



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

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Europol: The EU hub for support to law enforcement cooperation and training

Today the Commission proposed to make the EU law enforcement Agency (Europol) more effective at collecting information, analysing it and sharing these analyses with the Member States. This will let Europol provide more concrete and targeted support to the national law enforcement authorities in their cross-border cooperation and investigations. At the same time the proposal increases Europol's accountability to the European Parliament and the national Parliaments and strengthens the protection of personal data.

The new Regulation also reinforces the link between training and support to operational cooperation, by merging the European Police College (Cepol) within Europol and by making Europol responsible for joint training and exchange programmes for police and other law enforcement personnel.

"The EU needs an effective and cost-efficient agency to help Member States fight serious cross-border crime and terrorism, ensuring the safety and security of citizens and protecting the licit economy. Our proposals aim to enhance Europol's role as a European law enforcement agency, to reinforce personal data protection and increase Europol's accountability to the European Parliament and national parliaments and to ensure the quality and coherence of the training offered to frontline officers", said Cecilia Malmström EU Commissioner for Home Affairs.

Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič, responsible for Administration and Interinstitutional Affairs, said: *"During difficult economic and budgetary times, all EU institutions and agencies have to make efforts to streamline their operations. This reform of Europol shows that it is possible to be cost-efficient while increasing effectiveness at the same time. It is a strong start for the EU's plans to improve the functioning of its decentralised agencies."*

The activities of organised crime networks are more complex, diverse and internationally spread than ever before. Serious crimes such as trafficking in human beings, drugs, and firearms, corruption, payment card fraud, cybercrime, and terrorist offences cause severe harm to victims, inflict economic damage on a large scale and undermine citizens' sense of security. Smooth cross-border cooperation, efficient use of information and analysis, and appropriate operational support to investigations are crucial for Member States to adequately respond to these threats.

The Commission proposes to boost Europol's role as the European law enforcement agency in the following ways:

- For Europol to truly become the EU hub for information exchange and analysis on serious crime, the Regulation strengthens and clarifies the obligation for Member States to supply data to Europol. Targeted financial support to investigations is also foreseen. Europol will report annually on the quantity and quality of the data supplied by Member States.
- To enable Europol to better establish links between data already in its possession and to subsequently analyse them, the agency's data processing structure will be re-designed. The European Data Protection Supervisor will be given responsibility for external data protection supervision of Europol, and the rights of individuals affected by data processing by Europol will be strengthened.
- The regulation merges Europol and Cepol into a single agency, which will be housed in Europol's headquarters in The Hague, the Netherlands, to realise synergies and efficiency gains. Combining the operational law enforcement cooperation know-how of Europol with the training and education expertise of Cepol will strengthen the links between the two fields. Duplication of support functions in the two agencies will be avoided, and the resulting savings re-invested in training courses. This is also the fruit of last year's interinstitutional agreement on decentralised agencies. The so-called 'Common Approach' aims to improve the coherence, effectiveness, accountability and transparency of all these agencies, including by looking for synergies and merging agencies, where appropriate.
- Finally, to increase parliamentary scrutiny of Europol, the European Parliament and national Parliaments will be consulted on Europol's strategic multi-annual work programme. Both the European Parliament and the national parliaments will receive information through annual activity reports and final accounts each year, as well as threat assessments, strategic analyses and general situation reports.

Background

With the Stockholm Programme, the European Council called on Europol to evolve and "become a hub for information exchange between the law enforcement authorities of the Member States, a service provider and a platform for law enforcement services". It also called for the establishment of European training schemes and exchange programmes for all relevant law enforcement professionals at national and EU level.

Today the Commission adopted:

- A proposal for a Regulation on the EU Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation & Training (Europol) and repealing Council Decision 2009/371/JHA (establishing Europol) and 2005/681/JHA (establishing Cepol).
- A Communication on the European Law Enforcement Training Scheme (LETS).

When the new Regulation has been adopted by the European Parliament and the Council, Europol will become responsible for implementing the LETS. The Bramshill site in the United Kingdom - where Cepol is located - is due to be closed in the course of 2014. The British authorities announced that the closure of the site will be handled in such a way that operations at Cepol can continue without any disturbance.

The United Kingdom and Ireland may take part in the adoption and application of the proposed Regulation by notifying the Council in writing that they wish to do so (within three months after the proposed regulation has been presented to the Council). Denmark does not take part in measures pursuant to Title V of Part Three of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), such as the proposed Regulation.

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