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From: Belgian delegation  
To: Law Enforcement Working Party

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Subject: Conclusions of the meeting of the Forerunners group of European Union Liaison Officers (Brussels, 23 November 2011)

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On 23 November 2012, the Forerunners group of European Union Liaison Officers (EU LOs) met in Brussels. The Forerunners group was considered to be a good initiative by its participants (BE, SE, NL, AT, FR, DK, FI, GSC). The participants agreed to keep the group informal and to open up the group to other EU Member States (MS) with a LO network. The Forerunners group should accordingly present its conclusions and proposals to the LEWP (and COSI).

The participants agreed to meet each other twice a year alternately in Brussels and The Hague.

The meeting focused on three main themes:

- I. Information exchange regarding the EU LO networks
- II. Facilitation of cooperation between liaison officers
- III. New trends and opportunities in international police cooperation (IPC) and international exchanges of information

each of which was divided into several topics.

## **I. Information exchange regarding the EU LO networks:**

- In order to further facilitate the information exchange within the EU LO networks, the group emphasised the need for an accurate and updated Compendium. Therefore, an electronic version of the annual updated Compendium 2012 (doc. 16686/12) will be sent to all MS. Consideration was given to the possibility of working towards an online version, using the experts platform of Europol (EPE), where experiences and best practices could then be shared.

Since MS were unable to agree on the insertion of a list of foreign LOs posted within the EU, the group discussed the option of simply providing this list as an addendum to the Compendium.

Concerning the circulation of the Compendium, all the participants agreed not to make the instrument public, but rather to make it available at the national contact points and/or the central directorates concerned.

- There is a specific need for LO management service meetings to enhance cooperation and to share information and experiences on LO posts without duplicating working parties and/or meetings. Here also the EPE could be a useful instrument for assembling information (working methods on how to determine) on the opening, closing or moving of posts.
- The groups discussed methods for selection, training and evaluation of LOs. Concerning the training of LOs, the participants agreed to draw up an inventory of training courses and to consider the possibility of CEPOL and EUROPOL organising a common part.

### Conclusions & proposals:

- The list of foreign LOs in the MS should be added as an addendum to the Compendium. As for the drafting of this list, the same principles apply as for the list of EU LOs in third countries.
- The possibility of using the EPE for exchanging information on postings of liaison officers, experiences and good practices will be examined.
- EUROPOL and CEPOL will be asked what support they can offer for the training of liaison officers.

## II. Facilitation of cooperation between liaison officers:

- Concerning LO meetings in third countries, some delegations questioned the added value of certain LO meetings in third countries. The results and returns obtained should reflect the efforts and investments made.

In order to facilitate discussions on operational matters, the Forerunners group supported the idea of having a purely operational part of these meetings, accessible for police officers only. Since some members already organise internal regional operational meetings on a yearly basis, the group suggested opening up these meetings to the other EU LOs present in the region.

- Regarding the possible role of LOs in the OAP, participants reaffirmed that there was only a minor role for the LO to play.
- As regards the common LO platforms, participants were aware that these platforms are not closely monitored or evaluated by the back offices. It was therefore suggested that the regional INTERPOL offices should play a more active role in relation to regional LO meetings and/or common platforms.

### Conclusions & proposals:

- The regional LO meetings of some participants already organised on a yearly basis could be opened up to other LOs in the region.
- The Forerunners group recommend that part of the LO meetings in third countries be reserved to discuss operational matters amongst police officers.
- Participants were asked to reflect on the tasks and minimum requirements of common LO platforms in order to monitor or evaluate the functioning of the platforms.

### **III. New trends and opportunities in international police cooperation (IPC) and international exchanges of information:**

- A exchange of views took place regarding the existing methods for selecting the information channels to be used. In this regard, the BE delegation proposed to present its model for choosing information channels at a forthcoming meeting of the Forerunners group.
- Most participants of the Forerunners group encourage the use of the EUROPOL channel. The national desks at EUROPOL are being reinforced by almost every MS.

#### Conclusions & proposals:

- The BE delegation proposed to present its model for choosing information channels at a forthcoming meeting of the Forerunners group.
- The Forerunners group agreed to examine the possibility of organising a conference with EUROPOL, the LOs in the national desks at EUROPOL and the management services on optimising the functioning and support of the LO desks. The BE delegation will contact EUROPOL in this regard.

The Law Enforcement Working Party is asked to take note of the outcome of discussions and to facilitate the way forward as mentioned in the "conclusions and proposals" chapters.