



Europol Unclassified – Basic Protection Level

The Hague,	10 December 2014		
EDOC #	751421	v	1
Unit	[REDACTED]		
Author	[REDACTED]		
Phone	[REDACTED]		

**Report on conference  
Assembly of Regional Groups On Surveillance [ARGOS]**

Routing Table			
	Unit or function	Approved by	Approval date
From	[REDACTED]		10/12
Via			11/12/14
			13/12/14
To			15/12
Cc			

Event	Conference on covert surveillance bringing together all members of the Cross-border Surveillance Working group [CSW], the Surveillance Expert Network for South-East Europe [SENSEE] and delegates representing the remaining EU MS
Subject	Covert Surveillance
Role in event	Organiser and chair
Place / Date	The Hague / 26-28 November 2014
Organised by	Europol
Advisable to attend + why?	Yes, on top of being the Initiator of the event, O14 represents Europol in the Strategic Boards of both the CSW and SENSEE expert groups
Participants	AL, AT, BE, BH, BG, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IC, IE, IT, LV, LT, LU, MD, NL, PT, RO, RS, SE, SK, SI and UK
Date of next conference	To be discussed
Special contacts	[REDACTED]
Related documentation	EDOC-#747029-ARGOS Conference Participants list 26-28 November 2014 EDOC-#739368-CS ARGOS Conference HQ 141126-28 Agenda

**CSW Background**

[REDACTED]

The main driver for the initial seminar was the increased international mobility of criminals due to the removal of border controls and the use of the most modern technology by subjects.

▪ **Membership**

[REDACTED]

▪ **Work completed**

[REDACTED]

The 2013 exchange programme allowed for every CSW member to send 2 operatives for a 2 weeks period to a surveillance unit of their choice.

[REDACTED]

▪ **Main issues**

- Despite the NCA's efforts and Europol signing up as a partner, the CSW did not manage to secure ISEC funding at the last call earlier in 2014. The group no longer benefits from financial support.
- Except for Europol all long standing Steering Committee members have left or will leave the expert group by spring next year. New members need to step up and take over.

[REDACTED]

**PUBLIC**  
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to the public on:  
21 FEB 2013

1 CSW: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Europol (Strategic board members)

[REDACTED]

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### SENSEE Background

In May 2012 the Expert Working Group, advisory body to the respective Ministries of the PCC contracting partners, agreed on the creation of the Surveillance Expert Network for South-East Europe.



#### ▪ Membership

The Contracting Parties to the PCC SEE are member of the SENSEE network, totalling 11 countries and Europol<sup>3</sup>.



#### ▪ Work Completed

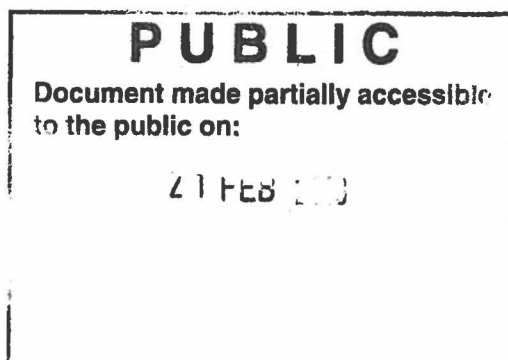
- Upon the creation of the SENSEE EPE environment in 2013, an overarching Covert Surveillance community was created, grouping CSW, ISG and SENSEE contributions by default. Nevertheless specific EPE sub-communities exist for CSW-ISG and for SENSEE.



#### ▪ Main issues



- The group still is quite young and besides the language issue, the group members remain quite reluctant to share operational experiences. The networking opportunities will help building the required trust.
- The creation of the EPE for SENSEE has been dominating the annual meetings so far. The members seem happy to exchange basic information (e.g. contact, structure, legal etc.), but are not at ease in sharing practical knowledge and best practices.



3 SENSEE: Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Hungary, FYRoM, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia and Europol (Strategic Board members)

4 Currently ensured by the permanent DCAF office in Ljubljana

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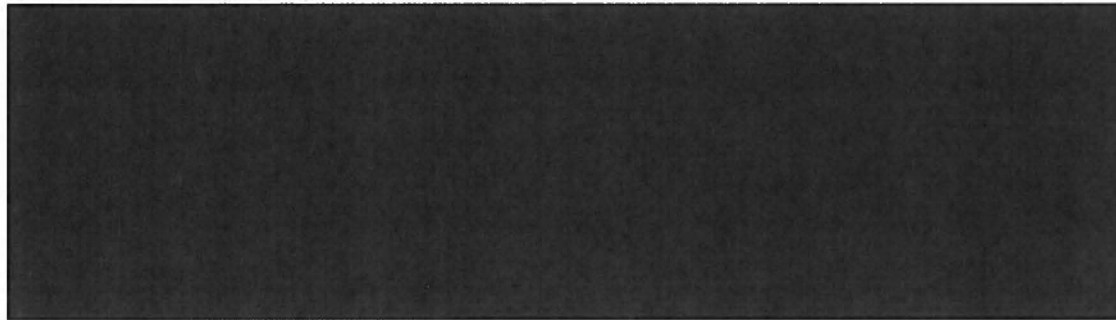
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**The ARGOS Conference**

Europol initiated and organised an overall conference on the subject of covert surveillance already in November 2008 and 2011 grouping experts on surveillance from all EU MS for the first time. CSW welcomed the periodic "opening up" towards the MS not part of their group.

55 participants registered, representing 27 countries<sup>6</sup>, Europol financed the accommodation and costs for one group dinner.

Both the CSW and SENSEE had a separate group meeting "back to back" on Wednesday 26 Nov PM. The sessions on Thursday and Friday AM will be all together.



**Way forward**

The overall outcome and response was extremely positive. Surprisingly the encouraging feedback not only came from the WB Countries but the initially reluctant CSW members proved to be evenly enthusiastic.

One can surely conclude that both expert groups drew closer together as the direct outcomes of the conference are:



In addition, Europol seized the opportunity

- to promote the safe sharing of knowledge and expertise through the dedicated EPE network



Both Chairs and several participants hinted at Europol in order to have the initiative repeated on a yearly basis; however O14 only suggested that we might repeat the effort every 2 or 3 years. As an alternative, we suggested that since both CSW and SENSEE have biannual meetings, the groups could have one meeting separate and align the time and place for the second, thus creating a common meeting. This topic will for sure be on the agenda of the respective upcoming steering committee meetings.

O14 will continue its support to the respective Chairs aiming to increase the active involvement of all partners and exchange expert knowledge and expertise on covert surveillance. Extra effort will be put in linking up with similar informal groups dealing with technical surveillance.

