

The logo for Europol, featuring the word "EUROPOL" in blue capital letters. The letters are arranged in a slightly curved path, with a blue circular glow behind the "O" and "P". Several yellow and orange diagonal lines radiate from the center of the glow, creating a sense of motion or energy. A vertical line is positioned to the right of the logo.

**E U R O P O L**

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## **Europol's role in enhancing internal security in the European Union**

by

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Conference of Home Affairs Committee Chairpersons

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Opening address

- Location and specific situation
- personal and professional background

Looking at the nature as well as at the phenomenology of international organised crime and terrorism and its facilitating factors, there is no doubt that an effective coordination at European level is crucial. The evidence for this evaluation can easily be depicted from the major strategic reports from the EU-level, the Organised Crime Threat Assessment (OCTA) and the Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE SAT). Organised criminals as well as terrorist groups operate nowadays in an efficient, organised and sophisticated way. Their activities are interlinked. This is why coordination via a multi-national and multi-agency organisation like the European Police Office (Europol) is of decisive importance.

Let me present you with how Europol contributes to the prevention and combating of organised crime and terrorism in the European Union.

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I will do this in three major steps:

First, I will give you some information about what Europol and how it operates.

Secondly, I will explain how Europol contributes to the prevention and combating of international organised crime in the EU.

Thirdly, I will give you some insight into the most recent developments as perceived from Europol's perspective.

## **1. Europol's nature, role and tools**

Europol is the European law enforcement organisation which aims at improving the effectiveness and cooperation of the competent authorities in the Member States in preventing and combating serious forms of international organised crime falling under Europol's mandate.

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Europol's support should be requested by the Member States when the following minimum requirements are met:

1. an Organised Criminal (OC) group has been identified;
2. the given OC group operates in an international dimension (two or more Member States are affected by its criminal activities);
3. the types of crime carried out by the OC group concerned fall under the Europol mandate.

This is what Europol looks like from the legal perspective.

- But how does it look like from the operational perspective?

- What is the added value produced by Europol?

Europol facilitates the exchange of information and analysis

- between the EU Member States and Europol,

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- among the EU MS themselves and
- between the MS and third partners which have signed cooperation agreements with Europol.

The exchange of information is done on one hand side with the technical assistance of Europol. Europol provides the Information Exchange System (Info-Ex) and other necessary software, communication capabilities and tools.

However, there is the second key element to the information exchange process: the Europol Liaison Bureaux. They are located within the Europol premises in The Hague and employ Liaison Officers – law enforcement officers from the MS and from some third partners.

This network of Europol Liaison Officers is powerful. It is the living tissue of the organisation. They use and complement the Info-Ex at the same time.

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To understand what the Liaison Bureaux are, you have to imagine more than 100 law enforcement officers residing under the Europol roof,

- all speaking English, and also some other languages,
- all professionals in various fields of law enforcement
- and all having international cooperation experience.

Among the Europol Liaison Officers (ELOs) there are not just police officers but also customs, border guard and security services officers. Needless to say, these officers have access to their domestic data bases, to the investigative officers and to experts. This multi-lingual, -national, -agency and -cultural approach guarantees a swift and efficient multilateral information exchange between Member States and Europol.

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Europol serves the Member States of the EU. To this end we have also signed cooperation agreements with third parties. Operational agreements, which allow for the exchange of personal data, allow association with Europol for countries like:

- Bulgaria and Romania which are on the verge of becoming fully-fledged Europol members;
- Iceland, Norway and Switzerland;
- transatlantic partners Australia, Canada and USA
- Organisations as Eurojust and Interpol.

Strategic agreements with Colombia, Russia, Turkey and some international and EU players as OLAF and SITCEI are also in place.

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As a result, at Europol we have not only liaison officers from 27 EU MS, but also from AUS, N, ISL, CH, US, CAN, CC and from ICPO-Interpol.

## **2. Combating OC and terrorism**

Europol assists the MS in preventing and combating international organised crime and terrorism through:

- strategic support
- analytical support
- operational support
- providing expertise and training.

### **2.1 Strategic support**

As I mentioned earlier in my speech, strategic support is provided by Europol in the form of two main documents, the

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Organised Crime Threat Assessment (OCTA) and the E  
Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT), both

- published annually,
- drafted under the responsibility of Europol,
- gathering and amalgamating data from the Member States, from Europol itself, from third partners, from the academic world, from NGO's and from open sources in a balanced way.

- **OCTA**

The objective of the OCTA is to identify well defined patterns of organised crime, based on geographic, structural and other relevant factors. This designs a clear map of OC and its threats in the EU. The OCTA results provide a solid ground for an integrated and coordinated approach between national law enforcement agencies on one hand side and E

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bodies on the other hand side. Its results are taken on board by the council for the planning of police and security activities on the EU-level (by Europol, Eurojust, Frontex, PCTF etc.) as well as by the individual Ministers of the Council within their national responsibility “at home” or in their region. Interlinking horizontal approach (on EU-level) with vertical approach (from EU to national level), we can achieve much more results, seen from a holistic perspective. Following this approach, we complement each other in the most effective and efficient way possible. We avoid double efforts as well as blind spots on the landscape.

- **TE-SAT**

The EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report describes the situation and the current trends of terrorism, seen from an EU law-enforcement perspective. TE-SAT 2007 has been

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based on a new methodology developed by Europol in close consultation with the Finnish and German Presidency, Eurojust and SitCen.

In this respect, the TE-SAT 2007 has been a good example of excellent horizontal cooperation in the field of counterterrorism at EU level. The results of the TE-SAT are taken on board by the agencies on the EU level as well as by those on national level.

## 2.2 Analytical support

Europol has the responsibility for handling criminal information by applying intelligence-led law enforcement, demanding and supporting a proactive approach. Analysis is therefore the main instrument used at Europol.

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Analytical activities carried out by Europol aim at integrating the efforts of national law enforcement agencies at EU level. Information is not only exchanged via the Europol Liaison Officers' network. Information is transformed into intelligence which should be understood as knowledge or processed information designed for action. Finally, intelligence and Europol products are shared – they are disseminated to competent authorities in the MS and partner EU organisations and institutions.

To facilitate this process Europol proposed the European Criminal Intelligence Model (ECIM) which consists of a circle of activities that can be summarised as follows:

- Every year Europol produces the OCTA which identifies the threats and proposes priorities. It is submitted to the JHA Council;

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- Based on the council decision, Europol sets the intelligence requirements in order to structure and improve the information exchange;
- The analysis of the gathered intelligence assists in the production of focused threat assessments concerning criminal phenomena or groups;
- The subsequent activity of law enforcement focuses on specific targets which represent a serious threat to the security of the Member States;
- The outcomes of the investigations and relevant operational activities are then reintroduced into the OCT/ with the aim of creating new knowledge and new intelligence requirements.

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## 2.3 Operational support

Operational support is mainly provided by Europol within a framework called Analysis Work Files (AWF). An AWF is a work file on a specific crime area which is linked to specific forms of operational support offered by Europol. The AWF is designed to store, to process and to analyse factual information and in particular 'intelligence', including personal data of sensitive nature, at the same time.

There are currently 16 AWFs in place. The crime areas that they tackle range from terrorist activities to trafficking of human beings, from cigarette smuggling to outlawed motorcycle gangs, from drugs to euro counterfeiting. Each AWF is targeting several criminal organisations or groups at the same time.

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## 2.4 Expertise and training

Europol supports MS' investigations also by providing expertise on the spot. When requested, Europol can dispatch an officer or officers (with a secure link to Europol data bases) to a required location. Such experts can assist the national law enforcement units with ongoing investigations, as in the case of the London bombings in 2005.

In addition, Europol provides support and training to the MS in the field of specialist law enforcement techniques.

Moreover, networks of experts are maintained and used as platforms for exchanging the existing knowledge, experience and expertise. These networks gather experts, among others in the fields of witness protection, controlled deliveries, cross-border surveillance and cross-border hostage-taking and kidnapping.

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## 3. Recent and coming developments

### 3.1 Three protocols

Most recently, the Member States modified the European Convention and gave Europol slightly expanded powers in certain areas. This has been done by means of three Protocols, namely the Protocol on Money Laundering, the Protocol on Joint Investigation Teams and the so-called “Danish Protocol”. The first two entered into force on 2 March while the third one became effective on 18 April, 2007.

In a nutshell, the Protocol on Money Laundering foresees that Europol can handle all money laundering criminal offences. This is a great opportunity for Europol, especially in fighting terrorism and its financing.

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The Protocol on Joint Investigation Teams foresees the creation of teams composed of judicial and police staff members from the concerned countries. These teams of professionals are given a clear mandate, responsibilities, objectives and time framework. Within this Protocol, two points are of particular importance:

- Europol as well as Eurojust can participate in such activities in a support capacity, having no coercive powers;
- Europol is given the power to request a Member State under certain conditions, to start an investigation.

The so called Danish Protocol introduces a series of provisions aiming at making Europol more dynamic and effective. In addition, it opens the option for third partners to participate in AWF at Europol.

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### 3.2 Council Decision

Another current development concerning Europol is the possible transformation of the Europol Convention into a Council Decision. This decision, still in draft format, would result in more flexibility and efficiency for the organisation as such. The MS could easier adjust Europol's role to the needs – politically as well as operationally.

This discussion is still ongoing. Different arguments are to be considered. From Europol's perspective, we are looking forward for the decision of the Council hopefully in June.

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## 4. Conclusion

I have just demonstrated the way Europol enhances the law enforcement cooperation of MS in providing internal security in the EU. I have also pointed out, shortly, the main current developments.

Let me finish my short intervention with three major challenges for Europol's work and by expressing my expectations where you as Parliamentarians could support our important work:

- awareness
- data delivery
- staffing

I would be happy to answer any questions.

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