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ENFOPOL   152
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NOTE

from :	Presidency
to :	Delegations
Subject :	Third round of Mutual Evaluations "Exchange of information and intelligence between Europol and the Member States and among the Member States respectively"
	– Final Report on the evaluation visits of all 27 Member States

Delegations will find enclosed the draft final report on the evaluation visits.

The Multidisciplinary Group on Organised Crime (MDG) is requested to examine the report with a view to submitting it to the Article 36 Committee/COREPER/COUNCIL for approval.

It is suggested that the report be made available for the European Parliament for information.

Furthermore, it is suggested that all Member States are invited to report to the Council on how they have implemented the recommendations made by the experts to them by the end of 2008, and that these reports be examined and discussed by the MDG subsequently.

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1. THE EVALUATION

1.1.   This final report has been prepared in accordance with Article 8(3) of the Joint Action of 5 December 1997 which established a mechanism for evaluating the application and implementation at national level of international undertakings in the fight against organised crime.

1.2.   In June 2002 the MDG agreed that the third round of mutual evaluations should deal with the topic of evaluating the supply of information and intelligence to EUROPOL and the exchange of information and intelligence between Member States.

1.3.   More specifically, it was agreed that the primary purpose of the third round of mutual evaluations should be to evaluate the application and implementation at national level of instruments dealing with law enforcement, of the resulting legislation and practices at national level and of international cooperation. In particular, the evaluation was to assess cooperation and coordination between different law-enforcement structures and operational practices. Overall, the main focus of the evaluation was to be practical day-to-day cooperation between different units at both national and international level.

1.4.   The MDG invites the Article 36 Committee to forward this report to Coreper, with a view to inviting the Council to take note of the conclusions and recommendations in Sections 7, 8 and 9 below, and with a view to the Council, in accordance with Article 8(3) of the Joint Action, taking such action as it considers appropriate. It should be remembered that the procedure laid down in Article 8(3) envisages that the Council may, if it sees fit, address any recommendations to the Member State concerned, and may invite it to report back to the Council on the progress it has made by a deadline to be set by the Council.

1.5.   The Presidency further proposes that this report, when taken note of by the Council, be forwarded to the European Parliament for information.

1.6.   This document reflects the conclusions and recommendations also contained in the three summary reports, that have been prepared previously [1].

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[1]   9501/4/04 REV 4 CRIMORG 43 and 7917/2/05 REV 2 CRIMORG 34 and 14292/05.

1.7.   Cross-border organised crime is one of the major challenges endangering the creation of an area of freedom, security and justice. Countering this threat requires swift and comprehensive action from all law-enforcement authorities throughout the European Union and that fundamentally depends on the unhampered and coordinated exchange of intelligence and information between the Member States.

1.8.   One of the reasons for the establishment of a European Police Office (Europol) is to improve the effectiveness and cooperation of the competent authorities in the Member States [1] in the areas of crime for which Europol has received a mandate. The Europol Convention provisions governing the exchange of information and intelligence provide the framework within which an exchange via the Europol National Units (ENU) can be facilitated. They also provide for an information flow into Europol to enable it to fulfil its analytical role by feeding its Analytical Work Files (AWF) and Europol Information System (EIS).

1.9   Furthermore, many bilateral and multilateral mechanisms have been established between the Member States to provide for a horizontal exchange of information and intelligence.

2.   GENERAL INTRODUCTION

2.1   Following the pattern of the first and second round of mutual evaluation, the evaluations of the countries in the third round provided an idea of the state of European cooperation between the law-enforcement authorities responsible for the fight against serious international crime. The remarkable progress on setting up the area of freedom, security and justice within the European Union was doubtless also a stimulus to the necessary and useful discussions on adapting a number of practices and structures so that, in future, Member States can work in better synergy with the new instruments at their disposal [2].

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[1]   Cf. Art. 2(1) of the Europol Convention.
[2]   EUROPOL, the creation of EUROJUST, the European arrest warrant and the setting up of FRONTEX are just some of the elements which are influencing the internal organisation and practices of each Member State.

2.2   It is certainly not a coincidence that many countries evaluated have undertaken substantial reforms aimed at root-and-branch alteration of their internal structures. However, in spite of these changes which affect national internal organisation, it must be recognised that daily information exchange still poses major difficulties. While this phenomenon is apparent in almost all the Member States evaluated, the peer review also revealed a political and technical willingness to change this situation.

This is especially evident in the great sense of anticipation about the setting up of a computerised information exchange system with Europol, of joint investigation teams or even, in the case of some Member States, the clear resolve to guarantee better internal access to data information between police and customs departments.

2.3   It has to be remembered that the situation is constantly influenced and improved by new proposals, projects and instruments in that field within the European Union. The Framework Decision on simplifying the exchange of information and intelligence between law-enforcement authorities of the Member States of the European Union brings new tools to enhance actual cooperation between law-enforcement authorities [1]. In the same spirit the availability principle and protection of personal data developed in the Hague Programme change the view of the usefulness and use made of the various existing data information systems. This programme underlines for example the need to maximise the effectiveness and interoperability of EU information systems in tackling, as for example, illegal immigration and improving border controls as well as the management of the SCHENGEN Information System (SIS II), the Visa Information System (VIS) and EURODAC released in 2005 [2].

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[1]   6888/3/05 REV 3 CRIMORG 20 ENFOPOL 19 COMIX 149 ENFOCUSTOM 12.
[2]   9246/1/05 REV 1 JAI 184.

2.4   It is obvious that those Member States that acceded to the EU in the last years face some problems that are quite specific to the European Union's new members, in the area of harmonising legislation and its related implementation. The establishing of new laws and/or legal bases has not always been accompanied by parallel structural reforms. It has also been fairly generally observed that there has been great fragmentation of databases with formats that are not always compatible with each other and thus create difficulties for communications between services. Finally, the present report cannot ignore the fact that some Member States are having difficulties in recruiting police staff given the budget constraints and salary levels at national level. However, there have overall been a large number of reforms both in preparation for future SCHENGEN integration and the forthcoming SISone4all and SIS II computer systems and in the process of establishing international platforms to bring together all those responsible for international cooperation in the law-enforcement authorities.

2.5   Another important factor that has to be kept in mind is that the 12 new Member States represent relatively short or even very short (in particular it concerns Bulgaria and Romania) experience in being a member of Europol. Therefore this is obvious that this particular fact very often did not allow to fulfil complete and in depth evaluation, especially in relation to practice and practical arrangements. On the other hand however, the 12 new Member States were aware of these limitations and in general responded to them with concrete plans and proposals regarding their future activities as members of Europol [1].

3.   GENERAL COMMENTS AND STRUCTURES

3.1   Overall, the new evaluation round revealed a **clear trend towards reform** in all the Member States evaluated. This finding reflects a desire among many Member States to adapt their structures to respond to the changes and constraints they face. Trends in crime relate to the changes in crime profiles, especially the geographical spread of crime which now has improved means of exchange and communication at its disposal. In many Member States the situation is leading to a radical re-think of how to tackle crime in future in order to meet the new challenges posed by a European area more open than before.

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[1]   Due to this fact and other related issues connected with last 2 accessions to the EU, the report makes reference to two groupings: first 15 Member States and 12 new Member States. However, in general the findings and recommendations of this report should apply to all Member States altogether.

3.2   In the case of all **first 15 Member States** evaluated, the discussions clearly reflected **two main approaches**:

- adapting the internal structures responsible for the fight against serious international crime, and
- increasingly intensive discussion of the methods to be put in place for better exchange, sharing and use of existing databases within and between the various existing structures.

All the Member States realise that a lack of international cooperation or the absence of a common policy in this area will have consequences in the medium or longer term for every Member State, in terms of both controlling and anticipating the phenomena in question.

3.3   **Finland**, for example, is aware that the accession of the Baltic States to the EU could lead to the type of criminal activity peculiar to that region being exported, has established a very active system of cooperation between its customs authorities, border guards and police forces with the aim of coordinating measures to combat criminal activity both inside and outside the country more effectively.

3.4   It should also be noted that some of the countries evaluated have had a tradition of decentralised powers or of federalism (**Belgium** and **Germany**), which has sometimes made effective internal cooperation more difficult because of the degree of autonomy they enjoy in exercising various powers. On the other hand, although those countries which are more centralised politically and administratively tend to concentrate information more effectively, they do not always share that information internally as well as they might.

3.5   According to the Member States, these changes have taken various forms and have not always had the same goals or the same time scale. In **the Netherlands**, for instance, reforms were implemented from the start of the 90's when investigation teams with supra-regional powers were set up, culminating in the creation of the National Investigation Service in 2002. **France**, which has two main forces in charge of the fight against crime (the national police and the national gendarmerie), has been bringing the two forces closer together in the last few years. A willingness to rationalise forces and resources by this country is evident. Different methods are being followed such as: the setting up of Regional Task Forces [1], the possibility for the Police and the Gendarmerie to access each other's databases and the existence of combined Police/Gendarmerie investigation teams within the central units of judicial police [2].

3.6   **Luxembourg** has pushed alignment to the extreme by creating, in 1981, an integrated law-enforcement network with a common gendarmerie/police network, leading to the establishment of a single police force within the Grand Duchy [3]. In **Austria** the authorities decided to set up a new customs administration as a consequence of EU enlargement and, since 1 July 2005 a new organisation has resulted from the merging of the police and gendarmerie.

3.7   An on-going reform is to be launched in **Denmark**. This reform will establish a more output-oriented policing, with strategic decisions taken at central level. More formal powers will be given to the National Commissioner of Police. In practical terms a major reduction of the current 54 police districts has been carried out.

3.8   The **United Kingdom** has created the police force of the 21st century in the form of the SOCA [4]. This structure brings together the National Crime Squad (NCS), the National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS) and Her Majesty's Customs and Excise (HMCE) to better cope with the new challenges posed by current and future crime.

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[1]   GIRs in France created by interministerial circular of 22 May 2002.
[2]   These central units could be under the responsibility of either the Police or the Gendarmerie and all of them are under the global coordination of the National Crime Investigation directorate (Judicial Police).
[3]   Law of 31 May 1999.
[4]   Serious Organised Crime Agency, see "One Step Ahead: a 21st century strategy to defeat organised crime." Published by Home Office Publications, March 2004.

3.9   In some other countries reforms were made earlier such as in **Italy** with the creation of the National Anti-Mafia Directorate (DNA) to fight more efficiently against transnational organised crime. Nevertheless, in that country, as in some others such as **Spain** or **Greece**, the number of different agencies responsible for combating transnational crime could sometimes create some impediments. This fact is mainly due to competence-sharing and also to difficulties with exchanging information between different law-enforcement authorities. These difficulties arise more or less within all Members States but sometimes emerge more clearly in the States where there is a wide variety of agencies and/or national databases. The Experts would also mention Greece which proved its efficiency during the Olympic Games in 2004 but whose police, at the time of the evaluation, remained under-equipped in terms of computerised facilities. Taking into account this situation, the authorities are now studying the idea of creating a national coordination unit responsible for the collation and systematic analysis of information on organised crime.

3.10   Throughout the evaluations of the **12 new Member States**, the experts were impressed by the very important changes which had occurred as a result of European integration. Numerous countries have embarked on major institutional reforms in particular to reorganise their police and customs systems. These reforms have almost always been the corollary of the introduction of new penal codes and even sometimes of the customs code. Often, and in parallel, such changes were accompanied by a reform of the legal institutions inter alia in order constitutionally to ensure a genuine separation of the powers of the executive and the judiciary [1]. These evident priorities doubtless focussed more on basic structures than on formal structures. Once the basic framework had been established, it became necessary to introduce the tools for ensuring that the new organisational structures could function effectively. On this point, the various expert assessments have shown serious delays in computerisation, largely as a result of two factors. The first is the fragmentation of existing databases which are more often than not incompatible with each other and the second relates rather to budget priorities. An illustration of this is to be found in the **Slovak Republic**, where the Ministry of the Interior's new computer framework will not be operational before 2009.

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[1]   Some States, such as Poland, were still in the process of changing the structural organisation of their national police in 2006.

3.11   Internally, all the **12 new Member States** evaluated have embarked on reorganisation aimed at rationalising cooperation between the various law-enforcement authorities in order better to coordinate the fight against serious crime. It is clear that much remains to be done, particularly in the case of States which manifestly still have an enormous variety of national law-enforcement authorities, some of which have tasks that are sometimes ill defined and/or overlap with similar powers at national level. It must also be said that those responsible for the various authorities do not seem to have clearly established the inevitable realignments in the fight against crime arising from the future removal of systematic controls at internal borders, e.g. by a targeted strengthening of the European Union's external borders. However, all the experts are unanimous in noting genuine involvement in cooperation with the other Member States. This is evident within the existing structures [1].

Similarly, although a real will exists and manifests itself in the development of cooperation with Europol, one cannot but note that for the time being bilateral cooperation, in particular with neighbouring States, and the extensive use of the Interpol channel still widely predominate.

3.12   Finally, close scrutiny of the **12 new Member States** shows that there is still considerable compartmentalisation between Ministries. The sharing of information, which is accepted in principle, remains difficult in particular owing to the recent changes involved in the new distribution of tasks. Accordingly, and this is not a problem confined to the new Member States, the separation between intelligence services dealing with the fight against terrorism and those dealing with serious crime is not conducive to an overall understanding of the challenges faced by the whole of the European Union [2].

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[1]   For example, the cooperation which is conducted through the Baltic Sea Task Force, FINESTO or FER.

[2]   Few or no officers liaising between law-enforcement authorities and those combating terrorism and no computer gateway between the services combating traditional crime and those dealing with terrorism matters.

3.13   Thus, the Member States evaluated generally display an acute awareness of the requisite structural changes and also a rather realistic view of the problems and the required solutions, not only to have access to and share available information within individual Member States but also within the area of freedom, security and justice in a Europe of 27. The issue to improve the accessibility of information[1] is undoubtedly a response to the questions and strategies noted by the experts during their evaluations. There is clearly a need to further intensify discussions on all these initiatives and turn them into day-to-day operational reality, while always safeguarding relevant data protection concerns.

This summary reveals also how each Member State has faced transnational crime problems. All of them have given these problems priority, taking into account their European commitments. To achieve this, many of them have initiated thorough internal reforms not only to be in line with European regulations but to be better partners with their European counterparts on a day-to-day basis.

4.   INTERNAL ORGANISATION OF THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION

4.1   As recorded in the summary reports [2], numerous difficulties still stand in the way of efficient internal cooperation between police departments. However, the evaluations reveal that all the Member States are now aware of these difficulties and almost all have devised **short or medium-term strategies to improve internal information exchange**. It is also interesting to note that these difficulties concern both countries with a centralised administrative system and those with more extensive or more developed regional powers owing to the historical origins of the various administrative layers. It is also encouraging to note that European perspectives and decisions are taken into account rapidly in almost all the reform projects evaluated, and sometimes even serve as the trigger for introducing internal reforms free of any legal constraints.

The different recommendations set out in Chapter 8 and 9 of this report are already explicit enough and require no further elucidation but interestingly, by emphasising certain points, a logic emerges in the shaping of European policies in the JHA field.

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[1]   The Hague Programme on strengthening freedom, security and justice in the European Union (OJ C53/2005).

[2]   9501/4/04 REV 4 CRIMORG 43 and 7917/2/05 REV 2 CRIMORG 34 and 14292/05.

4.2   Whereas all the Member States have implemented inter-departmental exchange to monitor files better and thus improve information exchange, the experts noted a general willingness to go further in this area by **rationalising exchanges**. This usually involves introducing technical and/or legislative support which makes it possible to systematise exchanges, and sometimes leads eventually to file interconnection. For instance, in **Luxembourg**, the Law of 2 August 2002 on the protection of persons with regard to the processing of personal data makes provision, in certain circumstances, for data interconnection in the future [1].

4.3   As stated in the general introduction to this report, many of the new Member States have seen a **root-and-branch alteration of their internal structures**. In **Estonia**, for example, there was already restructuring of the police in the 1990s (which was not the case for the whole of the former Soviet bloc). In **Poland**, a major reform was undertaken in 2000 and there were further significant changes in 2006. In **Latvia**, numerous legislative changes and reforms have also occurred but there are still difficulties due to the large number of law-enforcement authorities in its territory (11 in all). In **Lithuania**, all institutional infrastructures are very recent as are their legal bases. For example, the new Lithuanian penal code only entered into force in 2003. Substantial and important changes of the national legislation were undertaken also in **Bulgaria** (internal reform of 2006) and **Romania**. It is true that some countries have been able to mitigate the impact of introducing such major changes by making their structures simpler. This situation has occasionally been facilitated by a country's history, but also sometimes by the fact that a country is small.

4.4   Nevertheless, the main source of difficulties with information exchange lies in certain departments having **exclusive powers and/or the accumulation of databases** which are incompatible or which did not have a common purpose at the outset. However, here again, the Member States are taking innovative steps to remedy the situation. Especially in case of the new Member States where they establish new computing infrastructures and introduce tools for developing crime analysis. And even though sometimes the reorganisation has not always reached the same level of either planning or implementation - here are some positive examples:

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[1]   In Memorandum A No 91 of 13 August 2002 and more specifically Article 16 of the Law.

- **The Netherlands'** authorities have decided to abandon these different systems and practices and have set up a national ICT- steering committee to reorganise information exchanges in the Netherlands. The project, which is known as the "Politie Suite Opsporing 2", is designed to create a national police information system and aims to be completed in the next five years. The various databases (OCTOPUS, RBS and VROS) will cease to exist entirely. This is all the more important given that since 1993 the Netherlands authorities have been working on the idea of centralising a number of police departments or activities at inter-regional or national level. The fragmentation of investigation teams responsible for tackling serious and organised crime (the so-called "core teams") came to an end in 2003 when the teams were combined to form a single National Crime Squad.

- In **France**, a large number of national files receive joint input from the police and the gendarmerie, for example, the STIC for property and documentation, the FPR for wanted persons, or the FVV for stolen vehicle files. All these files are accessible via the CHEOPS architecture which brings together and secures all police operational applications. Every officer who has been granted the right of access has to identify himself with a registration name and password which is renewed every three months by a national authorisation management system. In this way the user can gain access to the applications and their various functions on the basis of the rights granted him by his profile (search, supply or management profile) using a single computer workstation. It goes without saying that this type of organisation is of considerable benefit in terms of access to and exchange of operational information.

- In **Germany** the main task of the BKA is to gather information in its role as the central agency. The various LKA are therefore connected to the BKA by a communication channel which enables each Land to consult the databases of the central BKA system in the form of a central index. The model of BKA-LKA databases (INPOL) could be a good example to be implemented at EU level, regarding in particular the hit-no hit access from each Member State to other Member States' databases and how the centralised database works and is fed.

- Other Member States like the **UK** have taken a different route in developing their internal cooperation system, given the multiplicity of autonomous police forces in the United Kingdom (52). The National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS) was first launched in April 1992 to provide leadership and excellence in criminal intelligence. Its current legal basis is laid down in the Police Act of 1997. The organisation aims to combat the top echelons of crime. It plays a key role in multi-agency strategies. NCIS deals with the development of criminal intelligence on a national scale. It aims to help law enforcement and other agencies, at home and abroad, by processing and disseminating information, giving guidance and direction, and analysing major criminal activity. However, the Government wants to go further and the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 has recently established the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) on 1 April 2006. The Agency brings together the staff, expertise and skills from NCS, NCIS, CUSTOMS investigation and intelligence work on tackling serious drug trafficking and recovering related criminal assets and the Immigration Service's responsibilities on organised immigration crime. Specialist Prosecutors, answerable to the Attorney General, will work closely alongside the Agency's staff.

- In **Estonia**, the police services have a common computing infrastructure for managing a common database, the KAIRI which is accessible to all law-enforcement authorities. Moreover, this country has launched a project entitled "e.services" which should make it easier to process crime information while making individual files communicable and accessible to all representatives of the penal system (police, magistrates, lawyers and courts).

- In **Slovenia**, there is also a common database. To summarise the Slovenian system, the authorities have set up a joint application, the LISK, used by all the police departments. From this application all police may consult their accessible databases. All these applications are currently being updated to be transferred shortly to a more efficient database, the CICS. This next system should allow for an increase in exchanges of interdepartmental information and also authorise access to the Internet.

- In some respects, **Poland** also has a quite an efficient computing infrastructure. The difficulty in that country arises from the development of numerous databases by different services and the problem of crosschecking information. But some time ago the authorities created a central platform to facilitate the matching of information on criminal cases under investigation. A remaining weakness is the fact that the principal common database, the KCIK, is primarily fed information by the police services while other services such as the customs or border guards do not seem to be actively involved. The criminal investigation bureau does not however have direct access to this database. Difficulties of this type are not directly related to the size of the country.

- Thus in **Cyprus**, for example, all law-enforcement authorities have excellent databases managed through efficient computing infrastructures. But this does not stop many services and agencies developing their own databases. Everything is done without any real coordination and without any introduction of computing tools designed to avoid duplication or encourage interaction between the different services. In this example, there is a clear absence of a uniform model at national level for managing information and better regulating the processing of criminal intelligence. Moreover, the technical means used for the exchange of information are still often obsolete. For example, the anti-drug unit exchanges information with the other police services in the form of copies of files without direct electronic exchanges. This type of difficulty recurs in other countries.

- In **Hungary** for example where there is a plethora of databases, crosschecking of information is virtually impossible owing to the incompatibility of data media which prevents any automated exchange between services. But also in this country notable progress is being made. For example, the border guards' strategy seems to be a dynamic one. In order to combat illegal immigration in all its aspects, the authorities have created an Integrated Steering Centre at central level with structures founded on regional organisation. The experts were told that whoever initiates a joint operation would take the lead. In addition it was also mentioned that through the envisaged participation of all services in such actions it should be guaranteed that spill-over information and intelligence not directly related to illegal migration reaches the competent authorities immediately. In 2004 there were around 3 200 such operations.

4.5   Difficulties in terms of internal cooperation could also be caused by the **complexity and variety of different law enforcements** inside the same territory:

- **Italy** have taken legislative measures to improve internal cooperation and i.a. created the Anti-Mafia Directorate. The innovation introduced by the establishment of this agency is its focus on a strategic target, namely the fight against organised crime, which is to be carried out through the coordination of all intelligence activities and effective high-profile police investigation. To achieve that goal, DIA is an inter-agency body consisting of investigators drawn in equal proportion from Italy's three police forces: the State Police, the Carabinieri and the Guarda di Finanza.

- Under the on-going reform in **Denmark**, the new approach sees a centralised information flow at the national communication centre within the SOCA [1] which has access to all information. In this country regional intelligence units cooperate with the SOCA on a daily basis and on specific issues when necessary.

- It has been observed that in **Spain** several bodies have been developed for coordination purposes. At national political level, the State Secretariat for Security governs the national law-enforcement authorities. However, the recently established CEMU (Executive Board of the Unified Command) also brings together senior political representatives of the National Police Force and the Guardia Civil in order to reinforce the coordinated management of tasks in the national law-enforcement authorities.

- On the other hand in **Bulgaria** recent re-unification of the various police forces into one single NPS has been introduced, under the direction and supervision of the Secretary General of the Ministry of Interior. The specialised Coordination, Information and Analysis Directorate within the Ministry ensures that the activities of the law enforcement agencies within the new structure of the Ministry are led by intelligence, as it allows the sharing and dissemination of information to all Directorates and carries out analysis at a central level. Each Central and Regional Directorate has a Coordination, Information and Analysis Division. The similarity of the central structure competent for analysis with the structure of the various directorates makes cooperation and exchange of information much easier.

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[1]   Danish Serious Crime Agency (National Investigation support).

4.6   In general, however, despite major efforts in all the countries evaluated, there is no escaping the conclusion that **there are still many difficulties involved in sharing information between police and customs services**. This also holds for the Financial Investigation Units (FIUs) depending on whether they are under the more or less direct control of the judicial authorities or whether they are set up in the form of an "independent" agency. However, as for cooperation between Customs and Police, progress has been observed, for instance:

- The **United Kingdom** which is seeking the greatest long-term integration of its investigating agencies in this field.

- The countries such as **France** and **the Netherlands** have made significant progress, allowing customs investigation services reciprocal access to certain police databases.

- Member States such as **Germany** and **Finland** have developed closer links between the police and customs services, for example, through access to joint computer indices (INPOL in Germany) or the supply of data to a partly joint national file (RIKI and EPRI in Finland). It should also be pointed out that the situation varies according to the legislative powers granted to the customs service in each Member State.

- Since 1 May 2004, **Austria's** customs guard has been disbanded and most of its officers transferred to the staff of the Ministry of the Interior. For this reason but also because of the size of the country, exchanges of information between law-enforcement authorities are based more on a personal approach than formal cooperation.

- The setting-up of DIA in **Italy** consisting of investigators drawn in equal proportion from Italy's police forces is a form of progress.

- In **Spain** there is a DAVA liaison officer in the national police and in **Greece** the authorities are planning an information exchange protocol whose long-term goal is to make for easier information exchange between the other law-enforcement authorities.

- Expertise acquired can be shared by encouraging all initiatives which allow the sharing of risk-analysis information. Setting up joint investigation teams would probably produce encouraging results here. This phenomenon is also observed in **Ireland** where there are cooperation agreements between the Garda Siochàna and the Customs.

- In **Estonia** there is excellent cooperation between customs and police. The first step taken was to merge customs services with those of the tax authorities. The Estonian authorities then developed a bureau of investigation to work proactively on common objectives. This facility has doubtless been strengthened by the fact that customs and police have identical powers in matters within their respective areas of competence.

- In the case of the **Czech Republic**, there are exchanges of information between police and customs. This means that the customs can have direct access to certain databases held by the police. In the main, this concerns matters and data relating to drug trafficking.

- In **Lithuania**, however, the customs in its present form is a very recent service, which does not therefore have experience comparable with that of the customs services of the other Member States. Although the customs and police have similar powers in their respective areas of competence (notably investigative powers), there are no gateways between the respective files held by police and customs. Closer links here between the Lithuanian police and customs are therefore desirable.

- **Slovenia** and **Cyprus** have signed memoranda of understanding between police and national customs agencies.

- **Slovak Republic** is about to implement a penal reform which will give customs investigative services penal powers in matters within their competence [1].

- Similarly in **Latvia**, there are signs that a new form of cooperation is emerging for the exchange of intelligence between customs and police since there is not at present any mutual access to their respective computerised databases. For this reason, negotiation plans are under way for the future signing of a memorandum of understanding.

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[1] This will initially involve powers relating to drug trafficking.

- On the other hand, the situation is completely different in **Malta**, where there is no memorandum of understanding between customs and police [1]. If there were, this would no doubt constitute an excellent basis for rationalising the way national institutions work together and should normally make possible better sharing of information, particularly in the case of major trafficking. It should also encourage the services to work proactively and thus produce better operational results to the benefit of all the other Member States.

4.7   More broadly speaking efforts are concentrating more and more on **better exchanges of information between different law-enforcement authorities**. In this connection particular attention has to be paid to the way **Belgium** is developing its new concept of integrated policing. Belgium has gone as far as imposing a legal obligation on police officers to pass on any information they have to the local information units (Law on integrated policing of 7 December 1998, Article 44/11).[2] In fact, the main concerns in terms of exchanging information stem from the police services themselves. For instance, some countries such as Belgium are trying to improve the internal exchange of information by establishing a protocol which will in future enable general administrative departments in the State security service to exchange information with the Federal police.

4.8   There is still **too much compartmentalisation between administrative services**, which inter alia causes difficulties in gaining access to certain computerised databases:

- For example, in the **Czech Republic** criminal intelligence is not collected on the basis of common standards and clearly defined rules for systematic exchanges or transmission. Hence the PEGAS database, which contains information and criminal intelligence, is kept in Prague at the criminal police unit and is not accessible to regional units, which still have to exchange their information by courier transport. Information is most often exchanged on a case-by-case basis and more often than not in reaction to personal initiatives rather than proactively.

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[1]   This absence of a memorandum of understanding in no way signifies an antagonistic relationship between the services but rather the absence of any institutionalisation of methods of exchanging information.

[2]   All police officers and persons responsible for public order have an obligation to transmit all information to the national databases. Failure to do so carries a maximum penalty of 6 months' imprisonment.

- This far from satisfactory situation exists in almost identical form in the **Slovak Republic**. In that country, the great difficulty is the existence of a run-down system of national management of databases with frequent incompatibility between regional and central databases. This state of affairs is the result of use of types of software which are incompatible with each other. At present, many exchanges of information take place through exchanges of diskettes or by courier. However a national project plans to make access to the different crime databases compatible between services by setting up a system of databases that are centralised and accessible to the different services from the same computer terminal. The planned new system, known as AKC, should make it possible to establish links between different cases, whether they are being dealt with at national, district or regional level. This project is unfortunately behind schedule and should be implemented as from 2009.

4.9   Apart from these technical aspects represented by the upgrading of computer systems, their compatibility between different services and the reorganisation of the collecting and exchange of information, this third round of evaluations has shown the key importance of **information management**. All the Member States have become aware that information is only as good as the instruments which endow it with major added value. Virtually all the new Member States also making considerable efforts in that direction. This means pursuing two further important courses of action. The first concerns the wish to turn the law-enforcement authorities into services that are more proactive than reactive by using the research facility afforded by Organised Crime Threat Assessment (OCTA). The second involves providing each of the countries analysed with analysis and coordination facilities:

- In **Hungary** there is a department which analyses and coordinates crime information. However, coordination between the DAC/CCOC and the NEBEK, which is responsible for international cooperation, is not altogether satisfactory. Consequently the authorities have a plan which would allow the variety of national databases to be maintained but under the umbrella of a common computer framework. This will constitute real added value since at present, even at central level, there is no possibility of even partial online interconnection between services.

- In **Malta**, there is a central integrated computer system, the PIRS. This system has been combined with another, the CAU, with the idea of initially achieving computerised integration of databases now stored in hard copy. But this analysis work and database are not for the time being accessible from the central crime database and consequently no electronic crosschecking is possible. Moreover, the results of these analyses are not available in the different crime units.

- In **Latvia**, all the law-enforcement authorities report daily events occurring in their territory to the Ministry of the Interior's information centre. This is done in standardised form and the information can be consulted by all the services concerned. There is now a major plan to finalise a new integrated computer system making it possible to establish links between the various pieces of information collected by different services. The Latvian authorities are thinking of creating a structure to develop strategic analysis, which shows a genuine desire to innovate even if there is not yet in fact any analysis of intelligence at the central department of crime analysis. However, the experts point out the existence of a Ministerial Directive for increasing cooperation between the various law-enforcement authorities. There is already a facility for cooperation with multi-disciplinary teams under the aegis of the Public Prosecutor between the Finance Police Board, Corruption and Prevention Bureau Economic Police Department and Criminal Police.

- In **Poland**, as previously indicated, a central platform was established to make possible crosschecking and analysis of the information processed by the different law-enforcement authorities. Although the computer systems in place are of an excellent standard, evaluation has shown that the inter-ministerial team responsible for the national action plan to combat crime should adopt a more dynamic approach in order to encourage better exchange of information and develop the operation of joint teams.

- In **Lithuania**, the authorities have elaborated a project to set up a Crime Analysis Centre. That project is not yet under way. The idea is to pool the analysis units of the three principal law-enforcement authorities and thus make possible reciprocal access to the information held by each of them. It is for example interesting to note that cooperation is not very active between customs and border guard services despite the fact that borders which are sensitive for the EU States are involved, e.g. with Belarus and Kaliningrad. However, there is excellent cooperation between the State Security Agency and the various law-enforcement authorities between which memoranda of understanding have been signed to promote the cooperation arising from the exchange of information between the intelligence service and the other operational services.

- In **Slovenia**, there is no real national unit analysing crime information. One positive arrangement is that enabling national agents to be sent as reinforcements to regional teams in conducting criminal investigations. Moreover, there is no real synergy between the customs and police services. In order to change this situation, a bill is being drawn up to give the customs special powers in investigations into economic crime.

- In **Slovak Republic**, most services are still compartmentalised owing to the computer systems in place and also to the absence of any internal cooperation agreement between the various law-enforcement authorities, e.g. police and customs. The police authorities have, it is true, created the Strategic Analysis and Planning Department, but the aim of this structure at the present stage is to be an observatory for major crime trends. The fact that a number of services have closely related or similar powers and the absence of any memoranda of understanding between the various national agencies leave the way open for shortcomings in the analysis and crosschecking of information.

- In **Estonia**, there is the advantage of the centralised information database, the KAIRI, which makes it possible, where necessary, to set up joint investigation teams involving both the central and regional levels. Estonia has also introduced a strategy plan for the run-up to 2010, which defines the priority courses of action in combating serious crime and will also take account of the OCTA produced by Europol.

4.10   It is clear that progress still needs to be made even though important developments have been noted in a number of Member States. It has to be said that in general most of the Member States are short of human resources as far as analysts are concerned. Finally, all these mechanisms will have to pay very close attention to securing computer systems, especially their Intranet systems. At the present time, several existing electronic mail systems in the new Member States lack the safeguards necessary to secure exchanges of information.

5.   EXTERNAL ORGANISATION OF THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION

5.1   As observed to some extent during most of the evaluations, experts noted that most **law-enforcement authorities were being reorganised** to adapt their existing tools to a quantitative and qualitative increase in international information flows. The scale of the changes varied from one Member State to another. For example, in the United Kingdom, the main idea has been to set up a new multi-disciplinary approach for tackling international crime. As stated by the Home Secretary "… the existing divided responsibilities are no longer appropriate in the face of what is increasingly technically sophisticated and international crime. The Agency will be more than the sum of its parts. Its activities will be driven by a focus on the harm caused by organised crime, more effective use of intelligence and specialist investigators…" [1].

5.2   This very ambitious state of affairs no doubt reflects changing needs in many of the countries evaluated. Most of the EU Member States have put in place dedicated **joint platforms** for international cooperation. For instance, **Finland** has set up a highly integrated system which not only combines all the cooperation channels but also allows a high degree of participation by officials from the various ministries/services concerned in the fight against international crime. Some of them are already up and running and some still in the process of adaptation (**Ireland**, **Greece**, **Austria**). These platforms make international information-sharing more effective and rational. It is interesting to note that the Member States include a variety of representatives from different ministries on these platforms to ensure greater internal efficiency in the processing of information.

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[1]   "One Step Ahead", a 21st century strategy to defeat organised crime – report presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for the Home Department by command of Her Majesty – March 2004, published by the Home Office.

These platforms are also sometimes an opportunity for foreign liaison officers working in a given country to meet and exchange views. In addition, some countries have taken advantage of the setting up of these international information processing centres to reorganise and upgrade their internal cooperation procedures.

5.3   Although these developments are among the most significant, the evaluations brought out the fact that the **customs'** part in the fight against major international crime is in some countries relatively small but specialised. In most cases this is because customs investigations are confined, in many national legal systems, to certain specific criminal offences and/or to offences which can be linked to, for example, tax fraud. This often reflects a fairly strict internal compartmentalisation as regards the exchange of both information held by the police and by customs. However, the findings would be incomplete if one failed to mention that there has been a positive development in this regard. The evaluations in the first fifteen countries visited revealed a real change of attitude. In some countries this change has resulted in major reforms designed to improve information-sharing with a view to better international cooperation. Apart from the **United Kingdom's** efforts to bring together Customs and Police services in the SOCA agency, several Member States are making special efforts not only to coordinate information exchange better but also to improve their work by using synergies between certain Customs and Police services. More generally, it has to be said that although memoranda of understanding (MOU) have been developed internally in some countries, to improve cooperation between departments, bilateral links between liaison officers remain the rule between the customs services of the various Member States. As regards cooperation between liaison officers, the situation is not much different for police services. Accordingly, the systematic representation of the various law-enforcement authorities on international platforms must remain a priority for Member States.

5.4   **Interpol** remains the preferred channel for day-to-day operational cooperation as regards the exchange of information with member countries and third countries, apart from bilateral links, but the role of Europol in information exchange is increasingly significant in several Member States. A number of Member States have proposed to channel input from their databases into the Interpol database in order to upgrade efforts to combat serious crime and trafficking of all sorts. By way of example, the experts point out that **France** has provided Interpol with its database on stolen blank travel documents. It is currently working with the French NCB enabling police forces to access certain databases managed by Interpol.

France is in talks with a view to loading its stolen vehicle database into the Interpol database. On the other hand it was noted that in **Estonia**, where cooperation with Interpol started in 1992, there has been a very marked increase in exchanges of information via that channel. Thus in 2004, for example, nearly 12000 messages passed through Interpol as compared with only 1332 for the same year via Europol. [1] It is, of course difficult to compare the figures provided by the various Member States owing on the one hand to the disparate nature of the information forwarded and on the other to the inevitable difference in the volume of the information flow between an organisation of 27 Member States (Europol) and one (Interpol) of 170 Member States.

5.5   More generally, a clear distinction can be made between EU Member States which have an **Anglo-Saxon judicial system** and those which have **continental rules** [2]. In the first category of countries, exchange of information appears easier than in other countries. In **Finland**, **Sweden** and **Denmark** it is possible to exchange information within the PTN – Nordic Police and Customs Cooperation – without obtaining any prior judicial authorisation. Police services turn to the justice authorities only when foreign requests for information become judicial cooperation requests that might involve coercive measures. For many other countries evaluated most police departments do not readily pass information to EU partners in accordance with the principle of investigative confidentiality. Under this principle, all information held by a police department during an investigation is placed under judicial authority (examining magistrate or public prosecutor). **Italy**, **Greece**, **France**, **Austria**, **Spain** , **Germany**, **Luxembourg** and **Belgium** illustrate this position to various degrees.

5.6   **Coordination of external cooperation** also remains a difficulty depending on internal organisation. For example, in many countries evaluated a clear distinction has to be made between services provided through an international platform of cooperation and a channel of liaison officers posted abroad. In different countries assessed the management of liaison officers does not seem to be part of international platforms. The reason invoked is that cooperation via the liaison officers is fundamentally bilateral cooperation which seems to be the dominant practice in international police cooperation.

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[1]   The Europol figures concern the handling of intelligence and specifically organised crime, which is not the case with Interpol.
[2]   It being understood that this statement on the diversity of legal systems does not imply any assessment about quality and efficiency of above-mentioned systems.

This subject will have to be reviewed in future years in order to harmonise practices amongst EU Member States and to streamline roles and practices. **Denmark**, for instance, will have completed a redeployment of liaison officers from posts inside the EU to new positions outside the EU.

5.7 Experts have also noted the lack of guidance concerning the **choice of communication channel**. Most of the time, in the name of efficiency, authorities leave investigators considerable autonomy in choosing the channel deemed most appropriate for investigation. Probably a better oriented approach of these practices would generate greater efficiency in day-to-day work by preventing, for example, any overlapping.

In most Member States there are not really any differences in the international approach to the problems to be resolved. This is shown inter alia by the large number of cooperation agreements between Member States and also with third countries. Moreover, a fairly ambitious policy of appointing liaison officers also makes it possible to strengthen such cooperation. In this connection, **Poland** is characterised by an ambitious policy of appointing liaison officers inasmuch as the authorities consider that liaison officers posted abroad should become operational partners for all law-enforcement authorities in Polish territory. This policy of appointing liaison officers is shown to be particularly important when one examines the places where the various officers are located. Thus countries such as **Cyprus**, **Estonia** and **Slovenia** have assigned liaison officers to sensitive countries, which unquestionably helps to secure the EU's new external borders [1]. Nevertheless, the chief difficulty lies rather in the practices used. The evaluation has in fact revealed a great tendency in each of the Member States visited to carry out international work on a case-by-case basis without any real pre-defined strategy. This means that most contacts are based rather on personal contact. In **Slovak Republic** for example the services systematically concentrate more on bilateral contacts without any guarantee of systematic information returns to the international police cooperation bureau. Moreover, the impossibility for many of the services of gaining access to the databases held at central level sometimes prevents the regional services from having a clear view of the Ministry of the Interior's actions at international level. In the **Slovak Republic** there is no standardised protocol for the various law-enforcement authorities governing the procedures to be followed in relations with the services of the other Member States or third countries.

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[1] Liaison officers have for example been posted to the Balkans or to territories located to the east of the EU.

However, the Slovaks are in the process of resolving this problem by creating an Inter-ministerial Coordination Secretariat within the Criminal Police and Investigation Bureau. More or less the same could be said in the case of most of the Member States evaluated. This does not mean that international cooperation is not good and efficient, but is simply a description of how things are and the practices at national level. In **Lithuania**, for example, international cooperation is also well developed with guidance and awareness-raising for those responsible for such cooperation geared to Central Asia and the former Soviet Republics.

5.8   All other Member States have promoted **cooperation between neighbouring countries**, sometimes in the form of a joint centre such as that at Thörl Maglern involving **Slovenia** and **Austria**. It has already been pointed out that all such cooperation on a day-to-day level mainly taken place on a "peer-to-peer" basis. This also means that the choice of communication channel is left up to the operator without any real control by those responsible for the international platforms established. This applies to most of the new Member States even if the experts have found it to be more particularly the case in countries like **Poland**, the **Czech Republic**, the **Slovak Republic**, **Slovenia**, **Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania** and **Latvia**. The real difficulty remains the effects of internal organisation on exchanges of information at international level. Although great efforts have been made over the last two years by the new Member States, one cannot but see the extremely negative effects of an absence of rationalisation of methods in the exchange of information at international level. This is illustrated by **Cyprus** where numerous law-enforcement authorities are authorised to exchange information directly with external services and, owing to the absence of any systematic centralisation and recording of exchanges, central coordination becomes problematic. Similarly in **Hungary**, where the NEBEK is supposed to deal with communications and exchanges of information with all external partners, only about 20% of the international flow of information goes via this international cooperation structure [1]. These difficulties are also more or less apparent in **Poland** where it would be useful to enable the Criminal Intelligence Bureau to systematically list all requests for and exchanges of international information in order to avoid duplication and increase synergy between services.

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[1]   The rest comes directly from the liaison officers and in particular through bilateral contacts.

5.9   The **organisation of the international platforms** will also be dealt with in the Europol Chapter, but it seems useful to pinpoint some of the problem areas which are sometimes also to be found in all other Member States. On the whole, nearly all Member States have set up structures and premises more or less suited to the new tasks. These initiatives have sometimes also provided an opportunity of upgrading the computer applications in place in preparation for the integration of future applications designed for management of the SCHENGEN databases. In **Slovenia**, this strategy has provided the opportunity of setting up a computer application "SPIS 4", which will moreover avoid any pointless duplication. Certain platforms are still far from investigation centres as in the **Slovak Republic**. In other Member States, the services responsible for international exchanges have not yet been fully amalgamated on the existing platform as in **Cyprus**, where the prospective SIRENE bureau [1] is still separate from the common structure for international cooperation. In the case of such platforms, a distinction must be made between those countries which only have police and those which include representatives of other ministries, in particular customs. The very good example is in **Romania**, where the LOs are seconded to the International Police Cooperation Centre from the General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police, the customs administration and the Romanian Border Police.

There continues to be a trend towards opening these platforms more systematically to the maximum number of law-enforcement authority representatives. It must however be said that even here there are only very few countries where such structures allow anyone other than the police direct access to their databases from the international platforms. This is particularly the case in **Latvia**. It is also undeniable that the organisation of work on the international platforms is sometimes furthered by excellent regional cooperation. That this is the case can be seen with **Poland** and **Germany** where cooperation bureaux work side by side, but also cooperation is sometimes facilitated by historic ties such as those between the **Czech Republic** and **Slovak Republic**. Although these last two countries have no difficulties in exchanging information with each other owing to their understanding of each other's languages, it is important and necessary to provide these international platforms with competent officials who have been trained at international level but also with a solid training in foreign languages.

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[1]   The prospective bureau did not start its activities until June 2006.

5.10	In general, many of the new Member States are constrained by **draconian budget choices**. This means that priorities have to be defined at national level and the strengthening of international cooperation should no doubt remain a priority on the one hand in order ultimately to harmonise the level of all law-enforcement authorities in the territory of the European Union and on the other to ensure the effectiveness of the area of freedom, security and justice as defined at the Tampere Summit. Some priority will doubtless therefore have to be given to the training of staff in this area but also to providing the international platforms with staff, not forgetting to ensure that such staff have the necessary support at regional level to achieve consolidation of this international approach.

## 6.	EUROPOL

6.1	The evaluation of the 27 Member States showed that all the partners are broadly interested in the roles and mission devolved to the European Police Office. However, despite the fact that those interviewed were generally interested, sometimes even quite enthusiastic, it would be misleading to claim that cooperation with Europol is ideal, although figures and internal decisions in a number of Member States indicate an increase in exchanges with Europol.

However, the figures must not be allowed to mask the difficulties. For example, in all the Member States it is as difficult as ever to draw a clear distinction between the results of cooperation with Europol and the results of cooperation between liaison officers working at Europol. Likewise, comparisons are very difficult because of major differences in the make-up of National Europol Units, in terms of the number of officers and also the agencies they represent.

6.2	There is good general preparedness for setting up, at internal level, an **automatic workflow from national work files to the Europol Information System (EIS)** that began to be operational in October 2005. Although Europol started automatic extraction of data from Member States' national services for the launch of the EIS system, very few Member States are completely ready to operate the system. There are different reasons accounting for this situation. In some Member States the information to be transmitted is not yet defined. In some other Member States live information can be transmitted only with the prior authorisation of judges.

Due to these different levels of preparedness, it will still take time before a fully integrated Europol system is available for the benefit of all police agencies in Europe.

6.3   Given the current situation, the main tools and resources available to the Member States are still the **analyses produced by Europol**. Opinions on this topic differ. Sometimes the quality of the analyses available to the Member States has been criticised. However, despite these criticisms, most Member States wanted the analyses on offer to be more closely attuned to national needs; on a number of occasions, some Member States even asked for Europol analysts to lend national investigation teams a hand on a temporary or ad hoc basis. In other words, although some Member States criticised the content of some of Europol's analyses, they still wanted the quality to be improved by changing the way they were produced.

6.4   As regards the **products distributed by Europol**, it cannot be denied that there are considerable differences. In general, more progress will need to be made in future to ensure the proper distribution of products on a regular and appropriate basis to all the relevant national services. In some Member States the level of awareness of Europol products seems fairly low compared to some other Member States. One of the main reasons for this continues to be difficulties stemming from the language problem. No doubt, from this point of view, the knowledge of foreign languages should be improved within the different police services.

6.5   The experts noted that, despite all these difficulties, **many Member States considered that Europol had made a satisfactory contribution to a number of operations on the ground**. Thus, to quote one example among many, the HIO operations on illegal immigration or RIO, a **Spanish** Presidency initiative, were judged excellent by the Member States concerned (particularly **France** and **Ireland**). In general, however, the evaluations gave a clear indication that there were not only expectations of added value from Europol, but also a determination to put pressure on Europol to achieve better quality results. **The Netherlands'** proposal that the various National Europol Units should meet annually to assess the quality of the products and information supplied by Europol is certainly an option for the future.

6.6   The number of **AWFs** in which Member States are participating demonstrates a great interest in projects developed by Europol. Broadly speaking, some national authorities see limitations with some of the AWFs and consider them not broad enough and too target-oriented. On the other hand, some Member States want to develop AWFs based on a "regional approach".

6.7   In the same way judicial, police or customs policies encouraging use of the **Europol network and channels** are simply providing ideas for the future. Some EU Member States have been very ambitious on this point by issuing an internal circular on the prioritisation of the Europol channel for the exchange of information on an external level. This is the case with **Spain** which issued a national circular to promote the use of Europol [1]. In October 2001 the **Danish** National Police took the strategic decision to use Europol as the primary channel for the exchange of all intelligence and operational information relating to cases or incidents with a European dimension. The **French** services also indicated their involvement with Europol by distributing to all national services an administrative note referring to the role and added value of the European police body in the context of organised crime [2]. From this point of view, the role of **Germany** ought to be mentioned. In this country, numerous conferences and visits to Europol take place each year and trainees can stay 1 to 3 months on site at The Hague [3]. The German Liaison Office and the National Unit contributed to the Europol Awareness Programme with almost 100 presentations in-house at Europol and in Germany to large numbers of specialised officers and partly high-level delegations.

The fact that, to date, so few countries have so clearly urged their police forces to use the Europol tool systematically, giving them so many general and specific instructions, leads the experts to recommend that Member States which have not done so should take such an initiative now, not just by providing a general impetus to make good use of Europol, but also by indicating that the Europol channel must, in the long term, become the preferred channel for the exchange of information and intelligence-sharing in connection with organised crime.

6.8   Lastly, it should be emphasised that **national platforms** are very well organised and are developing in an excellent fashion, even though some Member States are still intending to improve their structures to make resources available to their partners on a permanent basis.

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[1]   Statement by the operational matters division of 1 July 2004 on the use of the resources and services provided by Europol.

[2]   Circular from the Directorate-General of Customs and Indirect Taxes, 13 August 2003 on France's participation in the work of Europol.

[3]   The German bureau at Europol being in charge of training reception.

6.9   As it was stated in the beginning of this document, in the **12 new Member States** the situation is somewhat different because these countries all became Europol members only recently [1]. Generally speaking, the Europol national units all have the resources they need to operate properly. In many Member States, there is still a **rather monolithic representation of police forces** and efforts are still required to achieve greater diversity through broader representation of the various LEAs in each Member State. For instance, there are still very few customs representatives in ENUs, although a number of Member States are planning changes in this area in the near future. In **Lithuania**, the authorities had the idea of replicating the Europol structure at national level. That country choose to specialise ENU officers along the lines of the specialisation implemented within Europol. Furthermore, regional ENU correspondents have been appointed in the various districts. However, even in this case, only the police is represented within the national ENU.

6.10   While, as in all other Member States, the commitment and resources deployed to raise **awareness** among staff about Europol's role and duties are undeniable – particularly in police academies – few countries have actually sent formal instructions to the various police services. **Lithuania** and **Slovak Republic**, however, have sent a note to all departments concerned giving precise details about the information that can and/or should be sent to Europol. Likewise, the judicial authorities – in particular the offices of the prosecutors responsible for investigations – seem to attach considerable importance to collaboration with Europol.

6.11   As was pointed out in the previous chapter, there is a close correlation between the proper sharing of information at international level and the way in which information is exchanged internally. That point, observed within the 27 Member States, is further evidence, if any were needed, that the **centralisation of information** intended to be exchanged with EU Member States and/or third countries on a single platform remains a priority. Yet from that point of view improvements will be needed to make exchanges more efficient. Failure to centralise international exchanges – leading to fragmentation of effort – has been observed, for instance in the **Czech Republic**. The authorities have responded by requiring all LEAs dealing with international cases to report systematically on such cases to the Department of International Police Cooperation and the Bureau of Criminal Police Cooperation.

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[1]   However, all 12 Member States had previously concluded cooperation agreements with Europol.

That example, however, is not an isolated one; many exchanges take place through bilateral contacts without systematic centralisation. It must also be pointed out that the situation is, in part, caused by the fact that the IT standards used are not always compatible, thus making it more difficult to collate and compare information.

6.12   In addition to this frequently observed difficulty, it is sometimes **impossible to gain access to national databases from the international platform and through ENU officers**. It is somewhat paradoxical that officers should be given responsibility for international exchanges and yet be denied access to the main national databases they need to fulfil their duties. That very practical difficulty is compounded by the fact that national LOs within ENUs who do not belong to the national police do not have direct access to their national databases. In Hungary, for instance, the national desk does not have access to national databases. The same situation can be found in Malta, where there is no single department responsible for international exchanges and the multiplicity and diversity of databases makes efficient international information exchange more difficult to achieve. To be fair, it must be acknowledged that such difficulties are found, to various degrees, in most of the new Member States.

6.13   One of the points still to be settled is **translation**. Situations in this respect are diverse. In **Lithuania**, **Estonia**, **Slovak Republic** and **Slovenia**, ENUs do not have their own translation departments. In **Poland**, the department does not seem to have enough capacity to cope with the foreseeable demand. In **Latvia**, on the other hand, many documents produced by Europol are translated into the national language; in the longer term, this will make the various departments more aware of Europol's products. In this connection, the advantage enjoyed by **Malta** ought to be mentioned: all staff members are bilingual and can therefore use Europol material without it having to be translated first.

6.14   The situations as regards **facilities made available to the various LOs** seconded to the national offices in Europol are also diverse. Some LOs do not have access to their national databases from Europol, whereas others do. The objective should be that all LOs working in national offices within Europol should eventually have access to their main national databases.

Also in connection with databases, the need to upgrade the data exchange security level should be emphasised. While data transfer between the ENUs and Europol is secure further to an agreement, this is not the case for e-mail messages exchanged between ENUs and, therefore, international platforms and other national departments. For the States concerned, solutions must primarily be implemented within the framework of a general upgrade of national and regional computer architectures in order to avoid undermining the entire information channel. Much of this information is classified (and therefore legally protected); the corresponding technical protection must accordingly be implemented and all risks that the processed data might be compromised or intercepted must be avoided.

6.15   The new Member States' approach to connecting to the **EIS** has been examined. Generally speaking, discussions in this area are still at an early stage, even though all the Member States visited took the matter into account in preparing their daily relationship with Europol in future. The discussions and progress made vary from one country to another. To mention but a few examples: no decision has yet been taken in **Poland**. In **Latvia**, no policy has been defined in this area and that country's authorities do not intend, as the project currently stands, to set up a national system that would automatically feed the new Europol database. The position is about the same in **Estonia**, **Cyprus**, **Slovak Republic** and **Hungary**. In **Malta**, on the other hand, discussions seem to be moving forward further to the upgrading of the computer architecture; the authorities are working on a business plan and practical guidelines on implementing the future provision of data for the EIS. In **Slovenia** as well, a technical solution seems to have been found for providing Europol with data automatically. Likewise, the **Czech** authorities have stated that they are working on a project which would start at the end of 2006.

6.16   As regards the **products** Europol develops and disseminates, all the new Member States consider they are of a good standard, even though – as in all other Member States – dissemination to all departments concerned is not always entirely satisfactory owing, in particular, to the lack of translations. Nonetheless, it must be said that all Member States – including the new ones – are making remarkable efforts to integrate the concept of Europol either in initial training or in continuing training and the seminars organised for senior LEA officers.

6.17   As regards **contributions to the various AWFs**, the situation is diverse in the new Member States as in all the other Member States. Participation ranges from 2 to 13 AWFs. That disparity can, in part, be explained by internal human resource difficulties but also stems from differing perceptions of the common interest. Some Member States may sometimes be reluctant to take part because the issue involved is not a priority for them in combating crime, thus depriving other Member States of potentially useful information. However, greater awareness of what Europol does, more experience and increased resources will probably help to dispel that attitude in future.

6.18   By way of conclusion on Europol, one may note a certain difference of opinion on Europol's role as a European police body. Whatever the internal difficulties, none of the Member States would imagine combating crime without Europol's help and support. However, many of the Member States which gave an opinion on Europol's future role did not want to see the European police body take on **operational activities**. On the other hand, many Member States would like Europol to increase its **analysis activities**. In particular, they want Europol to work on regional themes geared to priorities that would reflect those of countries concerned by a specific form of crime in a given European region.

Furthermore, many Member States acknowledge the importance of the **training** delivered by Europol. Some Member States also made clear that they would like to see Europol officers assist Member States with their analysis work by joining national investigation teams if necessary.

In conclusion, it should also be emphasised that more and more Member States are envisaging not just enhanced cooperation with Europol but also more sustained liaison with Eurojust as part of assistance with investigations. A good example of enhanced cooperation is the Europol-Eurojust Joint Investigation Team Project (JIT Project). This project aims at producing an overview of Member States' legislation on JIT. The purpose of this overview would be to inform Member States of the different options when establishing a JIT and to raise awareness of the methodology which Europol and Eurojust could deploy in support of such teams.

7. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

7.1   The current evaluation of the level and methods of cooperation among the 27 EU Member States and between these Member States and Europol is without precedent in the research on principles governing security management in Europe [1]. It goes without saying that its findings, far from being complacent, frequently challenged preconceived ideas on the progress made in cooperation. Furthermore, the fact that this was a peer evaluation made it possible to obtain results and knowledge that no other method could have delivered, thanks to the mutual trust between assessors and assessed. Once again, as was stressed in the introduction to this summary report, as regards comparability some precautions should be taken when evaluating the level of cooperation and analysing the results. To give just one example: the experts had to note recruitment difficulties – in particular in the police – in certain Member States owing to competition between the public and private sectors, which sometimes prevents necessary security posts from being filled. The other Member States are not currently in the same situation from this point of view.

7.2   However, beyond these important but nonetheless very specific comments, one may formulate much broader conclusions based on more fundamental observations and concerning – to various degrees – all Member States. Over the past decade, considerable progress has been made in judicial and police cooperation. Europol, Eurojust, OLAF, CEPOL and Frontex have been set up, for instance. Yet the evaluation of the 27 Member States has undeniably revealed a twofold complexity, arising on the one hand from the fragmentation of organisations set up and on the other from a mutual lack of understanding regarding criminal prosecution channels.

For instance, the 1999 Tampere action plan provided that Europol would be able to set up joint investigative teams, establish a Police Chiefs Task Force and receive operational data. For the moment, with the exception of France and Spain, one must conclude that it has not yet been possible to set up many joint investigative teams [2]. Furthermore, the Member States still have differing levels of ambition as regards receiving operational data. It must be said that this situation is also the consequence of a lack of common definitions regarding the concepts of operational data and intelligence [3].

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[1]   See also, however, the final report on the evaluation of anti-terrorist arrangements in the 25 Member States (12168/3/05 REV 3 ENFOPOL 109).
[2]   Council Framework Decision of 13 June 2003.
[3]   None of the evaluated Member States had provided for any legal definition in this respect.

Currently, the real cooperation between Europol and the Member States is that provided for in Article 10 of the Europol Convention, which establishes the Analysis Work Files (AWFs). In all Member States visited, all partners unanimously agreed that the groups of analysts which had been set up and the liaison officers and/or designated experts exchanged information quite easily. On several occasions, it was observed that these exchanges of information had led to full operational cooperation and sometimes even arrests within the framework of national investigations. In 2004, the management board of Europol set up the EIS project. That system, which provides for the future supply of information to Europol from certain national databases, is still at an embryonic stage at national level in many countries. In addition, many Member States still have considerable misgivings about automatic data extraction for direct input into Europol's EIS database. The evaluations revealed very great difficulties in many Member States on that point, owing to the considerable diversity of national databases. Furthermore, these databases are often incompatible and seldom shared by the various LEAs, as has already been pointed out in the previous section of this report.

7.3   But while institutional partnerships are being set up at European level between the various agencies, cooperation between ministerial departments at national level is developing more slowly. As regards Europol/Eurojust cooperation, for instance, a cooperation agreement was signed by the two agencies on 9 June 2004. Articles 2, 5 and 8 of that agreement lay down the arrangements governing the exchange of information. The agreement also provides that Eurojust may ask Europol to create analysis files or undertake strategic analyses. At national level, however, the representatives of the various LEAs visited – police, customs and border guards, intelligence services, etc. – do not easily establish contacts with Eurojust, even informally.

7.4   The procedure for drafting the OCTA report is a case in point. Although the report is supposed to provide, *inter alia*, serious crime trends, national judicial services are almost never involved, in whatever capacity, in its preparation. During some interviews with national prosecutors, some of them regretted not being more closely involved in the procedure, which ultimately feeds into the same criminal information processing channel. This division of responsibilities, and unfortunately of objectives too in some cases, also occurs between customs and police. In many Member States (though not all), the customs authorities have no power to carry out investigations.

Yet in those countries, the police very rarely have contacts with OLAF. OLAF, however, does have agreements with Eurojust and Europol [1]. The latter agreement deals in particular with promoting the exchange of information. If we add the creation of the CIS and FIDE for the customs authorities, the feeling is that the number of existing databases has considerably increased without any real horizontal sharing being established, to the detriment of useful cross-checking of information.

7.5   In the course of the hundreds of hours of interviews, conducted by the Member States' experts, they concentrated on methods for improving the sharing of available information. In this respect, the framework decision on exchange of information [2] should satisfy many practitioners. It gives precise definitions of the concepts of "criminal intelligence operation" and of "information and/or intelligence". The document also requires Member States to provide replies to requests for information within given time limits; this should strengthen not only active and operational cooperation but also mutual trust.

It was further observed a certain lack of familiarity with tools available at European level among the various departments, as well as some incomprehension at the number and apparent complexity of initiatives.

7.6   Furthermore, the various levels of cooperation intended to bring together highly operational departments, for the purposes of DNA database exchanges for example, could at first complicate relations between the various cooperating authorities, with the risk of prompting non-systematic cross-checking of information by departments. Accordingly, as the evaluation exercise as a whole has patently demonstrated, all Member States without exception must further strengthen their international cooperation structures and make sure there are no parallel structures and/or cooperation initiatives within their departments which might prevent proper cross-checking and processing of the information needed to strengthen international cooperation. That is important for cooperation not only within but also and more importantly beyond Europe [3].

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[1]   The Agreements of 14 April 2003 and 18 February 2003, respectively.
[2]   See CRIMORG 87, ENFOPOL 106, COMIX 498, ENFOCUSTOM 47 and OC 437 of 2 October 2006.
[3]   See, in this connection, the conclusions of the European Council meeting on 15 and 16 June 2006, following the Vienna Declaration on Security Partnership (CONCL 2, 16 June 2006, 10633/06, p. 3).

With this in mind and restricting themselves to the future role of Europol, one may fully endorse the conclusions set out in the document issued by the Friends of the Presidency Group[1], since it reproduces virtually *in extenso* all the observations and/or recommendations set out in the various evaluation reports.

7.7   A number of new Member States had planned to overhaul their computer systems when the new SIS II was introduced. Severe shortcomings in cooperation between Member States can therefore be expected further to the general delay in upgrading computer architectures in some new Member States and to the obsolescence of their current systems.

7.8   In short, five fundamental points are worth highlighting in this final report in order to draw maximum benefit from these analyses:

➢   Emphasis must be placed on the recommendations addressed to the Member States. A distinction will have to be made between the various implementation stages. Some measures concern strategies, methods and even the establishment of new forms of cooperation. Some of the latter have to do with reorganising internal structures, while others involve international cooperation between similar European departments. These developments will have to be monitored in order to evaluate them promptly.

➢   The managerial steps taken by the departments and various LEAs in response to certain reported shortcomings or failures should also be looked at.

➢   The budgetary resources earmarked for following up the recommendations will also have to be examined closely. In this area, specific attention should be devoted to establishing appropriate technical infrastructure, particularly as regards upgrading the security of telecommunications and IT facilities. It will be interesting, for instance, to examine to what extent Community grants will have been used for such technical investment.

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[1]   9184/1/06 EUROPOL 40, 19 May 2006.

➢ The improvement and development of cooperation between the various European authorities must be monitored in the light of the needs and expectations of Member States. Follow-up in this area to ensure better interaction between authorities, jointly with the Commission's initiative in this area, could contribute substantial added value.

➢ As regards Europol, it would be useful to compare and check the progress made in matching the future development of Europol[1] to Member States' working methods.

7.9   By way of final conclusion, one must fully realise the magnitude of the task but it has also been possible to identify the challenges to be met over the next 20 years. It can be observed in the field that all those in charge of national authorities are well aware of the radical change in the struggle lying ahead. Terrorism and serious crime, petty crime and large-scale trafficking are increasingly interrelated. The urgent need to improve cooperation in the field of financial crime, for instance through closer collaboration between FIUs, police and customs authorities and intelligence services has been demonstrated. In this respect, it would probably be useful, as part of following up all reports submitted since 2003, to take stock of the fundamental legislative reforms carried out in Member States to implement the recommendations adopted and issued by the Council.

7.10   The follow-up to this report will be one of the indispensable keys for ensuring that all Member States take the measures required to improve the internal organisation of LEAs with a view to enabling better sharing of information. This reorganisation process should also promote and develop cooperation within Europe and beyond. As can be seen from a number of reports, many Member States have undertaken root-and-branch reform. Others, since the evaluation exercise, have engaged in significant restructuring of their working methods:

• In **Poland**, for instance, the Parliament adopted a law on 12 May 2006 establishing a central anti-corruption office (CBA). That new body, which will have a staff of some 500 officers and a budget of EUR 17 million, will have the same privileges as the intelligence services.

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[1]   Council conclusions on the future of Europol, 9670/2/06 REV 2 EUROPOL 49.

- In **Spain**, a Directorate-General for the Police and Guardia Civil has just been created, by Royal Decree, within the Spanish State Secretariat for Security. That decision follows on from the establishment, in 2004, of the Unified Command Executive Board (CEMU) and the Anti-Terrorist Coordination Centre (CNACA). In addition, an Intelligence Centre against Organised Crime (CICO) has also been set up to coordinate strategic intelligence. Lastly, a Directorate-General for International Relations has been set up, with responsibility for coordinating LO networks in particular.

- In **Germany**, the Interior Ministers of the German *Länder* and the Federal State agreed to create a national anti-terrorism database on 4 September 2006. This report is not about terrorism but the initiative is still worth mentioning on account of the method used: the purpose of the new database is to contribute to data exchange between the police and the various intelligence services.

The three above examples illustrate the most recent innovations; however, many other Member States have already started in-depth reform as shown in each of the individual reports and others are preparing for reform in the future.

7.11   In closing, this summary report would be incomplete without a mention of the issues related to the training of officers in the various LEAs in European and international affairs. The various reports have demonstrated the importance of training and raising the awareness of the junior and senior officers responsible for combating serious international crime. One of the training areas in question involves providing information on the role and resources that international cooperation bodies can bring. In a recent article [1], the Interpol Secretary-General declared that local and State police forces around the world are increasingly being taught to enter the names, photographs and fingerprints of criminals and suspect individuals into national databases. But few local officers are told or trained to enter arrest information into already existing global databases". That comment reflects the importance of initial and continuing training in raising awareness, on an ongoing basis, among officers of the security forces in the Member States about the globalisation of crime and the fact that setting up European bodies is one of the appropriate responses in the medium and long term.

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[1]   Global policing, Ronald K. Noble, in the Herald Tribune, 15.8.2006.

8. SPECIFIC RECOMMANDATIONS

8.1 FOR THE MEMBER STATES:

8.1.1   Consider the possibility of looking into a permanent cooperation structure between all separate law-enforcement authorities (police, customs, border guards, etc.) with a view to their acting jointly on the basis of a shared-intelligence model.

8.1.2   For countries where the international police cooperation department is in a separate location, prioritise the merging of the various offices in order to streamline the flow of information.

8.1.3   For countries with several police forces, encourage the creation of an integrated system allowing all police forces of the country to have access to different databases at least on the basis of a "hit/no hit" system.

8.1.4   For Member States which have not defined instructions, set up operating instructions for the various law-enforcement authorities so as to ensure that information sent to the international cooperation department is transmitted according to common standards throughout the country.

8.1.5   Whenever necessary, allow all police officers responsible for combating international crime to have access from a single computer terminal to all the relevant databases produced by all the police services, where this has not yet been done.

8.1.6   Examine ways of involving the police, customs and immigration services more closely so that, in the interests of cooperation, information can be shared more effectively.

8.1.7   Consider the adoption of a policy allowing the common use of own liaison officers by all national law-enforcement authorities.

8.1.8   For countries with a large variety of law-enforcement authorities, encourage, as far as possible, the presence of the various agencies at these focal points for international cooperation.

8.1.9 Whenever necessary develop a foreign language policy, more particularly for officers dealing with international cases or managing international cooperation.

8.1.10 When necessary ensure the security of exchange of information between the various LEAs by developing secure intranets at national levels.

8.1.11 Whenever possible, develop a concept of intelligence-led policing in order to carry out pro-active enforcement measures on the basis of analysis products.

8.1.12 Encourage the establishment of synergy functions to help analysts remain in contact with the investigators to enable them to carry out work and produce products more suited to the requirements of investigators responsible for fighting serious crime.

8.1.13 Establish structures at national level for developing strategic analysis to improve the setting of priorities in combating serious crime.

8.2 FOR THE MEMBER STATES WITH EUROPOL:

8.2.1 Consider the approach making Europol the central point of information exchange within the EU.

8.2.2 When necessary, encourage all law-enforcement authorities to use more systematically the Europol channel whenever two or more Member States seem to be concerned by organised and serious crime.

8.2.3 The Member States should commit themselves to sending Europol as much quality information as they can that comes within Europol's sphere of competence, basically information on current investigations and analyses.

8.2.4. The Member States and Europol should carry out in-depth consideration of the methods and objectives of the future Joint Investigation Teams. Encourage joint operations in which information about ongoing investigations is used. Ensure the promotion of the use of the manual on best practice.

8.2.5   Produce specific written internal instructions to encourage law-enforcement authorities to improve the use of resources and services provided by Europol.

8.2.6   Launch discussions for finalising future national systems which will input data into Europol's EIS database. For countries which redefine their own national data processing architecture take into account the future input into the EIS system. In particular, establish the type of information which will be entered in the EIS.

8.2.7   Involve, where possible, Europol analysts in Member States' investigations where several Member States are concerned.

8.2.8   Provide the ENU with sufficient translation capacity in order to improve the use of Europol products.

8.2.9   Organise temporary assignments to the National Desk at Europol for relevant and appropriate personnel.

8.2.10 The AWF should be based on a feasibility study and a commitment by the Member States concerned. Before entering an AWF, the Member State should ensure that important issues such as legal obstacles, data protection and ownership of information (relationship between police and judicial authorities) are resolved.

8.2.11 Provide the Member States with more detailed information on the target group approach as it has been addressed to the HENUs since 2004 when initiating new Analysis Work Files (AWFs).

9.   SPECIFIC RECOMMANDATIONS FOR EUROPOL

9.1   Continue with the development and implementation of the EIS, in close cooperation with the Member States, as a high priority. Europol could invite end users to study in detail the types of data which are required to be input into the system.

9.2   Fully implement the EIS to facilitate the transfer of national intelligence to Europol as it must be dealt with in cooperation with the Member States in the framework of the Europol Information Management and Technology (IMT) Programme Board.

9.3   Establish a list of information – both in the pre-investigation and investigation phases – for which exchanges between Member States should be simplified in order to accelerate effective exchanges of information in both directions. This objective should be in line with the Council framework decision on simplifying the exchange of information and intelligence between law-enforcement authorities of the Member States of the European Union.

9.4   Provide follow-up and check with the Member States that the documents concerning strategic analysis and other documents of general interest produced by Europol are actually circulated to the relevant services. In this regard it will be necessary to ensure that the technological form in which they are produced is compatible with the means available in the departments of the countries to which they are sent. It is also important that major documents (such as for example strategic analysis) produced by Europol should be available in all the official European languages [1].

9.5   Provide operational and strategy analyses as far as possible for the benefit of the Member States. As of 2006, the OCTA is the tool provided to all Member States and Europol partners, in order to jointly discuss and prioritise, in accordance with respective Council Conclusions based on OCTA, both strategic and operational actions at EU as well as at regional level.

9.6   Propose a common standard for statistical reports on crime in order to better evaluate exchanges between Europol and the individual Member States and to improve analysis of Europe-wide crime. These common standards will make it possible to compare and assess in an unquestionable manner the crime situation within Member States and other Europol partners more easily. Common standards will further enable Europol to assess the extent to which its partners are communicating through Europol channels and making use of Europol products and services [2].

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[1]   The Europol policy is to provide major documents in all EU official languages, if the relevant budget is available.
[2]   Taking into account the Communication of the Commission on Developing a comprehensive and coherent EU strategy to measure crime and criminal justice: An EU Action Plan 2006 – 2010, doc. 12145/06 CRIMORG 134.

9.7   Consider creating a means of assessing the quality of the information received and the response times to questions put by Member States. Despite complaints from some EU Member States, unanimous agreement was reached in 2003-2004, in the framework of the HENUs, on the definition of best practice and standards regarding the roles of both the Europol National Units and Europol Liaison Desks, including a tool to assess the standards and quality of information exchange.

9.8   Produce a distribution chart for documents produced by Europol – in consultation with Member States – to be certain that the recipients and services concerned benefit from Europol's output.

9.9   Organise targeted seminars to provide Member States with a better knowledge of Europol services and products, insisting if necessary on the different but complementary roles of OLAF and Europol. Continuation will follow in individual Member States within the CEPOL framework, for which Europol has developed training on the organisation in general as well as the exchange of information and intelligence, intelligence-led enforcement and practical case studies in various areas of organised crime.

9.10   Achieve the pilot project on video conferencing and consider using this technique in order to reduce travel costs and other expenditure linked to meetings as far as possible.

9.11   Establish centralised training courses assisted by the ENU and SIRENE for all law-enforcement authorities. In these training programmes, examples of best practice should be used in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of Europol.

9.12   In association with the Member States, draw up a strategic plan to ensure that they have training programmes and information on Europol's structure and tasks.

9.13   Particular attention should be paid to the quality of analyses produced for the benefit of the Member States.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ACRONYM ABBREVIATION TERM	ENGLISH TRANSLATION OR EXPLANATION
AKC	Analytical Coordination Centre
AWF	Analysis Work File
BKA	Bundeskriminalamt (Federal Crime Office)
CAU	Criminal Analysis Unit
CBA	Central Anti-Corruption office
CCOC	Coordination Centre against Organised Crime
CEMU	Unified Command Executive Board
CHEOPS	Central Architecture System for providing a data network for National Police
CICO	Intelligence Centre against Organised Crime
CICS	Computer Information Central System
CIS	Customs Information System
CNACA	Anti-Terrorist Coordination Centre
DAC	Directorate of Analysis and Coordination
DAVA	Customs Surveillance Sub-Directorate
DIA	Anti-Mafia Investigation Directorate
DNA	National Anti-Mafia Directorate
EIS	Europol Information System
ENU	Europol National Unit
EURODAC	European automated fingerprint identification system
FIU	Financial Investigation Unit
FPR	Data system for wanted persons
FVV	Data system for stolen vehicles
HIO	High-impact operation on illegal immigration, in collaboration with Europol
HMCE	Her Majesty's Customs and Excise
ICT	Information and Communications Technologies

ACRONYM ABBREVIATION TERM	ENGLISH TRANSLATION OR EXPLANATION
IMT	Information Management and Technology
INPOL	BKA-LKA database
JHA	Justice and Home Affairs
JIT	Joint Investigation Team
KAIRI	Information system for all LEAs
KCIK	National Centre for Criminal Information
LKA	Landeskriminalamt (*Land* Crime Office)
LO	Liaison Officer
MDG	Multi Disciplinary Group on Organised Crime
MOU	Memorandum Of Understanding
NCIS	National Criminal Intelligence Service
NCS	National Crime Squad
NEBEK	International Law Enforcement Cooperation Centre
OCTA	Organised Crime Threat Assessment
OCTOPUS	System to support investigations and the registration of intelligence (same as RBS)
PEGAS	Database of the Unit for Organised Crime
PTN	Nordic Police and Customs Cooperation
RBS	System to support investigations and the registration of intelligence (same as OCTOPUS)
SIS	Schengen Information System
SOCA	Serious Organised Crime Agency
STIC	Système de Traitement des Infractions Constatées (Recorded offences database)
VIS	Visa Information System
VROS	National Index on Criminal Investigations

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