1. **Introduction**

This document reports on the ARGOS board meeting of 27 – 28 June 2017 at Europol HQ. The management is invited to take an informed decision on the ARGOS meeting proposal (ref. 3 and 3.1)
The creation of the Board builds further on Europol's ARGOS initiative\(^1\) taken since 2014 to bundle the informal regional expert groups on covert surveillance. The board is introduced in order to ensure equal input from the regions following the recent establishment of the Surveillance Cooperation Group.

The ARGOS board consist of the chairs of the European Surveillance Group (ESG), the Surveillance Cooperation Group (SCG), the Surveillance Expert Network for South East Europe (SENSEE) and Europol. Its main purpose is to identify and ensure a common way forward, avoid duplication and improve the know-how exchange.

2. **Content**

The first ARGOS board meeting compared the state of play, needs, expectations and vision of the three groups and found a common way forward.

Common vision

All three chairs agreed that close contacts between the groups is key to develop a common way forward. Nevertheless the regional needs and focusses should remain. The ARGOS concept was unanimously approved. Future funding applications will be done in close cooperation.

3. **Consequences for Europol**

The chairs agreed with Europol's proposed ARGOS approach. A first draft of the ToR is produced by \(^2\). Apart from the annual meetings of the groups, Europol will organise an annual ARGOS board meeting and a common conference at least every three years involving the three groups. 054 will be responsible for the connection with other special tactics networks and non-EU partners.

The board agreed on having an ARGOS conference beginning 2018 instead of Q4 2017 (Europol budget, 30K, earmarked for the 2017 edition can be released and used for other projects/actions).

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\(^1\) [EDOC-#864074-20161116 ARGOS 2017 Context and proposal](https://example.com)

\(^2\) [Draft ARGOS ToR EDOC-#883500](https://example.com)
Combining the efforts of the three groups will result in
• A three day conference with Approx. 80 participants
• By extending the agenda of the conference, it would optimise the working time and meet the needs voiced by the ARGOS board members
• Cost would be divided amongst 3 stakeholders (ESG, SCG, SENSEE). Although not hosting the conference at the HQ, OS4 will ensure
  o The streamlining of the agendas
  o Noticed ownership through the use of a unique logo (G14 support to be requested)
  o Estimated cost for Europol: 30,000€ including 1 official dinner for all participants (same budget as 2017, better operational results)

3.1. Defensive points

ARGOS is a Europol initiative and needs to be branded as such. Although combining the conference back to back with the ESG meeting, the Europol ownership can be properly guaranteed through visible active contribution (meeting participation, logo design and display, official dinner).

4. Conclusion

The first ARGOS board meeting successfully agreed on the common way forward for the EU covert surveillance community. It welcomes and supports Europol’s ARGOS concept and prepared the second ARGOS conference.