Council of the European Union

NOTE

From:	Presidency
To:	Delegations
Subject:	The EU Innovation Hub - Way forward - Governance and Operational tasks

On 8 October 2019, Ministers at the JHA Council expressed their overall support for the creation of an Innovation Hub at Europol[1], which could act as an observatory of new technological developments and drive innovation, including by developing standard technical solutions for Member States (MS) in the field of internal security.

The European Union (EU) Innovation Hub for Internal Security ("Hub") is a collaborative platform of innovation labs, as mentioned in its mission statement. It will provide an EU platform to support the delivery of R&D, and innovative cutting-edge products for citizens' security in our area of freedom, security and justice.

The Hub, due to is positioning, will act as a network of innovation labs, based on peer cooperation between key EU Agencies, will have an overarching role in assessing the risks and fostering the use and development of advanced and emerging technologies and promoting a culture of innovation and knowledge sharing across internal security actors in the EU and its MS. Its focus will be internal security, aiming to serve the broader community of stakeholders in the JHA area, notably in law enforcement agencies, border management, criminal justice and the security aspects of migration and customs.

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[1] The initiative will be referred hereinafter as the EU Innovation Hub for Internal Security ("the Hub") to distinguish it from the individual research and development capacities of the JHA Agencies in the form of innovation labs.

In its meeting on 21 February 2020, COSI confirmed the mission statement, main features, tasks and governance of the Hub[2], including the establishment of a Steering Group to provide direction and exercise responsibility for the work of the Hub.

Building on this, COSI, in its meeting of 15 May, adopted further principles for establishing the Hub, setting out, in particular, a series of operational tasks and modalities related to its resources and governance[3].

The efficient and effective functioning of the Hub will be also defined by the model that will be established for its governance and for the development of its main operational tasks.

The overriding principle guiding COSI considerations in this respect is that "the governance of the Hub will be of a collaborative nature with a light governance structure"[4]. The governance model should therefore provide the necessary flexibility to foster innovation in a needs-driven way[5] and should ensure the Hub outputs, while providing support, guidance and oversight to that effect.

Considering the strategic need to establish the criteria for the Hub governance, as well as recognizing the importance of the principles of ownership, commitment and rotation among MS and the JHA Agencies, it is relevant to define strategic guidance for governance and operational tasks.

In this respect, in view of the Presidency first and foremost, it is important to outline and follow up on developments in relation to the operational tasks and modalities set out for the Hub, so that the governance structure takes into account these developments.

There is a strong demand for the EU Innovation Hub to further develop its operational work, underlined by recently adopted Council instruments. For example, the Council conclusions on Internal Security and European Police Partnership[6] call on the Commission to remove legal barriers to share and pool data amongst Member States for innovation purposes, especially to train, test and validate algorithms, and underline the role of the EU Innovation Hub in this context. The EU Innovation Hub at Europol can play an important role in making further progress on the topic of encryption, e.g. capacity building, identifying innovative technical solutions, etc.

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[2]   5757/20
[3]   7829/20
[4]   7829/20
[5]   7829/20
[6]   13083/1/20

As indicated in the Europol presentation[7], the (at present virtual) Hub Team[8] that supports the Hub and contributes to its work presently consists of representatives of the JHA Agencies, as well as the Commission/DG HOME and JRC, the General Secretariat of the Council and the Office of the EU CTC. It is currently actively involved in identifying and defining specific "quick win" projects. These are on-going and future R&D projects that can be started or developed under the auspices of the Hub and that can provide concrete added value and results for the overall community relatively swiftly.

In the course of January 2021, the JHA Agencies agreed to select certain "quick win" projects in the field of AI, one of the COSI's priority topics for the Hub, with a view to launching concrete cooperation in due course. As agreed by the Hub Team, Europol has compiled a set of criteria for these "quick win" projects, as well as guidelines on the way these projects could be conducted.

In view of the Presidency the following aspects are therefore important to highlight at this stage to support further development of the EU Innovation Hub:

1. The Member States are invited to continue and further strengthen their support to the Hub, in order for the Hub to foster a close and natural connection with the national innovation labs and to share the burden of the resource implications of the Hub's activities.

2. COSI will discuss the governance of the Hub, including the establishment of the Steering Group once the operational tasks and modalities of the Hub have become effective, starting with the "quick win" projects. This will allow sufficient experience to be gained and useful lessons to be drawn, so that this can inform decisions on the development of an appropriate governance model.

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[7]   5905/21
[8]   5757/20 and 7829/20

5906/21   MH/dk   3
                                    JAI.1   **LIMITE**   **EN**

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3.	At present the Hub is running on existing resources of the Agencies. Fostering innovation would require specific resources. The Commission, supporting Europol and together with the participating JHA Agencies, is invited to scope the existing situation, assess the needs and identify possible concrete next steps to ensure the necessary resources for the functioning of the Hub.

Delegations are invited to express their views on the issues outlined above.

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