COVER NOTE

from :	Chairman of the Europol Management Board
to :	Chairman of the Article 36 Committee
Subject :	The Strategy for Europol

Delegations will find in annex a letter of the Chairman of the Europol Management Board informing the Council about the Strategy for Europol.

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EUROPOL
Management Board

The Hague, 31 July 2007
MBS 133.2007

> Mr António Delicado and Mrs Rita Faden
> Chair of the Article 36 Committee
> Council of the European Union

Dear Mr Delicato and Mrs Faden,

I am pleased to inform the Council about the attached Strategy for Europol, which was elaborated by the Management Board in close cooperation with the Director.

The Strategy is a flexible and future-oriented instrument supporting an increasingly operational Europol and aims at focusing its priority areas.

The Management Board elaborated the Strategy paying close attention to the needs of Europol as well as to the environment in which it operates and agreed that the Strategy's implementation will also depend on variables, including the future Council Decision replacing the Europol Convention.

In view of the changing nature of the operational framework, the Management Board will monitor the Strategy's implementation by Europol and the national competent authorities with the assistance of the Heads of the Europol National Unit.

I remain at your disposal for any further information you may need on this issue.

Yours sincerely,

Jaime Fernandes
Chairman of the Europol Management Board

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THE STRATEGY FOR EUROPOL

The strategy should allow Europol to do more of that which it can do better

The strategy will enable Europol[1] to achieve its vision[2] through the implementation of its mission[3] while fulfilling the corporate values[4]. It encompasses mission-oriented goals, consequential objectives and a benchmarking framework that allows monitoring their implementation. The strategy, which will emphasize the operational aspect of Europol, will be flexible, future-oriented and will have a memory of the past while taking stock of the present in an objective way.

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[1] The concept of Europol integrates the Headquarters and the National Units representing the competent authorities.

[2] Europol will be a world-class centre of excellence to support the EU Member States' fight against all forms of serious international crime and terrorism.

[3] The objective of Europol shall be to assist in improving the effectiveness and cooperation of the competent authorities in the Member States in preventing and combating all forms of serious international crime and terrorism.

[4] Engagement and commitment; integrity; dynamic and proactive; professional and results oriented; credibility and reliability; dialogue based cooperation; leadership and common approach.

Background

The objective of the Paris Vision (December 2000) was "to define the perspectives of the action of Europol in terms of planning and strategy, to allow it, in the framework of the Europol Convention, to perform its mission of providing assistance to national law enforcement agencies … and … to set the framework of Europol in terms of priorities and to define its tasks and objectives". Its aim was Europol's stabilization.

The Rhodes Vision (April 2003) foresaw that "Europol has to support the Member States and EU bodies and to act as a centre of European excellence for information exchange and analysis, in combating serious international organised crime". Its aim was Europol's consolidation.

Current situation

Since December 2000, the Member States represented within Europol through their Management Board members (MB) identified **information exchange and operational analysis** as Europol's core activities and developmental priorities. The Rhodes Vision stated that "the core business of Europol is receiving, exchanging and analyzing information and intelligence (operational/strategic)".

Implementing these priorities required action by Europol and the Member States alike. Internally, emphasis was placed on completing the development of a functional and stabilized Information System (IS), on adapting to the EU enlargement and expanding the cooperation framework, and on exploring the future role in joint investigations. Member States were to increase the sharing of information and intelligence and to assist in the process leading to joint investigations. It would appear that the large-scale priorities set for Europol have been met both at Head Quarters and Member States level, although not all areas were addressed and quality processes remain underdeveloped.

While stabilization was consistent with the recent establishment of Europol and consolidation was logical in view of its development, the features of the new vision dictate the scenario of an evolution.

The state of the art

Formal and informal analysis as well as the ensuing debate demonstrated limited awareness of or trust in (most often a combination thereof) Europol by the national competent authorities, which is not acceptable for any support and service-provider organization.

A number of Member States[5] express criticism towards both the support and services provided by Europol, while, in turn, Europol calls attention to the shortcomings in the cooperation afforded by Member States. This vicious circle is a no-win game that must be broken if Europol is to effectively assist Member States in improving law enforcement cooperation in its mandated areas.

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[5] "Europol's role in the (EU) international law enforcement cooperation is marginal, actual meaningful successes are limited, the majority of EU Member States are not (sufficiently) contributing to Europol's "information position" and Europol is unknown or - at its best - perceived as a political bureaucracy on the investigating field". (Belgian contribution to the second meeting of the Strategy Committee; X070088; #220221).

Implementation of the Rhodes Vision has been scanty according to both Europol[6] and Member States, possibly due to vagueness and lack of a clear ownership.

This prompted the MB to establish the Strategy Committee (StratCom), which considered that "Europol's objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely, and have a clear ownership".[7]

Planning Europol's evolution
The internal and external changes that have affected Europol during the Rhodes Vision's life-span paved the way to its future. Examples of these changes are the number of Member States, which almost doubled in three years, the enhanced operational perspective brought about by The Hague Programme, including the European Criminal Intelligence Model and the OCTA, and the revised legal framework resulting from the entry into force of the three Protocols amending the Convention (while Member States are busy negotiating a draft Council Decision replacing the Europol Convention that may enter into force in 2010).

Whereas the strategy is the instrument enabling the achievement of the vision through the implementation of the mission - adopted by the MB in September 2006 -, the identification of strategic, core business goals and objectives connecting the planning instruments to the mission is required to ensure and control Europol's progress towards the vision.

The StratCom took note of a strategic analysis[8] presented by Europol and considered that it did not influence the development of the strategy. The StratCom agreed that a joint strategic analysis should be developed to support the implementation of the strategy before the elaboration of the draft Work Programme 2009, at the latest.

Member States should not underestimate the need to establish action plans supporting and allowing Europol's fulfilment of its tasks at the domestic level, which should also include objectives and relevant assessment mechanisms.

The essence of Europol
In accordance with the tasks detailed by the Convention[9], Europol's core business is[10]:
- Exchange of operational information (e.g., LBx network);
- Operational analytical support (e.g., IS, AWFs);
- Strategic analysis (e.g., OCTA, TE-SAT);
- Operational support to investigations (e.g., JITs, information management);

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[6]   Evaluation of Rhodes Vision (#216748).
[7]   Europol's strategy: elements and structure (MBS 029.2007).
[8]   SWOT-PESTEL analysis on Europol (1424-40).
[9]   Article 3 (Tasks).
[10] MBS 029.2007.

- Knowledge and / or expertise products (e.g., Knowledge Management Centre; handbooks).

The following conceptual rules guide the implementation of Europol's strategy:
- "Support" and "assist", with a focus on the operational perspective, are the key strategic elements of Europol's vision and mission;
- The strategic objectives need to be grounded in reality, including a good "business case" addressing the resources and capabilities of the Organization;
- The process is result-driven as opposed to process-oriented;
- The strategy will ensure MB's oversight for the long-term future of Europol and the Director's oversight for its day-to-day running;
- Member States play a specific role in, contribute to and bear responsibility for the implementation of the strategy;
- Performance assessment and accountability are key issues in the implementation of the strategy;
- Departmental strategies should be completely aligned to each other and with the overall strategy;
- It is important to achieve tangible results early on in the implementation of the strategy in order to boost interest and participation and act as a catalyst for further progress.

Strategic goals

Goals are broad, mission-related statements about what is to be achieved. Europol's goals are core business related and of a horizontal, cross-departmental nature. Their level of accomplishment, primary responsibility of the Director, will indicate the extent to which Europol is assisting to improve the effectiveness and cooperation of Member States' competent authorities in preventing and combating all forms of serious international crime and terrorism.

Europol's goals are to:
- **Become the first platform of choice for Member States to share operational and strategic information through a strengthened ENU/ELO network, within secure and user-friendly information exchange communication facilities;**
- **Supply operational analysis to Member States and partners on the basis of an adequate quantity and quality of live information, given its unique legal framework to process personal and sensitive data;**
- **Provide strategic analysis through broadening analytical capabilities in all priority crime areas;**
- **Provide operational support to (clusters of) Member States and partners through products and services meeting their needs and expectations.**

Strategic objectives

Objectives are operationally-related statements of outcomes contributing to the achievement of a particular goal and with a clear ownership.

Europol's objectives are accompanied by a SMART[11] benchmarking framework enabling the MB to control the level to which the different actors fulfil their responsibilities, particularly in view of the MB's task to submit an opinion to the Council on the renewal of the Director and Deputy Directors.

Evaluation

The evaluation of the completion of the tasks assigned should combine internal monitoring of performance and external accountability through MB reporting, which would be enhanced by a strengthened use of Key Performance Indicators and a fair assessment of the results of the Annual Client Survey.

In particular, the measurement or performance assessment methodology should include review procedures, monitoring rules or mid-course correction procedures (ad interim assessment) and should be conducted according to agreed standards. The evaluation will be defined according to quantities (benchmarks' implementation rate and deadline) elaborated by the Europol Directorate and agreed by the MB.

The MB will monitor (six months) and review (one year) the implementation of the strategy.

The future of Europol depends on its ability to focus resources where it can ensure more and better services to the Member States and the citizens of the European Union.

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[11] **Specific**: with a clear aim and expected result; **Measurable**: it is possible to ascertain whether they are being met; **Achievable**: it is possible to reach them…; **Realistic**: … with the available resources…; **Timely**: … and within a given timeframe.