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NOTE

From:	Europol
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Novel Actionable information, Criminal intelligence analysis and data analytics portal (CONAN)

Delegations will find in the annex a note from Europol on the Criminal intelligence analysis and data analytics portal (CONAN).

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The Hague, 11/10/2019

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Novel Actionable information

Criminal intelligence analysis and data analytics portal CONAN

1.   Background

In the Council conclusions on Novel Actionable Information of 6 June 2019[1], the Council called upon Europol to present a roadmap for the development of a knowledge-sharing platform - "Novel Actionable Information" (NAI) - to the Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation on Internal Security (COSI) by the end of 2019 with the objective of connecting experts, tools, initiatives and services in the area of digital data. This platform should build upon already available experience with knowledge sharing and expert platforms, such as the Europol Platform for Experts (EPE) and avoid duplication with already existing initiatives.

This document presents the current status of the new online platform, the Member States (MS) requirements and the future plan.

Additionally, Europol was requested to establish a Working Group on Criminal Intelligence Analysis. The last meeting of that Group took place on 28/10 at Europol.

2.   Launch of CONAN

After an analysis of the requirements expressed by the MS[2], Europol reached the conclusion that the majority of the requirements could be met through the use of EPE. Therefore, Europol already developed an initial platform and will perform, in cooperation with the MS a detailed evaluation and additional requirements analysis for the future platform.

On 3 October 2019 Europol launched the new criminal analysis portal, named "CONAN" (CONecting ANalysts), at the European Police Chiefs Convention. CONAN currently connects **1200 criminal intelligence analysts**, coming from the MS, EU agencies (Europol, EBCGA, Eurojust, EMCDDA, OLAF, ..) and Third partner countries. New analysts are joining up every day.

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[1]   Council conclusions on Novel Actionable Information (9720/19)

[2]   Opportunities for improving Criminal Analysis in Europe: EU Member States' requirements on criminal analysis (15200/18); Policing in a Connected World: Novel Actionable Information - Thematic discussion (5572/19); Council conclusions on Novel Actionable Information (9720/19)

3. **Current functionalities**

The new portal has several functionalities to connect analysts and help them to align ways of performing criminal analysis between law enforcement organisations across the European Union:

- A knowledge-sharing environment, including:

  o Best practices documents;

  o Standards, guidelines and procedures applicable for criminal analysis (both strategic and operational);

  o Online training;

  o Catalogue of shared ICT applications and services.

- An interactive community, including:

  o Discussion forums;

  o Chat functionality;

  o Helpdesk on criminal analysis.

4. **Coming soon: Collaboration on data analytics and software development**

MS have expressed the wish to collaborate on software development and data analytics developments. Currently, Europol is implementing a code sharing platform for this purpose. The platform will provide users the possibility to store and co-create software tools and co-edit code. For example, MS have expressed their willingness to translate the automated data extraction functionality that Europol has developed, into their Member State language(s). The software development platform will be connected to CONAN and users will be able to use this platform with the same log-in credentials as for CONAN. The portal will be launched at the end of 2019.

5. **Future needs**

5.1. Further development of CONAN: Meeting MS requirements

Parts of the requirements expressed by the MS were found not possible to meet in the short term. In addition, a number of shortcoming in the usability of the portal were reported.

- Experimentation testbed - The MS expressed the need for an experimentation testbed, enabling them to test system-to-system interfaces with services listed in the catalogue of shared ICT applications and services.

- Access to external applications - The portal includes a catalogue of shared ICT applications and services. The MS expressed the wish to have a common access to public ICT resources listed in the catalogue.

- Usability of the portal - Users of the portal have reported some shortcomings in the usability of the portal which cannot be addressed by the current platform infrastructure.

These topics need to be further analysed to fully understand the needs of the MS. In addition, they need to be prioritised together with the MS, in order to be able to focus resources on the most important topics for the MS first. After analysis and prioritisation, Europol will present a plan for meeting the MS needs and solving the portal's shortcomings in 2020.

The plan will include an overview of the necessary technical and financial resources required to further develop this platform.

5.2. Management of CONAN

In order to ensure that CONAN can continue to support the connected analysts, it is important that sufficient effort is put into keeping the portal up-to-date. New content needs to be reviewed and added to the portal, and existing content needs to be kept up-to-date. In addition, moderation of the discussion forums is needed to ensure that the discussions are on-topic and questions are answered or forwarded to the relevant experts. Moreover, technical support and assistance needs to be provided to the 1200 users of the portal, and a further growth of users is to be expected in 2020.

5.3.   Resource Requirements

A technical requirements exercise for a modernised platform meeting MS needs, will be prepared by the end of Q1 2020. This document will include an estimation of the financial cost of a modernised platform.

Regarding the current maintenance of the platform, Europol assesses that a minimum of four staff members is required in order to perform the management of CONAN.

As for next steps, Europol would like to have more clarity on the possibilities for funding, as in line with the Council conclusions on Novel Actionable Information of 6 June 2019[3], especially with regard to the funding of staff to manage the current platform and ensure business continuity in order to support MS national law enforcement.

COSI is invited to take note of the progress made, and express views on the achievements and challenges related to the development of CONAN.

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[3]   "[The Council of the European Union] CALLS UPON the Commission to explore the possibility of allocating adequate resources, as called for by the European Council in October 2018 , and to support the NAI platform as regards future funding made available to the MS, Agencies and networks (e.g. budget top-ups or calls for projects) with a view to ensuring cohesion and complementarity between stakeholders by promoting the use of NAI as a common platform for initiatives and projects;"