
Europol setting up team of 200 investigators to deploy to migration hotspots

Europol's Management Board today approved the recruitment of up to 200 counter-terrorist and other investigators for deployment to migration hotspots in Greece and other countries. Europol will form this pool of law enforcement officers through their secondment from national services in EU Member States. Up to 50 of these 'guest officers' will be deployed on rotation at key points on the external border of the EU to strengthen the security checks on the inward flows of migrants, in order to identify suspected terrorists and criminals.

With the recruitment and deployment arrangements approved today Europol is able to implement the necessary measures to deliver on the mandate given to it by the European Council, following the recent terrorist attacks in Europe, to reinforce the secondary security controls in the migration hotspots. The primary purpose of these enhanced controls is to identify movements of suspected terrorists, but they will also support Europol's ongoing efforts to disrupt organised crime networks involved in migrant smuggling.

Within the next few days Europol will launch a call for relevant national authorities in the Member States to second investigators to this new pool of experts. Europol is looking for 150 to 200 law enforcement officers, preferably with a background in counterterrorism or other criminal investigations. They will help reinforce security at the external borders of the EU by supporting the secondary security check process, by cross-checking data against data held in specialist counter-terrorist and other databases at Europol, and by facilitating rapid and secure information exchange between Member States. This will not include first line border control, although the officers will work closely with those from Frontex involved in such a task. The officers will work under the responsibility and legal framework of the country of deployment.

Europol expects to deploy the first 'guest officers' from this pool by the end of June. Their first deployment task will be in Greece, with other potential destinations currently under consideration.

"Europe faces many complex security challenges at the moment, including at the external border of the EU where high migratory pressures are exploited by criminal organisations. Although seen on a much less frequent scale suspected terrorists also use these channels to move in and out of the Europe. Combating these movements is already a top priority for the EU and the Member States involved. With this important decision taken today Europol will significantly reinforce its capacities to support these authorities in this critical work to safeguard our borders," said Rob Wainwright, Director of Europol.

Mr Arie IJzerman, current chairperson of the Europol Management Board, said: "Member states regard this initiative as a high priority for Europol and the national competent authorities. The Management Board will ensure that this new, important responsibility entrusted upon Europol is carried out in full compliance with applicable legislation and professional standards."

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