



Council of the
European Union

**Brussels, 9 June 2016
(OR. en)**

10109/16

LIMITE

**JAI 563
COSI 105
ENFOPOL 190**

NOTE

From: Europol
To: JHA Counsellors / COSI Support Group
Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation on Internal Security

Subject: Draft Media Strategy – Joint Action Days 2016
Operation CICONIA ALBA

Delegations will find attached the draft Media Strategy - Joint Action Days 2016: Operation CICONIA ALBA, prepared by Europol.



The Hague, 9 June 2016

EDOC# 825358

Draft Media Strategy – Joint Action Days 2016

Operation CICONIA ALBA

Background

Operation CICONIA ALBA is the name of the third Joint Action Days (JADs) taking place within the EU Policy Cycle for organised and serious international crime. The intelligence-led operational actions will cover several crime areas whilst focussing on key hot spots and key criminal infrastructures the EU, without excluding that some actions may take place outside the EU. JADs are a Member States-led initiative, fully supported by Europol.

The EU Policy Cycle

In 2010, the EU established a multi-annual policy cycle. Its aim is to ensure that in the fight against serious international and organised crime there is:

- effective cooperation between Member States law enforcement agencies, EU Institutions, EU Agencies and relevant third parties; delivering
- coherent and robust operational action targeting the most pressing criminal threats facing the EU.

The key objectives of the Joint Action Days 2016 are:

- Horizontal and intelligence-led operational actions covering more than one crime area;
- EU wide action day(s) focusing on key crime hot spots or key criminal infrastructures;
- Target the most threatening organised crime groups and top targets;
- Significant impact on serious and organised crime;
- Implementation of operational actions of the EMPACT OAPs;
- Improve the multi-disciplinary approach, including cooperation with third countries, agencies and the private sector;
- Improve the knowledge on the intelligence picture on SOC;
- Raise awareness about the threats of SOC and implement preventive actions;
- Improve coordination and cooperation at international and national level;
- Raising awareness about the threat of SOC and implement preventive actions;
- Give international law enforcement cooperation a more visible public profile.

In 2016 the concept builds upon the 2014 and 2015 models i.e. a series of smaller JADs are scheduled from June on throughout 2016, with one large scale JAD in the first half of October 2016 (aiming at covering mainly facilitated illegal immigration and trafficking of firearms).

Communication officers from law enforcement authorities of participating Member States had been invited to participate in a planning and coordination meeting at Europol, which took place on 7-8 June 2016 at Europol's headquarter in The Hague. The draft media strategy has been discussed at this meeting in order to ensure that all participating Member States agree on the draft media strategy.

The jointly agreed draft media strategy for CICONIA ALBA, will be considered by the COSI Support Group of 13 June 2016 and by COSI on 21 June 2016.

Main objective of the media strategy

- Highlight the successes of Operation CICONIA ALBA within the EU Policy Cycle on organised and serious international crime.

Additional objectives

- Raise awareness among the general public and Europe's law enforcement community about the impact and necessity of international cooperation in fighting serious and organised crime.
- Explain the role of COSI, the EU Policy Cycle on organised and serious international crime and how it facilitates the work of law enforcement authorities across the EU to the general public and non-experts.

Coordination of media communication

Participating countries have been asked to appoint a media contact point, who will contribute to the coordination of all communications related to Operation Ciconia Alba.

This will ensure the effective coordination of all media communication across participating Member States.

The appointed media contact points and Europol's communication team will jointly decide how and when to release information on Operation Ciconia Alba.

Media Channels

All available media channels, including specialised media, social media as well as technical briefings for journalists, should be exploited to highlight the impact of the operation in participating countries and its significance for international law enforcement cooperation.

Press Releases

1. An initial press release is planned to be issued on 20 June 2016, to announce the kick-off of the Operation, to explain the concept of the JADs and CICONIA ALBA, stressing the connection with the EU Policy Cycle, without giving any details on the upcoming operations.
2. A second press release will be published after the large-scale Operation late October 2016.
3. Final press release at the end of the year to inform about the total outcome of the JADs.

Europol will draft the press releases in cooperation with all involved parties. Through the appointed media contact points, all participating countries will receive a template to use as an inspiration for their national press releases as far in advance as possible.

The coordination of the release of any information related to Operation CICONIA ALBA is a priority; therefore, press releases and/or statements must be issued at the same time to ensure high press coverage and media momentum in all participating countries.

This doesn't prevent member states to communicate about individual operation in the course of Ciconia Alba, but it has to be always guaranteed that: these communications are coordinate with all involved partners including Europol and adheres to these communication guideline This is necessary in order not to jeopardise on-going investigations in other participating countries.

Visual material

Europol will provide participating Member States with an infographic that describes the EU Policy Cycle and the concept of the JADs. Member States can use the infographic for their media channels, and produce individual language versions.

Holding statement

As details or the name of the operation might leak before all member states are ready to communicate, we will need to be able to confirm that a larger international operation is taking place. However, the overall dimension, details and results of the operation will only be communicated after the operation has ended. If put under pressure by the press, the media contact points should only use the following lines to take:

It is correct that an operation is on-going/has been carried out today. This operation is part of a larger international action. In order to not jeopardise the on-going investigations, we cannot reveal more details at this stage, but will provide you with further information as soon as all operational actions have been concluded.

Press conference

Participating countries may also want to organise their own press conferences. It is appreciated if Europol will be kept in the loop through their media contact points. If necessary, Europol will try to provide a representative to attend the event and to speak on behalf of Europol.

Visual communication material

Europol will prepare an audio-visual package, which will be made available to the media contact points as well as the media. Europol encourages the participating countries to provide photos and video materials of the operations.

Social media

Europol will raise awareness and communicate information on Operation Ciconia Alba via its social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube). The media contact points are invited to share, re-tweet, and re-publish Europol's posts. The hashtag used will be #ActionDays16.

Possible key messages

- Following the successes of the 2014 Archimedes and 2015 Blue Amber JADs Operations, Europol will once again support its stakeholders' efforts to jointly counter crime networks involved in the priority crime areas covered by the EU Policy Cycle for serious and organised international crime (migrant smuggling, trafficking in human beings, firearms trafficking, drug trafficking, counterfeiting, excise and MTIC fraud, property crime, credit card fraud, cyber-attacks, child sexual exploitation).
- In addition to the arrests and the seizures as a result of Operation Ciconia Alba, law enforcement authorities have been able to gather a significant amount of highly valuable intelligence which will benefit further investigations and operations. The cooperation of the public has been remarkably valuable.
- The operation has focused on targeting the nine EU priority crime areas, as proposed by COSI and approved by the Council of EU. These are the areas which the EU has chosen to give top priority to for the duration of 2014 to 2017.
- Europol (whenever applicable: hosted the operational coordination centre,) assisted in the coordination of the overall operation and supported the participating partners.
- The multi-disciplinary approach of the operation enabled law enforcement authorities to link together actions covering several different crime priorities and areas. This has enhanced the operational impact and ensured cost-effective cooperation between the law enforcement authorities involved.

Additional Communication

- The JADs of Ciconia Alba are only one part of all the efforts under the EU Policy Cycle. Member States and Europol are urged to highlight the importance of the Policy Cycle, the EMPACT priorities and the role of COSI.