cycle priorities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Serve as the EU law enforcement hub for collecting, processing, analysing and exchanging information and criminal intelligence of relevance for cybercrime and cyber-enabled investigations.○ Provide cross-checking, operational analysis, support, coordination and de-confliction to MS cybercrime investigations in the areas of cyber-dependent crimes, payment fraud and online fraud schemes, child sexual exploitation, Dark Web, and cross-cutting crime enablers.○ Provide an on-the-spot service by deploying cyber analysts and/or specialists to support ongoing operations.○ Provide 24/7 support to MS for immediate reactions to urgent cyber cases and cyber crises situation via stand-by duty and the EU Law Enforcement Emergency Response Protocol (EU LE ERP).○ Support the implementation of Operational Action Plans under EMPACT priority threats.○ Extend support to the EU-wide Coordinated Response to Large-Scale Cybersecurity Incidents and Crises (EU Blueprint)³⁸ in accordance with the Joint Standard Operating Procedures of the EU Institutions, Bodies and Agencies (EUIBAs).○ Strengthen the support to Member States on Operational Taskforces, the effective prioritisation of HVTs and identification of optimal follow-up response measures.○ Facilitate the multi-disciplinary interaction between partners and stakeholders, including Advisory Groups, Governance network, Eurojust and the European Judicial Cybercrime Network, ENISA, Europol Financial Coalition, EUCTF and academia for the purposes of establishing cooperation and information-sharing.○ Interact with law enforcement representatives in the EU, industry and academia to develop and present collective views in the global discussion on Internet Governance, in forums such as the Internet Cooperation for Assigning Names and Numbers (ICANN)

³⁸ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reco/2017/1584/oj>

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<p>and the Réseaux IP Européens Network Coordination Centre (RIPE NCC), and in relation to the EU policy making and legislative process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Chair and facilitate the work of the European Group of Heads of Lawful Interception Units. Ensure the representation of the law enforcement interests related to lawful interception at the EU level.○ Participate in the discussions on the establishment of the EU Joint Cyber Unit³⁹ put forward by the EU's Cybersecurity Strategy for the Digital Decade.○ Contribute with expertise to the elaboration of the DNS4EU - European Commission's initiative to develop a public European Domain Name System (DNS) resolver service, as an alternative European service for accessing the global Internet.○ Contribute to the preparation and delivery of standardised prevention and awareness campaigns and activities in the cybercrime-mandated areas as detailed in the EC3 Cybercrime Prevention and Awareness Programme 2023, including the further promotion and implementation of the No More Ransom project. Facilitate the interaction and cooperation with partners such as the Cybercrime Prevention Network.○ Coordinate and support the demand, development and delivery of comprehensive cybercrime training under the umbrella of a Training Governance Model or Cybercrime Capacity Building Strategy at EU level, including the CEPOL Cybercrime Academy.○ Promote the EC3 Secure Platform for Accredited Cybercrime Experts (SPACE) as a centre of excellence where relevant experts exchange strategic information and best practices.○ Continue to use the EC3 Twitter Account as a fast dissemination channel for EC3's products and services, as well as to engage with the relevant external stakeholders.
<p>Expected results: Member States' investigations receive quality analytical and operational support related to cyber-crime.</p> <p>Improved joint operational activities with public and private partners of relevance.</p> <p>More effective levels of cooperation leading to better coordination and increased operational and strategic results.</p> <p>Europol contributes to the objectives of relevant EU policies.</p>

Digital Forensics

Objectives and actions

A.4.2 Provide digital forensics support to EU Member States' investigations.

- Provide forensic services, including expertise and examination in regard to digital forensics, mobile devices, computers and ICT infrastructure, such as the Forensic IT Environment.
- Maximise the usage of the Decryption platform in order to improve the speed and efficiency of the recovery of encrypted data from devices seized during the course of a criminal investigation.
- Continuously monitor new trends and actively support MS in overcoming the technical challenges to their cyber and cyber-facilitated investigations, by identifying suitable tactics, developing dedicated tools, and sharing best practices to respond to the emerging operational needs (e.g. hardware and Internet of Things (IoT) forensics, mobile extractions and analysis).

³⁹ <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/cyber-security>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strengthen cooperation with relevant stakeholders such as JRC, ENFSI, EACTDA, ECTEG and academia, and in collaboration with the Forensic Expert Forum further identify gaps in EU LE forensic capacities to tackle top-level criminality. ○ Collaborate closely with the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission to identify and develop innovative techniques for extracting digital traces of vehicles involved in criminal investigations. Create new tools for law enforcement at the Europol – JRC common lab. ○ Increase R&D activities of the EC3 Forensics Lab in the area of decryption to maximise practical output of the Decryption Platform. Involve MS and partner LE agencies from third parties in the development of highly specialised decryption solutions using Europol’s shared development environment. Ensure the availability of these solutions to the Network of Points of Expertise on Decryption. ○ Design the further evolution of the Decryption Platform on the basis of previous experience and developments of new technologies. ○ Invest in capabilities to perform in-depth hardware analysis, such as side channels analysis and other alternative methods, which would allow to tackle data extraction issues related to portable encrypted storage devices, hardware cryptocurrency wallets, as well as data extractions from Internet of Things (IoT) and even complex IT devices. ○ Maintain and support Forums (e.g. the Forensic Expert Forum) and communities on EPE in relevant forensic areas such as digital forensics, vehicle forensics, decryption etc. ○ Contribute to the annual Digital Forensic Investigator training course organised by CEPOL. Provide highly specialised training on decryption for top-level software developers from competent authorities in cooperation with ECTEG. Support ECTEG in the development of other training courses on encryption.
<p>Expected results: Member States’ investigations receive quality digital forensics support and enhanced access to criminal evidence.</p> <p>Increased capacity and functionalities of Europol’s Decryption platform.</p> <p>Continuously developed expertise of the EC3 Forensic Lab to be in the forefront of R&D and in tackling technical challenges.</p>

Document Forensics
Objectives and actions
<p>A.4.3 Provide document forensics support to EU Member States’ investigations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support MS investigations concerning false documents, counterfeit currency and printing devices. ○ Provide forensic services, reports and examinations, including forensics services accredited to ISO17020:2012. ○ Maintain ISO17020:2012 accreditation concerning forensics examinations on Euro counterfeited banknotes. ○ Assist in the dismantling of clandestine print shops. ○ Support EMPACT 2022-2025 cross-cutting threat and common horizontal strategic goal document fraud and related investigations. ○ Support EMPACT 2022-2025 priority Intellectual Property (IP) Crime, counterfeiting of goods and currencies and related investigations. ○ Share the expertise and provide training in false document and currency identification.

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- Support Member States' investigations with video enhancement analyses. Increase research in the area of video and picture enhancement and expand the EC3 Forensics Lab's capabilities.
- Explore new areas of R&D in the domain of document forensics to prepare tackling emerging challenges such as criminal abuse of AI and machine learning techniques in the area of biometrics, e.g. face morphing techniques, which will become increasingly a cross cutting factor in many crime areas.

Expected results: Member States' investigations receive quality document forensics support.
Continuously developed expertise of the EC3 Forensic Lab to be in the forefront of R&D and in tackling technical challenges.

Cyber Intelligence

Objectives and actions

A.4.4 Provide cyber intelligence support to EU Member States' investigations.

- Collect information on cybercrime and cyber-facilitated crime threats and trends from a wide array of public, private and open sources.
- Provide knowledge products with regard to technology and new criminal modi operandi online.
- Provide data extraction, transformation and loading services for the large datasets contributed by the EU MS to EC3 and other Europol's crime centres, following the new opportunities provided by the Europol Regulation Recast regarding the analysis of large and complex datasets.
- Improve the criminal intelligence position of EC3 and the EU Member States by proactively identifying cyber-HVT involved in the most prominent cyber threats.
- Enhance the operational and technical support to crypto-currency-related MS investigations through the implementation of the CryptoPortal and the upgrade of the tool for tracking and attribution of Bitcoin and other crypto currencies. Implement workflows to flag suspicious transactions reported by law enforcement to exchangers and for receiving HIT/NO HIT notifications from exchangers on crypto assets of interest for law enforcement (subject to the final provisions of Europol Regulation Recast regarding cooperation with private parties).
- Implement the Malware Information Sharing Platform (MISP) at Europol to further strengthen the operational collaboration between cyber law enforcement and cyber security/network, and information security community.
- Support EU MS with Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) analysis and expertise, and the development of national cyber intelligence models. Develop an OSINT Hub for sharing expertise on the exploitation of open source data for operational purposes.
- Establish a platform for operational data enrichment to the data contributed by MS with information coming from private partners, relevant EU bodies and OSINT through the implementation of MISP and other pipelines related to NFE project and transfer of information to OPS environment.

Expected results: Member States' investigations receive quality cyber intelligence support and benefit from improved criminal intelligence picture.

Operations on Cyber-Dependent Crimes

Disrupt criminal networks involved in cyber-dependent crimes associated with internet and ICT (Information and Communication Technology).

Objectives and actions

A.4.5 Provide support to EU MS’ investigations on cyber-dependent crimes.

- Provide operational coordination and support to Member States’ investigations with regards to cyber-dependent crimes of greatest concern.
- Focus on preventing and combating cyber criminality affecting critical infrastructure and network and information systems.
- Focus on investigating, targeting and disrupting cybercrimes associated with organised groups generating greatest harm and/or large criminal profits and cybercrime-as-a-service schemes.
- Provide technical support and in-depth analysis on top malware in light of the proliferation of the threat and the exponential increase of requests for technical and financial investigative support by MS.
- Set up operational meetings and support priority and HVT investigations, and EMPACT-related actions.
- Strengthen the operational and tactical response to ransomware and explore new avenues together with the J-CAT to have a long-term impact on the ransomware threat landscape, by developing an International Law Enforcement Ransomware Response Model and contributing to the US-EU Ransomware Working Group in order to enhance international collaboration.
- Pro-actively share technical expertise and support tools on analytics of large data sets (e.g. EC3 Search Box) with MS and participate in collaborative international efforts to standardise and further develop tools and procedures (e.g. Cygnus development, SIRIUS and FREETOOLS).
- Strengthen the support to the MS on Operational Taskforces, effective prioritisation of HVTs and identification of optimal follow-up response measures.
- Provide a dedicated, secure and automated malware analysis platform to MS through the Europol Malware Analysis Solution (EMAS). Enhance EMAS technical and analysis capabilities in regards to reverse engineering and ATM malware.

Expected results: Member States’ investigations on cyber-dependent crimes receive quality analytical and operational support.

Operations on Child Sexual Exploitation

Disrupt criminal networks involved in sexual exploitation of children, including the production of child abuse images and online dissemination.

Objectives and actions

A.4.6 Provide support to EU Member States’ investigations on child sexual exploitation.

- Tackle forms of criminal online behaviour against children, such as grooming, self-generated indecent material, sexual extortion and coercion, and web live streaming.
- Fight distribution of child sexual exploitation material including preventing, intercepting and stopping the sharing through peer-to-peer networks, commercial platforms, and the Dark Web, as well as addressing the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

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- Set up operational meetings and support priority investigations, and EMPACT-related actions.
- Continue hosting the Victim Identification Taskforce to foster cooperation and pooling of expertise from different police agencies and Interpol.
- Enhance the support provided to the MS in the area of victim identification by further developing the existing Image and Video Analysis Solution (IVAS) and the internal expertise.
- Update regularly EU MS experts on criminal intelligence relating to online platforms being set up, maintained or abused for the purpose of child sexual exploitation (CSE).
- Tackle the phenomenon of transnational child sex offenders by supporting the EU MS in detecting and intercepting of travelling child sexual offenders.
- Strengthen the support to the MS on Operational Taskforces, effective prioritisation of HVTs and identification of optimal follow-up response measures.
- Establish and sustain a dedicated solution to facilitate communication and information flow for receiving, processing and disseminating of information on suspected child sexual exploitation online from pertinent non-law enforcement actors to the relevant competent authorities in the EU MS ensuring that this is consistently done in a time-sensitive manner.⁴⁰
- Ensure that the position of Europol's EC3 as the criminal intelligence hub for the EU is assured and maintained within the framework of the prospective European centre to prevent and counter child sexual abuse. Contribute to the setting up of the centre to the extent possible given the availability of resources⁴¹.
- Provide expertise, evidence and data, including trends and statistics, to the various studies that will be carried out in the framework of the different EU policy initiatives. In particular, contribute to the identification of areas of improvement at EU and national level where strengthening of law enforcement efforts in the fight against child sexual abuse will be required.
- Build on existing structures such as the EU Financial Cybercrime Coalition and relations with partners through EC3 Advisory Groups and the EFEC to ensure effective cooperation and collaboration with private sector partners and NGOs in countering CSE, including in terms of receiving intelligence and information for operational and strategic purposes (subject to the final provisions of Europol Regulation Recast regarding cooperation with private parties).
- Deliver and support training courses on Victim Identification (in cooperation with CEPOL) and Combating Online Sexual Exploitation of Children.

Expected results: Member States' investigations receive quality analytical and operational support related to child sexual exploitation.

Operations on Payment Fraud and Online Fraud Schemes

Disrupt criminal networks involved in payment fraud and online fraud schemes.

Objectives and actions

A.4.7 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on payment fraud and online fraud schemes.

- Support the MS in combating forms of payment fraud such as skimming (duplication of a card's magnetic strip often through devices hidden within compromised ATMs and Point-Of-Sale terminals) and online fraud (cyber-enabled fraud) schemes.

⁴⁰ The action is related to the H2020 grant to the GRACE Project.

⁴¹ This initiative does not foresee any capacity reinforcement for Europol.

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- Support the MS in cyber-facilitated payment process compromise (business e-mail compromise BEC) investigations.
- Set up operational meetings and support priority and HVT investigations, and EMPACT-related actions.
- Support the implementation of the EMPACT Common Horizontal Strategic Goal on Coordinated controls and operations targeting the online and offline trade in illicit goods & services, assuming the coordinator's functions (for the online component).
- Execute the joint operational action against fraud in the travel sector (use of compromised credit cards to book flight tickets, accommodation, car rentals, etc.) in cooperation with key partners (airlines, hotels, online travel agencies and card schemes).
- Coordinate the execution of the joint action week on carding (unauthorised use of credit or debit card data to purchase products and services in a non-face-to-face setting, such as e-commerce websites).
- Target and identify online marketplaces offering illegal services using compromised credit card information, including illegal services (transport, accommodation, game tickets, etc.) offered on the occasion of large events.
- Execute joint operational actions against telecom fraud, including International Revenue Share Fraud, SIM swapping or smishing⁴², in collaboration with law enforcement, judiciary and relevant private partners.
- Coordinate the detection, identification, dismantling, prosecution and prevention of money mulling, together with private industry (banking sector, Fintechs, etc.). Organise in cooperation with Eurojust the annual European Money Mule Action.
- Support the MS in addressing emerging threats and new criminal Modi Operandi (e.g., digital skimming, investment/marketing fraud, ATM malware, Black Box attacks, compromise of Near Field Communication transactions, etc.).
- Facilitate cooperation among LEAs, the private sector and regulators (the European Central Bank at the European level and National Banks at a domestic level).
- Strengthen the support to MS on Operational Taskforces, the effective prioritisation of HVTs and identification of optimal follow-up response measures.
- Actively engage with priority regions to address payment fraud migration. In particular, continue expanding the operational and strategic collaboration on payment fraud migration and card-not-present fraud.
- Deliver the annual training course on Payment Card Fraud Forensics and Investigations.
- Establish a platform/framework to enable bi-directional communication on non-cash payment fraud cases and exchange of crime-relevant information with key private sector partners, by utilising new opportunities for cooperation with private parties stemming from the Europol Regulation Recast.

Expected results: Member States' investigations receive quality analytical and operational support related to non-cash payment fraud.

Operations on Criminal Online Trade and Use of Online Environments

Disrupt OCG and HVTs involved in the criminal online trade and the use of online environments for criminal purposes.

Objectives and actions

⁴² Smishing is a phishing cybersecurity attack carried out over mobile text messaging, also known as SMS phishing.

A.4.8 Provide support to EU Member States’ investigations on the criminal online trade and use of online environments for criminal purposes

- Support the MS and Europol’s Analysis Projects in combating criminal networks involved in the administration and moderation of Dark Web related activities, the related commodity-based vendors and buyers, as well as alternative communication platforms.
- Coordinate, plan and execute joint technical, investigative and prevention actions to maximise impact and reduce crime on the Dark Web and alternative communication platforms.
- Strengthen the support to the MS on Operational Taskforces, effective prioritisation of HVTs and identification of optimal follow-up response measures.
- Provide in-depth operational analysis on Dark Web data repositories to enhance the data enrichment and the identification of High-Value Targets involved in crime on the Dark Web and alternative platforms.
- Support Member States and Europol’s Analysis Projects in the coordination and development of EMPACT Operational Actions relevant to Dark Web.
- Maintain the strategic criminal intelligence picture for the online trade in illicit goods and services, in particular on the Dark Web and alternative platforms for threat intelligence and trend scenario purpose. Collaborate with private sector partners through EC3 Advisory Groups to enrich the intelligence picture.
- Maintain knowledge and expertise on tools, tactics and techniques for conducting Dark Web investigations.
- Further develop knowledge, expertise and the EU tools-box for the technical aspects related to the gathering and exploitation of data on Dark Web investigations in particular those that focus on dismantling the technical and operational criminal infrastructure.
- Acquire and integrate on premise solutions for the collection and scraping (data extraction) of information related to the criminal use of the Dark Web.
- Provide an annual platform for experts from across the traditional and technical specialists to share knowledge and expertise on developments and investigations on the Dark Web.
- Support the delivery of training related to Dark Web investigations.

Expected results: Member States’ Dark Web investigations receive quality analytical and operational support.

Joint Cybercrime Action Taskforce (J-CAT)

Objectives and actions

A.4.9 Provide support and operational coordination to the J-CAT operations and activities.

- Host and support the work of the Joint Cybercrime Action Taskforce (J-CAT) composed of Cyber Liaison Officers from closely involved Member States, non-EU law enforcement partners and EC3.
- Stimulate and facilitate the joint identification, prioritisation, preparation, initiation and execution of cross-border investigations and operations by the J-CAT partners.
- Extend the support provided by EC3 to cases prioritised by the J-CAT in order to process the increasing amount of data contributed within the framework of the taskforce in a swift manner and address the growing amount of submitted cases.

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- De-conflict and identify synergies for joint operational activities with the other global cybercrime taskforces and key cyber operational centres (e.g. NCFTA and Interpol) towards optimising resources and the effectiveness of operations.
- Facilitate the collaboration and operational engagement with Eurojust on cybercrime cases via the dedicated Eurojust liaison officer.
- Maintain a Law Enforcement attachment scheme to the J-CAT within which non-Taskforce members of operational relevance would be temporarily working with the J-CAT on a case-basis.
- Attach a Private Sector Scheme to J-CAT with key industry partners to enable the undertaking of joint initiatives between J-CAT, EC3 and the private sector. Utilise new opportunities for improving the cooperation with private parties, in terms of information exchange (subject to the final provisions of Europol Regulation Recast regarding cooperation with private parties).

Expected results: J-CAT investigations receive quality analytical and operational support.
Improved joint operational activities with public and private partners of relevance.

Research & Development

Objectives and actions

A.4.10 Proactively develop expertise and solutions related to challenges in cybercriminal investigations.

- Collect, analyse and manage strategic criminal intelligence, and further develop expertise with a view to supporting pro-active and innovative approaches.
- Support the interaction and cooperation with partners, including academia and other expert networks and EU entities, to facilitate cooperation in the development and delivery of strategic analysis, detailed analysis of law enforcement needs and of existing gaps, threat intelligence and forward-looking products including Europol's contribution to the Observatory Report on Encryption. Identify common challenges to combating cybercrime with Eurojust.
- Coordinate the demand and development of new technical solutions, including R&D with the Forensic Experts Forum and other relevant networks and platforms. Provide advice to R&D priorities at national and EU level, particularly in relation to EU funding programs, if and where appropriate.
- In coordination with Europol's Innovation Lab and other relevant stakeholders (e.g. JRC), organise a Cyber Innovation Forum for Law Enforcement to exchange best practices in combating cybercrime and cyber-enabled crime by employing innovative tools, tactics and techniques.
- In coordination with Europol's Innovation Lab and other relevant stakeholders (e.g. JRC), further develop expertise on technological innovation such as 5G, encryption, anonymisation services and any other relevant developments.
- Re-approach the issue of the possible role of Europol to facilitate access to WHOIS data for MS law enforcement authorities.
- In coordination with Europol's Innovation Lab, broaden and continue to implement the technology watch function to pro-actively inform about criminal abuse of new technology while ensuring the consideration of the law enforcement angle in the process of development and innovation.

Europol Unclassified – Basic Protection Level

Expected results: Coordinated efforts in research and development lead to greater realisation of common projects and technical solutions in the cybercrime area.

Member States’ investigations receive up-to-date technical support in the cyber domain.

Indicators	Latest result (Q2 2022)	Target 2023
Number of Accepted contributions by EC3		
Number of Operational Reports delivered by EC3		
Number of Operations supported by EC3		
Number of Action Days coordinated/supported by EC3		
Number of Decryption platform successes		
Satisfaction with Operational Support and Analysis provided by EC3		

A.5. Counter-Terrorism

Overview

The European Counter-Terrorism Centre (ECTC) was established in 2016. Against the background of the current security threat the EU is facing, the political direction and Europol's Strategy 2020+, the ECTC is expected to maximise operational, technical and overall information exchange capabilities in the area of counter-terrorism and ensure added value for EU Member States, as well as third party cooperation partners, namely by providing:

- An information hub for counter terrorism, with unique information and criminal intelligence sharing capabilities for law enforcement authorities in EU Member States and beyond.
- Effective operational support, coordination and expertise for Member States' investigations, by developing and deploying a comprehensive portfolio of support services.
- Proactive mitigation of the use of social media for radicalisation purposes through terrorist and violent extremist online content, as well as cyber-terrorist attack scenarios and support to operational analysis.
- A central strategic support capability, to identify European wide counter-terrorism implications and promote outreach with relevant (international) partners.

The ECTC prevents and combat terrorism by supporting Member States with terrorism-related financial information. The centre provides the information processing means by which the Agreement between the European Union and the United States of America on the Processing and Transfer of Financial Messaging Data from the EU to the US for the purposes of the Terrorist Finance Tracking Program (TFTP) is implemented.

Furthermore, the ECTC holds Europol's expertise in the area of Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear & Explosives (CBRN/E) and provides support to EU Member States' investigations on war crimes, genocide, crimes against humanity.

The EU Internet Referral Unit (EU IRU) of the ECTC coordinates and shares the identification tasks of terrorist and violent extremism online content with relevant competent authorities; carries out and supports referrals in an effective manner in close cooperation with the industry; and supports Member States' internet-based investigations.

The EU IRU also acts as a knowledge hub for Europol and the EU Member States in the field of cross-border access to e-evidence. The internet investigation field is an extremely fast evolving environment where methodologies and tools get rapidly outdated. Market research activities, trends and upcoming milestones in the e-evidence field are key to maintain the excellence and keep on delivering cutting edge products to Member States.

Since 2019, the ATLAS Network of Special Intervention Units has been affiliated with Europol. The ECTC holds the Atlas Support Office which pursues the establishment of links between ATLAS and Europol's counter-terrorism and serious and organised crime communities, and facilitates the exchange of strategic and operational expertise and practices.

2023 Objectives

<u>The European Counter-Terrorism Centre (ECTC)</u>
Objectives and actions
<p>A.5.1 Ensure the effective functioning of the ECTC in providing strategic and operational support to EU Member States’ investigations related to counter-terrorism.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Serve as the EU law enforcement hub for collecting, processing, analysing and exchanging information and criminal intelligence of relevance for a wide range of terrorism-related areas and in the field of responding to a major terrorist crisis. ○ Provide cross-checking, operational analysis, coordination and de-confliction to MS counter-terrorism investigations. <li style="background-color: #e0e0e0;">○ Meet the exponentially growing need for de-confliction of CT-related data with national CT units. Contribute to the development and efficient use by MS LEA of a de-confliction solution at EU level. ○ Provide operational support to MS on-the-spot. Support the deployments of Mobile office and other mobile toolkits. Provide technical/ forensic support. ○ Scope opportunities for embedding ECTC staff members on a temporary basis in operational cases into the Crime Information Cells (within CSDP missions/operations) or other fusion cells and platforms dealing with specific CT related phenomena/subjects, with the aim to increase information gathering and sharing on the spot and enhance (pan-) European coordination. ○ Manage the Counter Terrorism Joint Liaison Team (CT-JLT) operational platform. Ensure the performance of the CT-JLT concept as a mature mechanism for proactive and intelligence-led coordinated action accelerating exchange of information and operational results in particular with focus on returning foreign terrorist fighters (FTF). ○ Evaluate information on suspected FTF received from third countries and support the process for possible entering of this information in the SIS II by Member States according to the Terrorism Working Party (TWP) protocol for a coordinated approach⁴³. <li style="background-color: #e0e0e0;">○ Provided that Europol is granted with new capabilities in the field of SIS-SIRENE as a consequence of the Europol Regulation Recast, explore the adjustments required regarding the insertion of FTFs from trusted 3rd parties in the SIS II by Members States or Europol. ○ Identify new terrorist Modi Operandi, emerging threats and developments. Detect links between terrorism and organised crime and follow in particular the rising phenomenon of hybrid threats with terrorism dimension. Provide tailored newsfeeds and contribute to strategic reports, including trend analysis, early warnings, the 6-month high profile Outlook on developments in terrorism and the annual high profile TE-SAT report. ○ Aim to increase cooperation between the Counter Terrorism Group (CTG) members and Europol in areas of common interest and where appropriate, while fully respecting the sole responsibility of Member States for national security. ○ Administer and support the CT Program Board (CTPB) as the MS steering governance tool to the ECTC. Ensure the coordination of and the ECTC involvement in the work plan driven by the MS represented in the CTPB. ○ Organise stakeholder events, including the ECTC Advisory Network on Terrorism and Propaganda meetings and the annual conference. ○ Oversee the establishment of cooperation with EU institutions and agencies, international organisations, law enforcement, academia and private sector entities with a particular focus on stakeholders at policy level.

⁴³ EU Council 13037/20

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- Continue enhancing cooperation with the Western Balkan countries on the basis of the operational agreements and the Western Balkan CT Action Plan.
- Continue enhancing cooperation with the MENA countries and Turkey while expecting the international agreements to be concluded by the Commission, following a threefold approach:
 - 1) through the CT dialogues and by supporting CT/security experts deployed by MS to the EU Delegations and CSDP-missions/operations;
 - 2) by participating in capacity building initiatives offered by CEPOL and EU-funded programmes; Participate in the Working Group on FTF and returnees of the EU-MENA Information Sharing and Analysis Network (EMISA) as per related discussions at CTPB level; and
 - 3) by identifying strategic/technical partners for the establishment of a common product or specific strategic initiative.
- Contribute to and support the delivery of training by CEPOL Knowledge Centre on Counter-Terrorism (CKC CT).

Expected results: Member States' counter-terrorism investigations receive quality analytical and operational support.

Improved joint operational activities with EU institutions, bodies and agencies, as well as with public and private partners of relevance.

More effective levels of cooperation leading to better coordination and increased operational and strategic results.

Europol contributes to the objectives of relevant EU policies.

Operations on terrorist activities

Identify activities of terrorist groups listed by the Council of the European Union as posing a serious threat to the security of the EU and the Member States, and any associate criminal activities within Europol's mandate uncovered in the course of the investigations into these terrorist networks (including ethno-nationalist and separatist terrorism, left-wing and anarchist terrorism, right wing and single-issue terrorism).

Prevent and combat crimes committed or likely to be committed in the course of terrorist activities against life, limb, personal freedom or property, and related criminal offences associated with terrorism perpetrated by individuals, groups, networks or organisations who evoke Islam to justify their actions.

Prevent or combat terrorism by sharing analysis on related travel activities to terrorist hotspots, e.g. conflict zones and training venues.

Objectives and actions

A.5.2 Provide support to EU Member States' counter-terrorism investigations.

- Perform criminal intelligence analysis and support Member States with operational capabilities and expertise, including on-the-spot support.
- Continue performing secondary security checks through the deployment of Guest officers in Italy, Greece, Cyprus and Malta, and wherever needed. Manage CT-related operational information received from the secondary security checks.
- Contribute to the update of Frontex's Common Risk Indicators to enhance rules-based screening and risk identification.
- Enhance Europol's face recognition capabilities, including in the context of the secondary security checks. Increase the number of staff trained in the usage of face recognition tools.

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- Support an increasing number of operations of the Terrorist Identification Task Force targeting CT suspects for which there is not enough evidence for opening prosecutions. Assess the results of operations and present the assessment to Member States via all appropriate channels.
- Adjust the concept for the establishment of Operational Task Forces (OTFs) according to the specific requirements of the CT area. Based on the adjusted concept, provide support to an increasing number of OTFs in the CT area.
- Following the emerging trend of right wing terrorism and violent extremism, set up a dedicated target group and a EU-wide coordination mechanism to tackle this crime phenomenon.
- Perform priority actions related to right wing terrorism and violent extremism aiming at identifying targets (Organizations/Individuals) in high profile cases.
- Contribute to the collection of intelligence, analysis and reporting on used/seized terrorist weapons.
- Explore opportunities to enhance Europol's capabilities to support MS through acquiring additional translators for Arabic, as well as Farsi, Urdu, Pashto and Kurdish.

Expected results: Member States CT investigations receive quality analytical and operational support.

Operations on War Crimes, Genocide, Crimes against Humanity

Support Member States in the fight against impunity of War Crimes, Genocide, Crimes against Humanity.

Objectives and actions

A.5.3 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on war crimes, genocide, crimes against humanity.

- Streamline the gathering and processing of information at EU level.
- Utilise new opportunities stemming from the Europol Regulation Recast regarding cooperation with private parties in terms of collecting data from new sources (NGOs, UN, ICC, military, private, etc.).
- Perform criminal intelligence analysis and support Member States with operational capabilities and expertise, including on-the-spot support.
/Given the expansion of the workload of AP Core International Crimes and the limited resources available for this crime area Europol will maintain basic level of support to prioritised cases./
- Provide a seminar on Witnesses to Atrocities. Explore modalities for appealing to witnesses to atrocities to come forward and provide information on perpetrators.

Expected results: Member States' investigations on war crimes, genocide, crimes against humanity receive analytical and operational support within the framework of available resources.

Counter Terrorism Financing

Prevent and combat terrorism by supporting Member States with terrorism-related financial information.

Prevent and combat terrorism and its financing by providing the information processing means by which Europol can fulfil its obligations in respect of the Agreement between the European Union and the United States of America on the Processing and Transfer of

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Financial Messaging Data from the EU to the US for the purposes of the Terrorist Finance Tracking Program (TFTP).

Objectives and actions

A.5.4 Provide support to EU Member States' CT investigations with terrorism-related financial information.

- Deal with MS requests for data on financial payments linked to terrorism including in accordance with the EU-US Terrorist Finance Tracking Programme Agreement (TFTP).
- Verify the link to terrorism in requests for data on financial payments.
- Support MS' investigations targeting networks facilitating the financing of terrorist actions or organisations.
- Provide support, including information on financial transactional data, to all operations where there is a link to terrorism.
- Liaise with Europol's Financial and Economic Crime Centre and with the competent ESOC and EC3 units to close information gaps and to receive specialised support for complex cases. In particular, increase the interaction with EC3 on the use of cryptocurrency by a wide scope of terrorist groups.
- Support the Europol Financial Intelligence Public Private Partnership (EFIPPP).
- Explore possibilities to collaborate with national customs authorities in view of exploiting synergies with their competences in the area of CT and terrorism financing.

Expected results: Member States' investigations receive quality analytical and operational support with regards to terrorism-related financial information.

Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear & Explosives Support (CBRN/E)

Objectives and actions

A.5.5 Provide CBRN/E support to EU Member States' investigations.

- Provide support and expertise to Member States on CBRN/E security.
- Manage and administer the Europol Platform for Experts pages:
 - EPE/EBDS (European Bomb Data System);
 - EPE/EEODN (European Ordnance Disposal Units Network).
- Ensure the permanent secretariat and the continuity of the activities of EEODN.
- Support the exchange of information and best practices on explosives and/or CBRN cases among the Member States.
- Organise a conference/seminar for the EEODN and deliver a training for EEODN experts in partnership with CEPOL.
- Liaise with AP Weapons and Explosives to track possible new threats, trends and modus operandi involving CBRN materials and Explosives.
- Prepare strategic and technical reports on CBRN and Explosives, including reporting on trends and statistics to policy-makers.
- Provide support to Member States' prevention programmes.
- Contribute to capacity-building initiatives, in particular trainings, for Member States on CBRN and Explosives.
- Provide input to the European Commission's policy initiatives and contribute to the work of the different Working Groups, e.g. the CBRN Advisory Group, Standing Committee of Precursors, Chemical Detection Group, Civil Explosives WG, etc.
- Liaise and cooperate with other relevant partners in the area of CBRN/E.

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Expected results: Member States' investigations receive quality analytical and operational CBRN/E support.
Alignment of Member States operational needs and European Commission's policy initiatives.

ATLAS Support Office (ASO)

Objectives and actions

A.5.6 Provide support to the ATLAS Network.

- Serve as the main interface of the ATLAS Network with Europol's CT and SOC communities and support the establishment of links with other relevant law enforcement expert networks supported by Europol.
- Facilitate the exchange of strategic and operational expertise and practices with ATLAS in accordance with the applicable rules.
- Provide administrative and logistic support to the implementation of the ATLAS Annual Work Programme. Maintain the EPE of ATLAS.

Expected results: Stable and more efficient administration of ATLAS through the use of Europol's existing structures and tools.
Utilisation of linkages and synergies in terms of strategic and operational expertise between ATLAS, Europol and law enforcement networks.

EU Internet Referrals

Objectives and actions

A.5.7 Provide quality internet referral services.

- Perform scanning of the cyber environment, including the decentralised web, within the framework of prioritised areas (jihadist terrorism) or act upon Member States' specific requests (jihadist terrorism and irregular migration). **Extend the prioritised areas to cover all forms of terrorism.**
- Coordinate and share the identification tasks (flagging) of online terrorist and violent extremist content with a network of national counterparts.
- **Expand the EU IRU capabilities to the extent possible to meet the increasing workload from managing the PERCI platform, supporting Member States in using PERCI and utilising the crime intelligence emerging from PERCI's data.**
- Deliver operational and strategic products.
- Support the activities of the EU Internet Forum's Action Plan. Maintain a close dialogue with the internet industry in the framework of the Forum.
- Engage with the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT) by attending the GIFCT Working Group on Crisis Response.
- Organise and coordinate Referral Joint Action Days in cooperation with experts from MS and online service providers (OSPs), targeting jihadist terrorism. **Extend the scope of the Referral Action Days to target other types of terrorism.**

Expected results: The referral process is managed efficiently.
Cooperation with the private sector on content detection and referrals is growing.

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Increased number of online terrorist and violent extremist content is taken down.

A.5.8 Further develop the EU platform to tackle illegal content online (PERCI) as a communication and coordination tool for referrals and removal orders within the EU.

- Continue work on the roadmap of the PERCI project following the goals achieved in 2022 to reach the project full implementation which will include text, audio and video analysis, translation, speech to text, noise reduction, speaker identification, visual text recognition, object identification, face and logo identification, entity extraction, sentiment analysis and emotion detection. The Platform should be able to:
 - Create the possibility for OSPs to directly update the status of referrals and removal orders within the Platform (received/assessed/removed/not removed) through an ad-hoc Application Program Interface;
 - Provide OSPs with a secured vehicle to voluntarily report proactively deleted content in order to support attribution and allow for LE follow up;
 - Support OSPs in scaling up automatic detection and prevent re-upload of known content. Assist start up and smaller companies to protect their platforms from terrorist abuse in efficient and cost-effective way.
- Manage the PERCI Focus Group enrolling MS in support of the technical and operational development of the platform.
- Extend the scope of PERCI to handle in addition to online terrorist content any other type of illegal content related to crime areas covered by the Digital Services Act (after its adoption).
- Explore the potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) within the context of PERCI ecosystem. Identify the potential business opportunities of AI to enrich the existing dataset, improve the data quality and identify trends on online illegal content dissemination.
- Define business needs for the automation of data extraction, ingestion and real time crosschecks with Europol Databases.
- Support the leveraging of the platform to enhance the search experience in the existing dataset as well as to count with detailed statistics.
- Utilise PERCI datasets to generate operational support opportunities.
- Utilise new opportunities stemming from Europol Regulation Recast with regards to receiving personal data from private parties in view of ensuring the efficient use of PERCI as a toolbox of data processing in emergency cases.

Expected results: Coordination and de-confliction of the EU fight against terrorist content online and content promoting irregular immigration services.
Increased efficiency of the work of the Member States' IRUs and increased performance of the response from the OSPs on taking down illegal content.

A.5.9 Further develop and implement the EU Crisis Protocol (EUCP) on a collective response to viral spread of terrorist and violent extremist content online.

- Set up the PERCI platform as the operational platform for EUCP crisis mechanism to enable the 24/7 real time crisis response and knowledge sharing across sectors.
- Consolidate a central role in the coordination of the emergency responses in the event of a terrorist attack with a significant online component.
- In the event of the EUCP activation:
 - Coordinate, on 24/7 basis, of the de-confliction process among MS;
 - Assess and store related terrorist content;
 - Provide investigations support of the affected MS with advanced OSINT;

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Establish a real time engagement with an increasing number of online service providers (within the framework of available resources) to contain virality of content.o Provide input to post attack strategic communication.o Deliver an annual Table Top Exercise to test the protocol.o Review the effectiveness of the EUCP after activation.o Provide monitoring and research of new online modus operandi to detect new abuse of technology that could lead to a Christchurch type event.
Expected results: Countries and online service providers are provided with crisis response mechanism enabling them to respond rapidly, effectively and in a coordinated manner to the dissemination of terrorist or violent extremist content following a terrorist event.

EU IRU - Internet Investigations

Prevent and combat terrorism by sharing analysis regarding the use of the Internet by terrorist organizations.

Objectives and actions

A.5.10 Provide support to EU Member States' CT internet-based investigations.

- o Deliver operational and strategic products.
- o Provide operational support and support coordination of CT internet-based investigations.
- o Organise operational meetings.
- o Further develop and apply Social Network Analysis capabilities to support CT investigations.
- o Act as a hub of knowledge within Europol with regards to internet investigations, including the maintenance of the available tool sets and related skills.
- o Coordinate with Member States the implementation of the de-confliction module of PERCI for law enforcement investigative digital information, such as social media accounts.

Expected results: Member States' CT internet-based investigations receive quality analytical and operational support.

EU IRU – Advanced Technical Solutions

Project SIRIUS

Objectives and actions

A.5.11 Provide technical support to CT internet-based investigations and referrals.

- o Provide technical support to the Referrals and Operations teams.
- o Provide expertise on management of large data sets and analysis to the ECTC.
- o Act as a knowledge hub for Europol and the EU MS in the field of cross-border access to e-evidence.
- o Contribute to the Innovation work-stream at Europol by investing on prototyping initiatives.

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- In coordination with Europol’s Innovation Lab explore new technologies to find suitable solutions for the operational needs, including engagement with relevant private sector stakeholders and setting up point of contacts with the industry on specific matters.
- Support Member States in connecting with online service providers and analysing the digital footprint of a target in CT investigations through the SIRIUS capability.
- Organise a Codefest with Member States, to work jointly on the development of an investigative tool.

Expected results: CT internet-based investigations and referrals receive adequate technical support.
Cooperation with external partners on technical research and development is growing.

A.5.12 Provide support to Member States on acquiring cross-border access to electronic evidence (SIRIUS project).

- Continue to improve the knowledge of Member States’ law enforcement and judicial authorities on access to digital data from OSPs, via digests and guidelines published on the SIRIUS platform.
- Build the capacities of MS law enforcement and judiciary authorities to produce quality information requests to OSPs via face-to-face events and trainings organised within the framework of the SIRIUS project.
- Expand the geographical scope of the project to OSPs outside the USA.
- Reinforce the judicial dimension of SIRIUS with the support of Eurojust being a part of the second phase of the project.
- Provide specialised support on the identification of suspects in high profile cases.
- Support internet investigations by providing ICT-based tools created by Europol in collaboration with MS and by sharing tools created by MS, when they wish to do so.
- Facilitate the co-development of ICT-based tools by establishing short placement programmes at Europol for developers from EU law enforcement agencies.
- Help EU LEAs access ICT-based tools on digital evidence by ensuring the SIRIUS platform is the central repository of relevant solutions provided by EU-funded projects.
- Increase the number of beneficiaries in the Member States via translation of the platform content in several languages.
- Deliver a high-level report on the situation of the digital access to e-evidence.
- Develop mobile apps to help LEAs and Judiciary to access the knowledge hub.
- Provide supporting guidelines for small OSPs to build their capacities and standardise their processes to respond to LEAs’ requests.
- Facilitate the sharing of best practices and lessons learned among the Single Point of Contacts (SPOCs) in EU LEAs and/or officers in charge when a SPOC is not in place.
- Lay the basis for setting up SIRIUS as a permanent team in the EU IRU independent from continuity of EU grants to ensure the continuation of its services to MS.

Expected results: Improved Europol’s capabilities in the area of digital cross border investigations which leads to better and extended support to MS.
Increased MS capacity to prepare effective digital data requests to OSPs and obtain electronic evidence.
Increased mutual trust and understanding between MS and OSPs.

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Indicators	Latest result (Q2 2022)	Target 2023
Number of Accepted contributions by ECTC		
Number of Operational Reports delivered by ECTC		
Number of Operations supported by ECTC		
Number of Action Days coordinated/supported by ECTC		
Satisfaction with Operational Support and Analysis provided by ECTC		
% of persons checked for secondary security checks in Hotspots		
Volume of content assessed by EU IRU related to terrorism and violent extremism		

A.6. Combating Financial and Economic Crime

Overview

Based on the clear demand from Member States and partners to receive more support in the area of financial and economic crimes, as well as the commitment of Europol to put more focus on financial investigations and asset recovery in its Strategy 2020+, the agency set up in 2020 a new operational centre, the European Financial and Economic Crime Centre (EFECC) which is dedicated to maximising Europol's responsiveness and operational performance in the areas of fraud, money laundering, asset recovery, corruption and counterfeiting.

The establishment of the EFECC was driven by four main factors:

- The growing financial impact of economic crimes such as complex fraud and trans-national money laundering which remain a persistent threat, recognised as critical by recent EU level regulations which allow for the criminalisation of money laundering as a standalone offence;
- The need to increase the effectiveness of national law enforcement authorities in the pursuit of illicit profits of organised crime through reinforced asset recovery capabilities. The EFECC should be beneficial to the financial crime priorities in the EMPACT framework;
- The growing attention to crimes against the financial interests of the Union and the establishment of the European Public Prosecutor Office (EPPO). Under the EPPO Regulation, Europol is called to provide analytical support to EPPO investigations and share any relevant information held at Europol concerning offences under the EPPO competence; and
- The growing political attention to grand corruption cases and institutional calls for stronger Europol involvement in this area.

The new operational Centre aims at achieving the following goals:

- Reinforced operational effectiveness: by concentrating all financial intelligence and economic crime capabilities under one coordinated entity. This should develop synergies between MS demands for vertical support (stand-alone investigations in money laundering cases) and requirements for horizontal operational support to other investigations with regards to financial intelligence as referred to in EMPACT;
- Increased operational visibility: A Financial and Economic Crime Centre would bring a higher degree of organisational clarity, facilitating for both internal and external stakeholders the identification of the main sources of knowledge, expertise and operational support and bring a better understanding of the allocation of responsibilities; and
- Enhanced stakeholder management and funding opportunities: the new Centre should offer a single point of contact and become a reference for key operational stakeholders in the Member States (Financial Intelligence Units) as well as relevant institutional partners in the EU and private sector.

2023 Objectives

<u>European Financial and Economic Crime Centre (EFECC)</u>
Objectives and actions
<p>A.6.1 Reinforce the European Financial and Economic Crime Centre (EFECC) to extend the provision of strategic and operational support to EU Member States' investigations on financial and economic crime.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Enhance operational effectiveness and reinforce the services of Europol in the area of financial and economic crime by increasing the staff level of the new crime centre at Europol dedicated to the provision of operational support, expertise and stakeholder management in the field of fraud, money laundering, asset recovery, corruption and counterfeiting. ○ Serve as the EU law enforcement hub for collecting, processing, analysing and exchanging information and criminal intelligence of relevance for financial and economic crime. ○ Promote the systematic use of financial investigations as an investigative technique into organised crime and forge alliances with public and private entities in order to trace, seize and confiscate criminal assets in the EU and beyond. ○ Provide support to High Value Targets investigations of Member States and the work of the Operational Task Forces on particular HVT. ○ Establish a dedicated team in EFECC to provide horizontal operational support in financial investigations to Operational Task Forces and HVT (to the extent possible given existing capacities). ○ Support the EMPACT priorities of MTIC, Excise, Criminal Finances Money Laundering and Asset Recovery, Counterfeiting of Euro and IPR, notably by taking over the role of EMPACT support manager. ○ Following the legal clarity stemming from the Europol Regulation Recast (subject to the final text of the provisions) in regards to processing of bulk data contributions, optimise the utilisation of contributions in particular from FIUs, Customs and Tax Agencies (containing Suspicion Transaction Reports, Currency Transaction Reports, cash seizures or any information gathered under administrative powers). ○ Manage all EPEs relating to financial intelligence (FCIC, ALEFA, AMON, anti-corruption portal, Bank statements O.A.3.6, CARIN, EFIPPP, FCIC, FIU net and FIU net AG) and handle their growth. ○ Produce dedicated risk and threat assessments, strategic and situation reports in the areas of EFECC competence. Support the drafting of the "Financial and Economic Crime Threat Assessment" as the flagship document for the EFECC. ○ Further extend the Joint Financial Intelligence Group (JFIG) at Europol to improve communication and cooperation between Europol Liaison Bureaux and EFECC Analysis Projects in order to better align investigative priorities and effectiveness of pursued cases. ○ Maintain the Customs cooperation function within the EFECC including the cooperation with the Commission Service competent for customs matters. Exploit modalities for mutual information exchange between Customs risk profiling and Europol's criminal analysis in particular in the area of E-Commerce and small parcel shipments. Identify the requirements for establishing interoperability between the Customs Information System and Europol's databases, enabling automated cross-checking. ○ Further develop cooperation with the European Public Prosecutor Office (EPPO) in line with the requirements of the Europol Regulation Recast. ○ Improve operational cooperation and exchange of strategic and technical information with OLAF by making extensive use of the recently established SIENA connection and

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<p>dedicated OLAF Liaison Officer posted within the EFEC to ensure an effective multiagency approach in the fight against financial and economic crimes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Support the Member States in close cooperation with EPPO, OLAF and the EU Task Force Recover to protect the financial interests of the EU, with particular emphasis on countering attempts of serious and organised crime to target the NextGeneration EU recovery fund.○ Develop strategic cooperation with the European Banking Authority and the European Investment Bank as key partners of the EFEC.○ Contribute to policy development such as drafting of guidelines or revision of standards when requested by the Commission.○ Evaluate the effectiveness of the Europol implementation related to the Directive (EU) 2019/1153⁴⁴, in particular the possibility for Europol to request financial information from FIUs and information held in the national centralised bank account registries.○ Prepare for taking up any potential new task arising from the Action Plan for a comprehensive Union policy on preventing money laundering and terrorism financing⁴⁵ published by the Commission on 7 May 2020.○ Support developments in Countering Financing of Terrorism (CTF) and its links to AML, in particular by leading or supporting strategic CFT projects and by providing operational support when needed and possible.
<p>Expected results: Member States' investigations receive better and extended analytical and operational support related to financial and economic crime.</p> <p>Improved cooperation and joint undertakings with stakeholders and financial institutions leading to an increased operational impact.</p> <p>Europol contributes to the objectives of relevant EU policies.</p>

Operations on Fraud

Disrupt the capacity of OCGs involved in fraud.

Disrupt the capacity of OCGs and specialists involved in excise fraud.

Disrupt the capacity of OCGs and specialists involved in Missing Trader Intra Community (MTIC) fraud.

Objectives and actions

A.6.2 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on fraud.

- Perform criminal intelligence analysis and support MS with operational capabilities and expertise, including on-the-spot support.
- Set up operational meetings and support priority, HVT investigations and EMPACT-related actions.
- Organise and fund the Annual Plenary Meetings.
- Continue developing cooperation with Eurofisc, including by extending Europol's operational and analytical support to Eurofisc international MTIC and Tax Fraud and Evasion investigations.
- Organise a conference on VAT fraud with the participation of Eurofisc, OLAF, EPPO and the European Commission.

⁴⁴ Directive (EU) 2019/1153 of 20 June 2019 laying down rules facilitating the use of financial and other information for the prevention, detection, investigation or prosecution of certain criminal offences.

⁴⁵ C(2020) 2800 final

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- Continue implementing the Service Level Agreement with the EUIPO on acquisition fraud targeting IP Offices and Trademarks/Registered Community Designs users by producing operational and tactical analysis, and one annual strategic report.
- Organise a public/private partnership conference on tobacco excise fraud.
- Support at least one joint operation (Week of Action, Joint Action Day, etc.) developed in the frame of the EMPACT OAP Excise Fraud, also involving other EU bodies or agencies (OLAF, FRONTEX, etc.).
- Prepare a strategic report on MTIC fraud highlighting the new trends/modus operandi or typologies.
- Support at least one EMPACT operation in the framework of EMPACT priority Online Fraud.
- Organise a multi-stakeholder meeting on a selected fraud phenomenon involving specialised national agencies, EU agencies and private sector.
- Strengthen strategic cooperation with the Universal Postal Union (UPU).
- Strengthen strategic cooperation with the European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA).
- Support to the extent possible strategic activities, including policy developments, relating to Insider trading, market manipulation and CEO fraud.

Expected results: Member States' investigations receive quality analytical and operational support related to fraud. Cooperation between Europol and other EU bodies and agencies is strengthened.

Operations on Money Laundering

Disrupt the capacity of OCGs involved in money laundering.

Objectives and actions

A.6.3 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on money laundering.

- Process and handle financial intelligence information. Perform intelligence analysis and provide analytical support.
- Provide financial intelligence to the ESOCC, EC3 and the ECTC (with regards to terrorist financing).
- Provide dedicated support to EMPACT by taking over the role of coordinator of the Common Horizontal Strategic Goal of criminal finances, money laundering and asset recovery.
- Organise and fund the Annual Plenary Meeting.
- Support and host the secretariats for the Anti-Money Laundering Operational Network (AMON) and the Association of Law Enforcement Forensic Accountants (ALEFA).
- Support the strategic and operational information exchange between the Member States' Financial Investigators.
- Support the triparty Working Group on virtual assets (co-host secretariat jointly with Interpol and the Basel Institute).
- Improve operational support by enhancing virtual assets expertise and provide tracing and analysis support to financial investigations involving virtual assets.
- Contribute to the development of the Supra-National Risk Assessment and high-risk third countries assessment on money laundering and terrorist financing in the framework of the Expert group on Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing.
- Develop, promote and support the Europol Financial Intelligence Public Private Partnership (EFIPPP).

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- Continue engaging with the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and Egmont group in view of developing global cooperation on money laundering and terrorist financing. Support targeted FATF projects when operational needs are identified.
- Establish a well-functioning working relation with the new EU Anti-Money Laundering Authority (AMLA).
- Support the BeCaNet project⁴⁶ creating a network of counter-terrorism financing experts and improving cooperation with private sector on CT matters.
- Support the Datacros project⁴⁷ that aims at analysing fraudulent patterns in business ownership and control structures data in order to enhance financial analysis and investigations.
- Support the EU funded projects, which are aiming at establishing interconnection among business registers across borders in order to provide simplified and unified access to data on business ownership and control structures for financial analysis and investigation purposes.
- Coordinate training activities and support the financial intelligence training delivered to Europol and the EU Member States. Provide expertise in various events on money laundering and terrorism financing including by supporting CEPOL courses on money laundering and financial investigations.

A.6.4 Increase cooperation with FIUs.

- Work towards the improvement of the cooperation with the FIUs and increase the number of countries contributing financial intelligence to Europol (Suspicious Transactions Reports (STRs), Suspicious Activity Reports (SARs) and cash declarations).
- Prepare the grounds for establishing close cooperation with the future Cooperation and Support Mechanism (CSM) for the FIUs, including possible secondment of liaison officers, SIENA connection, use of FIU.net etc.
- Negotiate an SLA regarding the "Europol node" when the CSM/ new Authority takes over the FIU.net as a channel of operational communication with EU FIUs and FIU Norway.
- Provide information sessions on use and benefits of matching technologies to APs.
- Identify which FIUs would be interested in having/reactivating a/their SIENA connection/mailbox. Support technically the connection/reactivation of interested FIUs in SIENA.
- Set-up a system to collect and report transparent and unambiguous statistical data on AML/CFT information received and activities executed.
- Set-up a feedback system on the usefulness of STR-related information received by Europol to improve the data quality.

Expected results: Improved cooperation and joint undertakings with stakeholders and financial institutions leading to an increased operational impact.
Improved cooperation with FIUs and increased contribution of financial intelligence to Europol via FIUs.
Member States' investigations receive better and extended financial intelligence support.
Investigations on organised crime and terrorism can better benefit from synergies between financial and criminal intelligence.

⁴⁶ The BeCaNet Project is the 'best practice, capacity building and networking initiative among public and private actors against Terrorism Financing', led by BKA, Germany.

⁴⁷ <https://www.transcrime.it/datacros/>

Asset Recovery

Support investigations in order to identify the criminals involved, disrupt their associates and recover and confiscate the proceeds of their crimes.

Objectives and actions

A.6.5 Provide support to EU Member States’ investigations in identifying and tracing proceeds of crime.

- Perform criminal intelligence analysis and support MS with operational capabilities and expertise, including on-the-spot support.
- Set up operational meetings and support priority, HVT investigations and EMPACT-related actions.
- Support the European Commission in the peer-reviews of the EU Asset Recovery Offices (ARO).
- Co-chair with the European Commission the ARO platform meetings. Host the meeting of the ARO platform. Liaise with each Asset Recovery Office within the Member States to increase visibility of the EFECC’s work.
- Connect to Siena EU Asset Recovery Offices that are not directly connected yet and strengthen MS AROs partnership with the EFECC resulting in an increase of their contribution level.
- Support and host the secretariats the Camden Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network (CARIN).
- Improve operational support by enhancing virtual assets expertise and provide tracing and analysis support to ARO and the MS investigators involving virtual assets.
- Provide analytical and operational horizontal support to all other OD crime areas.
- Explore the opportunities provided by the EU Directive 2019/1153 to request from Member States financial information and intelligence.
- Support the Member States and the Commission in the revamp of the EU asset recovery framework. Provide technical advice if requested in the case there is a new EU legislative initiative concerning the improvement of cooperation between Asset Recovery Offices of the Member States in the field of tracing and identification of proceeds from crime.
- Promote the new Guest experts concept in terms of receiving additional expertise from MS in the area of asset recovery.

Expected results: Member States’ investigations receive quality analytical and operational support related to asset tracing and recovery.

Operations on Corruption

Disrupt the capacity of OCGs and specialists involved in all forms of corruption (public and private corruption, sports corruption, grand corruption, business corruption, political corruption and administrative corruption - including corruption in central or local governments, judiciary and law enforcement).

Objectives and actions

A.6.6 Provide support to EU Member States’ investigations on corruption.

- Perform corruption-related criminal intelligence analysis and support MS with operational capabilities and expertise, including on-the-spot support.
- Set up operational meetings and support priority and HVT investigations.

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- Organise and fund the AP Corruption Annual Plenary Meeting.
- Organise a major event (conference) on corruption.
- Promote the use of the dedicated Corruption-SIENA for the information exchange between anti-corruption authorities and Europol/AP Corruption.
- Implement joint actions with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) following the conclusion of Memoranda of Understanding in 2021 (e.g. workshops, seminars).
- Support strategic activities, including policy developments, relating to sports corruption.
- Contribute to the drafting of a strategic product in the field of corruption.
- Take part in the UN GLOBE network (Anti-corruption network for law enforcement agencies).

Expected results: Member States' investigations receive qualitative analytical and operational support related to corruption.

Operations on Counterfeiting

Disrupt the OCGs involved in the production and distribution of counterfeit goods violating health, safety and food regulations, and those producing sub-standard goods.

Objectives and actions

A.6.7 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on the production and distribution of counterfeit goods.

- Perform criminal intelligence analysis and support MS with operational capabilities and expertise, including on-the-spot support.
- Provide the necessary support for the implementation of the new EMPACT priority on intellectual property rights (IPR) crime.
- Manage the Intellectual Property Crime Coordination Coalition (IPC³) established in cooperation with the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO).
- Gather information and monitor relevant trends in the field of counterfeiting and piracy with particular emphasis on online IPR infringement. Collaborate with EUIPO to prepare reports intended to inform policy makers, law enforcement authorities and other relevant stakeholders.
- Support and host the secretariat of the IP Crime Network of the intellectual property crime experts from specialised LEAs.
- Coordinate operational actions tackling the sales of counterfeit products and piracy online, and the sales of counterfeit and illicit foods and beverages.
- Coordinate operational actions in the area of falsified medicines.
- Coordinate a new recurrent operation against counterfeit toys.
- Organise and financially support meetings, training, seminars and a conference at Europol and/or in the Member States on intellectual property crime.
- Organise and fund the Annual Plenary Meeting.
- Raise awareness on instruments which Europol and EUIPO offers to assist in the fight against IPR infringements. Develop and publicise crime prevention and other communication materials on intellectual property crime.

Expected results: Member States' investigations receive quality analytical and operational support related to counterfeiting.

<u>Operations on Counterfeiting</u>	
Disrupt the OCGs involved in Euro counterfeiting.	
Objectives and actions	
A.6.8 Provide support to EU Member States’ investigations on Euro counterfeiting.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Perform criminal intelligence analysis and support MS with operational capabilities and expertise, including on-the-spot support. ○ Provide financial support to Member States’ Euro counterfeiting operations. ○ Provide the necessary support for the implementation of the new EMPACT priorities on Euro counterfeiting. ○ Provide to Member States technical-tactical training on Euro counterfeiting. ○ Support strategic activities, including policy developments, relating to Euro counterfeiting. ○ Implement the Internet Joint Patrol Project on Euro counterfeiting with the European Central Bank and Banco de España as to gather information on vendors of counterfeit Euro banknotes, detecting trends and patterns over the internet, and delivering actionable intelligence to Member States and Third Parties, suggesting the start of new criminal investigations. 	
<p>Expected results: Member States’ investigations receive quality analytical and operational support related to Euro counterfeiting.</p> <p>Member States’ investigations in relation to Euro counterfeiting are initiated based on Europol’s analysis.</p>	

Indicators	Latest result (Q2 2022)	Target 2023
Number of Accepted contributions by EFECC		
Number of Operational Reports delivered by EFECC		
Number of Operations supported by EFECC		
Number of Action Days coordinated/supported by EFECC		
Satisfaction with Operational Support and Analysis provided by EFECC		

A.7. Strategic and Analysis Coordination

Overview

Criminal analysis remains at the core of Europol’s business and it continues being a service which is highly demanded by the law enforcement agencies in Member States. Europol has a considerable wealth of knowledge, capabilities and expertise in this area, which the agency strives to further strengthen through enhanced coordination and attention to quality output and control, standardisation, training, specialised analysis and a more efficient and flexible reassignment of resources.

Strategic analysis in the context of law enforcement aims at informing decision makers on current and emerging trends in serious crime and terrorism landscapes and helps with the identification of critical areas for prioritisation. The use of strategic intelligence analysis is one of the pillars of the EMPACT, as it promotes an intelligence-led approach to fight international serious and organised crime in a cooperative fashion among the EU law enforcement authorities, JHA agencies and external partners. The strategic analysis produced by Europol provide guidance also to the agency's management and the work of the Operational Analysis Projects (APs).

The Analysis Training coordination function at Europol has two aspects: 1) internal – which comprises the responsibility to assess in-house skills, training needs and requirements; and to develop and provide in-house analysis trainings; and 2) external – which includes the reviewing and responding to Member States’ analysis training needs in collaboration with CEPOL. The team in charge is also assessing the possibilities for accreditation of analysis training at Europol and organises the Europol Summer School.

Facilitating the cooperation among all competent law enforcement authorities including Customs and Counter-Terrorism services in the Member States is a crucial element of Europol’s work and mandate. The agency supports the Liaison Bureaux of Member States and other cooperation partners at Europol and maintains Europol liaison offices in other countries and organisations.

In view of the global challenges which the EU is facing, effective investigations depend often on the information exchange with third countries and private partners. In the past years Europol succeeded in establishing cooperation with key external partners and it will continue working on the implementation of the different cooperation agreements. The agency aims at increasing its outreach to other priority partners, in line with its External Strategy 2021-2024.

At the same time, Europol pursues the further strengthening of its partnership with Interpol and relevant EU agencies and institutions, in particular those active in the area of Justice and Home affairs, in order to ensure complementarity and maximum benefit from possible synergies.

2023 Objectives

Analysis coordination

Objectives and actions

A.7.1 Reinforce criminal analysis coordination and expertise at Europol to ensure provision of quality analysis support to Member States’ investigations.

- Expand the support to the work on criminal analysis at Europol by:
 - Further developing the Visualisation and Analysis Toolbox;
 - Enhancing the Data Management Portal; and
 - Establishing a pool of analysts specialised in technical analysis and specialised methods and tools to support all Europol’s Centres with expertise.
- Act a single point of contact for new tools for analysis.
- Coordinate user feedback and requirements in relation to the core Europol analysis, data sharing and messaging capabilities from an internal business need perspective.
- Monitor and enforce the standards related to the different process steps in the operational information management lifecycle to improve and maintain the quality and speed of Europol’s services.
- Progress with the establishment of joint analysis teams and platforms, including for Trusted Expert Communities (TEC), with regards to operational and strategic analysis (subject to the final provisions in the Europol Regulation Recast).

A.7.2 Ensure data and analysis quality control at Europol.

- Maintain efficient services of the Data and Analysis Quality Control Office established at Europol in 2022.
- Ensure the implementation of the current data review mechanism and that data processing is performed in line with Europol’s legal framework.
- Work in close cooperation with the DPF and ensure compliance with the data protection rules.
- Report internally on regular basis on the enhanced data review activities; Provide progress reports to DPF.
- Provide guidance and training to improve the quality of analytical reporting.

Expected results: Compliance with the legal requirements for data processing.
Increased quality of Europol’s operational analysis support to Member States.

Analysis coordination

Objectives and actions

A.7.3 Reinforce analysis training capabilities at Europol to ensure full coverage of training needs on the new analysis environment.

- Maintain a centralised overview of in-house analytical competencies and knowledge.
- Develop and provide in-house analysis trainings. Further develop the new Europol criminal intelligence training curriculum.
- Train all relevant staff on the new analysis environment for Operations, Data Management Portal and related tools.
- Further develop the analysis training environment and a learning management solution for assessing the impact of training on quality.
- Review and respond to Member States’ analysis training needs in collaboration with CEPOL. Train MS on the use of joint analysis platform (subject to the final provisions in the Europol Regulation Recast and the corresponding technical advancement).
- Assess the possibilities for accreditation of analysis training in Europol.
- Manage the online Intelligence Analysis Platform CONAN.

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- Organise the annual EU Crime Analysis Conference.
- Organise the Europol Summer School.

Expected results: Provision of effective and up-to-date operational and strategic analysis training for Europol’s analysts leading to increased quality of Europol’s operational analysis support to Member States.
Fully trained criminal intelligence analysts at Europol.

Strategic analysis

Objectives and actions

A.7.4 Deliver quality strategic reports

- Deliver regular strategic intelligence analysis reports within the areas of serious and organised crime, cybercrime and terrorism, such as:
 - EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT);
 - Cybercrime reports;
 - Financial crime reports;
 - Reports requested by COSI; Risk assessments requested by the Council and Commission;
 - Reports requested in the framework of VISA or Schengen evaluations;
 - Reports in the framework of the EMPACT priorities and operational action plans;
- Deliver joint strategic intelligence analysis reports with other EU agencies and Europol cooperation partners, including for example:
 - FRONTEX (Joint Europol-Frontex risk analysis), EMCDDA (EU Early Warning System on new psychoactive substances, Joint EMCDDA-Europol European Drug Markets Report), EUIPO and EUROJUST⁴⁸.
- Deliver ad hoc strategic intelligence analysis reports on the themes of serious and organised crime, cybercrime and terrorism based on the business need.
- Maintain a common, consistent and holistic approach towards strategic analysis across the Operations Directorate.
- Enhance networking with experts (e.g. SOCTA, TE-SAT Advisory Group) to advance methodologies, increase access to information and improve the quality of reports.
- Support strategic analysis in the MENA region by contributing to the EU funded project Euromed Police V.
- Support strategic analysis in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) region by contributing to the EU funded project EaP Training and Operational Partnership Against Organised Crime (TOPCOP).

Expected results: Provision of timely and quality strategic reports.
Enhanced analytical capacities of the EU Neighbourhood countries to perform thread assessments and other strategic analysis.
Strengthened strategic cooperation between national law enforcement authorities, as well as between the EU Neighbourhood countries and the EU MS and EU agencies.

Cooperation with Member States

Objectives and actions

⁴⁸ These reports are produced at different frequencies as agreed with the partner agencies.

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A.7.5 Manage cooperation with Member States.

- Manage strategic cooperation of Europol with Member States' competent authorities including Law Enforcement, Counter-Terrorism services and Customs.
- Ensure appropriate intake of Member State's needs and priorities across all relevant areas of Europol's work.
- Coordinate Europol contribution to the Management Board/MB Working Groups ensuring timely submission of the relevant documentation, and follow up to MB decisions.
- Coordinate and prepare meetings of the Heads of Europol National Units (HENUs).
- Support the implementation of the operational agreement with Denmark.
- Support the liaison officers' community based at Europol, including by facilitating the regular meetings of the Heads of Liaison Bureaux (LB) and the newly established informal Consultation Group.
- Support the organisation of study weeks/visits for staff from Europol National Units and Europol Liaison Bureaux.
- Provide information to MS on agency's wide operational activities via Operational Meeting updates.
- Support Member States' cooperation on matters outside Europol's mandate by offering a specific EPE platform dedicated for such communication and exchanges of information.

Expected results: Effective involvement of Member States' competent authorities in the consultations and decision-making on Europol matters.
Enhanced cooperation with and between LBs, their respective national authorities and related stakeholders for the additional benefit in the operational area.

Cooperation with third countries

Objectives and actions

A.7.6 Manage cooperation with third countries.

- Support the implementation of the operational agreements with Albania, Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Colombia, Georgia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland and Ukraine, and the working arrangement with Andorra, Armenia, Israel, Japan, Kosovo⁴⁹, New Zealand, South Korea and the United Kingdom.
- Support the implementation of the operational agreement with the USA and manage the Liaison Office in Washington.
- Support the implementation of the strategic agreements with Brazil, China, Russia, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates.
- Monitor the implementation of cooperation agreements and the fulfilment of obligations and commitments.
- Support the establishment of new Partner Liaison Bureaux and their Liaison Officers at Europol.
- Establish or reinforce cooperation with selected high-priority third countries in line with Europol's External Strategy 2021-2024 and as listed in the Management Board decision on Europol's external relations priorities.

⁴⁹ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/99 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

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- Prepare a mid-term report of the Europol External Strategy.
- Prepare a strategic review of the cooperation with the UK.
- Further develop Europol's relations with the Western Balkans countries. Promote the participation of the countries in the operational meetings and EMPACT activities. Build up a proactive approach of the cooperation of the countries with Europol.
- Contribute to the EU funded project WB Partnership against Crime and Terrorism (WBPACT) and monitor the future development of an EU funding scheme to support the operational cooperation in the region.
- Prepare a strategic review of the cooperation with the Western Balkan countries.
- Further develop Europol's relations with the countries from the MENA region. Continue introducing the concept of Policing Partnerships and enhance cooperation with the Gulf Cooperation Council – Police Network (GCCPOL) and the Arab Interior Ministers Council (AIMC) as a gateway to the region.
- Continue contributing to the EU funded project Euromed V.
- Progress in building cooperation with India and Pakistan, provided there is mutual interest.
- Further develop Europol's relations with the countries from the Eastern Neighbourhood region. Contribute to the EU funded projects EaP Training and Operational Partnership Against Organised Crime (TOPCOP).
- Strengthen cooperation with Brazil and Colombia and further develop Europol's relations with Chile and Mexico according to the concluded agreements. Explore the possibilities to advance negotiations of working arrangements with other prioritised partners, i.e. Argentina, Peru and Ameripol. Utilise the linkages to the EU funded project EI PACCTO⁵⁰ as a gateway to other countries in the region.
- Assist the European Commission, where required and requested, in the negotiation of international agreements according to Art.218 TFEU.
- Complete any administrative arrangements needed to implement international agreements concluded by the European Commission.
- Undertake follow-up actions with partners, if required, on the basis of the European Commission's review of the existing operational agreements.
- Elaborate legal advice on new possibilities for case by case cooperation with any third country, in the absence of an agreement or adequacy decision.
- Take appropriate implementing actions in case of new possibilities provided for in the Europol Regulation Recast as regards the transfer of personal data to third states.

Expected results: Increased involvement of Europol in information exchange with third countries and better access to criminal intelligence from abroad.
Improved cooperation and joint undertakings with third countries leading to an increased operational impact.

Cooperation with EU institutions, agencies or bodies

Objectives and actions

A.7.7 Manage cooperation with EU institutions, agencies or bodies.

- Manage strategic cooperation of Europol with EU institutions, agencies or bodies, including EU CSDP missions and operations; manage the Liaison Office in Brussels.

⁵⁰ EI PACCTO is an EU funded project which provides technical assistance to Latin American States to efficiently fight organised crime.

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- Manage and coordinate the interaction with the European Commission, the External Action Service (EEAS), including INTCEN, and EU Council and Parliamentary committees, including the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group (JPSG).
- Enhance cooperation with the Commission and EEAS, including EU Migration Liaison Officers and CT experts to third countries, in order to improve the links between EU Delegations and Europol and to progress on embedding the law enforcement component into CSDP missions and operations, in line with the Civilian Compact, as endorsed by European Council in December 2019.
- Explore the establishment of links with EU defence structures (CSDP missions and operations and SATCEN) and relevant bodies countering hybrid threats in order to enrich the intelligence picture with strategic information from military sources, while fully respecting the mandate of INTCEN and the mandate of national security and intelligence services.
- Provide (technical) advice and contribute to the implementation of new EU policy and legislative initiatives.
- Follow closely the implementation of the EU Security Union Strategy and relevant EU policies and initiatives⁵¹, for emerging tasks falling within Europol's mandate. In particular, follow the preparations for new initiatives in the area of cyber resilience, such as European Cyber Resilience Act, and the developments in the area of travel intelligence, such as the new proposal on Advance Passenger Information. The new initiative for reciprocal access to security-related information for front-line officers between EU and key third countries to counter shared security threats needs to be taken into account as well.
- Develop strategic cooperation with new bodies established by the EU involved in crime areas covered by Europol's mandate, i.e. Joint Cyber Unit, a European centre to prevent and counter child sexual abuse and a new EU Anti-Money Laundering body.
- Support activities regarding Schengen evaluations on police cooperation, such as evaluations, on-site visits to Schengen countries and training.
- Support the implementation of the operational agreements with Eurojust and Frontex. Facilitate the exchange of Liaison officers with Frontex and the liaising of Eurojust SNEs with Europol's crime centres.
- Support the implementation of the strategic agreements, MoUs and administrative and working arrangements with CEPOL, ECB, ECDC, EEAS, EMCDDA, ENISA, EPPO, EUIPO, EU-LISA, the European Commission, FRA and OLAF.
- Ensure the effective implementation of the working arrangement with the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) and the working modalities for Europol's provision of support. Ensure synergies with Eurojust and OLAF in the respective efforts to collaborate with the EPPO. Establish regular communication with the EPPO on strategic/policy issues relevant to respective mandates.
- Establish structured collaboration with the European Union Agency for Asylum (ex. EASO), based on the new legal framework.
- Continue the reinforced cooperation with eu-Lisa and Frontex with regard to the implementation of legislative files such as ETIAS and interoperability of the EU information management systems, etc. Participate in the trilateral technical meetings to ensure coordination and alignment.
- Continue the reinforced cooperation between the Eurojust Contact Points and Europol's Analysis Projects with regard to exchange of information, identification of HVT and Eurojust's participation in the EU Policy Cycle to step up the fight against serious and

⁵¹ EU Agenda and Action Plan on Drugs, EU Action plan on fire arms trafficking, Counter Terrorism Agenda for the EU, EU strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse, EU strategy to Tackle Organised Crime, Action Plan on migrants smuggling and Action Plan for fight against trafficking in human beings, the new Strategy on the future of Schengen and the European Police Partnership Concept.

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<p>organised crime, terrorism and cybercrime. Support the coordination of the annual networking meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Support the Joint Investigation Teams (JIT) of the Member States in cooperation with Eurojust and OLAF including the provision of complementary funding and training.○ Establish a structured communication flow with the EU Intelligence and Situation Centre (EU INTCEN) of EEAS.○ Collaborate with other relevant EU agencies such as EMSA and contribute to the work of the JHA Agencies Network.
<p>Expected results: Utilisation of synergies, optimisation of information flow and alignment of actions between Europol and other EU institutions, agencies and bodies leading to better operational impact.</p>

Cooperation with organisations and private parties

Objectives and actions

A.7.8 Manage cooperation with international and regional organisations, and private parties.

- Support the implementation of the operational agreement with Interpol and manage Europol's Liaison Offices at Interpol.
- Support the implementation of the strategic agreements with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the World Customs Organisation (WCO). Reach out to other relevant UN offices for establishing of cooperation (e.g. the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT)).
- Advance with the negotiations for establishing a cooperation agreement with the International Criminal Court (ICC).
- Pursue progress in concluding a working arrangement with NATO in order to enrich the criminal intelligence picture with strategic information from military sources.
- Explore possibilities to enhance cooperation with the Council of Europe, in areas of mutual interest.
- Monitor developments in relevant regional organisations and collaboration platforms such as the Baltic Sea Task Force, Danube River Strategy group, the Western Balkan regional initiatives, SELEC, MAOC-N, and EUMed, Afripol, the Western Africa Platforms, Aseanapol and Ameripol, and identify areas of collaboration depending on operational needs.
- Provide legal advice related to Europol's negotiation and conclusion of working arrangements with international organisations and private parties.
- Assess opportunities and develop relations with the private sector following the new provisions in the Europol Regulation Recast.

Expected results: Cooperation with international and regional organisations, and private parties brings forward better criminal intelligence picture and operational results.

Cooperation with private parties improves in effectiveness and reduces information gaps.

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Indicators	Latest result (Q2 2022)	Target 2023
Number of Strategic Analysis Reports		
Satisfaction with Strategic Analysis Reports		
Satisfaction with Operational Analysis		
Satisfaction with Operational Training delivered to MS/TP		
Number of new JITs signed		
Number of SIENA messages exchanged by Third Parties		

A.8. Governance, support and administration

Overview

Europol strives for full compliance with principles of sound financial management, security, data protection and internal control standards as demonstrated by the overall positive findings resulting from the internal and external audit mechanisms. In the spirit of ensuring clear accountability towards its stakeholders, Europol also applies robust document and records management procedures, and adheres to a systematic performance monitoring and reporting practice.

As provided for in Article 32 of the Europol Financial Rules, the Europol Internal Control Framework (ICF), adopted by the Europol MB in December 2018, represents the overall strategy on the organisational and internal control approach, as well as for Europol's ethics, compliance, corporate risk management and anti-fraud related components. The ICF is monitored through a set of control indicators that are integrated in Europol's corporate performance monitoring. The Code of Conduct, Europol's cornerstone for the organisational ethics, was put in force in an updated version at the end of 2019, including based on a review of staff from across the organisation. The Code of Conduct gives an essence statement for each of the 6 Europol Values (Service, Integrity, Accountability, Initiative, Partnership and Diversity), underlining a zero tolerance to fraud and the requirement to perform duties impartially and without favouring any particular individual, group, organisation or country, for preventing any potential conflict between personal and work related interests.

In 2023, the implementation of the HR and Finance Strategies will continue to ensure an efficient and effective management of budget and resources.

The agency aims at maintaining effective communication to both external partners and stakeholders, and internally to staff. Increasing the awareness of the general public and the law enforcement community of Europol's work is continuously pursued. The broader awareness of Europol's products and services among MS' competent authorities is a prerequisite for their full and effective utilisation, and for bringing forward better operational results. Transparent communication towards staff is an important factor to ensure engagement and motivation.

The growth of the agency demanded the establishment of the Strategic Housing Roadmap, which comprises the relocation of part of Europol's staff to temporary satellite buildings in the short to mid-term and the arrangement of second permanent headquarters in the longer term. At the same time, existing workspace should be re-organised to ensure optimal utilisation and compliance with the new governmental standards. These activities require a major effort and ultimately an expansion of the necessary facilities, ICT, security and administrative services for the years ahead.

Objectives 2023

Corporate affairs and services

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Objectives and actions
<p>A.8.1 Continue optimising Europol’s corporate functions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coordinate and oversee the implementation of Europol’s Strategy and Europol’s External Strategy. ○ Monitor the implementation of the Diversity & Inclusion Strategy. ○ Prepare Europol’s multi-annual and annual business planning documents, and quarterly, bi-annual and annual corporate performance reporting. ○ Provide policy advice and prepare related policy documents; Identify key strategic opportunities for Europol's growth in priority areas. ○ Coordinate all audit activities and Europol’s response to audit activities and findings. ○ Continue implementing the Internal Control Framework (ICF) and maintain the financial model of Europol (appointment decisions, etc.); assess the effectiveness of the ICF based on a dedicated list of control indicators. ○ Monitor Europol's corporate risks. Continue implementing the risk management policy and enhance awareness, through training and communication measures. ○ Streamline the use of corporate analytics and reporting to ensure high quality and accurate corporate performance measurement and reporting. ○ Maintain and further develop the User Survey. ○ Provide legal advice on the implementation of Europol’s legal framework and data protection rules. Advice on legality and compatibility of new Europol initiatives with EU law, as well as on new EU initiatives having an impact on Europol. ○ Prepare implementation legislation following the Europol Regulation Recast and obtain the agreement of the MB, the EDPS and the European Commission (where applicable). ○ Develop and deliver internal training program on the application of the amended Europol’s legal framework. ○ Ensure effective change management across Europol with a view to implementing the new provisions in the Europol Regulation Recast. ○ Develop and maintain Europol’s legal framework for finance, procurement, grants and facilities. Revise Europol’s Financial Regulation (FR) following the revision of the Commission’s FR and the model framework FR for agencies. ○ Provide internally legal support on contracts, service level agreements, licenses, grant agreements, etc. Handle contract related complaints and court cases. ○ Develop and maintain the HR legal framework and implementing rules to the EU Staff Regulations. Handle staff related complaints, requests and court cases.
<p>Expected results: Europol progresses along the strategic priorities; areas for further development are identified and utilised.</p> <p>Transparency and accountability of the organisation's strategic planning and performance. Increased benefits to Europol's stakeholders.</p> <p>Legal frameworks, implementing rules and corporate processes are up-to-date and compliant.</p>

Corporate communications
Objectives and actions
<p>A.8.2 Ensure efficient internal and external communication.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Maintain and further develop media, press and public relations; develop and coordinate external and internal communication networks and coordinate external publications. ○ Maintain and continuously develop Europol’s website.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue with the requirement gathering and implementation of the interactive data visualisation component as part of the website. Follow-up to the requirements phase towards the implementation of the new EU Most Wanted website. ○ Continue mapping and documenting processes and workflows in the area of digital communication. Continue the implementation of the digital asset management system. ○ Support high-level visits and organise high-level events such as the European Police Chiefs Convention (EPCC). ○ Implement actions for raising awareness based on the principle of joint responsibility between Europol and MS. ○ Provide corporate audio-visual productions and campaigns targeting awareness raising of Europol’s products and services. ○ Continue to explore possible ways to translate other promotional material in all EU languages, taking into account budgetary impact. ○ Provide access to, user support and training on the use of Open Source (OS) tools and databases. Organise the Europol Open Sources (OS) Intelligence Conference. Produce OS reports and contribute to country reports to support governance activities. ○ Manage and promote the use of the Europol Media Monitoring tool; deliver effective media monitoring, crisis monitoring and media impact products and services. ○ Maintain and develop Europol’s intranet as the main internal communication tool. Organise staff and managerial events.
<p>Expected results: Europol maintains effective communication to external partners and stakeholders. Europol and its brand identity are positioned among media.</p> <p>A wider group of MS’ law enforcement officers are aware of Europol’s products and services and of the benefits of international law enforcement cooperation.</p> <p>Effective media monitoring and open sources tools are in place and broadly used.</p> <p>Europol maintains effective internal communication.</p>

<u>Administration and budget</u>
Objectives and actions
<p>A.8.3 Ensure efficient human resources and budget management.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Plan and monitor the implementation of the budget and staff establishment plan. ○ Develop and update finance related policies, implementing rules and processes. ○ Execute financial initiation of revenue and expenditure; Perform ex-ante and ex-post financial verification of all financial operations. ○ Manage tender planning and procedures in line with annual business and budget planning. ○ Further review the contract management, budget planning and reporting, and financial and grant administration activities performed by Europol, and assess the need for further centralisation, in accordance with the Europol Finance Strategy. ○ Expand reporting via the new automated reporting solution. ○ Finalise the implementation of the eGrants System. ○ Coordinate the implementation of the HR Strategy as well as other organisational changes across Europol as approved by the MB.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Manage the salary administration and payment of allowances to staff and SNEs. ○ Manage the HR Management System (SYSPER) and coordinate the implementation of additional modules and functionalities. Review HR related processes in view of the implementation of new SYSPER modules. ○ Manage the Travel Management System. Prepare for the possible implementation of the Missions Integrated Processing System (MiPS) as the new travel management system at Europol. ○ Ensure the coordination of talent acquisition, learning and development, appraisal, probation and reclassification, on boarding and personnel administration for staff, SNEs, interns and law enforcement trainees. ○ Coordinate training of Europol staff. Further implement the Leadership and Management Development Program. ○ Manage the administration and coordination of grants, including EMPACT grants. ○ Assess and utilise possibilities for Europol to become a co-beneficiary in EU-funded projects in order to be able to respond to the increasing number of projects requiring Europol’s support, while facing limited resources. ○ Deliver health and wellbeing-related services. ○ Ensure the quality of the services after the insourcing of the medical service covering both Europol and Eurojust.
<p>Expected results: Ensured reliability and accuracy of Europol’s budget management. Increased HR efficiency, effectiveness and customer service delivery. Increased efficiency and effectiveness of financial processes and client satisfaction.</p>

<u>Security</u>
Objectives and actions
<p>A.8.4 Ensure the necessary level of physical, personal and information security at Europol.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consolidate the newly established Corporate Security Department to strengthen operational effectiveness, improve incident response and security compliance capabilities, improve the governance structure, enhance the security posture and foster cross-departmental cooperation. ○ Ensure the physical security of Europol’s buildings. Execute protective security operations for the Executive Director and staff, participants at high-level meetings and events. ○ Ensure that security requirements are fulfilled concerning the expansion of Europol to a second temporary satellite building. ○ Continue supporting the preparations for acquiring Europol’s second permanent headquarters in terms of security requirements. ○ Finalise the upgrade of the Security Control Room to cope with expanding security tasks (e.g. monitoring of the satellite buildings). ○ Maintain one service centre as a front office dealing with all in-house user related requests. ○ Identify innovative ways to communicate security awareness to Europol users. ○ Ensure timely accreditation of information systems to ensure Confidentiality & Information Security; Perform regular risk assessment of systems prior to becoming operational as well as compliance audits. ○ Develop, implement and validate the business continuity framework.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coordinate Europol's overall crisis management capability and Disaster Recovery activities. Review and revise the current recovery strategies and develop alternative ones. ○ Implement the management decision on the way forward concerning the Disaster Recovery site. ○ Implement the Europol Anti-Fraud Strategy.
<p>Expected results: Improved security for Europol’s buildings, staff and visitors. Europol fulfils its obligations in terms of confidentiality and information security.</p>

Facilities
Objectives and actions
<p>A.8.5 Progress towards the rationalisation and expansion of Europol’s facilities services and capabilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop, maintain and implement the policies, guidelines and processes related to services and products. ○ Develop, maintain and implement the budget, contracts and agreements related to services and products. ○ Manage the non-ICT related assets and ensure compliance with the financial processes and insurance scope. ○ Develop, maintain and implement digital workflows and self-service functionalities via the Facilities Management Information System (FMIS). ○ Provide travel and integrated, cross-horizontal services, with a focus on prioritising sustainability. ○ Continue with the implementation of the Strategic Housing Roadmap: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mid-Term Housing Solution (MTHS) project at Europol’s headquarters to strengthen the building in line with the applicable new governmental standards. - Temporary Satellite Building I (TSB I) project to safeguard the building’s availability after 1 January 2024, or to explore alternative options. - Temporary Satellite Building II (TSB II) project to create additional workplaces to support organisational growth and create swing space during the implementation of the MTHS at Europol’s headquarters. - Long-Term Housing Measures (LTHM) project to deliver a second permanent headquarters by redeveloping a current office building. - Long-Term Housing Measures (LTHM) project to deliver a second Data Centre. ○ Manage and improve Europol’s environmental management system and maintain the registration of the EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS). ○ Undertake initiatives to improve the environmental performance of the organisation in terms of sustainable procurement, carbon footprint, paper and water consumption, and waste management and separation, in line with the new Environmental Objectives and Action Plan for the period 2023 – 2025.
<p>Expected results: Existing workspace and new office locations are used in an optimal way to accommodate organisational growth. Effective processes and tooling are in place to ensure optimal facilities services and proper corporate environmental management.</p>

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Indicators	Latest result (Q2 2022)	Target 2023
Budget Outturn Rate		
Budget Commitment Rate		
Budget Payment Rate		
% of Late Payments (in value)		
Vacancy rate		
% of Female Staff		
Workplace Flex Ratio		
Emissions (tonnes CO2)		
% of pending critical/very important audit recommendations implemented within the timeline committed to by Europol agreed deadline with the auditing		
Total number of News Articles mentioning Europol (high-impact web-based media)		
User Satisfaction		

Management Board Functions

Accountancy Unit (ACCU)

The Accountancy Unit is an independent unit within Europol with its Accounting Officer appointed by/reportable directly to Europol's Management Board (MB). Its main tasks and responsibilities are to:

- Implement all payments (including salaries and allowances);
- Collect revenue and recovering amounts established as being receivable;
- Implement the accounting rules and chart of accounts in accordance with the provisions adopted by the European Commission;
- Keep, prepare and present the annual accounts of Europol (financial statements and reports on the implementation of the budget);
- Lay down and validating the accounting systems; Manage the Treasury.

Data Protection Function (DPF)

The DPF is an integral part of Europol and the initial point of contact for all data protection matters. The Data Protection Officer who acts as the Head of DPF is appointed by the MB in accordance with Article 41 ER. DPF main tasks and responsibilities are to:

- Ensure lawfulness and compliance in regards to data protection (e.g. compliance reviews, annual activity report, written record of the transmission of data, register of processing operations, handling of data subject request, handling of inquiries etc.);
- Provide consultation in relation to legal and technical-organisational data protection safeguards;
- Provide training and awareness program for staff handling personal data;
- Perform as the main contact point to external data protection supervisors (e.g. Europol Data Protection Supervisor / National Data Protection Authorities).
- Following the Europol Regulation Recast, establish in timely manner new data protection safeguards in order to ensure compliance with the new rules.

Internal Audit Capability (IAC)

With the entry into force of the Europol Regulation, the IAC was formally established and continued the work of the Internal Audit Function with the mission to enhance and protect Europol's organisational value, by providing risk-based and objective assurance, advice and insight. Its main tasks and responsibilities are to:

- Evaluate the appropriateness of Europol's risk identification and management system, and the effectiveness of the Internal Control Framework;
- Review the arrangements established to ensure compliance with applicable legislation, policies, plans and procedures;
- Review the reliability and integrity of significant operating and financial information and the means used to identify, measure, classify and report such information;
- Evaluate the economy and efficiency with which resources are employed;
- Review programs or operations to ascertain whether results are consistent with established plans and objectives, and determine whether goals have been achieved;
- Monitor and report on the implementation of audit recommendations issued by IAC.

Management Board Secretariat (MBS)

MBS is responsible for supporting the Chairperson of the Management Board in compliance with the Europol Regulation. Its main tasks and responsibilities are to:

- Support the coordination of the MB's work and ensure its coherence;
- Organise activities and meetings of the MB and its Working Groups on Corporate matters (legal, financial and personnel issues) and on Information Management, as well as ad hoc meetings and working groups established by the Board;

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- Provide the MB with the necessary administrative support;
- Support oversight and policy-making activities regarding matters such as the appointment of Executive Directors and Deputy Executive Directors, corporate governance, human resources and external relations.

ANNEXES

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Annex VIII: Privileges and immunities

Annex IX: Evaluations

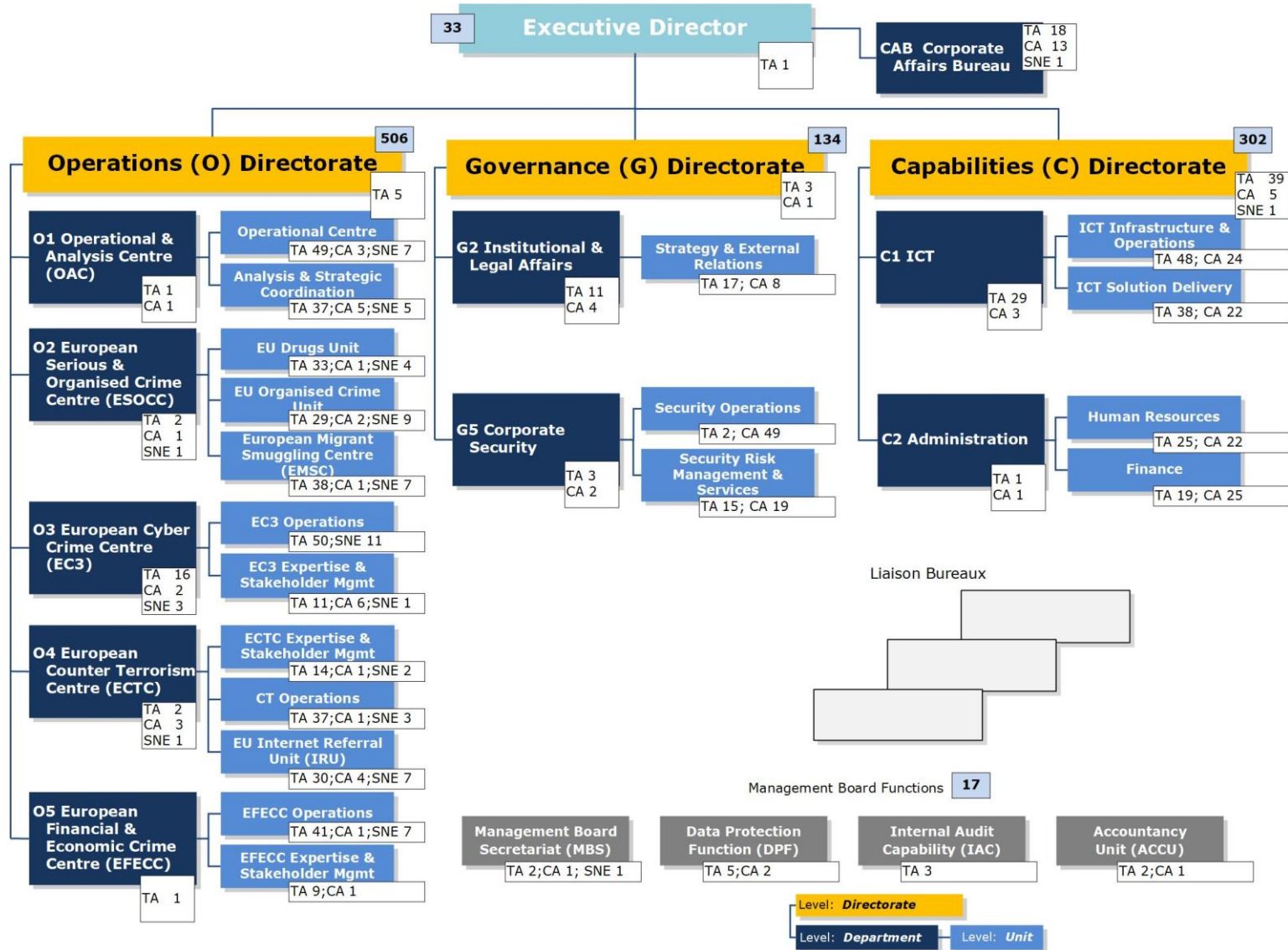
Annex X: Strategy for the organisational management and internal control systems

Annex XI: Grants

Annex XII: Strategy for cooperation with third countries and/or international organisations

Annex XIII: Procurement Plan 2023 (to be added before final adoption of PD2023-2025)

Annex I: Organisational chart of the Agency for year 2022⁵²



⁵² A re-organisation resulting in a new Information Management Unit is ongoing at the time of writing.

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Annex II: Resources allocation per activity 2023 – 2025

	Year 2022			Year 2023 Resource estimates			Year 2024 [1] Resource estimates			Year 2025 [2] Resource estimates		
	TA	CA & SNE (FTE)	Budget allocated	TA	CA & SNE (FTE)	Budget allocated	TA	CA & SNE (FTE)	Budget allocated	TA	CA & SNE (FTE)	Budget allocated
A.1. Development of operational ICT and IM capabilities	152	57	70,725,000	155	57	74,099,000	158	57	77,072,949	160	57	77,964,889
A.2. Operational Coordination	60	17	13,904,000	64	17	14,882,000	67	17	15,652,140	69	17	16,315,664
A.3. Combating Serious and Organised Crime	102	26	24,306,000	106	26	25,603,000	109	26	26,587,560	111	26	27,469,792
A.4. Combating Cyber Crime	77	23	15,681,000	81	23	16,949,000	85	23	17,827,980	88	23	18,651,847
A.5. Counter-Terrorism	83	22	16,344,000	87	22	18,291,000	91	22	19,196,820	94	22	20,048,064
A.6. Combating Financial and Economic Crime	51	9	8,933,000	55	9	9,944,000	59	9	10,682,880	62	9	11,363,845
A.7. Strategic and Analysis Coordination	52	10	8,696,000	56	10	9,520,000	59	10	10,182,900	61	10	10,737,039
Total Operational Activities	577	164	158,589,000	604	164	169,288,000	628	164	177,203,229	646	164	182,551,140
A.8. Governance, support and administration (incl. MBF)	109	142	33,791,773	112	142	34,617,172	114	142	35,647,015	115	142	35,506,368
TOTAL	686	306	192,380,773	716	306	203,905,172	742	306	212,850,244	761	306	218,057,507

[1] [2] The human and financial resources outlook for 2022 and 2023 are in line with the MFF 2021-2027 and the legislative financial proposal of the Commission’s proposal for a recast of the Europol Regulation. The Organisation will ensure that the largest part of the resource increase will be allocated to operational activities in support of Member States, in line with the Europol Regulation recast and the Europol Strategy 2020+.

Annex III: Financial Resources 2023 - 2025

The human and financial resources outlook for 2023, 2024 and 2025 are in line with the MFF 2021-2027 and the legislative financial proposal of the Commission's proposal for a recast of the Europol Regulation.

**Table 1 - Revenue
General revenues**

REVENUES	2022	2023
	Revenues estimated by the agency	Budget forecast
EU contribution	192,380,773	203,905,172
Other revenue		
TOTAL REVENUES	192,380,773	203,905,172

REVENUES	General revenues						
	Executed 2021	Estimated by the agency 2022	2023		VAR 2023/ 2022 (%)	Envisaged 2024	Envisaged 2025
			Agency request	Budget forecast			
1 REVENUE FROM FEES AND CHARGES							
2 EU CONTRIBUTION	168,964,254	192,380,773	203,905,172		106.0%	212,850,244	218,057,507
<i>- Of which assigned revenues deriving from previous years' surpluses</i>	2,363,548	3,349,469	5,098,619				
3 THIRD COUNTRIES CONTRIBUTION (incl. EEA/EFTA and candidate countries)							
<i>- Of which EEA/EFTA (excl. Switzerland)</i>							
<i>- Of which candidate countries</i>							
4 OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS							
5 ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS							
<i>- Of which interest generated by funds paid by the Commission by way of the EU contribution (FFR Art. 58)</i>							
6 REVENUES FROM SERVICES RENDERED AGAINST PAYMENT							
7 CORRECTION OF BUDGETARY IMBALANCES							
TOTAL	168,964,254	192,380,773	203,905,172		106.0%	212,850,244	218,057,507

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Additional EU funding: grant, contribution and service-level agreements

REVENUES	2022	2023
	Revenues estimated by the agency	Budget forecast
TOTAL REVENUES	3,652,500	3,196,134

REVENUES	Additional EU funding: grant, contribution and service-level agreements						
	Executed 2021	Estimated by the agency 2022	2023		VAR 2023/20 22 (%)	Envisaged 2024	Envisaged 2025
			Agency request	Budget forecast			
ADDITIONAL EU FUNDING STEMMING FROM GRANTS (FFR Art.7)	750,300	975,715	543,299			222,800	167,100
ADDITIONAL EU FUNDING STEMMING FROM CONTRIBUTION AGREEMENTS (FFR Art.7)	472,908	1,406,785	1,422,835			656,912	-
ADDITIONAL EU FUNDING STEMMING FROM SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS (FFR Art. 43.2)	1,142,088	1,270,000	1,230,000			120,000	-
TOTAL	2,365,296	3,652,500	3,196,134			999,712	167,100

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Table 2 - Expenditure

Expenditure	2022		2023	
	Commitment appropriations	Payment appropriations	Commitment appropriations	Payment appropriations
Title 1 - Staff expenditure	103,065,273	103,065,273	109,034,672	109,034,672
Title 2 - Infrastructure and operating expenditure	14,653,500	14,653,500	17,014,500	17,014,500
Title 3 - Operational expenditure	74,662,000	74,662,000	77,856,000	77,856,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	192,380,773	192,380,773	203,905,172	203,905,172

EXPENDITURE	Commitment / payment appropriations						
	Executed Budget 2021	Budget 2022	Draft Budget 2023		VAR 2023/2022 (%)	Envisaged 2024	Envisaged 2025
			Agency request	Budget forecast			
Title 1 Staff Expenditure	92,464,192	103,065,273	109,034,672		106%	114,996,244	119,246,507
11 Salaries & allowances	85,390,397	94,581,073	99,176,672		105%	84,093,244	108,990,507
- of which establishment plan posts	71,596,794	78,158,073	82,443,672		105%	84,093,244	84,688,507
- of which external personnel	13,793,603	16,423,000	16,733,000		102%	20,848,000	24,302,000
13 Sociomedical infrastructure	906,254	989,000	1,058,000		107%	1,079,000	1,101,000
14 Training	129,500	150,000	165,000		110%	168,000	171,000
15 Other staff-related expenditure	5,999,601	7,238,200	8,528,000		118%	8,699,000	8,873,000
16 Entertainment and representation expenses	38,441	107,000	107,000		100%	109,000	111,000
Title 2 Other administrative expenditure	10,689,182	14,653,500	17,014,500		116%	17,355,000	17,703,000
20 Rental of buildings and associated costs	6,525,136	7,964,000	11,509,000		145%	11,739,000	11,974,000
21 Administrative information technology	1,647,876	2,234,000	1,593,000		71%	1,625,000	1,658,000
22 Movable property and associated costs	971,193	1,728,000	1,001,000		58%	1,021,000	1,041,000
23 Current administrative expenditure	377,122	646,500	674,500		104%	688,000	702,000
24 Postal charges and telecommunications	965,378	1,076,000	1,227,000		114%	1,252,000	1,277,000
25 Statutory expenditure	202,478	1,005,000	1,010,000		100%	1,030,000	1,051,000
Title 3 Operational activities	63,641,173	74,662,000	77,856,000		104%	80,499,000	81,108,000

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EXPENDITURE	Commitment / payment appropriations						
	Executed Budget 2021	Budget 2022	Draft Budget 2023		VAR 2023/2022 (%)	Envisaged 2024	Envisaged 2025
			Agency request	Budget forecast			
30 Operations ⁵³	18,115,284	22,786,000	24,722,000		108%	25,216,000	25,720,000
31 Operational information technology	39,746,688	41,255,000	44,125,400		107%	46,095,000	46,017,000
32 Telecommunication costs for operational activities	1,051,080	2,306,000	1,080,600		47%	1,102,000	1,124,000
33 Seconded National Experts (Operational) ⁵⁴	3,544,677	6,662,000	6,185,000		93%	6,309,000	6,435,000
34 EPCC	104,094	300,000	300,000		100%	306,000	312,000
35 Heads of Europol National Units	23,600	170,000	170,000		100%	173,000	176,000
38 Decryption Platform	1,055,750	1,183,000	1,273,000		108%	1,298,000	1,324,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	166,794,547	192,380,773	203,905,172		106%	212,850,244	218,057,507

Table 3 Budget outturn and cancellation of appropriations 2018-2021 (N-4 – N-2)

Budget outturn	2018	2019	2020	2021
Revenue actually received (+)	136,992,275	143,094,062	160,660,117	177,370,336
Payments made (-)	(117,290,890)	(128,591,904)	(132,636,293)	(148,871,757)
Carry-over of appropriations (-)	(26,103,122)	(22,802,657)	(32,201,626)	(37,028,367)
Cancellation of appropriations carried over (+)	1,029,950	1,557,227	2,471,557	2,926,585
Adjustment for carry-over of assigned revenue appropriations from previous year (+)	6,480,224	9,108,957	5,056,138	10,702,251
Exchange rate differences (+/-)	(1,631)	(2,137)	(424)	(428)
Adjustment for negative balance from previous year (-)				
Total	1,106,807	2,363,548	3,349,469	5,098,619

⁵³ Including, among others, €3.734M for ATLAS, € 3M for HVT/OTF, € 4M for EMPACT and € 3.5M for Deployment

⁵⁴ Including € 2M for Short-term SNEs

**Descriptive information and justification on:
Budget outturn**

The overall budget result for the financial year 2021 comes to € € 5,098,619. This includes the following:

- An amount of € 2,169,706.95 of the 2021 budget was not committed and lapsed.
- An amount of € 2,926,585.14 of appropriations carried forward from 2020 to 2021 was not used.
- An amount of € 2,755.43 of internal assigned revenue (C5) carried forward from 2020 to 2021 was not committed and lapsed.
- The exchange rate difference in 2021 was € -428.17 (losses).

Cancelation of payment appropriations carried forward

The carry forward to 2021 came to a total of € 21.5M to cover existing commitments. The final implementation rate of the carry forward was 86.4% at the end of the year, which is 0.3% higher than in 2020. A total of € 2.9M was not used and is thus incorporated in the final budget outturn.

- € 333.6K relates to Title 1, which is 20.8% of the carried forward under Title 1 (€ 1.6M);
- € 473.7K relates to Title 2, which is 12.0% of the carried forward under Title 2 (€ 3.9M); and
- € 2.1M relates to Title 3, which is 13.3% of the carried forward under Title 3 (€ 16.0M).

Annex IV: Human resources quantitative

Table 1: Staff population and its evolution; Overview of all categories of staff

The human and financial resources for the years 2023 and 2024 are aligned with the Legislative Financial Statement put forward as part of the Commission’s proposal for a recast of the Europol Regulation.

A. Statutory staff and SNE

Staff	Year 2021			Year 2022	Year 2023	Year 2024	Year 2025
ESTABLISHMENT PLAN POSTS	Authorised Budget	Actually filled as of 31/12/2021	Occupancy rate %	Authorised staff	Envisaged staff	Envisaged staff	Envisaged staff
Administrators (AD)	583	596	102.2%	654	693	719	738
Assistants (AST)	32	18	56.3%	32	23	23	23
Assistants/Secretaries (AST/SC)							
TOTAL ESTABLISHMENT PLAN POSTS	615	614	99.8%	686	716	742	761
EXTERNAL STAFF	FTE corresponding to the authorised budget	Executed FTE as of 31/12/2021 ⁵⁵	Execution rate %	Headcount as of 31/12/2021	FTE corresponding to the authorised budget ⁵⁶	Envisaged FTE	Envisaged FTE
Contract Agents (CA)	235	190.96	81.3%	214	235	235	235
Seconded National Experts (SNE)	71	53.58	75.5%	59	71	71	71
TOTAL EXTERNAL STAFF							
TOTAL STAFF	306	244.54	79.9%	273	306	306	306

⁵⁵ CA financed from the EU contribution: 214 Headcount (190.96 Annual average FTE); CA financed from other sources: 19 Headcount (14.21 Annual average FTE). SNE financed from the EU contribution at 31/12/2021: 59 Headcount (53.58 Annual average FTE). SNE financed from other sources: 7 Headcount (6.13 Annual average FTE). Cost free SNE: 35 Headcount (25.50 Annual average FTE); SNE Guest Officers: 49 Headcount (46.71 Annual average FTE).

⁵⁶As of 2022, next to the regular SNE categories, an additional 50 SNE FTE for GE/OTFs (short-term, costed) are envisaged. Europol will report on the budgetary and HR related implementation in the regular updates to the MB throughout the respective financial year, the consolidated annual activity reporting and in the annual accounts. The short-term Seconded National Experts will be filled with MS’ experts as per the rules on the secondment of Seconded National Experts adopted by the MB in October 2021 and in accordance with the corresponding Guest Experts concept (thus the short-term Guest Experts will not be deployed to perform tasks of the regular 71 Seconded National Experts).

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B. Additional external staff expected to be financed from grant, contribution or service-level agreements

Human Resources	Year 2022	Year 2023	Year 2024	Year 2025
	Envisaged FTE	Envisaged FTE	Envisaged FTE	Envisaged FTE
Contract Agents (CA)	27	27	14	3
Seconded National Experts (SNE)	7	7		
TOTAL	34	34	14	3

C. Other Human Resources

Structural service providers⁵⁷

	Actually in place as of 31/12/2021
IT	66

Interim workers

	Total FTEs in year 2021	
Number	N/A	

⁵⁷ Service providers are contracted by a private company and carry out specialised outsourced tasks of a horizontal/support nature. At the EU Commission, following general criteria should be fulfilled: 1) no individual contract with the EU Commission 2) on the EU Commission premises, usually with a PC and desk 3) administratively followed by the EU Commission (badge, etc) and 4) contributing to the added value of the EU Commission.

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Table 2 – Multi-annual staff policy plan 2023 - 2025

Function group and grade	Year 2021				Year 2022		Year 2023		Year 2024		Year 2025	
	Authorised budget		Actually filled as of 31/12		Authorised budget		Envisaged		Envisaged		Envisaged	
	Permanent posts	Temporary posts	Permanent posts	Temporary posts	Perm. posts	Temp. posts	Perm. posts	Temp. posts	Perm. Posts	Temp. posts	Perm. posts	Temp. posts
AD 16							1		1		1	
AD 15		1		1		1			1		1	
AD 14		3		3		3		3		2		2
AD 13		5		0		1		2		3		3
AD 12		11		8		10		11		11		11
AD 11		10		6		8		10		11		11
AD 10		23		18		18		21		24		24
AD 9		51		37		43		47		51		51
AD 8		85		64		83		92		105		105
AD 7		152		193		193		216		234		239
AD 6		211		258		285		282		269		283
AD 5		31		8		9		8		7		7
AD TOTAL		583		596		654		693		719		738
AST 11												
AST 10												
AST 9												
AST 8		2		1		2		1		1		1
AST 7		5		1		5		2		3		3
AST 6		6		2		6		5		5		6
AST 5		7		6		7		4		3		2
AST 4		6		4		6		3		3		3
AST 3		3		1		3		2		3		4
AST 2		3		3		3		6		5		4
AST 1												
AST TOTAL		32		18		32		23		23		23
AST/SC 6												
AST/SC 5												
AST/SC 4												

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Function group and grade	Year 2021				Year 2022		Year 2023		Year 2024		Year 2025	
	Authorised budget		Actually filled as of 31/12		Authorised budget		Envisaged		Envisaged		Envisaged	
	Permanent posts	Temporary posts	Permanent posts	Temporary posts	Perm. posts	Temp. posts	Perm. posts	Temp. posts	Perm. Posts	Temp. posts	Perm. posts	Temp. posts
AST/SC 3												
AST/SC 2												
AST/SC 1												
AST/SC TOTAL												
TOTAL		615		614		686		716		742		761
GRAND TOTAL	615		614		686		716		742		761	

External personnel

Contract Agents

Contract agents	FTE corresponding to the authorised budget 2021	Executed FTE as of 31/12/2021	Headcount as of 31/12/2021	FTE corresponding to the authorised budget 2022	FTE envisaged 2023	FTE envisaged 2024	FTE envisaged 2025
Function Group IV	52	45.13	55	59	59	59	59
Function Group III	121	98.91	108	118	118	118	118
Function Group II	62	46.93	51	58	58	58	58
Function Group I							
TOTAL	235	190.96	214	235	235	235	235

Seconded National Experts

Seconded National Experts	FTE corresponding to the authorised budget 2021	Executed FTE as of 31/12/2021	Headcount as of 31/12/2021	FTE corresponding to the authorised budget 2022	FTE envisaged 2023	FTE envisaged 2024	FTE envisaged 2025
TOTAL	71	53.58	59	71	71	71	71

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Table 3 - Recruitment forecasts 2023 following retirement/mobility or new requested posts

(information on the entry level for each type of posts: indicative table)

Job title in the Agency	Type of contract (Official, TA or CA)		TA/Official Function group/grade of recruitment internal (brackets) and external (single grade) foreseen for publication*		CA Recruitment Function Group (I, II, III or IV)
	Due to foreseen retirement/mobility	New posts requested due to additional tasks	Internal (brackets)	External (brackets)	
Allocation of new posts / replacement of staff members due to resignation / contract expiry and definition of profiles will be done in line with Europol's mandate and business priorities and on the basis of the MASPP.	Number of anticipated retirements, if any, is expected to be small End of 2nd contracts: TA contracts: 18 (restricted) + 25 potentially (non-restricted – pending outcome of different indefinite contract procedures) CA contracts: 4 FGIII	30	Will be updated once the final budget is adopted; however most internal recruitments will be in the brackets AD5-AD12 and AD7-AD12	Will be updated once the final budget is adopted; however most recruitments will be AD6/Specialist or AD7/Senior Specialist	No significant change expected vis-à-vis current CAs.

*Indication of both is required

Number of inter-agency mobility Year 2022 from and to the Agency: XXX

Annex V: Human resources qualitative

A. Recruitment policy:

Implementing rules in place:

		Yes	No	If no, which other implementing rules are in place
Engagement of CA	Model Decision C(2019)3016	x		
Engagement of TA	Model Decision C(2015)1509		x	Decision of the Management Board of Europol of 28 February 2019 laying down general implementing provisions on the procedures governing the engagement and use of temporary staff under Article 2(f) of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union
Middle management	Model decision C(2018)2542		x	Decision of the Management Board of Europol of 04 October 2019 on middle management staff
Type of posts	Model Decision C(2018)8800	x		
Function of Adviser	Model Decision C(2018) 2209	x		

B. Appraisal and reclassification/promotions

Implementing rules in place:

		Yes	No	If no, which other implementing rules are in place
Reclassification of TA	Model Decision C(2015)9560		x	Decision of the Management Board of Europol of 10 December 2019 laying down general implementing provisions regarding Article 54 of the CEOS
Reclassification of CA	Model Decision C(2015)9561			Decision of the Management Board of Europol of 10 December 2019 on general implementing provisions regarding Article 87(3) of the CEOS
Appraisal of TA	Commission Decision C(2013)8985 and C(2016) 7270	X		
Appraisal of CA	Commission Decision C(2014)2226	X		

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Table 1 - Reclassification of TA/promotion of officials

Grades	Average seniority in the grade among reclassified staff						
	Year 2018	Year 2019	Year 2020	Year 2021	Year 2022	Actual average over 5 years	Average over 5 years (According to Decision C(2015)9563)
AD05			4.0				2.8
AD06	3.8	3.7	5.0	4.8			2.8
AD07	3.2	4.3	5.2	5.2			2.8
AD08	8.2	7.5	5.8	7.1			3
AD09	3.7	7	7.2	8.2			4
AD10				6.8			4
AD11	2.3						4
AD12							6.7
AD13							6.7
AST1							3
AST2							3
AST3							3
AST4	2.42	3.3	2.3	3.4			3
AST5	5						4
AST6							4
AST7				8.0			4
AST8							4
AST9							N/A
AST10 (Senior assistant)							5
AST/SC1							4
AST/SC2							5
AST/SC3							5.9
AST/SC4							6.7
AST/SC5							8.3

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Table 2 -Reclassification of contract staff

Function Group	Grade	Staff in activity at 1.01.2020	How many staff members were reclassified in Year 2021	Average number of years in grade of reclassified staff members	Average number of years in grade of reclassified staff members according to decision C(2015)9561
CA IV	17				Between 6 and 10 years
	16	8			Between 5 and 7 years
	15	4			Between 4 and 6 years
	14	21	2	3	Between 3 and 5 years
	13	10	2	4	Between 3 and 5 years
CA III	11	34	6	7	Between 6 and 10 years
	10	20	3	6	Between 5 and 7 years
	9	26	6	4	Between 4 and 6 years
	8	22	6	4	Between 3 and 5 years
CA II	6	8	1	7	Between 6 and 10 years
	5	36	2	6	Between 5 and 7 years
	4	13	5	3	Between 3 and 5 years
CA I	2				Between 6 and 10 years
	1				Between 3 and 5 years

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C. Gender representation

Table 1 - Data on 31/12/2021 /statutory staff (only officials, AT and AC)

		Official		Temporary		Contract Agents		Grand Total	
		Staff	%	Staff	%	Staff	%	Staff	%
Female	Administrator level			151	93%				
	Assistant level (AST & AST/SC)			11	7%				
	Total			162	27%	126	54%	288	35%
Male	Administrator level			427	98%				
	Assistant level (AST & AST/SC)			7	2%				
	Total			434	73%	107	46%	541	65%
Grand Total			596	100%	233	100%	829	100%	

Table 2 - Data regarding gender evolution over 5 years of Middle and Senior management⁵⁸

	2017		2021	
	Number	%	Number	%
Female Managers	2	6%	6	17%
Male Managers	31	94%	29	83%

In case of significant continuous imbalance, please explain and detail action plan implemented in the agency.

⁵⁸ Staff defined as middle manager by the applicable General Implementing provisions on middle management. 119

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D. Geographical Balance

Explanatory figures to highlight nationalities of staff (split per Administrator/CA FG IV and Assistant /CA FG I, II, III)

Table 1 - Table on 31/12/2021 - statutory staff only (officials, AD and CA)

Nationality	AD + CA FG IV		AST/SC- AST + CA FGI/CA FGII/CA FGIII		TOTAL	
	Number	% of total staff members in AD and FG IV categories	Number	% of total staff members in AST SC/AST and FG I, II and III categories	Number	% of total staff
Austria	7	1%			7	0.9%
Belgium	29	5%	4	2%	33	4.2%
Bulgaria	19	3%	6	3%	25	3.2%
Croatia	16	3%	2	1%	18	2.3%
Cyprus	5	1%			5	0.6%
Czech Republic	6	1%	3	2%	9	1.2%
Denmark		0%			0	0.0%
Estonia	5	1%			5	0.6%
Finland	7	1%	3	2%	10	1.3%
France	50	8%	3	2%	53	6.8%
Germany	48	8%	5	3%	53	6.8%
Greece	61	10%	11	6%	72	9.3%
Hungary	14	2%	8	5%	22	2.8%
Ireland	8	1%	3	2%	11	1.4%
Italy	58	10%	15	9%	73	9.4%
Latvia	3	0%		0%	3	0.4%
Lithuania	12	2%	5	3%	17	2.2%
Luxembourg		0%	1	1%	1	0.1%
Malta	2	0%			2	0.3%
Netherlands	57	9%	56	32%	113	14.5%
Poland	31	5%	5	3%	36	4.6%
Portugal	32	5%	12	7%	44	5.7%
Romania	65	11%	20	11%	85	10.9%
Slovakia	6	1%	1	1%	7	0.9%
Slovenia	11	2%	2	1%	13	1.7%
Spain	84	14%	15	9%	99	12.7%
Sweden	9	1%			9	1.2%
<i>United Kingdom</i>	4	1%		0%	4	0.5%
TOTAL	649	108%	180	102%	829	107%

Table 2 - Evolution over 5 years of the most represented nationality in the Agency

Most represented nationality	2017		2021	
	Number	%	Number	%
The Netherlands	99	14%	113	15%

In case of significant continuous imbalance, please explain and detail action plan implemented in the agency: N/A

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E. Schooling

Agreement in place with the European School(s) of The Hague				
Contribution agreements signed with the EC on type I European schools	Yes		No	X
Contribution agreements ⁵⁹ signed with the EC on type II European schools	Yes	X	No	
Number of service contracts in place with international schools:	N/A			
Description of any other solutions or actions in place: N/A				

⁵⁹ A *Contribution Agreement* was concluded between the European Commission and Stichting Het Rijnlands Lyceum to define the conditions for payment of the *EU Contribution* for pupils of Europol staff enrolled in the European School in The Hague. A *Mandate and Service Agreement* was concluded between Europol and the European Commission to define the collaboration with respect to the implementation of the aforementioned *EU Contribution*.

Annex VI. Environment management

1. Context of the Agency and its environmental management strategy

In line with the strategic goal of being the model EU law enforcement agency with strong performance, good governance and accountability, promoting diversity and staff well-being, Europol respects its *Environmental Policy*.

Europol recognises its responsibility for making a positive contribution to sustainable development and commits itself to protect the environment by limiting the environmental impact of its activities and to continuously improve its environmental performance.

In support of that, Europol has an Environmental Management System (EMS) in place, complying with ISO 14001: 2015 requirements and the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS). In 2021, Europol received a Certificate of Registration confirming the compliance of the agency's EMS with the ISO 14001: 2015 standard.

2. Overview of the agency's environmental management system

Europol uses and maintains an EMS, implemented in line with the requirements of EMAS and ISO 14001:2015. Its components, scope, responsibilities, activities of yearly cycle, processes and related EMS documentation are documented in the *Environmental Management System Manual* (Europol internal document). The EMAS process descriptions are integrated in the Europol process landscape.

3. Environmental aspects, indicators and targets

Europol's activities have both direct and indirect impacts on the environment. Under EMAS, Europol monitors those activities and significant environmental aspects that influence Europol's carbon footprint and impact for environment. The following **environmental aspects** are applicable:

- Energy consumption;
- Water consumption;
- Paper consumption;
- Waste production and separation;
- CO₂ emissions.

The following **environmental objectives** have been defined for the period 2020 - 2022:

Environmental Objectives 2020 – 2022 [1]	
Objective	KPI (target 2022)
Obtain and maintain EMAS registration	EMAS Registration
Reduced carbon footprint (CO ₂)	3,5% - 5,5%
Reduced potable water consumption	10% per FTE
Improved waste management and separation	5%
Reduced paper consumption	5%

[1] Year 2018 is used as baseline to define the performance indicators to meet the set environmental objectives.

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The following **indicators and targets** have been defined:

Performance indicator (description, unit)	Improvement target 2022 (compared to 2018)
	%
Total Carbon Footprint (Tonnes CO2e)	-4.5
CO2 buildings (Tonnes/p)	-4.5
CO2 vehicles (g/km)	-4.5
CO2 Air travel (Tonnes/p)	-4.5
Energy (MWh/p)	-4.5
Energy (kWh/m2)	-4.5
Water (m3/p)	-10%
Office paper (sheets/p/day)	-5.0
Waste (Tonnes/p)	-5.0

In 2022, the performance indicators will be reviewed and targets will be re-established for the next planning cycle (see section 4 below).

4. Actions to improve and communicate environmental performance

Europol has a detailed action plan, the “*Environmental Objectives and Action Plan 2020 – 2022*” in place, which defines three areas for sustainable and environmental improvement:

- *Structural environmental management and compliance*; is related to the environmental management and communication of the organisation;
- *Sustainable operations*; is the overall reduction of the carbon footprint and improved environmental performance by implementing organisational measures to reduce water, energy and paper consumption, waste generation and improved waste separation, reduce CO2 impact of business related travel, as well as employing sustainable procurement processes and awareness raising activities e.g. on promoting virtual meetings;
- *Social responsibility*; includes initiatives to small-scale nature development possibilities in the direct surrounding of Europol’s accommodation.

The aim is to implement environmental friendly measures to improve the environmental performance of the organisation and organise the involved processes in a sustainable manner, with the support of EMAS and implemented EMS tools.

In 2022, the *Environmental Vision 2030* will be prepared with the aim to establish Europol long-term ambitions and objectives, supporting goals of *European Green Deal*. Furthermore, the new mid-term objectives and action plan “*Environmental Objectives and Action Plan 2023 – 2025*” will be elaborated.

In cooperation with the Central Government Real Estate Agency (CGREA) of the Host State, the recommendations of the Energy Audit, performed in 2020, will be implemented and the legal compliance will be monitored (use of the underground water for cooling of the headquarters building).

Furthermore, Europol will include and consider EMAS and organisations’ environmental requirements in the development process of *Strategic Housing Roadmap*.

In line with EMAS, Europol intends to publish annually its Environmental Statement, reporting on its environmental performance. As well, EMAS update will be presented annually to the Management Board of Europol.

ANNEX VII : Buildings – year 2023

#	Building Name and type	Location	SURFACE AREA (in m ²)			RENTAL CONTRACT					Host country (grant or support)
			Office space	non-office	Total	RENT (€/year)	Duration of the contract	Type	Breakout clause Y/N	Conditions attached to the breakout clause (if applicable)	
1	Headquarters	Eisenhowerlaan 73, 2517 KK, The Hague Netherlands			32,500	N/A	20 years	Lease agreement			Host State support by providing and maintaining the accommodation regarding the owner related elements.
2		Jan Willem Frisolaan 13, 2517 JS The Hague			2,700	N/A	4 years	Lease agreement			Host State support by providing and maintaining the accommodation regarding the owner related elements.
TOTAL											

Building projects in planning phase:

Strategic Housing Roadmap (SHR)

In 2011, the Host State delivered the HQ with 850 workplaces and 750 conference and training seats. Since then, the capacity of the HQ was optimised into 1,025 workplaces to cover the organisational growth.

Europol is facing a shortage of workplaces, meeting facilities and data centre capacity in its headquarters. The Dutch Host State and Europol have developed a Strategic Housing Roadmap (SHR) for the period 2016 – 2031 (expiration of the first term Lease Agreement).

Mid-Term Housing Solution (HQ)

By implementing the Mid-Term Housing Solution, the utilisation of workplaces and space (m2) in the building will be further optimised to accommodate organisational growth, implementing new working arrangements and supporting innovative meet & greet solutions. This optimisation will be further accomplished by combining hybrid workplace solutions, applying a flex ratio of 0.8 and combining the availability of a physical workplace in the office environment with remote working opportunities. The number of 1,025 workplaces will be further extended into 1,076 workplaces, in combination with 59 “focussed work” places and 24 meeting rooms (164 seats) within the office environment. Additionally, a number of 58 workplaces will be created within an Operational Collaborative Centre, while the number of meeting seats in the conference and restaurant area will be increased to align with the new capacity of the building and the number of daily users.

In 2017, the Host State published two research reports following a serious incident at a parking building at the Eindhoven Airport, where part of the structure collapsed due to construction issues related to the plank floor slabs (concrete bubble deck floors). The HQ is built with the

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same plank floor slabs and was investigated by the Host State in 2017 – 2018. On the basis of the outcome of the research, the Host State informed Europol that the HQ can be used safely, according to the new safety conditions set for the usage. Nevertheless, it is expected that precautionary remedial measures by strengthening the floors will be carried out in the HQ in line with the applicable national procedures and rules of the Dutch Government. The construction works by the Host State are foreseen for the period 2023 – 2025.

The replacement of the Local Operational Network (LON), part of the Building Automation System (BAS), was initially to be executed as part of the Mid-Term Housing Solution to minimise the disturbance to the organisation. The current LON is no longer supported by the market and needs to be replaced by new technologies, as Local Area Network (LAN). Due to business continuity reasons, the LON replacement was prioritised and therefore a separate project was initiated by the Host State in 2021 to start the necessary replacements.

Temporary Satellite Building I

Due to the plank floor slab issues at the HQ, the Host State provided Europol in 2019 with the Temporary Satellite Building I to accommodate the workplaces needed to cover the organisational growth. The building will be used until the pre-cautionary additional measures will be completed in the HQ and HQ2 becomes available. As the Lease Agreement of this building will expire on 31 December 2023 and appropriate time is required in case alternative housing needs to be established, the Host State has started consultations with the involved stakeholders.

Temporary Satellite Building II

The Host State is investigating the possibilities of establishing a Temporary Satellite Building II in the vicinity of the Headquarters (HQ1). Additional workplaces and supporting spatial functions should be temporarily relocated to obtain sufficient moving space in the Headquarters for the execution of the construction works of the Mid-Term Housing Solution. As both, Temporary Satellite Buildings I and II are needed for a minimum period of seven years, until the completion of the HQ1 and HQ2, it is important that staff have the ability to easily access and maintain a relationship with the organisational entities accommodated in the HQ and Temporary Satellite Building I. Finding a suitable new office building that meets Europol's requirements is challenging, particularly regarding an acceptable distance from HQ1, the necessary security features and the currently tense real estate market in the city of The Hague.

Long-Term Housing Measures (HQ2)

For the implementation of the SHR Long-Term Housing Measures, the Host State successfully finalised the acquisition of office building Churchillplein 1 in The Hague (HQ2) in 2019. Europol completed its user Spatial-, Functional- and Technical Programme of Requirements in 2021 and the Host State is currently analysing them. As a follow-up, the Host State and Europol will start a project for the optimisation of this building to be carried out under the responsibility of the Host State. The permanent expansion is necessary to accommodate Europol's growth and spatial needs for the period 2031 – 2045.

The user requirements include a second high-availability 'Hot Data Centre'. As both buildings HQ1 and HQ2 are connected to the same electricity grid, Europol will request the Host State to establish this data centre at a different, highly secure location within The Netherlands. In view of Article 88 of the Financial Regulation (FR) applicable to Europol, it is envisaged to request approval from the European Parliament and the Council for these housing initiatives in the near future, once the Host State and Europol have identified the exact scope of costs.

Data Recovery Site Austria

Europol's Data Recovery Site is hosted at a location owned by the Republic of Austria. The original contract, running from 1 August 2011 to 31 July 2021, was recently renewed by an Addendum for a period of 5 years, starting as of 1 August 2021 until 31 July 2026. The Data Recovery Site is used to store a backup of Euro-pol's data and is therefore important for Europol's ICT business continuity.

Annex VIII. Privileges and immunities

Agency privileges	Privileges granted to staff	
	Protocol of privileges and immunities / diplomatic status	Education / day care
<p>According to Article 63(1) Europol Regulation the Protocol on Privileges and Immunities of the European Union ("Protocol No. 7"⁶⁰ to the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union) applies to Europol. The Protocol is supplemented by the Agreement of 15 October 1998 between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Europol concerning the Headquarters of Europol (see Art. 70 <i>Europol Regulation</i>).</p>	<p>According to Article 63(1) Europol Regulation the following legal acts apply to Europol's staff (including the Executive Director and the Deputy Executive Directors):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protocol on Privileges and Immunities of the European Union ("Protocol No. 7" to the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU) - Regulation (Euratom, ECSC, EEC) No. 549/69 of 25 March 1969 determining the categories of officials and other servants of the European Communities to whom the provisions of Article 12, the second paragraph of Article 13 and Article 14 of the Protocol on the Privileges and Immunities of the Communities apply (as last amended by Regulation (EC) No. 371/2009 of 27 November 2008) <p>Protocol and Regulation are supplemented by the Agreement of 15 October 1998 between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Europol concerning the Headquarters of Europol (see Art. 70 <i>Europol Regulation</i>), which is itself supplemented regarding staff privileges and immunities by a number of <i>Notes Verbales</i> some specific to Europol and others directed towards all international and EU organisations in The Netherlands. The most significant of these is an exchange of <i>Notes Verbales</i> of 25 October 2007.</p>	<p>Europol staff members can benefit from the ordinary rules regarding tax benefits linked to day care expenses just as any other residents of the Netherlands.</p>

⁶⁰ Please note: Protocol No. 7 has been renumbered, compared to the Protocol on Privileges and Immunities of the European Communities. Its Article 15 empowers the European Parliament and the Council to determine acting by means of regulations the categories of officials and other servants of the Union to whom the provisions of Article 11, the second paragraph of Article 12, and Article 13 of this Protocol shall apply, in whole or in part. -Regulation No. 549/69 (see above) has not been amended following the entry into force of the new Protocol No. 7 (1 Dec. 2009), thus still contains the references to the old numbering.

Annex IX. Evaluations

Internal monitoring & evaluation

Europol management monitors the implementation status of all planned actions, projects and indicators on a quarterly basis, to assess the overall progress and to take corrective actions where needed.

The **Consolidated Annual Activity Report (CAAR)** is submitted on behalf of the Executive Director of Europol to the Management Board (MB) and presents the activities performed to implement the annual Work Programme. The document provides an overview of the extent to which the annual objectives were achieved, information about the budget implementation, human resources, risk management activities, efficiency and effectiveness of the internal control system and audit results. All building blocks of assurance are also included in the report. An analysis and assessment of the CAAR is made by the MB.

Internal Audit Capability (IAC)

The function and role of the IAC are enshrined in Article 78 of the Financial Regulation applicable to Europol and defined further in the IAC Charter. The mission of the IAC is to enhance and protect Europol's organisational value, by providing risk-based and objective assurance, advice and insight. The IAC helps Europol in accomplishing its objectives by bringing a systematic and disciplined approach to evaluate the effectiveness of risk management, control, and governance processes, and by issuing recommendations for their improvement, thereby promoting a culture of efficient and effective management within Europol.

As part of its audit work, the IAC issues recommendations and opportunities for improvement. Europol has a system in place to develop and monitor the implementation of actions to address the risks identified by the IAC and reports in the CAAR on the progress achieved in implementing the audit recommendations.

Data Protection Function (DPF)

The tasks of the Data Protection Officer (DPO) are provided in Article 41 of the Europol Regulation and the related MB Implementing Rules. The DPO and Head of the Data Protection Function (DPF) is accountable to the MB and has to ensure, in an independent manner, that the processing of personal data by Europol, including personal data relating to staff members, is done in a way that is both lawful and in compliance with the provisions set out in the Europol Regulation. According to his mission the DPO provides objective assurance and consultation, which is designed to add value to and improve Europol's data processing operations. In the performance of his duties the DPO is supported by the DPF.

The protection of personal data remains a key factor that enables Europol to successfully fulfil its mission. Europol's tailor-made data protection framework is widely recognised as adhering to the highest standards of data protection in law enforcement. It is designed to serve the needs of the operational units in preventing and combating serious and organised crime and terrorism, while simultaneously protecting the personal data processed in Europol's systems. In addition to law enforcement data, the DPO also ensures the protection of Europol staff data as so far determined by Regulation (EC) No 45/2001⁶¹, since 11 December 2018 replaced by Regulation (EC) No 2018/1725⁶².

⁶¹ Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing and free movement of personal data (OJ L 008, 12.1.2001, pp. 1-22), directly applicable to Europol's administrative personal data pursuant article 46 ER.

⁶² Regulation (EC) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data.

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External monitoring & evaluation

The **Internal Audit Service (IAS)**, supported by the IAC and Europol, performs a risk assessment on Europol's governance, administrative and support process areas at regular intervals, with a view to identifying the overall risk profile of key administrative processes outside the core business area. On the basis of the risk assessment concerning Europol's process landscape, the Europol MB endorses a multi-annual IAS Strategic Audit Plan for Europol, subsequently implemented by corresponding IAS audit engagements at Europol. The last risk assessment was conducted in 2017 with a next risk assessment starting in 2021.

The **European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS)** holds regular meetings with the Data Protection Function (DPF) of Europol; the DPF facilitates the EDPS' annual and other inspection activities.

The **European Court of Auditors (ECA)** conducts annual audits on Europol's implementation of each financial year, including the annual accounts presented to the discharge authority, as well as performance and ad-hoc audit engagements with respect to the mandate of Europol.

Recommendations and opportunities for improvement put forward during external monitoring and evaluation activities are assessed by Europol. To address these recommendations and opportunities for improvement, Europol develops action plans, the implementation of which is monitored and reported upon including in the CAAR.

Ad-hoc evaluations

Other evaluations planned for a specific year are referred to in the Annual Work Programme.

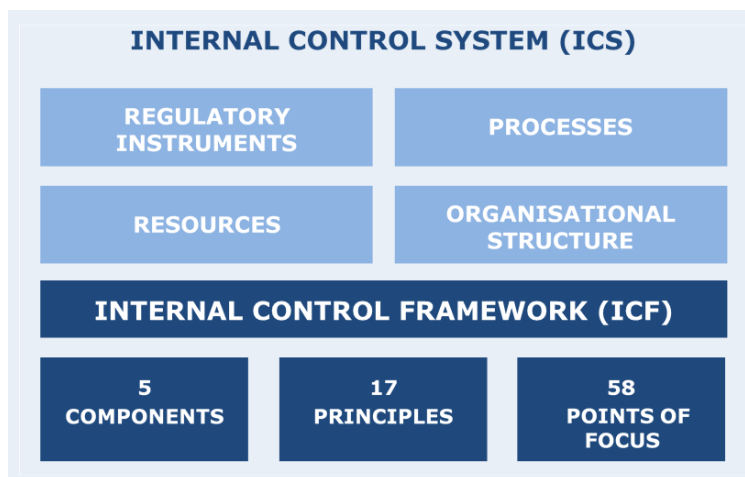
Annex X. Strategy for the organisational management and internal control systems

The Europol Strategy 2020+ sets out the strategic direction for Europol and the five strategic priorities. Europol's **Internal Control System (ICS)** is a key component to help deliver the Europol Strategy 2020+ and achieve the corresponding operational, reporting and compliance related objectives for Europol, with a view to supporting Member States in preventing and combating all forms of serious international and organised crime, cybercrime and terrorism.

The **ICS** is based on the **Europol Internal Control Framework (ICF)** which was drafted following the release of the ICF of the European Commission and adopted by the Management Board (MB) in December 2018, thereby replacing the Internal Control Standards (ICS) adopted by the MB in 2011.

The **Europol ICF**, which overarching the ICS, was developed on the basis of international best practices and on the ICF of the European Commission, following a thorough analysis of the ICF of the European Commission, the original COSO Integrated Internal Control Framework guidance documentation, as well as consultation with the Internal Audit Capability (IAC) and the Corporate Matters Working Group (CMWG) of the MB. Europol's **ICS** represents the regulatory instruments, processes, resources (technical and human) and organisational structure to enable Europol to achieve its strategy and objectives in a predictable course of action, throughout all of its organisational entities and office locations.

The Europol Internal Control Framework (ICF) consists of five (5) components⁶³ and seventeen (17) principles. The seventeen (17) principles are underpinned by fifty-eight (58) so-called 'Points of Focus'⁶⁴.



The Europol ICF is designed to provide reasonable assurance regarding the achievement of the elements of internal control, as set out in the Financial Regulation (Financial Rules) applicable to Europol, with regard to the implementation of the budget, namely:

- a. effectiveness, efficiency and economy of operations;
- b. reliability of reporting;
- c. safeguarding of assets and information;
- d. prevention, detection, correction and follow-up of fraud and irregularities;

⁶³ (1) Control environment, (2) Risk assessment, (3) Control activities, (4) Information and communication, (5) Monitoring activities

⁶⁴ Important characteristics of the internal control principles

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- e. adequate management of the risks relating to the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions, taking into account the (multi-) annual character of programmes as well as the nature of the payments concerned.

Further to the control environment, control activities, management of information and communication as well as monitoring activities, a corporate risk management process aggregates and assesses risks (including the related responses) at organisational level. Risk management is expanded from a vertical (e.g. in departments or programmes/projects) to a horizontal perspective (corporate, organisational wide view) in line with the four principles and related points of focus of the risk assessment component, whereby corporate risks are considered internally by Europol at regular intervals throughout the year and on an immediate ad hoc basis in the event of the identification of time-critical or high impact risks.

Continuous monitoring and an annual assessment are performed to determine whether each of the five components of internal control, including the underlying principles, is present and functioning and whether the components operate in an integrated manner and effectively reduce, to an acceptable level, the risk of not achieving the (multi-) annual objectives - relating to operations, reporting, and compliance - of the organisation. The annual assessment of the Europol ICS is based on continuous monitoring embedded in the quarterly performance reporting and an assessment, using both quantitative and qualitative measurements - including a set of internal control indicators and the assessment of compliance and fraud related aspects.

Europol's Anti-Fraud Strategy was developed in 2017 taking into consideration the principles set in the Anti-Fraud Strategy of the European Commission as well as the priorities defined by the Commission within the framework of the Common Approach on EU Decentralised Agencies, especially strengthening anti-fraud capabilities through awareness raising, prevention, detection and ensuring the proper handling of the conflict of interest issue. The methodology used strongly built on a hybrid fraud risk assessment considered key elements of an anti-fraud strategy being anti-fraud culture, anti-fraud awareness, the different stages of the anti-fraud cycle and the thirteen most common fraud risk scenarios as defined by OLAF. As a result four objectives were developed, i.e.

- i. Promote Anti-Fraud Culture
- ii. Enhance Anti-Fraud Awareness
- iii. Expand Anti-Fraud Cycle Capabilities
- iv. Fraud Risk Scenario Process Improvements

In order to achieve the objectives, sixteen detailed actions were defined calling for cross-departmental cooperation to provide required deliverables and meet predefined performance indicators. The actions referred to, in particular, governance framework documentation to address whistle-blowing, conflict of interest, gift handling and code of conduct, communication campaigns and anti-fraud awareness and training events, capability building through defined roles and responsibilities, the use of tools for early-stage identification of potential fraudulent activities and closer cooperation between OLAF and the Internal Investigations Service (IIS), process improvements in the area of procurement and contract implementation. To date all sixteen initially defined actions were completed.

In 2019, Europol received positive Internal Audit Service (IAS) audit assurance regarding the effective design of Europol's anti-fraud and ethics-oriented framework, concluding that *"the Agency's processes for ... anti-fraud and ethics-oriented policies and procedures are adequately designed and effective and comply with the existing regulatory and legal framework."*

In 2021, a revised Europol Anti-Fraud Strategy was developed for the adoption by the Management Board in early 2022, considering the principles and priorities, the action plan and the top-ten external and internal fraud patterns as identified in the fraud risk assessment

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accompanying the Anti-Fraud Strategy of the European Commission as published mid-2019⁶⁵. Similar to the first iteration of the Europol Anti-Fraud-Strategy, the revised strategy was reviewed mainly considering qualitative elements, using empirical methods referring to professional judgement of senior and middle management, control and audit functions, of other services in Europol and is going to be supported by data from audits, internal investigations and other relevant sources.

The revised Anti-Fraud Strategy will allow to fine tune existing controls in line with the further development of Europol, including major legislative changes, while at the same time permitting identifying risks emerging from new fraud patterns. New actions deriving from the revised Anti-Fraud Strategy are expected to be implemented as of the second quarter of 2022.

⁶⁵ COM(2019) 196 final

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Annex XI. Grants

A. Grant, Contribution and Service-level Agreements resulting in revenue and additional budget

	General information					Financial and HR impacts										
	Date of signature	Total amount	Duration	Counterpart	Short description	N (2021)		N+1 (2022)		N+2 (2023)		N+3 (2024)		N+4 (2025)		
						CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	
Grant agreements																
1. Western Balkans IPA/2018 / 395-549	05/03/2018	2,000,000	45 months and 26 days	European Commission DG Near	Pilot project to deploy Europol Liaison Officers in the Western Balkans	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA
						Number of CAs	1		0		0		0		0	
						Number of SNEs	0		0		0		0		0	
2. SIRIUS PI/2017 / 391-896	21/12/2017 (starting date 1/1/2018)	1,630,000	48 months	European Commission Service for Foreign Policy Instruments	International Digital Cooperation - Cross border access to electronic evidence Global Response Against Child Exploitation based on big-data technologies supported by advanced AI powered algorithms	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA
						Number of CAs	7		0		0		0		0	
						Number of SNEs	0		0		0		0		0	
3. H2020 - GRACE 883293 - part of consortium coordinated by Vicom, ES	18/05/2020 (starting date 1/6/2020)	6,823,512.50 for the consortium of which 702,550 for Europol	42 months	European Commission Research Executive Agency	To become a flagship project that revolutionises how LEAs view, analyse and share information to combat crime and terrorism	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA
						Number of CAs	3		3		3		0		0	
						Number of SNEs	0		0		0		0		0	
4. H2020 - INFINITY 883293 - part of consortium coordinated by Airbus, FR	11/05/2020 (starting date 1/6/2020)	6,866,503.75 for the consortium of which 533,600 for Europol	36 months	European Commission Research Executive Agency	Artificial Intelligence and advanced Data Analytics for Law Enforcement Agencies	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA
						Number of CAs	1		1		1		0		0	
						Number of SNEs	0		0		0		0		0	
5. H2020 - AIDA 883596 - part of consortium coordinated by Ingegneria Informatica, IT	20/05/2020 (starting date 1/9/2020)	7,690,272.50 for the consortium of which 935,800 for Europol	30 months	European Commission Research Executive Agency	Sustainable Autonomy and Resilience for LEAs using AI against High priority Threats	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA
						Number of CAs	5		5		5		0		0	
						Number of SNEs	0		0		0		0		0	
6. H2020 - STARLIGHT 101021797 - part of consortium coordinated by CEA, FR	05/05/2021 (starting date 1/10/2021)	17,000,000 for the consortium of which 891,200 for Europol	48 months	European Commission Research Executive Agency	Sustainable Autonomy and Resilience for LEAs using AI against High priority Threats	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA
						Number of CAs	3		3		3		3		3	
						Number of SNEs	0		0		0		0		0	
Total grant agreements						CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	
						1,738,664	1,738,664	975,715	975,715	543,299	543,299	222,800	222,800	167,100	167,100	
						20		12		12		3		3		
						0		0		0		0		0		

	General information					Financial and HR impacts										
	Date of signature	Total amount	Duration	Counterpart	Short description	N (2021)		N+1 (2022)		N+2 (2023)		N+3 (2024)		N+4 (2025)		
						CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	
Contribution agreements																
1. EaP EMPACT ENI/2020 / 416-376	11/06/2020 (starting date 1/7/2020)	2,500,000	48 months	European Commission DG Near	Fighting organised crime in the EaP region	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA
						Number of CAs	2		2		2		2		0	
						Number of SNEs	0		0		0		0		0	
2. SIRIUS II New Agreement	21/12/2020 (starting date 1/1/2021)	3,491,891.50 (2,226,456 Europol, 1,265,435.50 Eurojust)	42 months (staff for year 1 still in SIRIUS I)	European Commission Service for Foreign Policy Instruments	International Digital Cooperation - Cross border access to electronic evidence	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA
						Number of CAs	0		7		7		7		0	
						Number of SNEs	0		0		0		0		0	
Total contribution agreements						CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	
						927,425	927,425	1,406,785	1,406,785	1,422,835	1,422,835	656,912	656,912	-	-	
						2		9		9		9		0		
						0		0		0		0		0		

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	General information					Financial and HR impacts										
	Date of signature	Total amount	Duration	Counterpart	Short description	N (2021)		N+1 (2022)		N+2 (2023)		N+3 (2024)		N+4 (2025)		
Service-level agreements																
1. EUIPO - IP Crime	07/11/2019 (starting date 1/1/2020)	maximum 3,800,000	48 months	The European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO)	To support law enforcement authorities preventing crime related to Intellectual Property Rights	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA
							950,000	950,000	950,000	950,000	950,000	950,000	-	-	-	-
						Number of CAs	3		3		3		0		0	
					Number of SNEs	6		6		6		0		0		
2. EUIPO - Fraud	13/08/2019 (starting date 1/1/2020)	No amount specified, 80,000 in year 1 and 2	48 months	The European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO)	Preventing fraud against users of the European Union Intellectual Property Systems	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA
							80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000	-	-	-	-
						Number of CAs	0		0		0		0		0	
					Number of SNEs	1		1		1		0		0		
3. The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training	05/08/2020	880,000	Maximum duration until 1/9/2024	The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training	EUROMED POLICE V (Contract No. ENI/2020/414- 940), WB PaCT (Contract No. 2019/ 413-822) and TOPCOP (Contract No. ENI/2020/415-941) projects	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA
							240,000	240,000	240,000	240,000	200,000	200,000	120,000	120,000	-	-
						Number of CAs	3		3		3		2		0	
					Number of SNEs	0		0		0		0		0		
Total service-level agreements						Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA
							1,270,000	1,270,000	1,270,000	1,270,000	1,230,000	1,230,000	120,000	120,000		
						Number of CAs	6		6		6		2		0	
						Number of SNEs	7		7		7		0		0	

TOTAL AGREEMENTS	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA
		3,936,088	3,936,088	3,652,500	3,652,500	3,196,134	3,196,134	999,712	999,712	167,100	167,100
	Number of CAs	28		27		27		14		3	
	Number of SNEs	7		7		7		0		0	

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B. Grants to be awarded

Since 2006, Europol has supported the law enforcement community with grants. Initially for the support in the fight against Euro counterfeiting via Low Value Grants (LVGs). Later, from 2014 onwards, Europol started supporting the EMPACT activities via High Value Grants (HVGs) under a Delegation Agreement with DG Home.

Then in 2017, the Europol Regulation allowed Europol to support activities directly from the budget, other than Euro Counterfeiting, via grants. This additional support was initially provided via one or more HVGs for each Operational Action Plan (12-15 annually) and via LVGs for operational activities for EMPACT. This last category has increased in popularity considerably; from six applications in 2017 to 83 applications in 2021.

Grant activities further increased in 2020 by the direct award of a grant to the ATLAS community after the support of this community from the ISF Police stopped. Then finally, Europol developed the new grant scheme for the Operational Task Forces going after High Value Targets. For this scheme 12 LVG applications were received in the first year (2020) and 51 LVG applications in the second year (2021) of existence.

The total annual amount budgeted to award grants comes to roughly € 10M per year.

Running grant schemes under strictly annual budgets (“non-differentiated appropriations”) is causing more and more challenges, especially because grants must be closed before the end of year N+1 and the peaks in workload are difficult to manage with limited staff resources.

In addition, Europol’s beneficiaries, mainly the MS law-enforcement community (law-enforcement public bodies such as police, criminal investigation offices, gendarmerie, border guards, customs, etc.) are seeking possibilities for multi-annual funding and planning. As an example, for EMPACT, the Council is requesting Europol to introduce grants that run over multiple years and similar signals are received from the ATLAS community.

In 2022 Europol continues to support Member States via the different grant schemes with annual budgets (or so called non-differentiated appropriations). From 2023 onwards, Europol proposes to make the technical alterations to the financial system so that it will be possible to start using differentiated appropriations.

1. Restricted call for proposals to support the implementation of activities identified by the Council

Legal basis

Article 4 and Article 61 of the REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) and replacing and repealing Council Decisions 2009/371/JHA, 2009/934/JHA, 2009/935/JHA, 2009/936/JHA and 2009/968/JHA.

Council conclusions on setting the EU’s Priorities for the fight against organised and serious international crime between 2022 and 2025, doc. 8665/21 COSI 90 of 12 May 2021.

Budget line

3020 – EMPACT grants

Priorities of the year, objectives pursued and expected results

Enhancing the fight against serious and organised international crime during the second year of implementation of EMPACT activities 2022-2025.

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The call is restricted to EMPACT participants and it is announced on Europol website, while all relevant documents are published on the Europol Platform for Experts – a communication tool with EMPACT participants used to reach all potential applicants. In accordance with Europol legal basis, the Europol national unit (ENU) shall be the liaison body between Europol and the competent authorities of the Member States. Thus, the applications must always be submitted via the ENU of the Lead Applicant.

The objective of the call is to provide support to Operational Actions laid down in the thirteen Operational Action Plans (OAPs) as adopted by the Council. EMPACT 2022-2025 addresses the following crime areas: High-risk criminal networks; Cyber-attacks; Trafficking in Human Beings (THB); Child sexual exploitation; Migrant smuggling; Drugs trafficking: (i) the production, trafficking and distribution of cannabis, cocaine and heroin, (ii) the production, trafficking and distribution of synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances (NPS); Fraud, economic and financial crimes: (i) online fraud schemes, (ii) excise fraud; (iii) MTIC fraud, (iv) intellectual property (IP) crime, counterfeiting of goods and currencies, (v) Criminal Finances, Money Laundering and Asset Recovery; Organised Property Crime; Environmental crime; Firearms trafficking.

It is expected that the support will provide for improved cooperation between Member States law enforcement agencies, EU Institutions, EU Agencies and relevant third parties while delivering coherent actions targeting the most pressing criminal threats facing the EU.

Description of the activities to be funded under the call for proposals

Transnational operational and non-operational activities addressing in each of the EMPACT Priorities at least one of the following objectives: awareness raising and exchange of best practices; improving data gathering and intelligence sharing, providing strategic support for current or proposed operational activities; enhancing operational support and cross-border cooperation.

Grants may not be awarded for activities that are funded under another EU programme or from Europol's budget. In this respect, it is noted that Europol is active in an environment which has undergone a proliferation of EU funding sources. A statement to ensure respect for the principle of no double funding from EU sources must be made by applicant(s) in the Application form. Europol is entitled to perform checks in this respect, including by liaising with external partners (e.g. DG HOME, Eurojust).

Calls will be designed with the aim of promoting one or more of the following outcomes which projects applications should aim at achieving:

- fostering communication and coordination amongst participants of OAPs;
- sharing of experiences and best practices between EU Member States;
- improving intelligence gathering and analyses;
- expanding data sharing with Europol information systems and prioritising the use of SIENA (secure line) as an operational communication tool;
- establishing support frameworks to implement operational activities, including where relevant with third countries or the private sector;
- enhancing cross-border/transnational operational cooperation between EU Member States and, where relevant, with third countries or the private sector;
- establishing joint investigations, joint operations or joint action days.

To take account of the operational nature of the activities, Europol may allow use of contingency budget for unplanned actions ("red-envelope procedure") in addition to planned actions ("blue envelope"). This is justified based on the need for law enforcement to respond quickly to opportunities and challenges and is further specified in the Call documentation.

Europol may award using simplified cost options provided that a decision by the Executive Director has been adopted.

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Essential eligibility, selection and award criteria

Eligibility criteria:

I. In order to be eligible the Applicant must be a public body established in an EU Member State participating in the OAP in question (i.e. the particular EMPACT crime priority) and in the law-enforcement cooperation under Europol Regulation.

No differentiation is made in Europol's constituent act between different Member States. However the opt-in structure used for JHA under the TFEU creates a varying degree of participation of Member States. Europol pays due regard to the status of EU Member States with regard to the Europol Regulation and/or Justice and Home Affairs matters as regards eligibility to be a (lead) Applicant.

II. The Co-Applicants must be:

- An entity explicitly mentioned as a participant in the OAP;
- If the entity is not explicitly mentioned in the OAP, any of the following entities may be Co-Applicants, provided their participation is justified by the nature of the action:
 - A public body established in an EU Member State or in a third country OR
 - A profit or non-profit-oriented organisation established in an EU Member State or in a third country, OR
 - An International Organisation.

As regards co-applicants even non-opting in Member States could be eligible as co-applicants on the same basis as third countries and third parties provided that their participation is justified by the nature of the action. Their meaningful participation has however to be possible having due regard to Europol's legal obligations on exchange of information with third countries.

III. Applications must involve at least two (2) public bodies established in two (2) different EU Member States.

Law Enforcement applicants may involve non-LE entities for the purpose of managing a grant provided that the manner and degree of their involvement satisfies security and confidentiality concerns. Costs incurred by other types of bodies could be eligible, provided that these can be justified by the aims of the action and respect the principle of sound financial management.

IV. The proposed activities must be mentioned in the respective OAPs as approved by COSI Council decisions.

Selection criteria:

In accordance with Article 198 of the Financial Regulation, proposals for action shall be evaluated on the basis of the following selection criteria:

- Financial capacity - Applicants and co-applicants must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain their activity throughout the period during which the activity is being carried out and to participate in its funding.
- Operational capacity - Applicants and co-applicants must have the professional resources, competences and qualifications required to complete the proposed action.

The verification of the financial and operational capacity shall not apply to public bodies and international organisations in accordance with Article 198(5) and (6) of the Financial Regulation.

Award criteria:

In accordance with Article 199 of the Financial Regulation, proposals for an action shall be evaluated on the basis of the quality and expected results and cost-effectiveness of the proposed action. Applications will also be assessed with regard to their impact on the implementation of the OAPs concerned, European added value and involvement of Europol.

Ex-post publicity for award of grants (in particular their annual publication in accordance with Article 189 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046) and the financial verification of the payment requests, including the required supporting documentation shall take into account the confidentiality and security of the operational and classified information.

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Indicative timetable and indicative amount of the call for proposals

Date	Amount
Publication: Q4 2022 Award of grants: Q1 2023	tbc

Maximum possible rate of co-financing of the total eligible costs

95%

2. Ad-hoc low-value grants in support of operational activities as laid down in the Operational Action Plans implementing the EMPACT Priorities.

Legal basis

Article 4 and Article 61(3) of the REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) and replacing and repealing Council Decisions 2009/371/JHA, 2009/934/JHA, 2009/935/JHA, 2009/936/JHA and 2009/968/JHA.

Council conclusions on setting the EU's Priorities for the fight against organised and serious international crime between 2022 and 2025, doc. 8665/21 COSI 90 of 12 May 2021.

Budget line

3020 – EMPACT grants

Priorities of the year, objectives pursued and expected results

Enhancing the fight against serious and organised international crime during the second year of the implementation of EMPACT activities 2022-2025. These grants are focussed on supporting Member States' cross-border operations and investigations as well as joint investigation teams as per Europol's tasks under Article 4(1)(h) of the Europol Regulation. Applications from eligible applicants can be submitted throughout the period indicated below rather than on any fixed deadline(s).

The objective of the low-value grants is to provide support tailored to operational activities within the fifteen Operational Action Plans (OAPs) adopted by the Council. They target activities that are developed on an ad-hoc basis rather than as a result of a long-term planning, due to their investigative nature or other quickly changing aspects of crime phenomena and crime-countermeasures. EMPACT 2022-2025 addresses the following crime areas: High-risk criminal networks; Cyber-attacks; Trafficking in Human Beings (THB); Child sexual exploitation; Migrant smuggling; Drugs trafficking: (i) the production, trafficking and distribution of cannabis, cocaine and heroin, (ii) the production, trafficking and distribution of synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances (NPS); Fraud, economic and financial crimes: (i) online fraud schemes, (ii) excise fraud; (iii) MTIC fraud, (iv) intellectual property (IP) crime, counterfeiting of goods and currencies, (v) Criminal Finances, Money Laundering and Asset Recovery; Organised Property Crime; Environmental crime; Firearms trafficking.

It is expected that the support will provide for effective cooperation between Member States law enforcement agencies, EU Institutions, EU Agencies and relevant third parties while delivering coherent operational actions targeting the most pressing criminal threats facing the EU. The funded measures should achieve concrete, quantifiable / measurable operational results. This scheme shall take due consideration of the existence of a separate grant scheme supporting actions against euro-counterfeiting.

Description of the activities to be funded through low-value grants

Transnational short-term operational and/or investigative activities within the EMPACT Priorities, with a budget not exceeding 60,000 EUR (in line with the threshold defined in the

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EU Financial Regulation), aiming to enhance operational cross-border cooperation, establish joint investigations, joint operations or joint action days.

Grants awarded under this Article have a maximum duration of 9 months with possibility to extend at Europol's discretion if justified operationally.

Europol may use simplified cost options provided that a decision by the Executive Director has been adopted.

Essential eligibility, selection and award criteria

Eligibility criteria:

I. In order to be eligible the Applicant must be a public body established in an EU Member state participating in the OAP in question (i.e. the particular EMPACT crime priority) and in the law-enforcement cooperation under Europol Regulation.

No differentiation is made in Europol's constituent act between different Member States. However the opt-in structure used for JHA under the TFEU creates a varying degree of participation of Member States. Europol pays due regard to the status of EU Member States with regard to the Europol Regulation and/or Justice and Home Affairs matters as regards eligibility to be a (lead) Applicant.

II. The Co-Applicants must be:

- An entity explicitly mentioned as a participant in the OAP;
- If the entity is not explicitly mentioned in the OAP, any of the following entities may be Co-Applicants, provided their participation is justified by the nature of the action:
 - A public body established in an EU Member State or in a third country OR
 - A profit or non-profit-oriented organisation established in an EU Member State or in a third country, OR
 - An International Organisation.

As regards co-applicants even non-opting in Member States could be eligible as co-applicants on the same basis as third countries and third parties provided that their participation is justified by the nature of the action. Their meaningful participation has however to be possible having due regard to Europol's legal obligations on exchange of information with third countries.

III. Applications must involve at least two (2) public bodies established in two (2) different EU Member States.

IV. The proposed activities must be mentioned in the respective OAPs as approved by COSI Council decisions.

V. The requested grant cannot be higher than 60,000 EUR, or in line with the current threshold for low-value grants established by the EU Financial Regulation.

Selection criteria:

In accordance with Article 198 of the Financial proposals for action shall be evaluated on the basis of the following selection criteria:

- Financial capacity - Applicants and co-applicants must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain their activity throughout the period during which the activity is being carried out and to participate in its funding.
- Operational capacity - Applicants and co-applicants must have the professional resources, competences and qualifications required to complete the proposed action.
- The verification of the financial and operational capacity shall not apply to public bodies and international organisations in accordance with Article 198(5) & (6) of the Financial Regulation. To ensure that the operational needs are met, a pool of evaluators shall be duly appointed by the responsible authorising officer. In each evaluation at least 2 evaluators from that list (with complementary expertise in law enforcement and finance) shall perform the evaluation (without a separate ad hoc appointment).

To allow for fast processing, applicants must use the templates to apply and reply within maximum 24 hours to any questions raised during evaluation.

Award criteria:

In accordance with Article 199 of the Financial Regulation, proposals for an action shall be evaluated on the basis of the quality and expected results and cost-effectiveness of the

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proposed action. Applications will also be assessed with regard to their impact on the implementation of the OAPs concerned, European added value and involvement of Europol. Ex-post publicity for award of grants (in particular their annual publication in accordance with Article 189 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046) and the financial verification of the payment requests, including the required supporting documentation shall take into account the confidentiality and security of the operational and classified information.

Indicative timetable and indicative amount

Date	Amount
Publication: Q1 2023	tbc ⁶⁶
Award of grants: Q1-Q4 2023	

Maximum possible rate of co-financing of the total eligible costs

95%

3. Support for combatting Euro-counterfeiting

Legal basis

Article 4(4) and Article 61(3) of the REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) and replacing and repealing Council Decisions 2009/371/JHA, 2009/934/JHA, 2009/935/JHA, 2009/936/JHA and 2009/968/JHA.

Budget line

3030 – Other grants

Priorities of the year, objectives pursued and expected results

Operational actions and support for coordination activities within the guidelines approved by the Europol Management Board with the objective of protecting the euro currency from counterfeiting activities.

Description of the activities to be funded through low-value grants

Applications from eligible applicants can be submitted throughout the period indicated below rather than on any fixed deadline(s). Applications submitted must involve at least one of the following activities, all designed with the objective of protecting the integrity of the Euro currency:

- Investigations into or related to euro counterfeiting. This means inquiries related to counterfeit euro banknotes and counterfeit euro coins, as well as the production and the distribution of them;
- Technical investigations using forensic and/or scientific analysis to identify, sites, raw materials and technical equipment used for the production of counterfeit euro notes and coins as well as measures to locate technical equipment used;
- Investigative measures carried out in compliance with the applicable national law and in accordance with these guidelines;
- Operational or technical investigations into euro counterfeiting involving cooperation with third countries.

In addition, the applicant must commit to a degree of involvement of Europol:

- as a minimum to ensure the role of Europol as the Central Office, the law enforcement information, including samples of any counterfeit currency recovered, must be shared with Europol via the appropriate channels;
- on the spot support where an application involves a production site(s).

⁶⁶ If operationally justified, the authorising officer may decide to increase the maximum amount for this scheme, subject to Europol budget availability.

Essential eligibility, selection and award criteria

This is not a general advertised call due to the restricted pool of potential beneficiaries. The possibility and funds available shall be made known to the entities foreseen under the Europol Management Board approved rules. Any ex post publicity will also take this into account excluding operational, strategic and classified information.

Eligible applicants:

- a) A law enforcement public body established in an EU Member State;
- b) A law enforcement public body in a third country, where foreseen by Europol legal framework.

To ensure that the operational needs are met, a pool of evaluators shall be duly appointed by the responsible authorising officer. Considering the low value of individual awards made, a single evaluator shall evaluate based on objective criteria established to assess the award criteria. These criteria include: anticipated Quality of the Counterfeits, impact of proposed operational measure, involvement of Europol, value for money and involvement of National Central Office. To allow for fast processing, applicants must use the templates to apply and reply within maximum 24 hours to any questions raised during evaluation.

Indicative amount available

Date	Amount
Q1-Q4 2023	150,000 + internal assigned revenue ⁶⁷

Maximum possible rate of co-financing of the total eligible costs

100% maximum

4. ATLAS Network grant

Legal basis

Article 4(1)(h) and (i) and Article 61(3) of the REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) and replacing and repealing Council Decisions 2009/371/JHA, 2009/934/JHA, 2009/935/JHA, 2009/936/JHA and 2009/968/JHA. Terms of Reference signed between Europol, Atlas Chair and Austrian Ministry of Interior and entering into force on 10 October 2018.

Budget line

3050 ATLAS

Priorities of the year, objectives pursued and expected results

The ATLAS Network is a cooperation structure between 38 Special Intervention Units (SIUs) that includes and supports different training platforms and sharing of best practices in terms of proficiency and tactics.

The main priority for the year 2023 is the execution of cross border operations, as well as the implementation of trainings, workshops and exercises. The resulting challenges need special attention and preparation on all levels and areas of competence: intervention in urban, rural and maritime areas, transport means and buildings are focal points as well as drone handling, sniper, communication and negotiation skills. In addition, the capability to render medical first aid during field operations needs to be trained, developed and improved.

Joint trainings, workshops, courses and project groups are the systematic approach to increase the readiness of involved units to handle possible terrorist attacks and/or incidents.

⁶⁷ as mentioned in the guidelines EDOC #878276

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Another priority is the development of Common Training Centres, acting as “Centres of Excellence”. These structures serve as dedicated facilities to provide standardized training and knowledge transfer to the ATLAS member units. Thus, the quality of the delivered training can be kept consistently on the highest level. At the same time, the amount of the target groups/participants can be increased. Along with this structure, a dedicated programme for “Pooling and Sharing” of special equipment will be further developed.

To bring forward these topics, working groups will define the detailed needs and implementation tasks.

Next to the already operating “Centre of Excellence-Aircraft” and “Centre of Excellence - Medic” the “Centre of Excellence-Naval” is in development. Further strategic objective is the establishment of a joint training facility “Centre of Excellence Building”.

Due to the fact that terrorism is a global issue, ATLAS’s response is to find adequate “strategic and primer partners” at an international level. In order to develop and strengthen the already existing international contacts as well as to reach out to other law enforcement SIUs (operating at a national level), ATLAS included the so-called “Police Special Intervention Units Conference (POLSPEC)” into the AWP. The aim of this “International Law Enforcement SIU - Conference” is to discuss and share matters related to security, counter-terrorism and capability development from a SIU perspective.

Description of the activities to be funded

The allocation of funds will cover numerous activities which allow the different specialised groups to increase its operational proficiency and to aid in carrying out various training/tactical response building exercises and workshops.

The activities, dependent on budget availability, are:

- fostering communication and coordination amongst SIUs
- delivery and/or design of training on:
 - o entry techniques
 - o silent techniques
 - o rural mountain operations
 - o buildings (assault tactics and knowledge)
 - o Rigid Hulled Inflatable Boats
 - o naval targets
 - o Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs)
 - o sniper techniques
 - o urban rappelling
 - o first aid (intervening in cases of most serious crimes with a high risk of life threatening and/or mass injuries)
 - o specialised parachute use: „Silent Approach Tactics“
 - o K9 techniques: interventions with specialised dogs’ assistance
- sharing of experiences and best practices between EU Member States and third countries
- further development of the secure information exchange tools
- maintenance of the mock-ups set up as part of the Common Training Centre “Centres of Excellence” Aircraft
- establishing support frameworks to implement operational activities
- enhancing cross-border/transnational operational cooperation between EU Member States in the areas of competence of SIUs
- establishing joint training and preparation for challenges impacting on several
- activities focussed on evaluation of training and cooperation results
- exploring further development of secure communication tools
- fostering cooperation with third countries: Police Special Intervention Units Conference (POLSPEC)

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Europol may award using simplified cost options, provided that a decision by the Executive Director has been adopted.

Justification Direct Grant

Under Article 61(3) of the Europol Regulation, the grant may be awarded without a call for proposals where the grant action is supporting specific tasks referred to in points (h) and (i) of Article 4(1) of the Europol Regulation. As illustrated above by the description of the objectives, results and actions, this grant indeed provides funds to the Atlas network (via the legal entity of the country chairing Atlas on behalf of the network) involves the use the grant funding for performance of cross-border operations and investigations and for the provision of training.

Indicative timetable and indicative amount of the grant

Date	Amount
Q1 2023	EUR 3,734,000

Maximum possible rate of co-financing of the total eligible costs

95%

5. HVT/OTF grants

Legal basis

Article 4(1)(h) and (i) and Article 61(3) of the REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) and replacing and repealing Council Decisions 2009/371/JHA, 2009/934/JHA, 2009/935/JHA, 2009/936/JHA and 2009/968/JHA.

Standard Operating Procedure - Standard Operating Procedure on the Selection of High Value Targets and Establishment of Operational Task Forces within O2-ESOC, EDOC #901933 v13.

Budget line

3040 HVT/OTF

Priorities of the year, objectives pursued and expected results

Priority: Europol will focus on the identification of High-Value Targets and the establishment of Operational Task Forces addressing the individuals and organised crime groups posing the highest serious and organised crime risk for the MS.

Objective: Creation and support of an environment for multi-disciplinary teams and transnational investigations aiming at having a stronger impact in destabilising activities of high risk organised crime groups and disrupting criminal markets.

Expected results: deliver qualitative operational support to OTFs, which are focusing on poly-criminal networks and their leaders posing the highest risk of serious and organised crime.

Description of the activities to be funded

Operational and/or investigative activities (e.g. travel and accommodation for operational meetings outside Europol HQ, direct operational costs such as informant rewards, buying/renting operational technical and forensic equipment, interpretation or deployments, etc.) implemented by the Operational Task Forces, established in accordance with the SOP with a budget not exceeding 60,000 EUR (in line with the threshold defined in the EU Financial Regulation), aiming to support MS investigations against individuals and criminal organisations constituting highest serious and organised crime risks to more than one MS and to intensify asset tracing and increase the rate of confiscation of criminal proceeds.

Each application, within the limit of 60,000 EUR, could cover a particular stage of the ongoing investigation. The operational stages will be pre-defined within the Operational Plan of

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established Operational Task Force in accordance with the Standard Operating Procedure in place. If operationally justified, several subsequent applications could be submitted, enabling Member States to apply for funding throughout the lifetime of the operation.

Europol may use simplified cost options provided that a decision by the Executive Director has been adopted. The duration of grants will be 9 months extendable if operationally justified.

Essential eligibility, selection and award criteria

Eligibility criteria:

I. In order to be eligible the Applicant must be a public body established in an EU Member State and in the law-enforcement cooperation under Europol Regulation. In addition, the Applicant must be a member of established Operational Task Force applying Standard Operating Procedure on the Selection of High Value Targets and Establishment of Operational Task Forces.

No differentiation is made in Europol's constituent act between different Member States. However, the opt-in structure used for JHA under the TFEU creates a varying degree of participation of Member States. Europol pays due regard to the status of EU Member States with regard to the Europol Regulation and/or Justice and Home Affairs matters as regards eligibility to be a (lead) Applicant.

II. The Co-Applicants must be members of established Operational Task Force:

- a public body established in an EU Member State or in a third country OR
- an International Organisation.

As regards co-applicants, even non-opting in Member States could be eligible as co-applicants on the same basis as third countries and third parties provided that their participation is justified by the nature of the action. Their meaningful participation has, however, to be possible having due regard to Europol's legal obligations on exchange of information with third countries.

III. Applications must involve at least two (2) public bodies established in two (2) different EU Member States.

IV. The proposed actions must be related to activities of established Operational Task Force, which carry out intelligence and investigative activities against selected HVT as defined within the Standard Operating Procedure⁶⁸ on Selection of High Value Targets and Establishment of Operational Task Forces.

V. The requested grant cannot be higher than 60,000 EUR, or in line with the current threshold for low-value grants established by the EU Financial Regulation.

Selection criteria:

In accordance with Article 198 of the EU Financial Regulation, proposals for action shall be evaluated on the basis of the following selection criteria:

- Financial capacity - Applicants and co-applicants must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain their activity throughout the period during which the activity is being carried out and to participate in its funding.
- Operational capacity - Applicants and co-applicants must have the professional resources, competences and qualifications required to complete the proposed action.
- The verification of the financial and operational capacity shall not apply to public bodies and international organisations in accordance with Article 198 of the EU Financial Regulation.

To ensure that the operational needs are met, a pool of evaluators shall be duly appointed by the responsible authorising officer. In each evaluation at least 2 evaluators from that list (with complementary expertise in law enforcement and finance) shall perform the evaluation (without a separate ad hoc appointment).

To allow for fast processing, applicants must use the templates to apply and reply within maximum 24 hours to any questions raised during evaluation.

Award criteria:

⁶⁸ EDOC #901933 v13 "Standard Operating Procedure - Selection of High Value Targets and establishment of Operational Task Forces within O2-ESOC".

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In accordance with Article 199 of the EU Financial Regulation proposals for an action shall be evaluated on the basis of the relevance, quality, cost-effectiveness and European added value of the proposed action.

Ex-post publicity for award of grants (in particular their annual publication in accordance with Article 189 of EU Financial Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046) and the financial verification of the payment requests, including the required supporting documentation shall take into account the confidentiality and security of the operational and classified information.

Information for Applicants

The Invitation to submit applications shall be restricted to OTF participants only. Once an OTF is established, the Invitation, accompanied by the application package, shall be circulated to the targeted audience only. All OTF participants shall receive the information simultaneously, in accordance with the principle of equal treatment.

Indicative timetable for the direct award and indicative amount of the grant

Date	Amount
Publication Q1 2023	3,000,000 ⁶⁹
Award of Grants: Q1-Q4 2023	

Maximum possible rate of co-financing of the total eligible costs

95%

6. Low-value grants for cooperation with Eastern Partnership countries

Legal basis

Article 4(1)(h) and (i) and Article 61(3) of the REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) and replacing and repealing Council Decisions 2009/371/JHA, 2009/934/JHA, 2009/935/JHA, 2009/936/JHA and 2009/968/JHA.

Contribution Agreement between the European Commission and the EU Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation ENI/2020/416/376.

Budget line

B-3600 EMP-EAP-Grants (EDOC#1111249)

Priorities, objectives pursued and expected results

Supporting the cooperation of the six Eastern Partnership countries with EU Member States and Europol for the fight against serious and organised international crime, including through their participation in EMPACT.

The Invitation to submit applications is directed to EU Member States and the Eastern Partnership countries collaborating in the framework of a specific action. In accordance with Europol legal basis, the Europol national unit (ENU) shall be the liaison body between Europol and the competent authorities of the Member States. Thus, the applications must always be submitted via the ENU of the Lead Applicant.

It is expected that the support will provide for improved cooperation between Member States' and Eastern Partnership countries' law enforcement agencies, EU Institutions, EU Agencies while delivering coherent actions targeting the most pressing criminal threats facing the EU.

Description of the activities to be funded

Activities addressing at least one of the following objectives: (i) strengthening Eastern Partnership countries' institutional knowledge and capacity on EMPACT crime areas and

⁶⁹ If operationally justified, the authorising officer may decide to increase the maximum amount for this scheme, subject to Europol budget availability.

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increasing cooperation within EMPACT; (ii) enhancing criminal intelligence in the countries of the Eastern Neighbourhood region as well as the exchange of intelligence and information between EaP countries, EU MS and Europol; (iii) enhancing operational cooperation with of the EaP countries with the EU Member States and Agencies, including through EMPACT.

The activities to be funded include operational and/or investigative activities (e.g. travel and accommodation for operational meetings, direct operational costs such as informant rewards, buying/renting operational technical and forensic equipment, interpretation or deployments, etc.) as well as activities related to strategic or operational intelligence exchange (e.g. meetings and workshops,) implemented by the targeted law enforcement agencies. Furthermore, activities and equipment related to identification and setting of legal and technical requirements for the exchange of intelligence.

In case of larger investigations, if operationally justified, subsequently submitted applications, each within the limit of 60,000 EUR, could cover a particular stage of the ongoing investigation enabling the participating countries to apply for funding throughout the lifetime of the operation.

Grants may not be awarded for activities that are funded under another EU programme or from Europol's budget, including through EMPACT grants. In this respect, it is noted that Europol is active in an environment which has undergone a proliferation of EU funding sources. A statement to ensure respect for the principle of no double funding from EU sources must be made by applicant(s) in the Application form. Europol is entitled to perform checks in this respect, including by liaising with external partners (e.g. DG HOME, Eurojust).

Europol may award using simplified cost options provided that a decision by the Executive Director has been adopted.

The maximum duration of grants will be 6 months extendable by 3 months if justified.

Essential eligibility, selection and award criteria

Eligibility criteria:

I. In order to be eligible the Lead Applicant must be a law enforcement or judiciary public body established in an EU Member State participating in EU law enforcement cooperation under Europol Regulation (EU) 2016/794 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2016 on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol).

II. The Co-Applicants must be:

- a public body established in an EU Member State OR
- a public body established in one of the six Eastern Partnership countries or, if relevant for the action, in a third country OR
- a profit or non-profit-oriented organisation established in an EU Member State or in one of the six Eastern Partnership countries or, if relevant for the action, in a third country, OR
- an International Organisation.

The meaningful participation of co-applicants based in third countries, has to be possible having due regard to Europol's legal obligations on exchange of information with third countries.

III. Applications must involve at least two (2) public bodies established in two (2) different EU Member States and at least one (1) public body of one of the six Eastern Partnership countries, which have a status of a law enforcement authority or judiciary.

IV. The requested grant cannot be higher than 60,000 EUR, or in line with the current threshold for low-value grants established by the EU Financial Regulation.

Selection criteria:

In accordance with Article 198 of the EU Financial Regulation, proposals for action shall be evaluated on the basis of the following selection criteria:

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- Financial capacity - Applicants and co-applicants must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain their activity throughout the period during which the activity is being carried out and to participate in its funding.
- Operational capacity - Applicants and co-applicants must have the professional resources, competences and qualifications required to complete the proposed action.
- The verification of the financial and operational capacity shall not apply to public bodies and international organisations in accordance with Article 198 of the EU Financial Regulation.

To ensure that the operational needs are met, a pool of evaluators shall be duly appointed by the responsible authorising officer. In each evaluation at least 2 evaluators from that list (with complementary expertise in law enforcement and finance) shall perform the evaluation (without a separate ad hoc appointment).

Award criteria:

In accordance with Article 199 of the EU Financial Regulation proposals for an action shall be evaluated on the basis of the relevance, quality, cost-effectiveness and European added value of the proposed action.

Ex-post publicity for award of grants (in particular their annual publication in accordance with Article 189 of EU Financial Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046) and the financial verification of the payment requests, including the required supporting documentation shall take into account the confidentiality and security of the operational and classified information.

Information for Applicants

The Invitation to submit applications and the relevant application documents are published on Europol website.

Indicative timetable and indicative amount of the grant

1st Invitation to submit applications

Date	Amount
Publication Q1 2021 Award of Grants: Q1 2021 – Q3 2023	€ 710,000

2nd Invitation to submit applications

Date	Amount
Publication Q3 2023 Award of Grants: Q4 2023 – Q2 2024	€ 710,000

Maximum possible rate of co-financing of the total eligible costs

95%

Annex XII. Strategy for cooperation with third countries and/or international organisations

Europol External Strategy 2021-2024

1. Framework of the Europol External Strategy 2021-2024

The External Strategy is part of Europol's multiannual programming, in accordance with Article 12 of the Europol Regulation (hereafter "Regulation"). The provisions for Europol's relations with partners are laid down in Chapter V of the Regulation.

The political framework of the Europol External Strategy 2021-2024 includes the European Council's Strategic Agenda 2019-2024, the EU Global Strategy, the Political Guidelines of the current Commission and the steps leading to the European Security Union, to which Europol will continue to contribute.

The key analytical reports on crime in the EU, including Europol's assessments, provide the operational framework for Europol's external relations and an indication of the operational needs of the MS.

The Strategy 2020+ represents the internal framework within which Europol's external relations are set; its strategic priorities represent the basis for defining the objectives for the External Strategy.

The objectives of the External Strategy 2021-2024 and the prioritised external partners reflect the findings of the report on the implementation of the External Strategy 2017-2020, in particular the chapter on Partners of this Strategy. Based on the experience gained during the implementation of the Europol External Strategy 2017-2020 and taking into account the guidance from the Management Board, Europol's leading goals when approaching external partners will be to maximize the exchange of information between Law Enforcement Agencies and Europol and to foster international operational cooperation. As a general principle, Europol's engagement in the projects with external partners will not adversely influence the analytical and operational support provided to the Member States.

Europol will address the Member States' interests and their need for support by making a clear prioritisation of its external relations.

The implementation of this External Strategy will strongly rely upon the availability of necessary resources. Furthermore, possible mid-to long-term implications of COVID-19 may have a negative impact in terms of reaching out to the targeted countries/organisations.

2. Goals

The External Strategy will guide Europol's cooperation with external partners and fulfil the Agency's objectives set by its Regulation, namely to support the competent authorities of the Member States and their mutual cooperation in preventing and combating serious crime, terrorism and other forms of crime affecting a common interest covered by a Union policy.

Europol performing as an integral part of the EU security architecture

The protection of citizens and freedoms is one of the priorities of the Strategic Agenda 2019-2024⁷⁰. Europol has well-established tools in the area of EU internal security, which address existing and emerging threats to the EU posed by an ever-changing security landscape.

⁷⁰ The main priorities of the European Council in the area of protecting citizens and freedoms include amongst others, the effective control of external borders; fighting illegal immigration and human trafficking through better cooperation

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Europol will further develop its relations with third countries, international organisations, regional groups and other external partners. The Agency will maintain existing and establish new strategic and operational cooperation with external partners, to enable the Member States' competent authorities to further strengthen the prevention and combatting of all forms of serious crime. Europol will actively respond to current and emerging EU security challenges, thereby contributing to the European Security Union and the priorities stemming from the EU strategic framework. Europol will further strengthen its cooperation with the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) in order to support the development of external relations in the area of security, in line with the operational needs of the Member States. In addition to existing priorities, the focus will be on developing further capabilities in the fight against cybercrime, financial and economic crime and environmental crime to support the implementation of the Commission's Political Guidelines for 2019-2024. As part of this endeavour, Europol will continue building effective partnerships with EU agencies, operations and missions and other bodies in line with European law enforcement's operational needs.

Europol's external relations flexibly responding to the Member States operational needs

The goal of Europol's external relations is to enhance operational cooperation with external partners, mainly through the exchange of data.

Europol's activities in the area of external relations will be driven by the operational needs of Member States, as identified by key analytical reports on crime in the EU. While contributing to and ensuring the proper implementation of the priorities set by the EMPACT, Europol will pay particular attention to including third countries and other external partners in EMPACT activities, where relevant, and to the support of High Value Targets related investigations.

Europol's partnerships with external partners will continue to provide a secure and adaptive environment for flexible and timely support of the Member States' investigations, according to the Europol legal basis.

In order to reach these goals, Europol will pursue several objectives: the Agency will further enhance partnerships with external parties at both strategic and operational levels, with a view to opening new channels for data exchange and increase the data flow through existing ones. It will further develop its cooperation tools in the external relations domain to provide agile operational support to Member States law enforcement authorities and will promote EU policing solutions, innovation and research in its external relations.

3. Objectives

Europol's goals in the area of external relations can be reached through objectives set by this External Strategy. These objectives strongly correlate with the strategic priorities set by the Europol Strategy 2020+:

1. Be the EU criminal information hub
2. Deliver agile operational support
3. Be the platform for European policing solutions
4. Be at the forefront of innovation and research for law enforcement

Bearing in mind the strategic priorities, Europol's objectives in the external relations will be:

Enhancing the partnerships with external parties at both strategic and operational levels

This overarching objective is the major driver for the further development of effective partnerships with external partners. Europol will also support the Commission in the

with countries of origin and transit; improving cooperation and information-sharing to fight terrorism and cross-border crime and protecting our societies from malicious cyber activities, hybrid threats and disinformation.

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negotiations of new agreements allowing personal data exchange, which have achieved limited results during the first years of implementation of the Regulation.

The list of priority partners with which Europol may conclude working arrangements adopted by the Management Board, and the criteria for setting the priorities regarding the conclusion of Working Arrangements, discussed by the Corporate Matters Working Group in 2019, guide the implementation of the External Strategy.

Europol will use the tools provided by the European Union to enhance external partnerships such as Union-funded projects, EU operations and missions when relevant.

Using an extended network of partners to develop further the EU criminal information hub

Europol's external relations will focus on the further development of its role as the EU criminal information hub, in order to contribute to the preventive measures and to support the delivery of operational results to fulfil the priorities set by the EU strategic orientation. Europol will also contribute, within its legal mandate, to other Union endeavours, such as achieving a more effective control of its external borders, ensuring the proper functioning of Schengen and providing improved crisis management mechanisms. In addition, Europol will continue exploring its possible role in countering hybrid threats and in the European Union crisis management scheme.

Special attention will be paid to the further development of cooperation with private parties, non-governmental actors and international organisations that could contribute to the work of Europol, according to its legal basis.

Further developing Europol's cooperation tools to provide agile operational support

Europol attracts external partners due to its unique and well-functioning environment for cooperation. Europol will continue to cultivate this environment, which represents a potential for further growth of new interested external partners.

The current security threats and ever-changing criminal environment require a complex multidisciplinary approach of law enforcement. This is reflected in the community of liaison officers hosted by Europol, which consists of police forces, customs representatives, members of the intelligence services and other law enforcement authorities. Europol will further invest to expand this multidisciplinary environment.

While Europol will continue to develop the community of liaison officers in order to ensure an effective connection with Member States and third parties, the future deployment of Europol liaison officers will take place as agreed by the Management Board.

Europol will further expand SIENA with all its functionalities and other platforms, such as the Europol Platform of Experts, in order to ensure the desired flow of operational information. Europol will develop its external relations with a focus on interoperability and interconnection of information (in line with and exploiting the ongoing implementation of the interoperability of EU information systems) to address EU security threats in all their complexity.

Interconnection and synergies will be of the utmost importance in the external relations of the Agency. Europol will explore possibilities to cooperate with EU bodies such as agencies, CSDP missions and operations: the ultimate goal of this cooperation will be to secure the operational data needed to support the law enforcement authorities of Member States. However, any form of cooperation with civilian CSDP mission must be assessed case-by-case, taking into account the Europol's operational needs, its alignment with the legal basis and the availability of resources.

Promoting EU policing solutions, innovation and research

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Europol has completed the phase of promoting its business model to potential external partners: the business model has helped establish solid external cooperation relations in almost all the continents. The continued threats call for new law enforcement approaches, in particular in the areas of counterterrorism, illegal migration, drug trafficking, trafficking in human beings, cybercrime as well as emerging threats from environmental crime. Due to a strong external element, tackling such criminality requires new forms and levels of external cooperation. Consequently, Europol has stepped up its efforts towards some external partners, for example via Union-funded projects.

Europol will continue to promote the model of the European Union law enforcement work with the goal to establish well-functioning external partnerships according to the operational needs. For example, the Innovation Lab will coordinate innovation and research activities for the benefit of the EU Member States' law enforcement agencies and other EU agencies and bodies. The Innovation Lab will focus on developing its external outreach with the established operational partners of Europol. Close cooperation with the Interpol Global Centre for Innovation (IGCI) is being established to monitor emerging technologies relevant to law enforcement work. In this context, cooperation with private parties will be further explored, keeping in mind current limitations in Europol's mandate.

In promoting EU policing solutions, Europol will focus on serving as a knowledge platform also for external partners, on promoting EU criminal analysis standards, on mediating and interconnecting expertise between the Member States, Europol and external partners.

4. Partners

Europol will continue to set priorities for engaging with external partners. The criteria for setting Europol's priorities regarding the conclusion of Working Arrangements, discussed by the Corporate Matters Working Group in 2019, will be applied to identify new external partners.

Europol will continue serving as a platform for EU Member States' competent authorities to interact with their counterparts from the partner countries in a coordinated way. Concerning the general focus of Europol's external relations led by the priority topics of organised crime, counterterrorism and cybercrime, the following areas will be further developed: cooperation on financial investigations, namely through the European Financial and Economic Crime Centre, Europol's travel intelligence function, innovation and forensics.

Third countries and regions

Europol has established cooperation with a number of external partners. The Agency will maintain the relations stemming from the existing agreements and working arrangements.

The Europol Strategy 2020+ states that Europol is the EU criminal information hub and it will continue to enhance the value of its network by providing Member States with access to a growing number of partners and sources of information.

From the geographical point of view, the **EU neighbourhood** has particular importance for Europol's external cooperation.

One of the main goals of Europol's external relations will be to establish an excellent operational partnership with the **United Kingdom** following its exit from the European Union. Cooperation with the United Kingdom is essential for all the crime areas falling under Europol's mandate.

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Maintaining excellent relations with the **Schengen Associated Countries**⁷¹ is also important. Furthermore, Europol will continue filling the gaps in cooperation with other European countries such as **Andorra** and **San Marino**.

While cooperation takes place on a daily basis at both strategic and operational levels, the **Western Balkan region** remains a top priority for Europol in view of persisting security threats such as organised crime, terrorism and migrant smuggling. The Agency has well-established operational cooperation with all the partners in the region except Kosovo⁷² and hosts a community of liaison officers at its premises.

Europol's effort will be the further enhancement of operational cooperation with the Western Balkans, including involvement in EMPACT. The exchange of criminal information and intelligence at regional level should be improved in order to enhance the intelligence picture, also in the context of the EU accession process of the Western Balkans. Western Balkan partners will be encouraged to share proactively crime information. Europol will support building up analytical capacities in the region in line with its recognised standards and best practices, and it will continue supporting Western Balkan regional initiatives when relevant to operational cooperation.

Europol will also continue to engage with **Middle East and North African countries**. Persisting migration pressure accompanied by security threats require well-established cooperation within the region. In order to approach the partners, Europol will seek support of the Commission, the European External Action Service and EU agencies active in the region. Europol will focus on building mutual trust with the law enforcement agencies in the region that should pave the way to the future exchange of information, also by promoting EU policing solutions. Further support to develop Regional Threat Assessment will be provided through the Union-funded project. Particular attention should also be paid to cooperation with **Turkey** since the finalisation of the draft operational agreement between the EU and Turkey on the exchange of personal data between Europol and Turkish law enforcement authorities would allow for a more structured cooperation.

The current level of security threats will keep the focus on the **Eastern Partnership countries**.⁷³ Similar to the Western Balkan and MENA regions, Europol will assist in the establishment of regional network of analysts and through the participation in EMPACT activities. Strengthening cooperation with **Ukraine** in the fight against financial and economic crime will be pursued in view of the establishment of the EFEC, while fight against cybercrime is another area of common interest. Active information sharing with the countries that have established cooperation with Europol and promoting Europol's model of cooperation to potential partners will also be in the focus.

Maintaining and further developing cooperation with **the United States, Canada and Australia** will remain another top priority. Europol will also strive to develop excellent cooperation with **New Zealand**. Crime areas such as serious organised crime, terrorism and cybercrime will be in focus.

In the process of maintaining relations with the **Russian Federation**, Europol will continue to follow the general approach adopted by its stakeholders, in line with the valid restrictive measures.

Asia

⁷¹ Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland

⁷² This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/99 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

⁷³ Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine.

Europol Unclassified – Basic Protection Level

The need for additional cooperation might arise after the Covid-19 crisis in relation to Asian countries. In particular, Europol recognises the importance of further engagement with **China**, within the framework of the strategic cooperation agreement, which should go hand in hand with growing Chinese investments and expanding relations with some Member States.

The intended deployment of a new Europol Liaison Officer to the IGCI in Singapore, with additional responsibilities covering the whole Asian region, will further enhance possibilities for cooperation. Countering cybercrime, child sexual exploitation and cooperation on innovation will be high on the agenda for future cooperation in the region.

Latin America

Growing demand for drugs, enhanced drug trafficking routes into the EU and the euro counterfeiting justify the need for enhanced cooperation with **Latin American countries**. Europol will focus on further cooperation as well as new partnerships with the **Andean community**.

International organisations

Interpol remains Europol's key partner due to its global outreach, complimentary tools and developed strategic dialogue between the respective management, as both organisations support law enforcement cooperation. Cooperation with Interpol will continue and further develop in line with the Regulation and the planned EU-Interpol cooperation agreement.

Regional police organisations such as the Police Community of the Americas (**AMERIPOL**), Association of Southeast Asian Nations National Police (**ASEANAPOL**) and African Union Mechanism for Police Cooperation (**AFRIPOL**) and other viable African regional and pan-African partners will also remain partners for further engagement.

Europol will continue its efforts to enhance cooperation with other international organisations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (**NATO**), World Customs Organisation (**WCO**), **UN entities (UNODC, UNCTED, UNOCT, III-M and UNITAD)** and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (**OSCE**) with a focus on counter terrorism and hybrid threats.

As the external dimension of the fight against economic and financial crimes becomes increasingly prominent, Europol's cooperation with international organisations and networks, such as the Financial Action Task Force and the Egmont Group, will be a key component of the European Financial and Economic Crime Centre.

5. Oversight mechanism – the role of the Management Board

The Management Board will receive regularly strategic reviews of cooperation with particular partners or regions in order to provide guidance for further actions. Information on the implementation of the External Strategy will be presented every six months.

The list of priority partners with which Europol may conclude working arrangements based on **goals and objectives** as outlined in this external strategy will be annually reviewed and submitted to the Management Board.

The Management Board will regularly discuss the developments and achievements obtained through Europol's external relations to the benefit of the operational interests of the Member States in order to review the goals and objectives set out in this External Strategies.

From: MB Secretariat <mbs@europol.europa.eu>
Sent: 31 January 2022 16:22
To: METSOLA Roberta, President <president@europarl.europa.eu>
Cc: MB Secretariat <mbs@europol.europa.eu>
Subject: @EXT: Transmission of Europol's Draft Programming Document 2023-2025

Dear President Metsola,

Please find attached the following documents:

-) Letter from the Chairperson of the Management Board transmitting Europol's Draft Programming Document 2023-2025:

-) Europol's Draft Programming Document 2023-2025:

With kind regards,

Borja Barbosa
Secretary of the Management Board

Phone: +31 (0)70 302 5115
Mobile: +31 (0)6 2482 3130
Email: mbs@europol.europa.eu

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