



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

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Assessment of law enforcement tools: no new databases needed at EU level

Exchanging information is an essential tool for law enforcement authorities, both when fighting serious organised crime (such as terrorism, trafficking in human beings, drugs or firearms) and offences committed by individuals across borders (such as murders and sexual violence against children).

Today, the European Commission adopted a Communication taking stock of how the information exchange works in the EU today, and recommending practical ways to improve it.

It concludes that information exchange generally works well, and no new EU-level law enforcement databases are therefore needed at this stage. However, the existing EU instruments should be better implemented, and exchange of information should be organised more consistently - in particular by creating Single Points of Contact for law enforcement agencies in all Member States.

The Communication emphasises the need to ensure high data quality and to respect data protection rules, and also explains how the EU will provide support, including funding and training, for Member States.

"Improving cross-border information exchange is not an end in itself. The purpose is to tackle crime more effectively and reduce harm to victims and to the EU economy. The measures in place generally work well, and there is no need for new law enforcement databases. But there is scope for improvement. In particular, legislation that has been agreed must be fully implemented and used more consistently, by all Member States", said Commissioner for Home Affairs Cecilia Malmström.

Examples of EU information exchange instruments include:

- The **Swedish Initiative** that establishes rules, including deadlines, for exchange of information and intelligence between Member State law enforcement authorities for the purpose of conducting criminal investigations or criminal intelligence operations.
- The **Prüm** Decision that sets up a system of automated exchange between member State law enforcement authorities of DNA profiles, fingerprint data and vehicle registration data for investigating criminal offences.
- **Europol** provides a platform for Member States – through Europol National Units (ENUs) – to exchange criminal intelligence and information. Member States can use the data for investigations and Europol uses it for its analysis where it falls under its mandate and is therefore shared with Europol.
- A **European Border Surveillance System (EUROSUR)** is being developed for information exchange and operational cooperation between National Coordination Centres and with Frontex to improve situational awareness and reaction capability for preventing irregular migration and cross-border crime at the EU's external borders.

Background

Today's Communication responds to the invitation in the *Stockholm Programme* for the Commission to assess the need for a European Information Exchange Model based on an evaluation of existing instruments. It builds on the Commission's Communication of 2010 giving an overview of information management in the area of freedom, security and justice and on the *EU Information Management Strategy* for internal security agreed in 2009 (Council Conclusions 30 November 2009), along with actions undertaken by Member States, the Commission and Europol to implement it. It also draws on a mapping exercise of EU information exchange involving national and other (EDPS, EU agencies, Interpol) experts, a study on information exchange among law enforcement authorities, and discussions with stakeholders, including data protection authorities.

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