

Fight against terrorism: Parliament to vote on updated powers for Europol

[10-05-2016 - 12:03]

Europol, as the EU's law enforcement agency, helps member states fight terrorism and international crime. It is due to be given additional powers to help it to tackle terrorism better. Parliament and the Council already reached a deal on this in November, but it will still need to be formally approved. MEPs debate the plans on Wednesday 11 May and vote on them later the same day. Find out more about Europol in our infographic

Europol

Europol is the EU's law enforcement agency, assisting national authorities by exchanging information, intelligence analyses and threats assessments. It was launched in 1999 and became an EU agency in 2010.

The agency deals with terrorism and international crime such as cybercrime, drug smuggling and people trafficking and carries out more than 18,000 international investigations a year. However, it does not have any powers to arrest suspects or carry out investigations in member states.

Europol, which boasts 900 staff members, has its headquarters in The Hague in the Netherlands.

New powers

MEPs vote this week on new powers for Europol. These would allow the agency to set up specialised units more easily so that it can respond faster to emerging threats. They would also set clear rules for centres, such as the European Counter Terrorism Centre that started on 1 January 2016. In some cases Europol would also be allowed to exchange information with private companies. For example, Europol would be able to ask Facebook to remove pages run by Islamic State.

These new powers would be accompanied by strong data protection safeguards and democratic oversight rules.

Negotiators from the Parliament and the Council reached a deal on this on 26 November 2015, which was endorsed by Parliament's [civil liberties committee](#) on 30 November. However, before the agreement can enter into force, it will still need to be formally approved by Parliament.

MEPs debate the deal on Wednesday 11 May from 9.00 CET and vote on it at about 12.30 CET. [Follow it live online.](#)

Next steps

If adopted, the regulation will enter into force on 1 May 2017.

Find out more

- Procedure file: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?reference=2013/0091%28COD%29&l=en>
- Europol website: <https://www.europol.europa.eu/>

Article

- Europol: helping EU countries fight international crime and terrorism:
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/20151130STO05256/Europol-helping-EU-countries-fight-international-crime-and-terrorism>
- Europol: deal on new powers to step up EU police cooperation and fight terrorism (30 November 2015):
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/20151130IPR05456/Europol-deal-on-new-powers-to-step-up-EU-police-cooperation-and-fight-terrorism>
- Briefing: updated rules for Europol :
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_ATA%282016%29581991
- Terrorism top story: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/top-stories/20151125TST04632/Terrorism>