

Press Release from Bill NEWTON DUNN MEP



News Release
Strasbourg, November 18, 2004

"A real policing scandal" in the EU

Speaking yesterday at a meeting of the European Parliament's Intergroup on Law Enforcement, Organised Crime and Terrorism, the President of the European Confederation of Police (EuroCOP), Mr Heinz Kiefer, exposed what he called "a real policing scandal". Europol, the European police organisation, has been without a Director since July this year after Member States failed to agree on a candidate.

Mr Kiefer said: "How can we expect the public and police officers to take Europol seriously when it has been without a Director for 5 months due to squabbling between Member States? This is a real policing scandal."

Europol is temporarily being headed by the Deputy Director Mariano Simancas while France, Germany and Italy fight over whose candidate should take the post.

Mr Kiefer went on to highlight a litany of contradictions and problems in the way crime is tackled in Europe, criticising Member States for making empty promises. He told MEPs of how an antiterrorism unit was set up in Europol after 9/11 and then closed when no Member State proved willing to share intelligence. It subsequently reopened after the Madrid bombing.

He drew attention to the poor implementation by EU countries of initiatives to tackle crime. The European Arrest Warrant was loudly hailed when it was agreed in 2002 but the fact that two years on, not all Member States have yet ratified it slips quietly unnoticed.

In addition, Mr Kiefer called for greater coordination of law enforcement bodies in the EU. The EU Task Force of Chiefs of Police is completely unconnected to any other body. Mr De Vries, the EU's Counter-Terrorism Coordinator sits with the European Council rather than with Europol's anti terrorism unit.

Speaking after Mr Kiefer's meeting with MEPs, Bill Newton Dunn, who has pioneered the formation of the new Intergroup and is author of the pamphlet, "Europe Needs an FBI" said:

"The EU Member State governments show alarming hypocrisy; there is a huge gap between their words and deeds. While they make loud claims to be working hard to tackle Organised Crime, they do not actually provide the resources or political will. The farcical opening and closing of the antiterrorism office in Europol is just one good example."

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Note to editors:

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- The Intergroup is a cross party, cross nationality group of MEPs meeting to discuss issues in relation to organised crime, terrorism and how law enforcers are tackling them. Newly inaugurated, it will regularly invite experts to address MEPs during the European Parliament's Strasbourg plenary sessions.
- Eurocop is an umbrella organisation of police unions and staff organisations, representing 600,000 affiliates. More information can be found at: www.eurocop-police.org