



Europol Programming Document

2025 – 2027

Adopted by the Management Board of Europol on 10 December 2024.

Europol Public Information

The Hague, 16 December 2024

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
List of Acronyms.....	3
Executive summary	4
SECTION I – General Context	11
SECTION II - Multi-annual programming 2025 – 2027	29
1. Multi-annual programme	29
2. Human and financial resource outlook for the years 2025-2027	34
SECTION III - Work Programme 2025.....	45
Activities.....	45
A.1. Development of information technology and information management capabilities.....	45
A.2. Operational Coordination	55
A.3. Combating Serious and Organised Crime	62
A.4. Combating Cyber Crime	72
A.5. Counter-Terrorism	84
A.6. Combating Financial and Economic Crime	96
A.7. Strategic and Analysis Coordination	106
A.8. Governance, support and administration	116
Management Board Functions	124
ANNEXES	126
Annex I: Organisational chart of the Agency for year 2025	127
Annex II: Resources allocation per activity 2025 – 2027.....	128
Annex III: Financial Resources 2025 – 2027	129
Annex IV: Human resources quantitative	135
Annex V: Human resources qualitative	140
Annex VI: Environment management.....	146
Annex VII: Buildings – year 2025	149
Annex VIII: Privileges and immunities.....	153
Annex IX: Evaluations	154
Annex X: Strategy for the organisational management and internal control systems	156
Annex XI: Grants.....	158
Annex XII: Strategy for cooperation with third countries and/or international organisations ..	174
Annex XIII: Procurement Plan 2025	187
Annex XIV: Corporate Risks 2025	197

List of Acronyms

ADEP	Automation of Data Exchange Processes	Frontex	European Border and Coast Guard Agency
AML	Anti-Money Laundering	GO	Guest Officer
AP	Analysis Project	HR	Human Resource
ARO	Asset Recovery Office	HRCN	High Risk Criminal Networks
BPL	Basic Protection Level	HVT	High Value Targets
CA	Contract Agent	IAC	Internal Audit Capability
CBRN	Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear	IAM	Identity and Access Management
CEPOL	European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training	ICT	Information and Communications Technology
COSI	Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation on Internal Security	IM	Information Management
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy	IRU	Internet Referral Unit
CSE	child sexual exploitation	ISF	Internal Security Fund
CT	Counter-Terrorism	J-CAT	Joint Cybercrime Action Taskforce
DAP	Data Analysis Portal	JHA	Justice and Home Affairs
DPF	Data Protection Function	JRC	Joint Research Centre
EC3	Europol Cybercrime Centre	LEA	Law Enforcement Authorities
ECA	European Court of Auditors	MB	Management Board
ECTC	European Counter Terrorism Centre	MENA	Middle East and North Africa region
EDPS	European Data Protection Supervisor	MS	Member State
EEAS	European External Action Service	MTIC	Excise and Missing Trader Intra Community
EES	Entry-Exit System	OAC	Operational and Analysis Centre
EFECC	European Financial and Economic Crime Centre	OAP	Operational Action Plan (under EMPACT)
EIS	Europol Information System	OCG	Organised Crime Group
EMAS	Europol Malware Analysis Solution	ODIN	Operational Data for Innovation
EMAS	EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme	OLAF	European Anti-Fraud Office
EMCDDA	European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction	OSINT	Open Source Intelligence
EMPACT	European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats	OSP	Online Service Providers
EMSA	European Maritime Safety Agency	OTF	Operational Task Force
EMSC	European Migrant Smuggling Centre	PERCI	European platform for takedown of illegal content online
EPE	Europol Platform for Experts	PNR	Passenger Name Record
EPPO	European Public Prosecutor's Office	QUEST	Querying Europol's systems
ESOCC	European Serious and Organised Crime Centre	R&D	Research and Development
ETIAS	EU Travel Information and Authorisation System	SIENA	Secure Information Exchange Network Application
EUCP	EU Crisis Protocol	SIS	Schengen Information System
EUIPO	European Union Intellectual Property Office	SNE	Seconded National Expert
Eurojust	European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation	SOC	Serious and Organised Crime
eu-LISA	European Union Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice.	SOCTA	Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment
FIU	Financial Intelligence Unit	TA	Temporary Agent
		TFTP	Terrorist Finance Tracking Programme
		THB	Trafficking in human beings
		TP	Third Part(y)/ies: Third countr(y)/ies and/or international organisation(s)
		UMF	Universal Message Format
		VIS	Visa Information System

Mission Statement

Europol's mission is to support its Member States¹ in preventing and combating all forms of serious international and organised crime, cybercrime and terrorism.

Executive summary

Europol's Programming Document is prepared on the basis of Article 12 of the Europol Regulation and Articles 32 and 33 of the Financial Regulation applicable to Europol. An overview of the current and anticipated future policy factors influencing or impacting Europol's work in the coming years is presented in Section I.

The strategic programming of Europol, including resources programming, is provided in Section II - Multi-annual programming 2025-2027. Special focus is placed on six main strategic priorities which have been identified as part of the Europol Strategy "Delivering security in partnership", endorsed by Europol's Management Board in June 2023. These priorities will guide the work of the agency in the years 2025-2027 to:

- be the EU criminal information hub, including for data acquisition;
- deliver agile, real-time operational support;
- be a platform for European policing solutions;
- bring the relevant partners together for cross-border cooperation and joint action;
- be at the forefront of law enforcement innovation and research;
- be the model EU organisation for law enforcement cooperation.

In Section III, Europol's Work Programme provides a comprehensive overview of the full work portfolio of the agency, including its regular (recurrent) work and specific annual objectives and actions for 2025; the work is organised around the different areas of operation (Activities).

Europol will continue providing the Member States with high quality operational support to investigations in the priority areas aligned with the EU Security Union Strategy and following the objectives of the EU Strategy to tackle Organised Crime, the EU Cybersecurity Strategy for the Digital Decade, the Anti-Money Laundering package, the New Pact on Migration and Asylum and the Counter-Terrorism Agenda, among others.

The planned work of Europol's Operational Centres, as well as the horizontal support functions, is extensive and striving towards further evolvement of capabilities, expertise and tools, in order to offer the necessary support to MS' operations. In addition to regular tasks and responsibilities, the key highlights in Europol's planning for 2025 are summarised below:

- The priorities of the European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats (**EMPACT**) **2022-2025** will remain the key driver for the operational support provided to the Member States' competent authorities in 2025. Apart from contributing to the implementation of all Operational Action Plans, Europol performs the coordinator role in four Common Horizontal Strategic Goals (Intelligence Picture, High-risk criminal networks, Online and offline trade in illicit goods & services and Criminal finances, money laundering and asset recovery). In 2025, the agency will prepare the **Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment (SOCTA) 2025**, which will lay the basis for the Council's decision on the EMPACT priorities for the following phase.
- **Criminal analysis** remains at the core of Europol's business and the agency will be further reinforcing analysis coordination through enhanced attention to quality output and control,

¹ "Member State" shall mean any Member State of the European Union upon which the Europol Regulation is binding and in which it is applicable.

Europol Public Information

standardisation and training. In 2025, the Data Analysis portal will be enhanced and the case management system will be further developed to facilitate closer and more effective collaboration with MS. In addition, the agency is planning to develop a new Analysis Training and Coaching program to satisfy the need for state-of-the-art analytical competence at Europol and the MS competent authorities.

- The development of information management capabilities and the final work plan of the **ICT Business Streams** for 2025 have been carefully reprioritised in line with the expected level of resources. While Europol will not be in a position to implement the full range of technology development work initially foreseen, it will strive to ensure the implementation and consolidation of the ICT systems of the highest priority for Europol and the MS, also in light of the substantial new tasks stemming from various legislative initiatives. In 2025, focus will be on continuing the development of Europol's **analysis capabilities**, with further enhancements in **case management** capabilities. Europol will also continue contributing to **EU Interoperability**, in line with the European Commission planning and in close cooperation with eu-LISA, prioritising the implementation of ETIAS and ECRIS-TCN in 2025. The agency will also pursue further analysis of the obligations stemming from the **Directive on Information Exchange** and support MS with the implementation of relevant provisions.
- With **ETIAS** becoming operational in 2025, followed by **VIS** systematic checks in 2026, Europol's **Operational and Analysis Centre** (OAC) will have to ensure the provision of 24/7 swift follow-up on hits of travel authorisation and long-stay visas and residence permits against Europol data. In 2025, the agency should also strengthen its capabilities for processing biometric data in view of its involvement in the revised **Prüm II** framework.
- Europol will continue providing quality support to Member States in identifying **High Value Targets** (HVT) representing the highest risk of organised and serious crime, and in complex investigations against HVTs through the setting up of **Operational Task Forces** (OTF). In 2025, the **European Serious and Organised Crime Centre (ESOCC)** will focus on the operational implementation of the actions of the EU Roadmap to fight drug trafficking and organised crime, in particular, the follow-up of the first mapping of the criminal networks that pose the biggest threats to society.
- The fight against **drug trafficking** will target concrete crime hubs and hotspots (such as main harbours), for which specific measures, addressing the particular crime enabling factors or facilitating targeted regional coordination of interventions, can be set up in consultation with the main MS/TP concerned. In this context, the ESOCC will lay the basis for establishing a Maritime Anti-Trafficking Coordination Hub to enhance the analysis and technical support to prioritised drugs related operations in the maritime domain, to improve the operational and strategic picture of maritime trafficking and to provide a secure real-time communication platform.
- The **European Migrant Smuggling Centre** (EMSC), within the ESOCC, will initiate the implementation of the upcoming Regulation on enhancing police cooperation and Europol's support to preventing and combating migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings, which is expected to be adopted in 2025. EMSC will aim at enhancing information sharing, incl. social media monitoring, especially on migrant smuggling routes and networks. Furthermore, the centre will intensify the financial investigation angle of the support provided to investigations, in close cooperation with the EFEC.
- The **European Cybercrime Centre (EC3)** will increase the focus on collection, processing and production of cyber threat intelligence, and the delivery of tactical analyses identifying and prioritising the most important cybercriminal data hubs and services and will provide support to follow-up operations of MS. EC3 will aim at obtaining and processing datasets such as lawfully intercepted and decrypted communications of criminal networks,

Europol Public Information

as well as seized Darknet servers used for criminal trade and the dissemination of child abuse material.

- In 2025, EC3 will continue providing **decryption** services using the Europol Decryption Platform to effectively decrypt data at rest to support prioritised investigations. Furthermore, the Digital Support Unit will strive to develop alternative decryption methods to expand the portfolio of decryption/access to data services. Another priority area of work is to identify suitable tactics, perform agile research and provide MS with **digital forensic tools** to respond to emerging operational needs. EC3 will also contribute to the implementation of the EU Forensic Science Area 2.0 Action Plan, in particular in the areas of digitalisation, biometrics and artificial intelligence.
- In response to the continuously increasing data contributions in the area of **child sexual abuse** and also in anticipation of AI-generated material, EC3 will be looking into data collection modalities and the possibilities for establishing a data warehouse to ensure effective data handling. The centre will utilise the benefits of the automated European Union Child Abuse Referral Service (EU-CARES), facilitating the receiving, processing and disseminating of online child abuse material from pertinent non-law enforcement actors, and the automatic cross check of data against EAS and IVAS.
- In the area of **counter-terrorism**, efforts to enhance the targeting of HVT individuals who represent an immediate threat to EU security and aiming to dismantle terrorist/violent extremist organisations will continue. The **European Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC)** will provide support to Operational Task Forces following the adjusted concept for establishing OTFs in the CT area and will pursue fostering information exchange among the relevant partners at EU level. Given the rising trend of **politically motivated terrorism** and violent extremism, the centre will perform priority actions aiming at identifying targets in high profile cases and support MS by means of clustering countries based on common targeting and tailored activity, for the effective disruption of networks and organisations.
- In 2025, the **EU Internet Referral Unit (EU IRU)** of the ECTC will further expand its focus towards violent left-wing extremism and violent anarchism and gradually align its monitoring capabilities, referral processes and analytical procedures for this crime phenomenon with the other online terrorist and violent extremist areas. In parallel, Europol should ensure the efficient functioning of the **EU platform for referrals and removal orders (PERCI)** for handling online terrorist content according to the requirements of Terrorist Content Online (TCO) Regulation. Work should be initiated for establishing an automated workflow for the intake and handling of notifications of imminent threat to life as stipulated in the TCO and for those stemming from illegal online content involving all crime areas covered by the Digital Services Act².
- Europol will provide support to the Operational Task Forces and Joint Investigation Teams established in the area of **war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity**. Together with Eurojust, the ECTC will aim at setting up a joint operational platform for coordinating operational needs in investigations related to Ukraine, identified as priority at judicial level. In 2025 also in cooperation with Eurojust, the EU IRU will initiate the implementation of the third phase of the **SIRIUS project**, where particular attention will be paid on providing awareness and training opportunities for LEAs regarding the upcoming application of the EU Electronic Evidence Directive.
- **The European Financial and Economic Crime Centre (EFECC)** is striving to increase Europol's responsiveness and operational performance in the areas of fraud, money laundering, asset recovery, corruption and counterfeiting. In particular, the centre aims to enhance its operational support against criminal networks and professionals providing

² Subject to the conclusion of a contribution agreement between the European Commission (DG CNECT) and Europol.

Europol Public Information

money laundering services to other criminal groups (crime as a service) and to strengthen its capabilities in providing swift feedback and expertise concerning tracing and analysis of virtual assets taking into account the high number of cases contributed by MS.

- In 2025, the new EU Authority for Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (**AMLA**) will start operations. It will be essential for Europol to develop a well-functioning working relation with the new agency and the Cooperation and Support Mechanism (CSM) for the FIUs, which AMLA will be in charge of. Europol and AMLA should work towards the conclusion of a working arrangement covering among others the modalities for establishing a secure communication channel, access to information and structured operational collaboration such as for participation in Joint Analysis Teams. The EFECCE will utilise the new opportunities to further improve cooperation with the FIUs and increase the number of countries contributing **financial intelligence** to Europol.
- The EFECCE will continue promoting the cooperation with **Customs** authorities and their participation in EMPACT and Europol's Analysis Projects. In 2025, the centre should benefit from the established connection between the Customs Information System and Europol's databases, enabling automated cross-checking. The agency will follow closely the developments related to the Customs Reform with respect to Europol's mandate and prepare for taking up any potential new tasks. In parallel, Europol will support operationally and strategically the implementation of the Commission's **Anti-Corruption** package and contribute to the work of the new EU Network against Corruption.
- Europol seeks to be at the forefront of **law enforcement innovation and research** and, through its **Innovation Lab**, it facilitates innovation in the law enforcement community and addresses the risks and opportunities of emerging technologies. The Lab acts as the secretariat for the **EU Innovation Hub for Internal Security** and leads the Hub Team in collaboration with other JHA agencies. In 2025, Europol will continue supporting the European Commission in identifying key research themes, fostering uptake of research and innovation, as well as providing support to MS in the use of emerging technologies in preventing and countering crimes. Moreover, the Lab will make use of the ODIN sandbox environment to develop, train and validate models and tools using operational data. It will also aim at further developing an innovation pipeline and at establishing possibilities for hosting LEA and non-LEA researchers of key emerging technologies.
- In the realm of external relations, Europol will initiate the implementation of its new **External Relations Strategy** and will pursue targeted cooperation with selected high-priority third countries and organisations. In parallel, the agency will strengthen cooperation with already existing partners, and will prepare a plan for further developing cooperation with the Schengen Associated Countries in the short, medium and long term. Furthermore in 2025, the organisation will finalise and initiate the implementation of the new **Strategy on cooperation with private parties**. In line with its Regulation, Europol will focus on enhancing the intake of relevant information from the private sector for the purpose of enriching the criminal intelligence picture.
- In 2025, work will continue to implement organisational initiatives or changes identified through the renewed Europol Strategy, while the agency will continue making progress in promoting workforce diversity and inclusion, in line with Europol's **Diversity and Inclusion Strategy**. The HR and Finance Strategies will guide and ensure the efficient and effective management of budget and resources, while the **Strategic Housing Roadmap** will advance further to allow for the agency's growth. In 2025, the Temporary Satellite Building 1 is planned to be returned to the Host State, while the Temporary Satellite Buildings 2 and 3 will gradually become operational for use. Finally, Europol will further strengthen its cybersecurity and information security policies and capabilities.

Europol Public Information

Table: Overview of Europol's objectives for the year 2025

Work Programme Activity	Objective 2025
A.1. Development of information technology and information management capabilities	A.1.1 Continue enhancing Information Management.
	A.1.2 Further develop ICT capabilities for Europol's operations.
	A.1.3 Implement improvements to core MS-facing operational capabilities.
	A.1.4 Advance interoperability and connectivity with information management systems at EU level to enhance information exchange.
	A.1.5 Further implement Europol's Innovation Strategy.
	A.1.6 Further improve corporate information management and related administrative ICT capabilities.
	A.1.7 Develop and maintain reliable and secure ICT capabilities.
A.2. Operational Coordination	A.2.1 Ensure the effective functioning of the Operational Centre in managing the intake of operational information.
	A.2.2 Provide support to operations and crisis management.
	A.2.3 Build-up Europol's operational services to comply with the legal obligations stemming from ETIAS, VIS and other EU information management systems.
	A.2.4 Ensure the provision of efficient services by Europol's SIRENE Office.
	A.2.5 Build-up Europol's biometric capabilities and services.
	A.2.6 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations with travel intelligence.
	A.2.7 Provide support to Member States in the area of special tactics.
	A.2.8 Manage and support deployments, incl. Europol's Guest Officers capabilities.
A.3. Combating Serious and Organised Crime	A.3.1 Ensure the effective functioning of the ESOCC in providing strategic and operational support to EU Member States' investigations on SOC.
	A.3.2 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on drug production and trafficking.
	A.3.3 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on weapons and explosives.
	A.3.4 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on high risk criminal networks.
	A.3.5 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on organised property crime.
	A.3.6 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on environmental crime.
	A.3.7 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on organised crime related to migrant smuggling.
	A.3.8 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on trafficking in human beings.
A.4. Combating cybercrime	A.4.1 Ensure the effective functioning of EC3 in providing strategic and operational support to EU Member States' investigations on cybercrime.
	A.4.2 Provide digital forensics support to EU Member States' investigations.

Europol Public Information

Work Programme Activity	Objective 2025
	<p>A.4.3 Provide cyber intelligence support to EU Member States' investigations.</p> <p>A.4.4 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on cyber-dependent crimes.</p> <p>A.4.5 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on child sexual exploitation.</p> <p>A.4.6 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on payment fraud and online fraud schemes.</p> <p>A.4.7 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on the criminal online trade and use of online environments for criminal purposes.</p> <p>A.4.8 Provide support and operational coordination to the J-CAT operations and activities.</p> <p>A.4.9 Proactively develop expertise and solutions related to challenges in cybercriminal investigations.</p>
A.5. Counter-terrorism	<p>A.5.1 Ensure the effective functioning of the ECTC in providing strategic and operational support to EU Member States' investigations related to counter-terrorism.</p> <p>A.5.2 Provide support to EU Member States' counter-terrorism investigations.</p> <p>A.5.3 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on war crimes, genocide, crimes against humanity.</p> <p>A.5.4 Provide support to EU Member States' CT investigations with terrorism-related financial information.</p> <p>A.5.5 Provide CBRN/E support to EU Member States' investigations.</p> <p>A.5.6 Provide support to the ATLAS Network.</p> <p>A.5.7 Provide quality internet referral services.</p> <p>A.5.8 Ensure the efficient functioning of the EU platform to tackle illegal content online (PERCI) as a communication and coordination tool for referrals and removal orders within the EU.</p> <p>A.5.9 Provide support to EU Member States' CT internet-based investigations.</p> <p>A.5.10 Provide technical support to CT internet-based investigations and referrals.</p> <p>A.5.11 Provide support to Member States on acquiring cross-border access to electronic evidence.</p>
A.6. Combating Financial and Economic Crime	<p>A.6.1 Ensure the effective functioning of the EFEC in providing strategic and operational support to EU Member States' investigations on financial and economic crime.</p> <p>A.6.2 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on fraud.</p> <p>A.6.3 Provide operational support to EU Member States' investigations on money laundering.</p> <p>A.6.4 Provide strategic support to EU Member States and other stakeholders regarding money laundering and terrorist financing.</p> <p>A.6.5 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations in identifying and tracing proceeds of crime.</p> <p>A.6.6 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on corruption.</p>

Europol Public Information

Work Programme Activity	Objective 2025
	<p>A.6.7 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on the production and distribution of counterfeit goods.</p> <p>A.6.8 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on Euro counterfeiting.</p>
<p>A.7. Strategic and Analysis Coordination</p>	<p>A.7.1 Reinforce criminal analysis coordination and expertise at Europol to ensure provision of quality analysis support to Member States' investigations.</p> <p>A.7.2 Ensure data and analysis quality control at Europol.</p> <p>A.7.3 Reinforce analysis training capabilities at Europol.</p> <p>A.7.4 Deliver quality strategic reports.</p> <p>A.7.5 Provide support and funding opportunities to EMPACT priorities and actions.</p> <p>A.7.6 Manage cooperation with EU Member States.</p> <p>A.7.7 Manage cooperation with third countries.</p> <p>A.7.8 Manage cooperation with EU institutions, agencies or bodies.</p> <p>A.7.9 Manage cooperation with international and regional organisations.</p> <p>A.7.10 Finalise the new Strategy on cooperation with private parties and initiate its implementation.</p>
<p>A.8. Governance, support and administration</p>	<p>A.8.1 Continue optimising Europol's corporate functions.</p> <p>A.8.2 Ensure fundamental rights compliance in all internal and external operational and administrative processes.</p> <p>A.8.3 Ensure efficient internal and external communication.</p> <p>A.8.4 Ensure efficient human resources management.</p> <p>A.8.5 Ensure efficient financial and budget management.</p> <p>A.8.6 Ensure the necessary level of physical, personnel and information security at Europol.</p> <p>A.8.7 Progress towards the rationalisation and expansion of Europol's facilities services and enhanced environmental management.</p> <p>A.8.8 Steer and coordinate the implementation of the Strategic Housing Roadmap.</p>

SECTION I – General Context

This section presents the current and future policy context that is expected to influence Europol's work in the coming years. Through the implementation of its Annual Work Programme 2025, Europol will contribute to the implementation of several EU policies in the JHA domain, as detailed below and under each specific Activity in Section III.

1. Security Union

1.1. The EU Security Union Strategy

The EU Security Union Strategy³ adopted on 24 July 2020 lays out four strategic priorities for action at EU level:

- A future-proof security environment: this priority comprises the establishment of new EU rules on the protection and resilience of critical infrastructure, the revision of the Network and Information Systems Directive and setting up of a Joint Cyber Unit. It will promote public private cooperation to ensure stronger physical protection of public places and detection systems against terrorist attacks.
- Tackling evolving threats: the European Commission will make sure that existing EU rules against cybercrime are fit for purpose and will explore measures against identity theft and to enhance law enforcement capacity in digital investigations, which would include artificial intelligence, big data, etc. The Commission put forward on 24th July 2020 a strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse online and will provide next an EU approach on countering hybrid threats.
- Protecting Europeans from terrorism and organised crime: Steps are underway to strengthen border security legislation and cooperation with non-EU countries and international organisations. EU Agenda on Counter-Terrorism, Drug Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2025 and EU Action Plan against firearms trafficking were issued in 2020, while EU Agenda for tackling organised crime, EU Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings 2021-2025 and renewed EU Action Plan against migrant smuggling 2021-2025 were put forward in 2021.
- A strong European security ecosystem: Key measures include strengthening Europol's mandate and further developing Eurojust to better link judicial and law enforcement authorities. Working with partners outside of the EU is also crucial. Cooperation with Interpol will be reinforced through the planned EU-Interpol Agreement. Research and innovation are powerful tools to counter threats and to anticipate risks and opportunities.

1.2. Mission Letters of the President of the European Commission, Dr Ursula von der Leyen

The President of the European Commission, Dr von der Leyen, issued mission letters to the Commissioners Designate in September 2024. Europol's work is most prominently featured in the mission letter to Commissioner Designate for Justice and Home Affairs, Mr. Magnus Brunner, but relevant references can also be found in the mission letter to Executive VP-designate for Tech Sovereignty, Security and Democracy, Ms. Henna Virkkunen.

Ms Virkkunen is asked to support the **strengthening of the EU's internal security**, foster **law enforcement cooperation** and support a tougher approach to crime with a particular focus on **organised crime and high-risk criminal networks**. Among others, Ms Virkkunen is asked to coordinate efforts to ensure high standards of cybersecurity and look at **digital technologies and AI to enhance law enforcement capabilities**. The Executive VP-designate will also guide the work **on anti-corruption**.

³ COM/2020/605 final

Europol Public Information

Mr. Brunner is asked to lead the efforts on the fight against **serious and organised crime** and is expected to present a **new European Action plan against drug trafficking**. Among key priorities mentioned in the letter is a **new European Internal Security Strategy**, updating law enforcement tools for **digital data access**, strengthening **law enforcement and judicial cooperation, child protection against sexual abuse, cybercrime, counter-terrorism**, renewing the **EU firearms action plan** and fighting **against migrant smugglers and people traffickers**.

Finally, Mr. Brunner is asked to enhance coordination and complementarity between Europol and other agencies and is expected to propose to “**make Europol a truly operational police agency and more than double its staff over time**”, with a strengthened mandate and oversight.

1.3. European Commission’s Communication: Enhancing the accession process – A credible EU perspective for the Western Balkans

In February 2020, the European Commission adopted a communication on “Enhancing the accession process – A credible EU perspective for the Western Balkans”⁴, which foresees stronger commitments by the EU and the Western Balkans. Credibility should be reinforced through an even stronger focus on fundamental reforms, starting with the rule of law, the functioning of democratic institutions and public administration as well as the economy of the candidate countries.

Ahead of the EU-Western Balkans Summit of 6 December 2022 and the Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) Council on 8 December 2022, the Commission presented also an “EU Action Plan on the Western Balkans” aimed at strengthening cooperation on migration and border management with partners in Western Balkans. In December 2022, the European Council decided to grant the EU candidate status to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

1.4. Joint Communication: Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020: Reinforcing Resilience – an Eastern Partnership that delivers for all

The European Commission-EEAS joint communication Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020⁵ was published on 18 March 2020 and comprises a new policy framework to strengthen resilience in partner countries in light of today's challenges, foster sustainable development and deliver tangible results for citizens. The EU, Member States and partner countries are invited to work together for accountable institutions, the rule of law and security. In particular, the EU shall work to enhance its support to fighting corruption and economic crime and improve cross-border cooperation to better protect people against organised crime. On 23 June 2022, the European Council decided to grant the status of candidate country to Ukraine and to the Republic of Moldova.

1.5. Strengthening cooperation with CSDP missions and operations

In June 2020, the Council adopted conclusions on security and defence⁶, which initiated the work towards a Strategic Compass for Security and Defence, adopted in March 2022. In the Strategic Compass, MS agreed to develop a new Civilian CSDP Compact by mid-2023.

On 22 May 2023 the Council adopted the new Civilian CSDP Compact⁷ reaffirming its full commitment to strengthening civilian CSDP and calling for the enhancement of the civilian CSDP missions’ effectiveness, impact, flexibility and robustness, enabling them to tackle more effectively current, emerging and future security challenges across the internal – external nexus. The implementation is taken forward by the EEAS and the Commission through a joint action plan, as well as through MS’ own implementation plans. Reinforced cooperation between CSDP and JHA is an important element of the Strategic Compass.

⁴ COM/2020/57 final

⁵ JOIN/2020/7 final

⁶ Council 8792/20

⁷ Council 9588/23

2. Serious and Organised Crime

2.1. EU Strategy to tackle Organised Crime 2021-2025

On 14 April 2020, the European Commission presented a Communication on the EU Strategy to tackle organised crime 2021-2025⁸ that sets out the strategic framework goals to enhance the fight against organised crime in the EU. The Strategy builds on four main priorities: (1) boosting law enforcement and judicial cooperation, (2) effective investigations: disrupting organised crime, (3) eliminating profits generated by organised crime and preventing infiltration into the legal economy and society and (4) making law enforcement and judiciary fit for the digital age. The Europol Regulation Recast and the EU Police Cooperation Package, both adopted, were major pieces of legislation included in the strategy. Europol is an important actor when it comes to the implementation of the Strategy, especially in connection to High-Value Targets, High-risk organised crime groups and digital investigation tools.

2.2. EU Drug Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2025

The EU Drugs Strategy⁹ provides the overarching political framework for the Union's drugs policy for the period 2021-2025 and is complemented by an EU Drugs Action Plan¹⁰, which sets out concrete implementation actions. The Action Plan underscores the role of Europol as a central actor for the implementation of the part on supply reduction. The Strategy puts forward the following priorities: targeting high-risk OCGs and disrupting criminal business models; proceeds and instrumentalities of OCGs involved in the drug markets, and social reuse of confiscated assets; international cooperation with third countries and involvement of relevant EU agencies. Further efforts are needed to address smuggling of drugs in and out of the EU by using established trade channels and illicit crossing of the EU borders. The Strategy requires measures for more effective monitoring of logistical and digital channels exploited for drug distribution in close cooperation with the private sector.

Moreover, on 18 October 2023, the European Commission adopted the **EU roadmap to fight drug trafficking and organised crime**¹¹, which aims to reinforce the EU action against the most serious security threats posed by the drugs trade and organised crime groups. It is composed of seventeen Priority Actions organised around four thematic areas: 1) The European Ports Alliance to strengthen the resilience of logistical hubs; 2) Action to dismantle high-risk criminal networks; 3) Prevention; and 4) International cooperation. Europol is mentioned extensively in the Roadmap and is actively involved in the implementation of most of its actions, in cooperation with MS and other relevant EU Agencies and bodies.

2.3. Establishment of the European Union Drugs Agency

The regulation setting up the European Union Drugs Agency (EUDA) and replacing the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) entered into force on 1 July 2023 and became applicable on 1 July 2024. This new legal framework enhances the mandate of the agency, expanding its scope of actions to polysubstance use, strengthening its monitoring and threat assessment capabilities and giving the agency a clear mandate to analyse global and third countries developments with potential impact on the EU. Most importantly for Europol, the EUDA is now competent to address drug supply and drug market issues, which offers increased opportunities for collaboration. EUDA is exploring possibilities to deploy a Liaison Officer to Europol.

⁸ COM(2021)170 final

⁹ Council 14178/20

¹⁰ Council 9819/21

¹¹ COM/2023/641 final

2.4. EU Action Plan on Firearms Trafficking 2020-2025

In its EU Action Plan on Firearms Trafficking 2020-2025¹² the European Commission invites MS and south-east Europe partners to improve cooperation among law enforcement authorities and with prosecutors and forensics specialists, to tackle the principal sources and routes of illicit firearms. Another aim is to improve cooperation between law enforcement and parcel and postal operators, to ensure stricter oversight of shipments containing firearms. Cooperation between EU and non-EU partners need to be stepped up in particular with countries in North Africa and the Middle East. The Commission will work to establish a systematic and harmonised collection of data on seizures of firearms, and publish annual statistics. In cooperation with Europol, the Commission will explore the feasibility of rolling out an EU-level tool to track in real time firearms-related incidents and develop a permanently up-to-date picture. The Commission invites Europol and MS to keep a focus on firearms cases in the framework of cyber patrolling operations and actions against dark web marketplaces.

2.5. Revision of the Regulation on the import, export and transit of firearms

On 28 October 2022, the European Commission presented a proposal to revise the Regulation setting out rules on the import, export and transit of firearms to prevent the risk of diversion by improving the traceability of firearms and facilitating information exchange between national authorities. Key provisions for Europol include: the obligation for customs to share information on seizures with competent authorities via SIENA; the alignment of the scope of the regulation to the scope of the Firearms Directive; imposition of stricter rules and controls for deactivated weapons and alarm and signal weapons; stricter rules for the import of semi-finished firearms and essential components; creation of national firearms contact points; enhanced cooperation between LE (including customs) and licensing authorities; development of an EU electronic licensing system for manufacturers and dealers to apply for import and export authorisation, as well as the need to check SIS, ECRIS and the central system containing all refusals before granting import or export authorisations. On 14 March 2024, the European Parliament and the Council reached a provisional agreement on the text. The final adoption is pending.

2.6. New Pact on Migration and Asylum

On 23 September 2020, the European Commission presented the New Pact on Migration and Asylum¹³. Of relevance for Europol are the proposals for a Regulation introducing a screening of third country nationals at the external borders (Screening Regulation) and the Regulation on the revision of Eurodac (see section 6). Europol already participates in the regular meetings and reporting of the EU Migration Preparedness and Crisis Blueprint, as well as the Situational Awareness and Forecasting project. The text was adopted on 14 May 2024.

2.7. EU Action Plans on the Central Mediterranean, Western Balkans, Western Mediterranean routes and a Migration Management Toolbox

On 21 November 2022 the European Commission presented the **EU Action Plan on the Central Mediterranean** in response to the large increase in migratory pressure. The Action Plan proposes 20 measures to fight migrant smuggling and human trafficking in close cooperation with EU Agencies (in the context of the Anti-Smuggling Operational Partnerships as presented in the EU Action Plan against migrant smuggling).

On 6 December 2022, the Commission presented the **EU Action Plan on the Western Balkans**, where the fight against migrant smuggling also features, including making full use of Europol's Operational Task Force(s) in the region and enhancing the participation of Western Balkans partners in EMPACT, as well as ensuring implementation of the regional anti-smuggling programme with cooperation of relevant EU Agencies.

¹² COM(2020) 608 final

¹³ COM(2020)609 final

Europol Public Information

On 6 June 2023, the Commission presented the **Action Plan on the Western Mediterranean and Atlantic migration routes**, with 18 operational measures, of which those in the domain of migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings are relevant for Europol. In the context of anti-smuggling operational partnerships, the promotion of structured cooperation between Europol and Morocco in the form of a Working Arrangement is underlined, as well as the implementation of a regional programme (Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt) to fight against migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings in cooperation with relevant EU Agencies. Further emphasis was placed on consolidating and ensuring synergies between existing Common Operational Partnerships and Joint Investigation Teams with West and North African countries, as well as promoting their participation in EMPACT.

Also on 6 June 2023, the Commission put forward a new **toolbox of measures to address the increasing misuse of commercial transport by criminal networks to facilitate irregular migration to the EU**, with a focus on airways. In this context, Europol's contributions to an improved situational awareness of relevant transport operators and to flag emerging trends is expected within the Migration and Crisis Preparedness Blueprint Network.

On 17 September 2023, in view of the recent increase in the migratory flows on the Central Mediterranean route directed to Italy, the Commission presented the **10-Point Plan for Lampedusa**. The Plan lays out a set of actions to be exercised, in full respect of fundamental rights and international obligations, to, inter alia: reinforce the support to Italy by the EUAA and Frontex; step up returns; take measures to limit the use of unseaworthy vessels and against migrant smuggling; step up border surveillance; support the prevention of departures by establishing operational partnerships on anti-smuggling with countries of origin and transit.

On 18 October 2023, in response to the call of the European Council, the Commission, in consultation with the EEAS, presented the **Action Plan for the Eastern Mediterranean**. This Action Plan identifies twenty-nine operational measures with an emphasis on stepping up prevention of irregular migration and enhancing management of flows. It foresees, amongst others, enhancing the cooperation between Europol, Frontex and Eurojust, in accordance with their respective mandates, notably by increasing active participation and information sharing of all relevant partners in the EMPACT.

2.8. Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling

On 28 November 2023, at the International Conference on a **Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling**, the Commission opened a new era of cooperation between countries of origin, transit, and destination. The Global Alliance aims to bring relevant actors together to join forces in identifying, arresting, and convicting high-value targets, including those residing/situated/operating outside of the Union. The Global Alliance will promote and ensure enhanced practical cooperation at a global level of law enforcement and judicial authorities, with the involvement of relevant EU Agencies, in line with EU foreign policy objectives. The 'Call to Action' was launched on all relevant actors, governments, international organisations and online service providers to work collectively in three main areas: (i) the prevention of migrant smuggling; (ii) the response to migrant smuggling and the alternatives to irregular migration, including addressing the root causes and, (iii) facilitating legal pathways.

2.9. European Commission's legislative initiative to prevent and fight migrant smuggling

On 28 November 2023, the European Commission announced a new legislative package to strengthen the EU legal framework to prevent and fight migrant smuggling, including a Regulation and a Directive. The proposed **Regulation on enhancing police cooperation in relation to the prevention, detection, and investigation of migrant smuggling**¹⁴ is particularly relevant for Europol. It aims to prevent and combat migrant smuggling and

¹⁴ Commission proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on enhancing police cooperation in relation to the prevention, detection and investigation of migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings, and on enhancing Europol's support to preventing and combating such crimes and amending Regulation (EU) 2016/794, COM(2023) 754 final of 28.11.2023 (hereinafter the 'Regulation on countering migrant smuggling').

Europol Public Information

trafficking in human beings by reinforcing: 1) inter-agency cooperation; 2) the steering and coordination of Member States, EU Agencies and other relevant stakeholders at EU level; 3) information sharing amongst all stakeholders; 4) Member States' resources; and 5) Europol's support through the use of Operational Task Forces (OTF) and of Europol deployments for operational support. Additional resources for Europol are included in the Legislative Financial Statement of the proposed Regulation.

2.10. Schengen Strategy and the Multiannual Strategic Policy for European Integrated Border Management

The 2021 Schengen Strategy pointed to Europol's renewed mandate as an element expected to reinforce the Schengen area internally.¹⁵ The agency also features in the Schengen Evaluation and Monitoring Mechanism and is an important contributor to the Schengen Cycle, especially to Schengen Barometer. Europol shall, according to its mandate, provide expertise, analysis, reports, and other relevant information to support the implementation of the Schengen Cycle and Schengen evaluation activities. Its experts regularly participate in all relevant evaluation missions and contribute to Schengen evaluation training activities.

On 16 May 2023, the Commission presented the second State of Schengen report¹⁶ with enhanced internal security of the Schengen area to fight against organised crime and drug trafficking featuring as one of the seven priority areas for the coming year. In this context, SIENA as the default law enforcement information exchange channel will reinforce Europol's position as the EU's law enforcement information hub. Moreover, Europol also contributes to the thematic evaluation on identifying best practices of MS in fighting drugs trafficking.

Following the Commission's Policy document on developing a multiannual strategic policy for European integrated border management (EIBM), the first such policy was put forward in March 2023. Europol and law enforcement authorities feature as relevant partners in several policy priorities and strategic guidelines for the next five years, including: border control; analysis of risks for internal security; cooperation amongst relevant Union institutions, bodies, offices and Agencies, including through regular exchange of information; cooperation with third countries in the areas covered by the European Border and Coast Guard Regulation; technical and operational measures within the Schengen area related to border control and designed to address irregular migration and counter cross-border crime; and research and innovation activities. Frontex adopted the technical and operational strategy for EIBM 2023-2027, and Europol may be involved in implementing relevant actions.

2.11. Renewed EU Action Plan against migrant smuggling 2021-2025

Europol will play an active role in implementing the Renewed EU Action Plan against migrant smuggling 2021-2025¹⁷. In terms of the reinforced cooperation with partner countries and international organisations, Europol is called to offer assistance in line with its mandate. Optimal use of the EMSC should be made, in particular through the Information Clearing House and the sharing of information from immigration liaison officers, common operational partnerships and CSDP mission and operations. The European Commission is due to step up negotiations on cooperation between Europol and partner countries in order to facilitate the exchange of personal data for investigators. EMPACT is also a key tool to implement the Action Plan. The judiciary (e.g. Eurojust) should be more closely involved with the Joint Liaison Task Force on Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking in Human Beings, while the capacity of law enforcement and judicial authorities to target the online presence of smugglers, with the support of EU IRU, should be stepped up. The support of the European Economic and Financial Crime Centre should be used to include a financial investigation element into migrant smuggling cases. Finally, joint reports on migrant smuggling with Frontex are encouraged, as well as the establishment of cooperation with the private sector.

¹⁵ COM(2021) 277 final of 2.6.2021, p. 13.

¹⁶ COM/2023/274 final

¹⁷ COM(2021) 591 final

2.12. EU Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings 2021-2025

The EU Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings¹⁸ recognises the central role of Europol in breaking the business model of the traffickers. The Strategy encourages national authorities to strengthen cooperation with labour inspectorates and/or social partners and EU Agencies, in particular with Europol and, within its remit, with the European Labour Authority and to carry out concerted and joint inspections'. It is highlighted that Europol facilitates MS' intelligence-lead and financial investigations and supports effective cross-border operational cooperation. Europol's role is also mentioned when it comes to detection of internet content used by traffickers. Furthermore, a Common Anti – Trafficking Plan to address the risk of trafficking in human beings and support potential victims among those fleeing the war in Ukraine was endorsed by the Solidarity Platform on 11 May 2022 highlighting the role of Europol in: monitoring offline and online risks; providing information to MS and the Commission, based on collected intelligence about the threat assessment for the area of trafficking in human beings; training; developing indicators about potential victims of trafficking or *modi operandi* of the traffickers, adapted to the context of the war in Ukraine.

2.13. Joint Investigation Teams (JIT) collaboration platform

On 1 December 2021, the European Commission issued a legislative proposal for a regulation to establish a dedicated JIT platform, to be used on a voluntary basis, to support the functioning of Joint Investigation Teams. To improve and speed up collaboration, the new proposal will set up a collaboration platform for easy and secure exchange of information and files, including evidence, within the joint team and between it and other bodies (e.g. Eurojust, Europol and the European Anti-Fraud Office). The final act was published in the EU Official Journal on 17 May 2023.

2.14. Revised Environmental Crime Directive

The revised EU Directive on the protection of the environment through criminal law, otherwise known as Environmental Crime Directive, entered into force on 20 May 2024. It introduces new criminal offences, a wider range of sanctions and obligations for MS to provide adequate training and resources to law enforcement. The new Directive also calls on Member states to cooperate through EU agencies, in particular Eurojust and Europol, as well as with EU bodies, including the EPPO and OLAF, in their respective areas of competence.

2.15. EU Action plan on cultural goods trafficking

On 13 December 2022, the European Commission presented an EU Action plan against trafficking in cultural goods, to deter criminals effectively, to address evolving security threats and to protect cultural heritage within and beyond the EU. The action plan builds on existing EU activity and addresses ongoing challenges through: improving prevention and detection of crimes by market participants and cultural heritage institutions; strengthening law enforcement and judicial capabilities; and boosting international cooperation, including with source and transit countries of cultural goods in conflicts and crises. The document establishes a list of key actions to strengthen the capabilities of law enforcement and the judiciary in that field, including several references to Europol's role and supporting the reinforcement of CULTNET by seconding appropriate staff to Europol.

In this context, on 8 June 2023, the Council adopted **Conclusions on the fight against trafficking in cultural goods**¹⁹, welcoming the Commission's action plan and encouraging further actions, several of which including direct references to Europol or EMPACT, such as the creation of an EU CULTNET contact point at Europol; the creation, in cooperation with the Innovation Lab, of a specific search engine to detect trafficking in cultural goods; or the need to take full advantage of Europol's and Eurojust's support for cross-border law enforcement and judicial cooperation.

¹⁸ COM(2021) 171 final.

¹⁹ Council 10249/23

2.16. 10-Point Plan - For stronger European coordination on welcoming people fleeing the war from Ukraine

On 28 March 2022, the European Commission presented the 10-points action plan, which among others, calls for closer cooperation in the area of preventing human trafficking and helping victims. The plan addresses the specific challenges emerging from the Ukrainian war. Furthermore, with a view to addressing the internal security implications of the war in Ukraine, the EMPACT community and Europol should support MS cooperation and investigations, and sustain the sharing of relevant security information. MS should ensure the enforcement of EU sanctions against Russian and Belarussian individuals and entities and take immediate appropriate action at national level concerning sanctioned persons. In this regard, Europol is part of the "Freeze and Seize" Task Force set up by the Commission to ensure EU-level coordination on the implementation and enforcement of sanctions.

2.17. Council Conclusions on Action Plan for the European Forensic Science Area 2.0

On 9 March 2023, the Council approved Conclusions on the Action Plan for the European Forensic Science Area 2.0²⁰. The Action Plan aims to shape the future of forensics by 2030, and is organised in three pillars, each addressing specific areas and outlining appropriate actions and responsible stakeholders. Europol's role in the implementation of the action plan has been identified in several areas, e.g. biometrics, artificial intelligence, digitalisation, and emerging technologies.

2.18. High-Level Expert Group on access to data for effective law enforcement

To contribute to the further consolidation of an effective Security Union, in June 2023 the European Commission set up a High-Level Expert Group (HLEG) on access to data for effective law enforcement, guided by the input provided by the Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation on Internal Security (COSI). The HLEG is tasked to explore the problems that law enforcement practitioners face in their daily work, and to define potential solutions to overcome them. Specific focus is on the need for law enforcement practitioners to have adequate access to data. The Group will map, assess, and prioritise the relevant issues and will identify, in a comprehensive manner, the legal, technical, and operational challenges, both current and potential future ones, and assess the practical impact of the lack of access to data on law enforcement's ability to perform their function. The Group is composed of high-level representatives of the EU MS and the European Commission, relevant EU bodies and agencies (including Europol, Eurojust, ENISA, FRA and CEPOL), the Joint Research Centre of the Commission and the EU Counter Terrorism Coordinator.

3. Cybercrime

3.1. European Commission's e-evidence package

On 12 July 2023, the European Parliament and the Council adopted a legislative package aiming at improving law enforcement and judicial cross-border access to electronic evidence. The objective is to establish a consistent legal framework and avoid conflicting obligations with the law of non-EU countries, as well as to protect the fundamental rights of individuals. Conceived as a judicial cooperation tool, the e-evidence legislation could have implications for Europol, since the SIRIUS capability is mentioned as a possible platform to transmit and facilitate the authentication of orders and as a de-confliction tool. The EU Package entered into force in August 2023 and will start applying as of 2026.

3.2. EU Strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse for 2020-2025

²⁰ Council 7152/23

Europol Public Information

The Strategy published in July 2020 presents a framework for EU action in 2020-2025²¹ to respond to the increasing threat of child sexual abuse both online and offline. The key initiatives foreseen were:

- To ensure that providers of electronic communications services could continue their voluntary practices to detect in their systems child sexual abuse after December 2020.
- To propose legislation requiring relevant online services providers to detect known child sexual abuse material and report it to public authorities.
- To establish a prevention network of practitioners and researchers.

3.3. Regulation laying down rules to prevent and combat child sexual abuse

On 11 May 2022 the European Commission proposed a Regulation laying down rules to prevent and combat child sexual abuse (CSA Regulation) in order to replace the interim regulation which was set to expire in August 2024. The proposal introduces i.a., detection and reporting obligations for online service providers, which will inevitably increase the number of referrals to be handled by Europol. The regulation also aims to establish a European centre to prevent and counter child sexual abuse, in the form of an EU decentralised agency, which should cooperate closely with Europol; the new Centre would “rely on the support services of Europol (HR, IT including cybersecurity, communication)”. In light of this ongoing legislative process, the interim regulation was extended until 3 April 2026 to ensure the continuation of the voluntary regime for the detection and reporting of CSA online to the competent authorities.

3.4. Proposal Directive on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child sexual abuse material (recast)

On 6 February 2024, the European Commission published a proposal revising the 2011 European directive on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children²². The aim is to adapt EU definitions and criminal offenses to constant digital change, including technological developments. The proposal also introduces, inter-alia, details on investigative tools available to law enforcement, Member States cooperation with Europol and Eurojust, as well as cooperation with third countries to investigate and combat child sexual exploitation in travel and tourism. It creates new structures and processes in Member States, sets-up multi-stakeholder mechanism for the development and implementation of measures to prevent and combat CSA, and promotes CSA training for law enforcement and the judicial.

3.5. Digital Services Act

On 15 December 2020 the European Commission adopted the Digital Services Act (DSA), a legislative proposal to set harmonised new rules for all digital services that operate in the EU. The proposal puts forward measures for countering illegal content online and introduces i.a. obligations for hosting service providers (HSP) to report suspicions of criminal offences to law enforcement or judicial authorities of the MS(s) concerned, once the HSP becomes aware of a threat to the life or safety of person or persons; should the MS concerned be unclear, the HSP must report it to the authorities of the MS in which the company is registered in the EU, or to Europol, or both. Europol continues working on fine-tuning its work processes in order to accommodate this new flow of information from HSPs. The DSA entered into force on 16 November 2022 and its rules became fully applicable from February 2024.

3.6. EU’s Cybersecurity Strategy for the Digital Decade

The EU’s Cybersecurity Strategy for the Digital Decade²³ adopted on 16 December 2020 seeks to enhance the EU’s resilience to cyber threats. Initiatives include enhancing cooperation and information-sharing amongst the various cyber communities and the establishment of the Joint Cyber Unit. Furthermore, special attention should be given to preventing and countering

²¹ COM(2020) 607 final

²² COM(2024) 60 final

²³ JOIN(2020) 18 final

Europol Public Information

cyberattacks with systemic effects that might affect EU supply chains, critical infrastructure and essential services, democratic institutions and processes and undermine economic security. The European Commission will, together with the EU Intellectual Property Office, Europol, ENISA, MS and the private sector, develop awareness tools to increase the resilience of EU businesses against cyber-enabled intellectual property theft.

3.7. Regulation laying down measures for a high common level of cybersecurity at the institutions, bodies, offices and agencies of the Union

In March 2022, the European Commission adopted the proposal for a regulation that introduces common binding rules on cybersecurity for all EU Institutions, Bodies and Agencies (EUIBAs). The new mandatory measures include i.a., baseline budget allocation towards cybersecurity and standards, procedures for incident response and maturity assessment. It also proposes the reallocation of resources and staff from relevant EUIBAs to CERT-EU, the EU Computer Security Incident Response Team. Classified environments are broadly excluded from the regulation, but the regulation implies adjustments to Europol's internal cybersecurity procedures, create new reporting channels and have some impact on resources. The regulation also opens the possibility for cooperation and information exchange between CERT-EU and the European Cybercrime Centre. The regulation entered into force on 7 January 2024.

3.8. Proposal for a Regulation on information security in the institutions, bodies, offices and agencies of the Union

Together with the Cybersecurity draft Regulation, the Commission proposed common information security rules for all EUIBAs that will be mandatory across all EU administration. These aim to create a baseline of security standards applicable to all information handled within the EU entities, both non-classified and classified, as well as to relevant communication and information systems. This Regulation will likely require some adjustments in the current procedures related to information security at Europol. Negotiations are ongoing.

3.9. Cyber Crisis Task Force

In March 2022, the European Commission established the Cyber Crisis Task Force to ensure coordination at operational and executive levels regarding cybersecurity crisis management. The Task Force is comprised of relevant Commission Services and EU bodies and agencies, including Europol and is mandated to support operational coordination and informed political decision-making, improve crisis management communication flows between civilian, law enforcement, diplomatic and defence cybersecurity communities, and coordinate the implementation of the Joint Cyber Unit.

3.10. Cyber Resilience Act

The European Commission adopted the Cyber Resilience Act²⁴ on 15 September 2022, which introduces mandatory cybersecurity requirements for hardware and software products. The proposed regulation will apply to all devices and software that are connected either directly or indirectly to another device or network, and aims to address the impact of cybercrime, in particular ransomware. Once it enters into force, it will likely have an impact on the ability of law enforcement to counter cybercrime, Europol's procurement of technology and potentially on Europol's role as technology provider for law enforcement. The European Parliament endorsed the compromise text on 12 March 2024. Final adoption is pending.

3.11. European Commission Cyber Package

On 18 April 2023 the European Commission adopted a Cyber package, which seeks to strengthen cybersecurity capacities in the EU and contains two main initiatives of relevance for Europol and/or EU MS law enforcement agencies.

- The *creation of a Cybersecurity Skills Academy*, which seeks to help increase the number of skilled cybersecurity professionals in the EU and to increase synergies across cyber

²⁴ COM(2022) 454 final

Europol Public Information

communities to fight cybercrime. The academy puts forward new ways for cooperation between Europol, CEPOL, the EU Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA) and the European Cybersecurity Competences Centre, to establish an operational trainings' need analysis to address cyberattacks. Moreover, cooperation between Europol, CEPOL, the Commission and the EEAS is foreseen for defining specific profiles and respective skills for law enforcement.

- *The EU Cyber Solidarity Act*, which is a regulation proposal to strengthen solidarity at Union level to better detect, prepare for and respond to significant or large-scale cybersecurity incidents. The proposal includes i.a. the creation of a Cybersecurity Emergency Mechanism.

The regulation proposal also establishes an EU Cybersecurity Reserve, comprised of a pool of cybersecurity services from trusted providers to support response to and immediate recovery from significant or large-scale cybersecurity incidents. As an EU agency, Europol would qualify as recipient of such support, should it suffer a significant cyber incident that goes beyond the agency's cybersecurity capabilities. The European Parliament and Council reached a provisional agreement on 6 March 2024. Final adoption is pending.

3.12. AI package

On 21 April 2021, the European Commission presented the so-called "Artificial Intelligence (AI) Package". The main component of the AI Package is the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Act adopted on the 21 May 2024, that constitutes the first step in regulating Artificial Intelligence in the Union and has a significant impact on how law enforcement agencies and Europol will be able to harness the potential of AI. The AI Act takes a four-tiered risk-based approach (from low risk to unacceptable risk) and sets different levels of safeguards to mitigate the risks posed by specific uses of AI for safety and fundamental rights. Certain uses related to law enforcement are labelled as "high-risk" and therefore additional obligations are imposed on the developers and deployers of the respective Artificial Intelligence systems. Significant work remains for the smooth implementation of the AI Act so to prevent that any additional burden is placed on law enforcement authorities and on Europol.

3.13. Commission Recommendation on a Coordinated Implementation Roadmap for the transition to Post-Quantum Cryptography

The European Commission adopted on 11 April 2024 a recommendation to foster the transition to Post-Quantum Cryptography for the protection of digital infrastructures and services for public administrations and other critical infrastructures in the Union²⁵. In this regard, Member States are encouraged to coordinate their actions through a dedicated forum, to define and develop the Post-Quantum Cryptography Coordinated Implementation Roadmap. The recommendation encourages Member States to engage in discussions with other relevant bodies, such as Europol and NATO in order to avoid duplication of efforts and ensure a cohesive approach to addressing emerging challenges. The outcome of this policy process will likely have an impact on cybercrime in general, as well as on Europol's information systems and digital support services.

4. Terrorism and radicalisation

4.1. A Counter-Terrorism Agenda for the EU: Anticipate, Prevent, Protect, Respond

On 9 December 2020, the Commission presented a new Counter-Terrorism Agenda²⁶ for the EU to step up the fight against terrorism and violent extremism and boost the EU's resilience to terrorist threats. In the framework of its implementation, the Commission, in cooperation with Europol, developed further guidance for the implementation of the revised EU Crisis Response Protocol.

²⁵ C(2024) 2393 final

²⁶ COM(2020)795 final

4.2. Council Conclusions on EU External Action on Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism

On 15 June 2020, the Council adopted Conclusions on EU External Action on Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism²⁷. Key areas include the Western Balkans, North Africa and the Middle East, Sahel and the Horn of Africa. The misuse of the internet and new technologies for terrorist purposes are specifically addressed, as well as the need to cut off sources of terrorism financing. Furthermore, the Council recognises that Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) will remain a major common security challenge which should be better tackled through enhanced and timely cooperation and information sharing among MS, INTCEN, Europol, Eurojust and Interpol.

4.3. Council Conclusions on protecting Europeans from terrorism

On 10 June 2022, the Council adopted Conclusions on protecting Europeans from terrorism²⁸. The conclusions focus on: the persistent high level of terrorist threat; the need to strengthen the use of SIS to monitor, detect individuals posing a terrorist threat, and better coordinate national entry bans and expulsion measures; the need to combat the threat stemming from actors contributing to radicalisation leading to terrorism; and access to essential data to fight terrorism.

4.4. Council Conclusions on released prisoners and terrorism threats

On 4-5 December 2023, the Council adopted Conclusions on released prisoners and terrorism threats²⁹. The Council invites Member States to share, in accordance with national law, and in a timely manner before their possible release, information within the EU on prison inmates who are assessed as posing a terrorist threat, by entering their data into SIS, and if such inmates are monitored in a law enforcement framework, using the Europol Information System (EIS) and the Europol Analysis Projects. Europol is also foreseen to support the exchange of good practices between MS.

4.5. Policy recommendations in counter-terrorism

Every semester, the Terrorism Working Party (TWP) is tasked, if required by changes to the terrorist threat picture, to prepare conclusions and policy recommendations or to adjust the existing ones, based on INTCEN's assessments and Europol's biannual reports on the terrorist threat to the EU. The latest report³⁰ was presented to the TWP on 4 March 2024 and the exercise for the update of the CT policy recommendations is currently ongoing. The latest update was endorsed by COSI on 22 November 2023³¹, including, i.a.:

- Continuous monitoring by EU MS, with the support of INTCEN and Europol, of the impact of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine on terrorist activities and narratives;
- Continuous development and use of EU IRU capabilities to support MS' actions to prevent the dissemination of all types of terrorist content; the EU IRU should continue its efforts to flag violent extremist and terrorist content online;
- Further development of the cooperation with key third countries and international partners on access to battlefield information;
- Call for the use of innovative tools and new technologies to counter terrorist threats and funding of research, innovation and development activities at EU level.

Moreover, in February 2023, COSI endorsed a **Revised coordinated approach**³² - Defining a process for Evaluating information on third - country nationals suspected to be jihadist terrorists received from third parties or a Member State for possible processing in the

²⁷ Council 8868/20

²⁸ Council 9997/22

²⁹ Council 15404/23

³⁰ Council 7177/24

³¹ Council 15044/23

³² Council 5606/23

Europol Public Information

Schengen Information System, replacing the Protocol endorsed in 2020. This new approach reinforces the role of Europol in supporting MS with processing data it has received from third countries or international organisations on persons involved in terrorism.

4.6. EU Crisis Protocol (EUCP)

On 7 October 2019, the EU Internet Forum committed to a common approach in addressing the online dimension of terrorist and violent extremist attacks as set out in the EU Crisis Protocol (EUCP). The EUCP requires the EU IRU to assume a central role in the coordination of the emergency responses in the event of a terrorist attack with a significant online component. Furthermore, the EUCP points out that a designated platform is needed that would enable two-way communication among Europol, MS authorities and hosting service providers (HSP). The EUCP was updated in May 2023, including improved interoperability, a stronger protection of fundamental freedoms, and a clarification between legislative and voluntary obligations for Online Service Providers.

4.7. Regulation on preventing the dissemination of Terrorist Content Online (TCO)

The TCO Regulation entered into application on 7 June 2022. It provides a legal framework to ensure that hosting service providers will take down terrorist content online within one hour and requires MS to inform and cooperate with each other and make use of structures set up by Europol, including the PERCI platform. The aim is to ensure coordination and de-confliction with regards to removal orders and referrals. The evaluation of the TCO regulation, initially foreseen by 7 June 2024, is still ongoing.

4.8. EU anti-racism Action Plan 2020-2025

On 18 September 2020, the European Commission presented a new EU anti-racism Action Plan³³ promoting fair policing and protection against discrimination. MS are encouraged to step up efforts to prevent discriminatory attitudes by law enforcement authorities and to boost the credibility of law enforcement work against hate crimes. The Commission will work together with MS to better address violent extremist groups, including by mapping of national responses to violent extremism. The Commission is also working with IT companies to counter online hate speech.

4.9. Violent right-wing extremism and terrorism

On 8 October 2019, the Council endorsed four work strands to combat the threat stemming from violent right-wing extremism: 1) Creating a better situational overview of violent right-wing extremism and terrorism; 2) Developing and sharing good practices on how to strengthen the prevention, detection and addressing all forms of violent extremism and terrorism; 3) Addressing the spread of unlawful right-wing extremist content online and offline; and 4) Cooperating with key third countries, including by addressing the topic in counterterrorism dialogues. COSI endorsed an update of the four work strands to provide a common ground for continued work to handle the constantly evolving threat of violent right-wing extremism and terrorism on 16 May 2023.

4.10. Digital information exchange in terrorism cases

On 1 December 2021, the European Commission adopted a new initiative on the digital information exchange in terrorism cases. In December 2022, co-legislators reached an agreement on a proposal for a Regulation amending Regulation (EU) 2018/1727 of the European Parliament and the Council and Council Decision 2005/671/JHA, as regards the digital information exchange in terrorism cases ('CTR'). According to the compromise text, each MS shall take the necessary measures to ensure that at least the information concerning criminal investigations for terrorist offences which affect or may affect two or more MS, gathered by the relevant authority, is transmitted to Europol, in accordance with national law

³³ COM(2020) 565 final

Europol Public Information

and with the Europol Regulation. The final Act was published in the Official Journal on 11 October 2023.

4.11. Directive on the exchange of information and cooperation concerning terrorist offences

On 1 December 2021, the European Commission published a Proposal for a Directive amending Council Decision 2005/671/JHA on the exchange of information and cooperation concerning terrorist offences, as regards its alignment with Union rules on the protection of personal data. The Council Decision covers information exchange between Europol and MS, as well as between MS related to terrorist offences. Transmission of personal data to Europol is foreseen for the purpose of the prevention, investigation, detection or prosecution of terrorist offences and other criminal offences in respect of which Europol is competent, as listed in Annex I of the Europol Regulation. The final Act was published in the Official Journal on 11 October 2023.

5. Financial crime

5.1. Revision of the Directive on freezing and confiscation of the proceeds of crime.

On 12 April 2024, the European Council adopted the Directive on Asset Recovery and Confiscation. The Directive will better equip MS in their fight against organised crime and the associated illegal profits. It will also oblige MS to ensure that authorities have the resources they need for their activities. The rules will also apply to violation of sanctions.

Key provisions for Europol:

- **SIENA:** MS shall ensure that asset recovery offices have direct access to SIENA.
- **Cooperation between asset recovery offices (AROs)/asset management offices (AMOs) and Europol:** AROs and AMOs shall cooperate with Europol and Eurojust, for the purposes of facilitating the identification of instrumentalities and proceeds, or property that may become or is the object of a freezing or confiscation order made by a competent authority in the course of proceedings in criminal matters, to facilitate the management of frozen and confiscated assets.
- **Cooperation network on asset recovery and confiscation:** The Commission will establish a cooperation network on asset recovery and confiscation to facilitate cooperation among AROs and AMOs and with Europol, and to advise the Commission and enable the exchange of best practices. Representatives of Eurojust, EPPO and AMLA may also be invited.

5.2. Revision of Directive 2019/1153 laying down rules facilitating the use of financial and other information for the prevention, detection, investigation or prosecution of certain criminal offences

On 30 May 2024, the Council adopted the amended Directive 2019/1153, to allow designated competent authorities responsible for the prevention, investigation, detection or prosecution of criminal offences to access and search MS' centralised bank account registers through a single access point. This would enable them to establish almost immediately whether an individual holds bank accounts in other MS and identify to which MS they should make a formal request for additional information. The new Directive will also enable FIUs to invite Europol to support them in the joint analysis, within the context of the AMLA, with the agreement of all FIUs and within Europol's mandate.

5.3. EU's anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism legislative package

On 30 May 2024, the Council adopted the Anti-Money Laundering and Anti-Terrorism Financing Package (AML package). The AML package consists of: a regulation establishing a **new EU Authority for Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of**

Europol Public Information

Terrorism (AMLA); a regulation recasting the regulation on transfers of funds which aims to make transfers of crypto-assets more transparent and fully traceable (which was adopted in May 2023); a regulation on anti-money-laundering requirements for the private sector; a directive on anti-money-laundering mechanisms at national level. The new AMLA is expected to start operations in mid-2025.

Key provisions for Europol:

- **AMLA Joint Analysis:** Europol will be able to **support FIUs** when carrying out joint analysis, subject to the agreement of all participating FIUs and will also **receive the results of the joint analysis**, upon explicit consent of all FIUs participating, and where the results indicate that there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a criminal offence has been committed.
- **Hit/no-hit system:** upon consent of all FIUs participating in the joint analysis, the AMLA staff shall be authorised to cross-match, on the basis on a hit/no-hit system, the data of those FIUs with data made available by other Union Agencies (including Europol).
- Europol can be invited, as an observer, to attend the **AMLA General Board** meetings, in its FIU composition.
- **Working arrangement:** The AMLA and Europol shall conclude a working arrangement, setting out the details of their cooperation, including the **possibility of posting liaison officers** at each other's premises.

5.4. Tax Package

The European Commission adopted on 15 July 2020 a new Tax Package to ensure that EU tax policy will boost the fight against tax abuse, curb unfair tax competition and increase tax transparency. The most relevant initiative for Europol would be a mutual communication channel with Eurofisc, the network of MS liaison officers facilitating multilateral efforts against cross-border VAT fraud.

5.5. New customs reform

On 17 May 2023, the European Commission adopted the Customs reform³⁴, which seeks to establish a more cost-efficient and effective cooperation framework governing the Customs Union. The Commission proposes to set up two key enablers:

- The EU Customs Authority, to pool expertise and competences that are currently scattered across the EU, to steer, coordinate, and support national customs authorities in the EU. EU Customs Authority is expected to assume its tasks on 1 January 2028.

- The EU Customs Data Hub to gradually integrate and replace the existing Customs IT infrastructure and enhance interoperability with related policy fields. It will collect, process, connect and store all relevant data, and also run EU-level risk analysis, to better protect the EU's external border for goods.

The European Parliament's first reading position was adopted on 13 March 2024. The file will be followed up by the new Parliament.

Furthermore, the Council resolution on customs cooperation in the area of law enforcement³⁵ adopted on 8 June 2023 highlights the vital contribution of customs and other competent authorities of MS to the internal security of the EU through the prevention, detection and investigation of activities involving irregular or illegal cross-border movements of goods and money laundering. Active cooperation between customs authorities and Europol, as well as other relevant EU agencies, was noted with satisfaction.

5.6. Update of the anti-corruption legislative framework

³⁴ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council and the European Economic and Social Committee: Customs reform: taking the Customs Union to the next level.

³⁵ Council 10247/23

Europol Public Information

The European Commission adopted a new anti-corruption legislative proposal on 3 May 2023. The package consists of 1) A Communication on the fight against corruption in the EU, which provides an overview of existing EU anti-corruption legislation and policies, takes stock of challenges and reflects on how to step-up EU action; and 2) A Directive on fighting corruption. The proposal establishes rules which update and harmonise definitions and penalties for corruption offences to ensure that high standard criminal law tools are in place to better fight and prevent corruption and to improve enforcement. Specific focus is given to cooperation between MS authorities, the Commission, Europol, Eurojust, OLAF and EPPO. The European Parliament and the Council adopted their negotiation positions in February and June 2024, respectively. Trilogues are expected to start soon.

5.7. Commission Recommendation on measures to combat and enhance the enforcement of intellectual property rights

On 19 March 2024, the European Commission adopted a Recommendation to combat counterfeiting, both offline and online, and enhance the enforcement of intellectual property rights. The Recommendation, also known as the EU toolbox against counterfeiting, aims to foster collaboration between rights holders, service providers, and law enforcement, while encouraging best practices and the use of modern tools and technologies. It consists of strategic initiatives to combat counterfeiting and strengthen the enforcement of intellectual property rights, setting out dedicated tools to increase companies' resilience and ability to better protect their intangible assets, including against cyber-theft.

The recommendations encourage MS to "share intelligence and data on new counterfeiting and piracy trends, seizures, risk assessments, lists of websites that have been held by competent authorities to have carried out IP-infringing activities (infringing websites), and good practices to tackle IP-infringing activities, as foreseen by Union law. They should share these with EU bodies working in the area such as OLAF, Europol, the EUIPO, and the Commission, making the best use of the available legal and technical tools." It also suggests continued cooperation between EUIPO and Europol, Eurojust, Frontex and CEPOL to support and streamline the fight against IP-infringing activities.

6. Information exchange and interoperability

6.1. Regulations establishing a framework for interoperability

On 20 May 2019, two Interoperability Regulations were adopted to set up a framework for interoperability between EU information systems in the field of borders and visas, police and judicial cooperation, asylum and migration. The regulations established:

- A common identity repository (CIR) that would create an individual file for each person recorded in the EES, the VIS, the ETIAS, Eurodac or the ECRIS-TCN;
- The European search portal (ESP) to enable the simultaneous querying of EES, VIS, ETIAS, Eurodac, SIS, the ECRIS-TCN as well as of Europol's and Interpol's databases;
- A shared biometric matching service (shared BMS);
- A multiple-identity detector (MID);
- A central repository for reporting and statistics;
- A new framework for MS law enforcement authorities' and for Europol's access to the EES, VIS, ETIAS provided by the CIR and ESP.

6.2. Entry-Exit System (EES)

The Regulation establishing the EES was adopted on 30 November 2017. The EES will replace the stamping of passports and will apply to third-country nationals admitted for a short stay in the Schengen area. The system's objective is to improve the management of external borders; prevent irregular immigration and facilitate management of migration flows; detect over-stayers and support the identification of undocumented persons. Europol will be able to request access to the EES under specific conditions and process. Despite some delays in MS implementation, the Commission is planning to start using the system in November 2024.

6.3. European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS)

On 12 September 2018, the Regulation establishing ETIAS was adopted, which will allow visa-exempt third country nationals to obtain a travel authorisation prior to their travel to the Schengen Area. The data provided by applicants will be automatically cross-checked, amongst others, against Europol data. The agency is expected to provide a reasoned opinion to the ETIAS National Units on hits against Europol data and its entries in ETIAS Watchlist. Additionally, Europol will be able to request access to data stored in the ETIAS Central System. ETIAS is expected to be fully operational in Q2 2025, and its functioning will start with a transitional period during which the travel authorisation will not be mandatory yet.

6.4. ECRIS-Third Country National (TCN) system

Established in 2012, the European Criminal Records Information system (ECRIS) enables national judicial authorities to receive information on previous criminal convictions in other MS. On 17 April 2019, the Regulation establishing a centralised system for the identification of MS holding conviction information on third-country nationals (TCN) was adopted to supplement ECRIS. Europol is granted direct access to ECRIS-TCN data in order to identify the MS holding information on previous convictions of third-country nationals. ECRIS-TCN is expected to enter into operation in 2025.

6.5. Recast of the Visa Information System

The VIS Regulation Recast was adopted on 7 July 2021 and foresees the extension of the scope of the VIS to include data on long-stay visas and residence permits. The data provided by visa applicants will be automatically cross-checked against Europol data and Europol will provide a reasoned opinion on the hits that occur against its data and against its entries in ETIAS Watchlist. The system is planned to enter into operation in 2026.

6.6. Recast of Eurodac Regulation

The revision of the Eurodac Regulation was adopted on 14 May 2024, with the aim to improve the control of irregular migration and the detection of unauthorised movements. The scope of the Regulation is broadened to provide law enforcement authorities with access to the Eurodac database. Europol will have an access point and will be able to access Eurodac for consultation when, after consultation of the Central Identity Repository (of biometric or alphanumeric data), this indicates that data is stored in Eurodac. The updated system is expected to become operational from 2026.

6.7. Screening regulation

The Screening Regulation introduces searches against the European databases for the purpose of security checks; this includes searches against Europol data, for all persons who do not fulfil the entry conditions to the EU. When a query provides a match against Europol data, an automatic notification is sent to Europol, in order for the agency to inform, where needed, whether the person could pose a security risk. In the LFS of the proposed Regulation, there are no additional resources foreseen for Europol for this purpose, even if this promises to be a resource intensive task. The Regulation was adopted on 14 May 2024 and will be fully applicable two years after its entry into force (i.e. mid-2026).

6.8. Revision of the Advance Passenger Information Directive

On 13 December 2022, Commission published the Advance Passenger Information (API) proposals that provide for the mandatory collection of API data for the purposes of border management and for countering serious crime and terrorism. On the latter, the mandatory collection of API data on intra-EU flights will strengthen the reliability and effectiveness of PNR data as a law enforcement tool. A provisional political agreement on the two proposals was reached on 1 March 2024. The agreed wording further clarifies amongst others the methods for selecting intra-EU flights and extending the collection and transfer of data from carrier to Passenger Name Record (PNR) data. The progressive entry into application is expected to begin in 2028.

6.9. Prüm II Regulation

The Prüm II Regulation was adopted on 13 March 2024 and intends to reinforce and modernise the existing Prüm framework by improving the technical architecture, introducing new categories of data, enhancing the follow-up communication process, and involving Europol. The involvement of Europol aims to enable (1) MS to search and cross-check the third country biometric data held by Europol in an automated manner and (2) Europol to cross-check data received from third countries with the MS' databases. Europol is also tasked to develop and maintain EPRIS (European Police Record Index System) by 2027, which forms the technical basis for the exchange of police records.

6.10. Directive on information exchange

The Directive on information exchange entered into force on 12 June 2023. The Directive is highly relevant for Europol and will have a significant impact on Europol's resources since it intends to establish SIENA as the mandatory channel for the exchange of criminal information by default and by introducing a provision to put Europol in copy for every information exchange concerning crimes falling under its mandate. MS have 18 months from the entry into force to transpose it into national law (with the exception of the provision on secure communication channel, which has to be transposed four years after entry into force).

6.11. Council Recommendation on operational police cooperation

The Council Recommendation on law enforcement cooperation³⁶ was adopted on 10 June 2022 and aims at creating shared standards for operational cross border cooperation between MS. This includes a common list of crimes for which hot pursuits across borders are possible and secure messenger tools for police officers to communicate with their counterparts when conducting operations in other EU countries. The proposal emphasises use of the different possibilities Europol offers to support operational cooperation between MS, especially with regard to secure communication tools, such as SIENA or the Virtual Command Post (VCP).

7. EMPACT 2022-2025

The Council adopted in 2021 the EU's priorities for the fight against serious and organised crime for the period 2022-2025 and these comprise:

1) High-risk criminal networks; 2) Cyber-attacks; 3) Trafficking in human beings; 4) Child sexual exploitation; 5) Migrant smuggling; 6) Drugs trafficking: the production, trafficking and distribution of cannabis, cocaine and heroin; the production, trafficking and distribution of synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances (NPS); 7) Fraud, economic and financial crimes: Online fraud schemes, excise fraud, MTIC fraud, Intellectual property (IP) crime, counterfeiting of goods and currencies, Criminal finances, money laundering and asset recovery; 8) Organised Property Crime; 9) Environmental Crime; 10) Firearms trafficking. Document Fraud is also included as a cross-cutting threat.

On 9 March 2023, the Council adopted conclusions on the permanent continuation of the EU Policy Cycle for organised and serious international crime/**EMPACT 2022 +**³⁷, as well as on the EU's priorities for the fight against serious and organised crime for EMPACT 2022-2025³⁸. These documents reflect 1) the replacement of annual Operational Action Plans (OAP) with biennial OAPs from 2024; 2) the removal of the mid-term and final assessment of the achievement of the common horizontal strategic goals that will be newly part of independent evaluation at the end of the cycle, and 3) in case of emergency situations/threats, adjustment of the operational actions during the implementation of the OAPs.

³⁶ Council 8720/22

³⁷ Council 7100/23

³⁸ Council 7101/23

SECTION II - Multi-annual programming 2025 – 2027

1. Multi-annual programme

This section references the **Europol Strategy “Delivering security in partnership”**, endorsed by the Management Board in June 2023, following several consultations with Member States, Europol’s Management Board and its Working Groups, the HENUs and Europol’s management. The renewed Strategy paves the way to further improve Europol’s performance, while benefitting from new opportunities introduced by the amended Europol Regulation, in order to better address the operational needs of the Member States and the security threats they are facing. To do so, it builds further on the five strategic priorities of the previous Europol Strategy 2020+, which remain relevant, and adds an additional priority aimed at addressing the increased complexity of law enforcement cooperation, and strengthening the role of Europol in bringing relevant partners together for international cooperation.

As a result, the following strategic objectives will continue guiding the work of the agency in the years 2025-2027 to:



Be the EU criminal information hub, including for data acquisition



Deliver agile, real-time operational support



Be a platform for European policing solutions



Bring the relevant partners together for cross-border cooperation and joint action



Be at the forefront of law enforcement innovation and research



Be the model EU organisation for law enforcement cooperation

The areas of specific focus for the years 2025-2027 are presented below:

Strategic Objective 1: Be the EU criminal information hub, including for data acquisition

Europol’s function as the EU criminal information hub will be further expanded to enable compliant access to data stored outside Europol’s own data repositories, within legal and practical possibilities. This includes operational use of EU databases (such as SIS, VIS, EES, ETIAS, and Eurodac) and the provision of support for the exchange of information involving national repositories (e.g. Prüm, ADEP-EPRIS).

Europol Public Information

Data gathering at Europol should be aimed at minimising criminal intelligence gaps and focus on data from live, complex investigations. The latter goes hand-in-hand with the prioritisation of Europol's support to coordinated action against High-Value Targets (HVTs) and Operational Task Forces (OTFs), including those with a regional focus.

Europol will prioritise the acquisition of data that fulfils this purpose, such as real-time data from large and complex investigations, lawfully-intercepted and decrypted communications of criminal networks, and seized darknet servers used for criminal purposes. The agency will also focus on data concerning crime hubs, hotspots and key crime enablers, as well as priority areas, such as financial crime, migrant smuggling, drug trafficking, cybercrime, the illicit weapons trade and large-scale fraud schemes.

Member States will have access to more self-service tools, including for data and operational contributions.

Highlights:

- Conducting targeted data collection with specific interest for Europol's focus areas;
- Facilitating instant communication, swift transfers from national data repositories, and integration with (joint) case management capabilities;
- Enhancing the intake of information through short-term on-the-spot deployments of frontline support officers;
- Enabling smooth data intake from private parties in relevant sectors (e.g. online service providers, the banking sector, crypto-currency exchangers), in consultation with Member States;
- Furthering Europol's role in EU information exchange by implementing related policies and enabling new initiatives, including the creation of a dedicated unit to coordinate Europol's work concerning interoperability and travel intelligence;
- Defining criteria for operational deployments to increase relevance and effectiveness, including for data collection.

Strategic Objective 2: Deliver agile, real-time operational support

Europol's operational support to Member States' investigations consists of several elements, chief among which are operational analysis, specialised capabilities, and the facilitation of operational coordination. Increasing the operational relevance of Europol calls for continued efforts and investments in such areas.

Europol's capabilities should, wherever possible, be targeted towards the kind of investigations and operations, on which Europol can have most impact and added value. These investigations and operations are primarily large and complex cross-border investigations requiring real-time support.

Highlights:

- Furthering the OTF and HVT concepts for operational support;
- Supporting the investigation of all aspects of the criminal business model, including criminal finance, logistics, communication, corruption and intimidation;
- Creating an analysis training and coaching programme to increase the number of qualified operational and strategic analysis at Europol and in Member States, while promoting harmonisation of methodology;
- Expanding the flexible deployment of short-term SNEs/guest experts;
- Optimising internal coordination of OSINT monitoring across Europol's centres;
- Stepping up support for migrant smuggling cases with essential partners for data collection outside the EU, with additional support coming through regional OTFs;

Europol Public Information

- Nurturing (new) partnerships for combating corruption and environmental crime through dedicated alliances, including relevant private parties;
- Specialised and coordinated support in financial investigations, crypto-currency tracing and online crimes through knowledge management among experts.

Strategic Objective 3: Be a platform for European policing solutions

Europol's role of offering a platform for competent authorities to develop and use policing tools and expertise has benefitted from the Europol Platform for Experts (EPE) and Operations Network Experts Platform (ONEP). These will be further developed in line with user needs and technical developments.

In addition, Europol will seek, where relevant and possible, to invest in platforms that can contribute to operational coordination between partners. These may also serve joint capacity building and the sharing of expertise and tools.

Highlights:

- Enabling the coordination of the collective response to the criminal threats through EMPACT and, where relevant, by suitable means for counter-terrorism;
- Creating a coordination and de-confliction solution for HVTs;
- Facilitating rapid crisis response mechanisms;
- Providing guidance for Member States' users to find the right products and services, including technical tools and extended support services to manage their expected growth;
- Creating a single digital portal for accessing Europol's processing systems, specialised tools, services, data, contacts and expertise;
- Rolling out in-built translation tools to facilitate communication for users in Member States' competent authorities and other partners.

Strategic Objective 4: Bring the relevant partners together for cross-border cooperation and joint action

Operational support to Member States often involves the facilitation of contacts with law enforcement from non-EU countries, with Interpol and other international organisations, and increasingly with private parties. In the interest of coordination at EU level, the engagement with EU Agencies in the field of Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) is also indispensable.

Since its establishment, Europol has developed into a strong enabler that brings the relevant partners together, with the significant and valuable community of Liaison Officers at its heart. The agency intends to foster this evolution in the coming years to maximise operational results, first and foremost for the Member States, but also for our other partners. Europol will especially invest in its partnerships with the Schengen Associated Countries, Interpol, and key JHA agencies such as Frontex.

Highlights:

- Intensifying the cooperation with the Schengen Associated Countries, as essential partners of the EU Internal Security Architecture;
- Seeking practical solutions for a more targeted operational cooperation with strategic third parties within the applicable legal frameworks;
- Assessing roles and competences that will enable cooperation between Europol and Interpol, with a view to address Member States' needs for products and services in relation to Third States;
- Coordinating with other EU JHA Agencies, to offer an aligned set of products and services to Member States;

Europol Public Information

- Stepping up cooperation with other (non-EU) Agencies and international organisations, including operational cooperation where possible;
- Developing a dedicated strategy for cooperation with private parties, including NGOs and academia, to optimise their engagement, both for operational interests and to nurture potential innovation.

Strategic Objective 5: Be at the forefront of law enforcement innovation and research

The Innovation Lab and its structured connection to Member States serves as a solid foundation for well-coordinated, collective innovation in the coming years. The operational relevance of innovation is a leading principle in the Lab's work. As a consequence, the connection to the operational needs of the Member States, JHA partners, as well as within Europol, has to be fostered and promoted.

The extended legal possibilities for the processing of personal data for research and innovation purposes are to be explored and acted upon in an adapted development environment.

Highlights:

- Identifying the innovative tools and processing capabilities Member States need most, and enabling their development together with specialised law enforcement services, as well as research and industry partners;
- Pursuing the rapid development of tools supporting data collection and processing, including through data science and artificial intelligence;
- Expanding the Europol Tool Repository with new cutting-edge technology;
- Optimising the possibilities for funding and priority attribution for grant schemes;
- Engaging proactively with private sector, academia and research institutes, including through Industry & Research Days;
- Stimulating a culture of innovation across Europol.

Strategic Objective 6: Be the model EU organisation for law enforcement cooperation

The operational mission of Europol must stand out in all aspects of its work. This applies also to the internal support functions that should fulfil their tasks with operational delivery in mind. The consideration for the specific needs of the law enforcement context in which Europol operates will be made a priority throughout the agency, optimising our performance and output.

Highlights:

- Investing to attract, train and retain specialists in relevant domains of expertise;
- Increasing the encouragement of personal development, talent management and empowerment;
- Work with the Management Board and Member States to address legal and administrative impediments to operational delivery;
- Creating an Operational Readiness Function, including relevant internal support services, for rapid operational response to crises and emergency situations;
- Identifying possibilities for a more flexible incorporation of tools and services within the ICT environment;
- Acting on our environmental responsibility to minimise carbon emissions;

Europol Public Information

- Creating a dedicated change management capability across the organisation, in which in particular the applicable requirements are structured and applied for every technical solution, process or work practice;
- Fostering continued engagement with former Europol staff by investing in the Europol community, even after their employment with the agency has ended.

Table: Key Performance Indicators for measuring multi-annual performance of the agency

Key Performance Indicator	Target 2025	Indicative targets	
		2026	2027
Number of Accepted Contributions by Europol ³⁹	97,000	100,000	100,000
Number of Operations Supported by Europol	3,250	3,250	3,250
Number of Operational Task Forces supported by Europol	36	36	36
Number of Operational Analysis Reports produced by Europol	280	280	290
Number of Action Days organised/supported by Europol	420	420	420
Satisfaction with Operational Support delivered by Europol	8.5	8.5	8.5
Number of Cross Match Reports and SIENA hit notifications produced by Europol	15,000	16,000	16,500
Number of searches through EIS and QUEST	15,500,000	16,000,000	17,000,000
Number of SIENA messages exchanged	2,000,000	2,100,000	2,500,000
Number of Strategic Analysis Reports produced by Europol	30	30	30
Satisfaction with Strategic Analysis Reports produced by Europol	8.5	8.5	8.5
Satisfaction with Operational Training delivered by Europol	8.5	8.5	8.5
Implementation of Audit Recommendations ⁴⁰	85%	85%	85%
Vacancy Rate	2%	2%	2%
% Female staff	35%	36%	36%
Budget Commitment Rate	95%	95%	95%
Emissions (CO2) ⁴¹	2,804	2,615	2,426

³⁹ The responsibility for this indicator is shared by Europol and its partners (MS, TP). As such, the target is indicative and used to monitor the trend of accepted contributions.

⁴⁰ % of pending critical/very important audit recommendations implemented within the timeline committed to by Europol and agreed with the auditing body.

⁴¹ It should be noted that measurement of this indicator is done on a yearly basis with results for year N being available well into year N+1; despite this time lag, Europol considers it important to monitor this KPI.

2. Human and financial resource outlook for the years 2025-2027

2.1. Overview of the past and current situation

Since its establishment, Europol's role in the security landscape of the EU has been growing and, as a result, the agency has been entrusted with several important functions, such as the European Cybercrime Centre, the European Migrant Smuggling Centre, the European Internet Referral Unit, within the European Counter-Terrorism Centre, and most recently, the Innovation Lab and the European Financial and Economic Crime Centre. Although resources were provided to perform new and additional tasks, Europol has always had to rely on the shifting of posts from support functions to the Operations Directorate or internal re-allocation of operational staff. In June 2022, the revised Europol Regulation entered into force; the Europol Regulation Recast reinforced Europol's financial and human resources, beyond the initial MFF 2021-2027. In addition, from 2024, some additional posts were transferred from Frontex to Europol, based on an agreement between the two Agencies, for implementing, in particular, tasks related to ETIAS. Finally, some additional resources were foreseen, as of 2024, in the Prüm II Regulation and, as of 2025, in the new legislative proposal for preventing and fighting migrant smuggling (subject to legislative process).

Consequently, for a few years now, Europol has been faced with an increased number of responsibilities that have inevitably exacerbated the pressure on resources, both staff and financial.

2.2. Outlook for the years 2025 - 2027

As detailed in section I – General Context of Europol's Programming Document 2025-2027, a significant number of new and expanded tasks are foreseen for Europol, stemming from Union policies and legislation. However, additional resources to perform these new tasks have not been allocated to Europol in the Legislative Financial Statements (LFS) of these initiatives – only some resources were allocated to the agency in the Interoperability Regulations⁴², the Prüm II Regulation and the legislative proposal to prevent and fight migrant smuggling, the latter under negotiation. While a significant number of resources were provided to the agency as part of and for the purpose of implementing the amended Europol Regulation, some priority projects are expected to have a significant multi-year impact on the resources of the agency. In addition, inflation pressures affecting mainly staff costs were estimated and communicated by the European Commission on 20 December 2023⁴³ and are expected to further compress the existing budget in 2025. As a consequence, Europol, will not be in a position to absorb fully its additional tasks without an adequate reinforcement to its resources.

The Management Board and its Working Groups were informed on various occasions about this issue and the agency requested additional resources – as part of the EU Budget 2025 process – that go beyond the ones currently provided in the multi-annual financial framework.

While resource pressures are evident in various areas, Europol focused its estimates only on the following high-priority, high-impact initiatives, for which no dedicated or insufficient resources were foreseen in the relevant legislative financial statements (where applicable):

- Digital Services Act (DSA);
- Interoperability (I/O);
- Second Data Centre;
- Information Exchange Directive (IED);

⁴² Europol received 14 TAs in the period 2019-2020.

⁴³ Budget Circular for 2025 – Agency Instructions Ref. Ares(2023)8743970 -20/12/2023.

Europol Public Information

- Strategic Housing Roadmap (SHR).

In addition, the agency requested funding to offset the impact of inflation on staff costs, as estimated in the Budget Circular 2025. The additional funds currently proposed by the European Commission for Europol in the LFS of the new legislative proposal to prevent and fight migrant smuggling have been provisionally included in the PD 2025-2027, in line with the European Commission’s draft EU Budget 2025 proposal, and will remain in reserve until the legislative process is concluded. In this respect, it is worth highlighting that the additional resources proposed in the LFS are significantly lower than the resources estimated by Europol for the full implementation of the proposed new Regulation, especially with regard to the final number of TA posts. Therefore, subject to the outcome of the ongoing negotiations, Europol will be able to support the implementation of this new initiative to the extent covered by the final amount of additional resources, or by de-prioritising and delaying other activities. Nonetheless, Europol acknowledges that part of the funds foreseen is intended to support the agency’s work on biometrics and SIENA integrations, which can also partially serve the objectives of Interoperability and the Information Exchange Directive - as such; those funds were deducted from the final total additional budget requested in January 2024.

While the draft EU Budget proposed by the European Commission in June 2024 did not include additional resources for Europol, in October 2024, the Commission amended its proposal, providing Europol an additional €2.9M to cover partially the additional costs related to salary updates. With the completion of the budgetary process, the budgetary authority further complemented the Draft Budget, granting Europol’s request partially, with an additional €5M and 15 TA posts, bringing the total budget 2025 to approx. €247M and the establishment plan to 791 TA posts. The total figures include the funding and resources foreseen in the anti-migrant smuggling proposal, which remain in reserve, subject to adoption.

A summary of the agency’s outlook for 2025-2027, as proposed in January 2024, is presented in the tables below:

Human Resources (TA, CA, SNE)⁴⁴	Yearly increase		
	2025	2026	2027
Establishment plan (TA) - TOTAL	77	77	48
<i>Amended Europol Regulation</i>	19	9	5
<i>Prüm II Regulation</i>	-	(2)	-
<i>Proposal on a Regulation to prevent and fight migrant smuggling</i>	3	4	3
<i>Additional agency Request</i>	55	66	40
Contract Agents - TOTAL	25	9	6
<i>Proposal on a Regulation to prevent and fight migrant smuggling</i>	5	9	6
<i>Additional agency Request</i>	20	-	-
SNE - TOTAL	13	8	5
<i>Proposal on a Regulation to prevent and fight migrant smuggling</i>	11	6	3
<i>Additional agency Request</i>	2	2	2

⁴⁴ Temporary agent numbers are approved by the Budgetary Authority (establishment plan). Contract Agent and SNE numbers: approved by the MB within budget availability - numbers are included in the agency's request and COM provides recommendation. If additional budget is necessary, this is approved by the Budgetary Authority.

Europol Public Information

Financial Resources (€)	Yearly increase		
	2025	2026	2027
TOTAL	45,713,377	54,309,064	61,415,221
<i>Proposal on a Regulation to prevent and fight migrant smuggling</i>	15,758,000	19,679,000	13,456,000
<i>Additional agency Request⁴⁵</i>	29,955,377	34,630,064	47,959,221

Additional information per initiative for the period 2025-2027

Relevant justifications for the additional resources needed for each of the five initiatives for the period 2025-2027 are presented.

Digital Services Act (DSA)

The Digital Services Act entered into force on 16 November 2022 and its rules became applicable in full in Q1 2024. The regulation introduces, among others, obligations for hosting service providers (HSP) to report suspicions of criminal offences to law enforcement or judicial authorities of the MS(s) concerned, once the HSP becomes aware of a threat to the life or safety of person or persons; should the MS concerned be unclear, the HSP must report it to the authorities of the MS in which the company is registered in the EU, or to Europol, or both. Given its experience with the preparations for and implementation of the Terrorist Content Online Regulation, Europol may also support MS law enforcement and the regulator in their preparations for the other provisions under DSA, which are applicable to national law enforcement authorities.

Since August 2023, Europol has received 514 HSP notifications under the DSA Art 18. Europol put forward a request for the minimum number of additional operational resources needed to handle Article 18 notifications ("threat-to-life").

In terms of ICT development, resources were estimated for assessing the suitability of the current PERCI solution (or similar alternative channel) as the foundation to adapt and/or add DSA-related functionality. This could include the potential expansion of features supporting referrals and removal orders, expanding the functionality of PERCI to account for HSPs access and their workflow on the platform; adjusting reporting functionality and working on access requirements and infrastructure (incl. storage and processing power, interconnections, network, security, auditing, scalability and availability requirements).

Interoperability (I/O)

The *EU Interoperability@Europol* Programme includes the necessary activities for Europol to implement and operate the tasks related to six EU large-scale IT systems (SIS, VIS, Eurodac, EES, ETIAS, ECRIS-TCN) and the interoperability components (European Search Portal (ESP), shared Biometric Matching Service (sBMS), Common Identity Repository (CIR), Common Repository for Reporting and Statistics (CRRS)). Additionally, the Screening Regulation and the Prüm II Regulation will bring new tasks to Europol.

Europol's role is particularly relevant as automated checks against Europol data and, in case of hits, the provision of reasoned opinions (ETIAS, VIS Recast) will allow the identification of potential and actual security risks posed by third country nationals prior to their arrival to the EU. Access to millions of records in EU IT systems will allow for a more comprehensive and complete criminal analysis to support the Member States. New possibilities for (biometric) identification will enhance the identification of criminals and the detection of identity fraud. At the same time, short deadlines, the scale of changes and the need for resources both in

⁴⁵ For 2025, including EUR 13.1 to cover the inflation effects affecting mainly staff costs, as estimated in the COM's Budget Circular 2025.

Europol Public Information

development phase and after the entry into operation of the EU IT systems make the EU Interoperability Programme a challenge for the organisation.

The Management Board discussed in 2022 the resource needs of Europol related to interoperability. The current request for operational staff is based on the estimation made in 2022, adjusted taking into account:

- The resources already allocated to the new Integrated Operational Services Unit in 2023 (17 posts) and those foreseen to be allocated in 2024, as a result of the agreement with Frontex (+25 to a total of 42 posts).
- The current EU Interoperability timeline.
- The experience gained from SIRENE.

Europol will work on the establishment of a consistent, coherent set of capabilities related to biometrics, in sync with the Interoperability Programme milestones. Currently, Europol's processing of biometric data is rather limited. However, in light of EU Interoperability (especially revised VIS and Prüm II), discussions with Member States and the future Regulation to prevent and fight migrant smuggling, a significant upgrade of the biometric capabilities and the services offered to the EU large scale IT systems and Member States will be required. To this end, the Europol Strategy and Biometrics Roadmap detail all necessary activities.

Implementation will also require additional ICT resources for managing and developing the necessary systems, including update of the current AFIS, FACE and EIS solutions for scalability, functionality (i.e. access, search and processing functionalities for fingerprint, DNA and facial images) and data review and retention requirements across solutions.

Second Data Centre

A new (hot) data centre is considered mandatory as part of the interoperability tasks of Europol and is envisaged and expected to:

- Increase resilience – the power issues in August 2020 that led to unavailability of both data centres at Europol HQ emphasised the need to position the data centres in two separate areas (geo-redundancy). This minimises unavailability due to local power grid issues / shared power infrastructure.
- Ensure compliance – in line with the Interoperability programme, Europol is requested to implement the recommendations for geo-redundancy for ETIAS and the communication equipment for SIS/VIS. Furthermore, it is expected to provide uninterrupted service (availability of 99.9% or more) for ETIAS searches via Quest. Europol's current infrastructure - that incorporates the location of the data centres - is designed for an availability of 98%.
- Increase availability – enable the implementation of near-zero downtime for solutions with this strict requirement. It should be noted that the geo-redundant data centre principle does not guarantee such requirement on its own; the entire solution should be designed and built accordingly, for instance using on-premise cloud native services. For this to work, the data centres should be close enough to minimise any communication delays, but far enough to meet the geo-redundancy requirement.
- Efficient use of equipment – At this moment, due to the design and distance, the Austria site is used as a backup location. It however contains equipment that potentially can be used in case of disaster (under normal conditions, this equipment is not used). Implementing the new data centre at closer vicinity gives the opportunity to implement the so-called hot/hot data centre principle where all equipment is used continuously at both sites to host Europol's ICT services. In this case, the Austria site will be further scaled down for backup purposes only, reducing the need for equipment which is not actively used.

The project is a multi-year one with several phases and costs related to buildings, hardware and software, services and training. Discussions on the identification of an appropriate location

Europol Public Information

are ongoing with the Host State and the project was foreseen to start in 2026, with a minimal investment in 2025 (design phase).

Information Exchange Directive

The Directive on information exchange entered into force on 12 June 2023. As explained in detail in Section I – General Context, this Directive is highly relevant for Europol and will have a significant impact on Europol's resources, since it intends to establish SIENA as the mandatory channel for the exchange of criminal information by default.

It is estimated that **the number of SIENA messages received by Europol will increase to reach up to 1 million messages in 2027** (by comparison, Europol received 160,000 messages in 2022). The increase in the volume of data will have an impact on both the Operational & Analysis Centre and the crime Centres at Europol, with needs for additional duty officers, analysts and specialists for data review and data quality. Taking into account the current and future rate of implementation in the Member States and potential efforts by Europol to optimise further the intake and processing processes, the level of additional operational resources estimated in this area has been kept to the minimum level for the next three years. It should be noted, however, that for subsequent years, Europol is expected to face resource needs of up to 100 additional operational staff.

Moreover, before the impact of the IED is seen on operations, Europol needs to assist Member States by supporting the design and further development of SIENA and the relevant integrations with Member States systems. Additional funds will be required as of 2025 in terms of ICT investments, to cover scalability, availability and functionality requirements, but also to cover the expected impact on other Europol systems due to the increased volume of data intake (e.g. Data Analysis Portal, Case Management, Unified Search Engine, Large File Exchange tool, IAM), security and compliance requirements and support services, such as providing a helpdesk for users and training.

Strategic Housing Roadmap (SHR)

A number of projects comprise the Strategic Housing Roadmap, specifically:

- The implementation of the Mid-Term Housing Solution (MTHS) project in the HQ to increase workplace capacity, provide additional meeting rooms and other related facilities, and strengthen the building according to the applicable governmental building regulations.
- Temporary Satellite Building 1 (TSB 1) project: decommission the building and return it to the Host State.
- Temporary Satellite Building 2 (TSB 2) project: create additional workplaces, meeting rooms and other related facilities to support the implementation of the MTHS in the HQ and cover organisational growth and new business demands until the delivery of HQ2.
- Temporary Satellite Building 3 (TSB 3) project: create additional workplaces, meeting rooms and other related facilities to support organisational growth and new business demands, until the delivery of HQ2. The first stage of the building completed and operational for use.
- Long-Term Housing Measures (LTHM) project: prepare for the delivery of a second permanent headquarters (HQ2).
- Low-rise Toren van Oud project: continue with the development of the Medical Centre and Gym & Fitness facilities, in order to create space in the HQ for the implementation of the MTHS.
- Alternative Temporary Housing: progress on establishing alternative temporary workplaces and meeting spaces to support organisational growth and new business demands until the delivery of HQ2.

Costs include consultancy fees, both for facilities and ICT, one-time investment costs, security personnel and network connectivity for workspaces and meeting rooms.

2.3. Risk considerations

As outlined in Annex XIV: Corporate Risks 2025, the identified corporate risks in terms of threats to Europol's objectives⁴⁶ are expected to impinge on the organisation's development and performance in 2025. All five high priority development initiatives listed in this section are therefore assessed to be affected by Europol's identified corporate risks. While the estimates for 2025 onwards have been developed in a prudent manner, these hold several elements of uncertainty⁴⁷, influenced by:

- external developments, including with regard to emerging technical evolution and innovation (Artificial Intelligence (AI) data science etc.); the
- ability to acquire and availability of the needed competencies and skills, in particular with respect to externally contracted services; the
- dependencies with regard to Member States and (operational) cooperation partners, the Host State as well as collaboration with private parties; the
- development of ongoing legislative and regulatory initiatives, as well as the related scope, complexity and modalities of their translation into technical requirements for the corresponding solution design (to inform detailed project planning prior to implementation and deployment).

From an overall perspective, the five high priority development initiatives outlined in this section will be subject to continuous re-assessment and are expected to extend (beyond the planning cycle of the current PD 2025-2027) well into 2028, therefore resulting in further anticipated investment need for the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).

2.3. Resource programming for the years 2025 - 2027

The text in this section focuses on the resource programming for 2025, in line with the Union Budget 2025 and the Final Europol Budget 2025.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Temporary agents

Starting from the 2024 Establishment Plan of 754 posts, the number of posts in 2025 will increase by 37 Temporary Agent (TA) posts, including: 19 posts stemming from the amended Europol Regulation, 3 posts from the new legislative proposal to prevent and fight migrant smuggling and an additional 15 posts to adequately perform new tasks as presented in section 2.2.

Contract Agents

In line with the new legislative proposal to prevent and fight migrant smuggling the number of CAs in 2025 is envisaged to rise by 5 posts, to a total number of 260.

Seconded National Experts

The number of Seconded National Experts (SNEs) in 2025 will increase to 132, with additional 11 from the new legislative proposal to prevent and fight migrant smuggling.

For detailed data and numbers per staff category, see Annex IV.

⁴⁶ Europol's corporate risks were informed by the annual peer risk review conducted in Q4 2024 with all EU Agencies related to the Directorate General (DG) Migration and Home Affairs of the European Commission.

⁴⁷ Europol is satisfied that the resource estimates are the result of a conservative and robust assessment process across the organisation; however, a fairly high degree of uncertainty is inherent to the process.

Europol Public Information

Staff financed with Grant Agreements / Contribution Agreements / Service Legal Agreements (SLAs)

For 2025 Europol will continue having a number of Contract Agents (CAs) and SNEs directly funded via grants, contributions or service legal agreements. For detailed information and numbers per agreement and staff category, see Annex XI.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Revenue (payment appropriations):

The main financial source of Europol is the regular Community subsidy. The revenue for 2025 is € 246M, including the resources foreseen in the LFS of the legislative proposal to prevent and fight migrant smuggling.

Item	Heading	Revenue 2023	Revenue 2024	Revenue 2025
9000	Regular subsidy from the Community	207,176,212	217,722,400	246,025,103
9010	Other subsidies and grants	1,030,000	1,420,000	P.M
9101	Denmark contribution	4,719,597	5,305,657	P.M
9200	Other revenue			P.M
Total Revenue		212,925,809	224,448,057	246,025,103

Expenditure:

The total Europol Budget 2025 comes to € 247.3M as Commitment Appropriations⁴⁸, which is an increase of 12.3% (+€ 27.1M) compared to the Final Budget 2024, and highlights the growth in operational needs of the organisation.

Commitment Appropriations (CA)

Title	Heading	Outturn 2023	Budget 2024	Final Budget 2025 (CA)	2025/2024 (€)	2025/2024 (%)	% of total budget 2025
1	Staff	114,234,450	125,204,109	142,601,813	17,397,704	113.9%	57.7%
2	Other Administrative Expenditure	15,310,202	12,900,714	12,950,575	49,861	100.4%	5.2%
3	Operational Activities	77,176,709	82,125,777	91,755,215	9,629,438	111.7%	37.1%
Total expenditure		206,721,361	220,230,600	247,307,603	27,077,003	112.3%	100%

⁴⁸ The budget structure for Europol consists of administrative and operational appropriations. Due to the Differentiated Appropriations (DA), the presentation of the budget is split into commitment and payment appropriations. In fact: Commitment Appropriations (CA) – cover the total cost of the legal obligations entered into during the very first financial year of the call or invitation to apply; Payment Appropriations (PA) – cover the expenditure arising from commitments entered into in the current and/or earlier financial years.

Europol Public Information

Payment Appropriations (PA)

Title	Heading	Outturn 2023	Budget 2024	Final Budget 2025 (PA)	2025/2024 (€)	2025/2024 (%)	% of total budget 2025
1	Staff	114,234,450	125,204,109	142,601,813	17,397,704	113.9%	57.7%
2	Other Administrative Expenditure	15,310,202	12,900,714	12,950,575	49,861	100.4%	5.2%
3	Operational Activities	77,176,709	79,617,577	90,472,715	10,855,138	113.6%	36.6%
	Total expenditure	206,721,361	217,722,400	246,025,103	28,302,703	113.0%	99.5%

Title 1 – Staff expenditure:

Staff expenditure in 2025 amounts to € 142.6M and represents 57.7% of the total budget. It reflects € 17.4M or 13.9% increase compared to 2024. The main budget in Title 1 is reserved for the salary, allowances and other staff costs for TAs and CAs (Chapter 11 – Staff in active employment) and comes to € 130.7M, which is an increase of € 14.8M or 12.8% compared to the year 2024.

The budget foresees the staff and salaries expenditure for 791 TAs and 260 CAs in total, (an additional 37 TAs and 5 CAs when compared to 2024). The budget anticipates several assumptions which will be closely monitored during the year such as: a salary increase of 3.2%, no envisaged change in the weighting coefficient for the Netherlands⁴⁹, a “budgetary” vacancy rate of 3.5%, and recruitment of new posts in Q2-Q3.

The budget for Socio-medical infrastructure such as catering, medical service and social & sport activities (Chapter 13) and Training for personal development (Chapter 14) is foreseen at € 1.5M in 2025.

The budget for Other staff-related expenditure (Chapter 15) is envisaged to reach € 10.3M which will be used to cover external services costs related to external security, hospitality, and consultancy services, required for the new developments of the Strategic Housing Roadmap (SHR). The budget is also envisaged to cover for interim services, internships and PMO management service. Out of the total, € 4.6M is reserved for the yearly fee for the European school.

The budget in Chapter 16 (Entertainment and representation expenses) amounting to € 0.1M is slightly lower than the budget 2024.

Title 2 – Other Administrative Expenditure:

The budget for administrative activities comes to € 13M and represents 5.2% of the total Europol budget 2025. It supports the operational efficiency and smooth functioning of the agency’s infrastructure and administrative processes.

This title typically covers associated buildings costs, administrative ICT expenditure and other governance, administrative and statutory expenditure.

⁴⁹ The salary and weightings coefficients refer to the levels known at the time of finalising the Programming Document 2025-2027 (November 2024).

Europol Public Information

The budget of € 9.2M is planned for buildings, security and associated utility costs (Chapter 20). It envisages a significant budget for SHR developments and regular preventive and corrective maintenance of the current buildings.

The budget for administrative ICT expenses (Chapter 21) amounts to € 1.2M and is foreseen for regular ICT software renewals as well as consultancies related to ICT projects of administrative nature.

An amount of € 2.6M is foreseen for the continuation of other governance, administrative and statutory expenditure (Chapter 22 – 25). These Chapters include budget for various activities related to open source, legal and other administrative expertise, uniforms, furniture, car fleet, office supplies, postal and courier services, as well as statutory expenditure, for activities of the MB and its Working Groups (WGs).

Title 3 – Operational activities:

The budget for Operational activities comes to € 91.8M and represents 37.1% of the total budget. This budget partially consists of differentiated appropriations (DA) related to grants included in Chapter 39.

The budget for Operations (Chapter 30), focuses on the Agency's direct operational activities and projects. It is designed to fund Europol's core operational activities, which include supporting Member States in combating various crimes by organising operational and strategic meetings, conferences and training, funding staff missions and deploying guest officers, enhancing capabilities of forensic tools and enhancing communication and public awareness as part of the operational WEB campaigns, and audio-visuals services. In 2025, the budget in this area sums up to € 17.6M, which is € 3.2M or 21.9% higher than the 2024 budget.

Under Title 3, the budget for operational ICT services and programmes (Chapters 31 and 32 together) comes to a total of € 55.4M, which is an increase of € 8.8M or 18.8% compared to 2024. It will be used to continue the multi-annual delivery of numerous projects in the area of ICT and Information Management, such as Interoperability, the Biometrics Roadmap, the Data Analysis Portal, the Joint Operational Analysis Case and New Collaborative Environment, supporting the Member States in their SIENA integrations related to the Information Exchange Directive etc.

An amount of € 8M is foreseen under Chapter 33 (Seconded National Experts - Operational) to support the regular SNE and short-term SNEs in the area of GE/OTF (Guest Experts/Operational Task Force). The budget included in this area is foreseen to cover the allowances for 82 SNEs (including 11 new for the AMS) and 50 short-term SNEs (SNE-GE/ OTF)⁵⁰.

The budget under Chapter 34 and 35 is foreseen for high-level external stakeholder meetings and events (Heads of Europol National Units (HENUs) and the Europol Police Chiefs Convention (EPCC)). The budget for 2025 amounts to € 0.5M, which is in line with the 2024 budget.

An amount of € 1M⁵¹ is envisaged in the 2025 budget, under Chapter 38 – for the Decryption Platform, to cover for the operational running costs of the platform, mainly electricity and gas, but also some maintenance and surveillance security services.

⁵⁰ The planning envisaged that some SNE-OTF will be deployed and the cost will be covered from the mission budget.

⁵¹ Provisional – subject to Steering Committee (JRC and Europol) discussions.

Europol Public Information

With respect to the Chapter 39 – Grants, which is dedicated to the Grants schemes under Differentiated Appropriations, the Commitment Appropriations (CA) sum up to € 9.4M while the Payment Appropriations (PA) sum up to € 8.1M. It includes € 4M for grants related to the AMS – the funds will become available subject to adoption of the proposal. The remainder of € 5.4M is foreseen for the continuation of the support provided to OTF (Operational Task Force) activities (€ 2M), the ATLAS network (€ 3M) and the Innovation Grants (€ 0.4M). In particular for EMPACT and for support against Euro counterfeiting, Europol grant implementation continues under the multi-annual calls and invitations the were launched under the 2024 budget.

		Budget 2025	Budget 2025	
		(CA)	(PA)	Difference
B3-920	EMPACT grants	2,000,000	2,362,500	<i>(362,500)</i>
B3-930	SA Euro CF Grants	-	120,000	<i>(120,000)</i>
B3-940	OTF Grants	4,000,000	2,400,000	<i>1,600,000</i>
B3-950	ATLAS Grants	3,000,000	3,000,000	-
B3-960	Innovation Grants	350,000	185,000	<i>165,000</i>
Total		9,350,000	8,067,500	<i>1,282,500</i>

2.5. Efficiency gains and savings

Europol is applying improvement initiatives and practices on a continuous basis to achieve efficiency gains and savings. Some examples are presented below.

Optimising resources allocation to align with strategic priorities by:

- Implementing proactive budget management, robust monitoring of budget implementation and regular forecast exercises to ensure the most efficient use of financial resources, together with the implementation of new automated reporting tools for a faster data analysis as well as enhanced cost allocation capabilities;
- Optimising operational deployments and streamlining the recruitment of (short-term) SNEs;
- Exploring synergies with partners incl. in the external relations domain;
- Descoping and/or outsourcing non-core activities;
- Establishing an "Initiative Reserve List", including purchases which can be compliantly brought forward from the year N+1 as to ensure highest implementation of the yearly budget at year end;
- Establishing of an ICT reserve list, to ensure faster uptake of new projects to optimise resource use;
- Using ICT leasing and regularly reviewing the costs of maintaining the (growing) ICT landscape ("run the business" costs) with a view to identifying savings;
- Closely monitoring the vacancy rate in an effort to maximise the use of resources made available to the agency;
- Implementing the HR Strategy 2020+, incl. digitalisation of services, work-life balance through teleworking/smart working and ensuring the right skills for Europol's workforce, utilising e-recruitment and appropriate training and development programmes.

Europol Public Information

Promoting energy efficiency and sustainability by:

- Optimising missions to maintain EMAS certificate and achieve environmental vision targets;
- Increasing remote working;
- Using green energy and long-term replacement plan reducing cost for maintenance and risk of equipment failure;
- Optimising office space to the core minimum (hot-desking).

Further streamlining activities to enhance efficiency by:

- Combining meetings with similar topics and same participants;
- Optimising use of interpretation for Management Board and its Working Groups;
- Combining trainings with similar topics and same participants;
- Optimising budget implementation for Grants;
- Increasing the use of multi-annual calls/invitations to reduce administration/resource efforts involved with creation and publication of calls/invitations.

Leveraging technology for operational improvements by:

- Using videoconferencing where possible, limiting increases to the mission and meeting budgets;
- Using more online trainings, thus reducing missions;
- Further extending the use of automated administrative tools (e.g. Sysper, Tagetik, FMIS etc);
- Investing in a set of administrative ICT solutions such as e-procurement, e-signature, etc.

Further streamlining administrative and procurement processes by:

- Exchanging and implementing best practices with/from other agencies (via engagement with EUAN and its sub-networks);
- Utilising multiannual commitments/orders to allow better pricing negotiations and potential savings, in particular in the ICT sector for the acquisition or renewal of software licenses;
- Using procurement templates and systems (e-procurement tools) common to all EU contracting authorities to familiarise the market with European procurement rules, streamlining new purchases and renewals;
- Developing long-term relationships with vendors, to facilitate negotiations and increased flexibility and collaboration;
- Participating in Interinstitutional procurement procedures for the acquisition/renewal of standard products and services (such as off the shelf Hardware and Software products), and for sharing tender effort in terms of market knowledge and resources needed;
- Standardisation and alignment of contractual terms in line with the EU Financial Regulations (such as in terms of right of audit, liability, escalation procedures and handling of personal data).

2.6. Negative priorities/decrease of existing tasks

No substantial negative priorities or decrease of existing tasks is foreseen. On the contrary, the agency's tasks are expected to increase beyond the level of the resources currently available. Consequently, the agency requested additional resources to fund adequately a number of initiatives and tasks, as detailed above, and has performed a de-prioritisation exercise in light of the EU budget 2025.

SECTION III - Work Programme 2025

Activities

A.1. Development of information technology and information management capabilities

Overview



As the European criminal information hub, and in order to provide operational support to MS investigations, Europol makes a continuous effort to evolve its information management and information technology capabilities following a business-driven approach in line with the renewed Europol Strategy.

In 2025, focus will be on continuing the development of Europol's analysis capabilities, with further enhancements in case management capabilities. Europol will also continue contributing to EU Interoperability, in line with the European Commission planning and in close cooperation with eu-LISA, prioritising the implementation of ETIAS and ECRIS-TCN in 2025. The Europol Roadmap on EU Interoperability (endorsed by the MB) and subsequent implementation plan will be regularly reviewed and, as required, adjusted taking into account resource availability and new developments, such as adoption of new legal instruments, adoption of new implementing acts or re-planning of activities by the European Commission and/or eu-LISA. Also, Europol will pursue further analysis of the provisions of the Directive on Information Exchange, which are foreseen to bring changes to SIENA and potentially other ICT capabilities, and Europol's business processes.

In view of the expected resource gap, the ICT delivery plan for 2025 has been carefully reprioritised, and the development of several ICT capabilities will be temporarily delayed or descope to allow for the implementation of ICT systems of the highest priority for Europol and the MS.

In line with the renewed Europol Strategy, Europol seeks to be at the forefront of law enforcement innovation and research. The Innovation Lab will facilitate innovation across Europol and in the wider law enforcement community and will support Member States in addressing the risks and opportunities of emerging technologies. Via the European Clearing Board (EuCB) and in cooperation with the Operations Directorate, the Innovation Lab will coordinate the regular collection of MS and Europol's needs for tools based on new technologies and will identify and suggest potential solutions from existing research projects and innovation networks. As part of the implementation of the amended Europol Regulation, Europol will utilise the ODIN (Operational Data for Innovation) sandbox environment to develop, train and validate models and tools using operational data.

Moreover, under Article 33a of the Europol Regulation and the governance framework adopted by the MB, Europol Research and Innovation projects will develop AI tools, trained with data provided by MS for that purpose, to facilitate investigations. The Lab will further develop an innovation pipeline so that proofs of concept and prototypes can be developed into fully-

Europol Public Information

fledged solutions in the new ODIN environment. The Lab will also continue to develop the Europol Tool Repository (ETR) to become an arsenal of advanced digital investigative tools for the EU LEA community.

Finally, the Innovation Lab will continue to act as the secretariat for the EU Innovation Hub for Internal Security and lead the Hub Team in collaboration with other JHA agencies to implement the tasks and functions adopted by COSI in 2020 and following the Hub's planning documents as endorsed by COSI on an annual basis.

The implementation of all initiatives will duly incorporate data protection safeguards as prescribed in the Europol Regulation. Any work on interoperability and connectivity with information management systems at EU level will build on the provisions for protection of fundamental rights and freedoms of natural persons in the legal instruments of the respective systems and other relevant EU law (e.g. on data protection, privacy, non-discrimination, etc.). Moreover, the newly established AI Alignment Committee will ensure that Europol's engagement into AI aligns seamlessly with organisational priorities, bringing maximum benefit to Europol, while at the same time guaranteeing full compliance with the requirements of the EU AI Act.

2025 Objectives

Information Management
Objectives and actions
<p>A.1.1 Continue enhancing Information Management.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Coordinate and manage information management products and services in accordance with the business demand and organisational strategy.○ Further develop and enforce information management standards and a single information management governance for Europol.○ Continue aligning the Catalogue of Products & Services and underlying information such as process landscape, data flows, and performance reporting.○ Subject to developments in 2024, further connect Law Enforcement experts communities through specialised tools and platforms, in particular by advocating the EPE as the central inventory of skills available across the MS Law Enforcement communities and gateway to (national) Law Enforcement specialist databases.○ Continue efforts to promote best practices in relation to Member States' information management capabilities and strategies.○ Develop one comprehensive multiannual business capabilities roadmap and a business roadmap for every business capability, while ensuring evolution in alignment with Europol's strategy and needs.○ Continue monitoring the roles and interactions of stakeholder bodies & streamlining reporting and consultations, in agreement with Member States.○ Continue integrating relevant changes stemming from the amended Europol Regulation and the renewed Strategy in the Information Management practices of Europol and the ICT planning.○ Further develop benefits management within IM/ICT planning and prioritisation, in order to support strategic alignment of initiatives.○ Continue strengthening the overall management coordination for information management at Europol and improving the coordination of operational demand for information management capabilities.

Europol Public Information

Expected results: Core Business Systems and the Member States receive a reliable and secure service with minimal interruptions.

Business needs are prioritised and met in a timely and coordinated manner, in line with legal obligations and with the priorities of Europol and MS.

Operational users at Europol and in the Member States benefit from improved information management capabilities, for use in criminal investigations and related information exchange and analysis.

Europol contributes to the objectives of relevant EU policies.

Develop Europol's ICT capabilities – Analysis Capability and Specialised Capabilities

Objectives and actions

A.1.2 Further develop ICT capabilities for Europol's operations.

Analysis Capability

Analysis is one of the core services that Europol provides to the Member States. In 2025, Europol will:

- Focus on maintaining the analysis capabilities developed so far, ensuring quality and stability. Ensure all activities are in line with security and accreditation rules, DPF, EDPS feedback and relevant provisions of the amended Europol Regulation.

Data Management Capability

- Further enhance the Data Analysis Portal, following the outcomes from 2024.
- Continue the development of the Case Management and Joint Operational Analysis Case (JOAC) capabilities, based on the outcomes from 2024.
- Initiate a project to enhance Europol's Data Governance framework.

Develop additional functionalities in line with the needs of the investigations supported at that time (within the limits of available resources).

SMART Capabilities

- Enhance existing and develop new smart capabilities, in line with business needs.

Specialised Capabilities

- Initiate the required technical developments for an automated workflow in PERCI to facilitate the intake, handling and distribution of "threat-to-life notifications" received by Europol in line with Art. 18 DSA, (subject to the conclusion of a Contribution Agreement with DG CNECT in 2024).
- Continue with the integration of the Internet Facing Operations Environment (IFOE) capabilities within the ICT landscape, in line with the business needs and the outcomes from 2024.
- Continue working on the development of the EU Firearms Intelligence Hub in line with the outcomes from 2024.

New Forensics Environment and capabilities

- Further enhance the NFE capabilities, aiming at a full accreditation to operate and delivering better forensic extraction and reconstruction capabilities.

Operations support capabilities

- Provide ad-hoc support capabilities to support law enforcement operational needs during large investigations, incl. design, engineering and deploying of ad-hoc

Europol Public Information

processing environments and software solutions (proof of concept level applications, data pre-processing, etc.).

- Continue enabling and promoting cloud experimentation to enhance operational capabilities by resource provisioning.

Expected results: An improved set of capabilities to maximise the value of data.
Enhancement of analysis products ensuring quality, security and stability.
Improved investigation collaboration and support to Member States.

Develop Europol's ICT capabilities MS-facing core operational ICT capabilities

Objectives and actions

A.1.3 Implement improvements to core MS-facing operational capabilities.

Secure communication and information exchange– SIENA, LFE, VCP and VCOP

- Support the roll-out of SIENA to more law enforcement communities and competent authorities such as Police Customs Cooperation Centres (PCCCs).
- Connect more authorities to SIENA, including at SIENA BPL, Restricted and Confidential levels via system-to-system integration (web services) or web application.
- Ensure support to Member States for implementing relevant provisions of the Directive on Information Exchange, and assess and implement potential changes to Europol's data processing workflows.
- Maintain SIENA's high level of performance and support to the data intake and data processing operations of Europol, including data for EU interoperability systems.
- Continue improving the SIENA user experience, for example by user interface changes, or better use of structured information.
- Maintain alignment of the SIENA training and production environments.
- Continue the development effort to establish Large File Exchange (LFE) interoperability with SIENA and continue establishing the interoperability of SIENA with other Europol capabilities.
- Ensure optimal operation of VCP-Connect and Video Conferencing for Operational Purposes (VCOP).
- Continue supporting improvement of the Universal Message Format UMF standard through participation in UMF related initiatives.

Knowledge management – EPE, ONEP

- Subject to developments in 2024, ensure that the Europol Platform for Experts (EPE) and its counterpart in the Operations Network (ONEP) develop in line with business needs as formulated by the platform managers, for example by adding new capabilities or enhancing existing ones.
- Ensure the EPE and ONEP solutions remain secure and relevant.
- Utilise EPE and ONEP as a gateway to (national) Law Enforcement specialist databases.

Search, cross checking & (self-)data management – EIS, QUEST

- Advance with redesigning the EIS from a technical perspective as a future component of the Europol Data Sharing Capability in accordance with the new ICT environment.
- Continue working on the integration of biometric searching capability with EIS.

Europol Public Information

- Revise and expand automated data loading services. Further proceed with the development of a new generation dataloader, and continue the support to MS/TP with implementation of data loader solutions.
- Dependent on the outcome of the analysis carried out in 2024, implement the in-take of data into the EIS from SIENA contributions or other channels.
- Continue improving data quality in the EIS including by implementing automated data compliance and performing manual checks.
- Analyse a new service extending the capacity for the direct loading of EIS data by third parties.
- Continue supporting rollout of QUEST (BPL and RESTREINT UE/EU RESTRICTED) in all MS, including the rollout of access to Europol's Analysis Projects on a hit/no hit basis.
- Maintain alignment of the EIS training and production environments.
- Proceed with enabling biometric searching capability of EIS data, in particular in order to fulfil the requirements of the Prüm II Regulation.

Information management enablers - IAM and secure lines

- Harmonise further the IAM landscape of Europol by integrating more systems with IAM and taking further steps towards establishing single enterprise identity.
- Continue improving IAM functional capabilities, providing more flexibility in IAM workflows and enhance further implementation of attribute based access control.
- Further implement secure lines to allow new partners to gain access to the Europol secure network and the applications and services that Europol provides through these lines (e.g. SIENA and IAM).
- Enable MS' and TP' connectivity to all Europol web applications available to MS/TP not only over EU-R connections but also over BPL and EU-C infrastructure based on business needs while respecting the rules of security.

Expected results: A reliable secure communication service to Member States and other partners.
A re-designed and robust data sharing capability fit for future use with new search services.
Increased efficiency of compliance checks on data.
A streamlined way for users to access Europol's systems.
Europol contributes to the objectives of relevant EU policies.

Develop Europol's ICT capabilities - Europol Roadmap on EU Interoperability and biometric capabilities

Objectives and actions

A.1.4 Advance interoperability and connectivity with information management systems at EU level to enhance information exchange⁵².

In close cooperation with the European Commission and eu-LISA and in line with the timeline set by the Justice and Home Affairs Council, in 2025 Europol will:

- Contribute to the work on interoperability and connectivity of IM systems at EU level by participating in relevant committees, advisory groups, product management fora and project boards, e.g. IXIM, SIS, VIS, EURODAC, EES, ETIAS, ECRIS-TCN, UMF and

⁵² Within the limits of available resources and subject to adoption of the AMS legislative proposal and the allocation of the corresponding additional resources to Europol.

Europol Public Information

<p>EPRIS. Provide technical advice on initiatives related to the implementation of the EU Interoperability Agenda.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Finalise the work and ensure readiness for the entry into operation of ETIAS: participate in formal testing, conduct business testing and end-user training, develop the Europol internal processes and solutions supporting the ETIAS processes, including automated searches against Europol data, automated notifications in relation to hits against certain data sets, manual processing of hits and providing Europol opinion, and Europol access to ETIAS data for law enforcement purpose. Participate in ETIAS Screening Board under the lead of Frontex. ○ Continue the work to ensure readiness for the entry into operation of the Revised VIS Regulation, enabling the systematic check of all long stay visa and residence permit applications against Europol Regulation Article 18.2(a) data, including biometric data: participate in formal testing, conduct business testing and end user training. Launch into operation the Europol internal solutions supporting the VIS processes, including automated searches against Europol data, automated notifications in relation to hits against certain data sets, manual processing of hits and providing Europol opinion, and upgrade Europol access to VIS data for law enforcement purpose. Participate in VIS Screening Board under the lead of Frontex. ○ In line with Europol’s Biometrics Roadmap, further enhance Europol’s capabilities related to biometrics, in particular fingerprints, facial recognition and DNA to meet the business needs and technical requirements in the context of the EU Interoperability framework and Europol’s core tasks. ○ Finalise the work and launch into operation Europol access to ECRIS-TCN. ○ In line with the adopted Prüm II Regulation, continue further development and testing of EPRIS in cooperation with Member States to support the searches of police records. ○ Ensure support to and implement relevant improvements in business processes and technical solutions supporting Europol’s tasks in relation to SIS, ETIAS, EES, and VIS. ○ Support CEPOL in the work of CEPOL Knowledge Centre (CKC) on Interoperability, Information Exchange and Law Enforcement Cooperation, and eu-LISA and Frontex in EU interoperability and large-scale EU systems’ related training activities. 	<p>Expected results: Europol’s integration in the European security architecture is carefully prioritised and progresses in accordance with the respective EU planning. Member States’ needs in terms of efficient access to information are better met.</p> <p>Interoperability and complementarity of Europol systems and tools with other EU information management systems leads to increased and more efficient exchange of information.</p> <p>Enhanced Europol contribution to relevant EU policies.</p>
---	---

Innovation Lab

Objectives and actions

A.1.5 Further implement Europol’s Innovation Strategy.

- Explore options to strengthen the functionalities of the ODIN Sandbox environment (i.e. a separate, isolated and protected data processing environment within Europol for the sole purpose of carrying out and supporting research and innovation projects). Identify, receive and make use of operational datasets for the purpose of pursuing research and innovation projects (within the limits of available resources).

Europol Public Information

- Develop further the Research and Innovation Pipeline so that proofs of concept and prototypes can be developed into fully-fledged solutions, using the new ODIN environment and disseminated via the ETR, to support Europol and MS investigations.
- Factor in fundamental rights compliance throughout the innovation process, in cooperation with the Fundamental Rights Officer.
- Further develop the foresight and horizon scanning activities of the Europol Innovation Lab's Observatory function, in cooperation with the Joint Research Centre (JRC) and other partners. Produce regular reports on technology foresight, offering thought leadership on emerging technologies for law enforcement. Contribute to the Serious Organised Crime Threat Assessment.
- Continue experimenting with virtual online meeting environments for the hosting of non-operational Europol events, with a view to establishing a business case.
- Act as the secretariat for the EU Innovation Hub for Internal Security and lead the Hub Team in collaboration with other JHA agencies, implementing the tasks and functions adopted in 2020, 2023⁵³ and annually endorsed by COSI. Lead the Hub's AI Cluster and contribute to the Hub's clusters on encryption, biometrics, and technology foresight and key enabling technologies. Play a leading role in organising the Hub's events and producing its reports.
- Ensure access for Member States competent authorities to the AP4AI/CC4AI online tool for AI compliance with the AI Act.
- Act as the secretariat of the European Clearing Board (EuCB), which channels Member States' needs and operational requirements, creates and monitors core groups and coordinates efforts on agreed innovation priorities.
- Establish further EuCB Core Groups in order to foster the co-creation of innovative tools with Member States.
- Maintain the Innovation Low Value Grants scheme launched in 2023, in order to provide targeted financial support to Member States in their efforts to co-create innovative tools.
- Continue to feed the ETR with innovative tools developed by EU MS, external partners and Europol and promote it as the primary platform for the sharing of innovative tools by, and for, Member States, in line with Europol's task to disseminate the results of the R&I activities of the Member States and of the EU-funded projects.
- Manage the Europol Code Repository (ECR) in support of Core Group projects and Europol's projects.
- Further develop networks of relevant partners in the industry and academia and organise Industry and Research Days, focusing on technology gaps and operational needs identified by Europol and Member States.
- Establish an administrative framework for the temporary embedment of academic experts within innovation projects to swiftly enable their participation. Continue to explore new resourcing models, for example, the temporary insourcing of skillsets and the clarification of intellectual property rights (IPR) when co-creating new solutions.
- Assist the European Commission in identifying key research themes, drawing up and implementing the Union framework programmes for research and innovation that are relevant to Europol's objectives. Act as a liaison between EU-funded research projects, DG Home and European law enforcement community via the EuCB.
- Provide, when possible, Europol evaluators to the EU framework programmes for research and innovation; support the dissemination and uptake of projects' outcomes,

⁵³ 15 May 2020, EU Innovation Hub for Internal Security main principles for establishment, Council Secretariat reference 7829/20 LIMITE COSI 77 ENFOPOL 109 CYBERE 69 JAI 341. And, Multi-Annual Plan endorsed by COSI in February 2023.

Europol Public Information

<p>taking into account the needs of national law enforcement authorities; establish clear rules of engagement for EU projects with the Sandbox environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Conclude the implementation of Project STARLIGHT, a Horizon 2020 project which aimed to deliver a set of AI tools for LEA purposes. The Innovation Lab will facilitate the further development of proofs of concept developed within the project, for further exploitation at Europol and/or by national competent authorities.○ Maintain dedicated Innovation EPEs (Lab, Hub, EuCB, etc.).○ Facilitate the training of law enforcement in the field of innovation in close cooperation with CEPOL.○ Ensure that Europol can identify and adopt innovative and novel technologies, to improve the efficiency and added value of Europol's services to the EU MS LEAs.
<p>Expected results: Europol contributes to the development of artificial intelligence and machine learning tools, and other research and innovation projects based on datasets provided by Member States.</p> <p>A substantiated overview of the risks, threats and opportunities of emerging technologies.</p> <p>Coordinated efforts in research and development leading to greater realisation of common projects and technical solutions.</p> <p>Alignment of Europol's innovation activities with MS law enforcement needs and priorities. Alignment of EU funding for security research with the needs of law enforcement.</p> <p>Europol contributes to the objectives of relevant EU policies.</p>

Corporate information management

Objectives and actions

A.1.6 Further improve corporate information management and related administrative ICT capabilities.

- Improve IM for non-operational information as well as the underlying IM capabilities to increase the efficiency of documents management (DM), records management (RM) and archiving.
- Manage and enhance corporate IM capabilities and collaboration tools for non-operational information including end-user support and training.
- Progress in establishing IM capabilities that enable electronic workflows, electronic approval and e-Signature.
- Progress further with the Records Management Programme, by developing a File Plan and reviewing the Retention schedule for prioritised areas. Review and improve the related governance framework.
- Continue the transition to a new electronic Document, Records and Workflow management platform (within the limits of available resources).
- Progress with the Archiving Programme: maintain the central archive of official documents and corporate records in hard copy and electronic format; progress with the restructuring of the corporate archive facilities and the implementation of a historic archive (EU Archive Regulation 2015/496 amending Council Regulation 354/1983).
- Maintain the overall organisational structure and support business stakeholders when defining and implementing organisational change; coordinate the implementation of organisational changes in IM capabilities to guarantee consistent information ownership and information security.

Europol Public Information

- Advance Europol’s Process Landscape and ensure its alignment with the renewed Europol strategy; facilitate the development, analysis, improvement and automation of business processes in prioritised areas of organisational development in line with the amended Europol Regulation.
- Enhance business process management at Europol. Ensure that processes and protocols for new initiatives are in place to guarantee the methodological consistency of the work and compliance with internal and external requirements.
- Continue with the development and implementation of a corporate analytics and reporting capability (within the limits of available resources).
- Enhance HR services (e.g. Sysper, EU-Learn, PMO) in line with the Commission-led HR Transformation Programme.
- Progress with planning, design, procurement and implementation of ICT components required for Europol’s buildings in line with the Strategic Housing Roadmap.

Expected results: Effective processes, systems and tooling are in place to ensure proper corporate risk, internal audit and business process management.
 Reduced bureaucracy and time spent on document and records management and reporting while ensuring the availability of reliable information on decision-making, corporate performance and level of compliance.

Provide and maintain ICT capabilities

Objectives and actions

A.1.7 Develop and maintain reliable and secure ICT capabilities.

- Develop a timely, comprehensive ICT portfolio work plan on a yearly basis, including demand management and resource allocation, and monitor its implementation.
- Design, build, maintain and manage the product lifecycles of Business applications, their processes and their evolution in alignment with the relevant stakeholders and strategies, legal, security and data protection requirements.
- Create enabling technology roadmaps, including retirement / replacement of obsolete solutions and identification of technology-driven innovation opportunities, with attention to integration, interoperability and data management.
- Develop and maintain the Business, Solution, and Information architecture, as well as the portfolio of ICT capabilities, to enable deliberate decision-making and ensuring evolution in alignment with Europol’s strategy, business needs, and compliance standards.
- Guided by ICT Architecture, procure new ICT capabilities or develop new solutions according to agile practices and Secure Coding techniques while applying high standards of Quality and Assurance.
- Continue optimisation of ICT costs, including license spending, right-size security measures, capacity and availability of Systems and Services.
- Assure uptime and availability according to the set SLAs with the stakeholders.
- Provide workplace-related services and customer service and support to users of all Europol ICT capabilities, in-house, in MS and Third Partners. Maintain an up-to-date Service Catalogue.

Expected results: Member States, Partners and Europol staff receive reliable and secure systems and services that enable the achievement of Europol’s renewed strategy.

Europol Public Information

Indicators	Latest result (Q2 2024)	Target 2025 ⁵⁴
ICT work plan project delivery	n/a	75%
Operational Stability - Uptime of Core systems	99.64%	98%
Number of Searches through EIS and QUEST	7,013,203	15,500,000
Number of SIENA Messages exchanged	985,567	2,000,000
Number of SIENA Cases initiated	81,657	160,000
% of Active Users on the EPE	41%	n/a

⁵⁴ A number of indicators throughout the Work Programme also depend on MS demand for Europol's products and services. All indicators and their targets are reviewed annually, on the basis of actual performance data, as part of the final version of the Programming Document.

A.2. Operational Coordination

Overview

Europol's Operational and Analysis Centre is responsible for handling all incoming information and for managing the workflow of non-prioritised cases in terms of data processing, data handling and hit reporting. The Centre provides support to specific operations and action days both from the Europol headquarters and on the spot. In case of serious incidents, it initiates emergency procedures and coordinates Europol's immediate response.



Internally, the Operational and Analysis Centre presents up-to-date business intelligence to Europol's management, enabling decision making on a permanent 24/7 basis and assures the continuity of the operational business outside office hours.

For its part, the new Integrated Operational Services Unit of the Operational and Analysis Centre is responsible for the SIRENE Office of Europol. In this capacity – among other tasks – it acts as a single point of contact for SIRENE Bureaux, managing communications with them and all criminal information exchanged through the SIRENE communications infrastructure in line with the SIS regulations. The Unit has also assumed the handling and comparison of the biometric data received across the different cases (prioritised and non-prioritised), and the management of the existing dedicated databases for fingerprints (ABIS), face recognition (FRS) and DNA.

An increasingly important and considerable part of the work conducted by the Integrated Operational Services Unit is the implementation of Europol's role in relation to travel intelligence and the EU large-scale information management systems. In particular, with the ETIAS and revised VIS mechanisms becoming operational in 2025 and 2026 respectively, Europol is expected to build up a 24/7 service providing swift follow-up and reasoned opinion on hits of long-stay visas and residence permits or travel authorisation applications against Europol data.

In parallel, the Operational centre at Europol offers specialist law enforcement techniques (Special Tactics) assisting MS investigations in any of the three priority areas of serious and organised crime, terrorism and cybercrime. Whilst remaining open to new developments, the following areas of knowledge and expertise are being currently supported: covert human intelligence sources, covert surveillance, covert entry, counter-kidnapping and -extortion, hostage negotiation, witness protection, fugitive active search and satellite imagery.

Finally, the Deployment Management Team provides horizontal support to Europol's operational centres by dealing with Europol's large scale/long term deployments, as well as deployments linked to first responses or specific expertise requested by MS and partner countries. Currently, one of the main tasks of the team is to manage the training and deployment aspects of the Guest Officer project with deployments to migration hotspots (Greece, Italy, Cyprus and Malta), but also to other areas at the request of the MS and the European Commission, such as countries bordering Ukraine and Belarus.

2025 Objectives

<u>Operational Centre</u>	
Objectives and actions	
A.2.1 Ensure the effective functioning of the Operational Centre in managing the intake of operational information.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Monitor operational data on 24/7 basis as the single point of entry for any incoming information from stakeholders. ○ Decide on the acceptance of information into Europol’s databases. ○ Process and handle urgent messages in priority cases, in close cooperation with competent analysis projects. ○ Handle non-priority cases and manage hits on related information including evaluation and reporting of matches. ○ Follow-up on hits with Europol’s analysis data once MS obtain hit/no hit access to the Analysis Projects via QUEST. ○ Provide permanent monitoring and reporting of open source information about incidents related to the mandate of Europol. ○ Receive and process notifications received by Europol from hosting service providers, as foreseen in the Digital Services Act and in the TCO Regulation. ○ Manage EIS operational data including the insertion of data on behalf of third parties and hit management. ○ Manage operational information exchange with third parties. ○ Prepare daily situation and weekly criminal intelligence briefing reports to inform internally about main operations, trends and patterns. Host the daily briefing of operational heads of units (TOT meeting). ○ Contribute to the preparations for data intake and related operational procedures, required for the implementation of the Directive on information exchange (within the limits of available resources). ○ Continuously develop, maintain and deliver the 2-month induction training for newly recruited analysts. Contribute to the delivery of the criminal analysis, EIS and SIENA trainings. 	
Expected results:	Increased quality and completeness of Europol’s criminal intelligence picture allows for more effective response to MS operational cases and crisis situations.

<u>Operational Centre</u>	
Objectives and actions	
A.2.2 Provide support to operations and crisis management.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Act as 24/7 contact point for urgent operational requests from MS Liaison bureaux/ Europol National Units/competent authorities and for officers’ reporting during on-the-spot deployment. ○ Initiate the emergency procedures and crisis response steps in case of operational emergencies / terrorist attacks within the EU or affecting the security of the EU. ○ Ensure a coordinated application of the crisis response mechanism and the different protocols in the cybercrime, counter-terrorism and migrant smuggling areas. 	

Europol Public Information

- Coordinate Europol's immediate response together with other relevant units and stakeholders.
- In close cooperation with the Special Tactics team and other Centres, guarantee 24/7 access to expertise and specialised operational knowledge, such as the European Tracking Solution.
- Liaise with Europol's partners (MS and third parties) affected/involved.
- Provide remote support to on-going actions/operations/major events/on-the-spot deployments.
- Coordinate Europol's activities supporting major international events including the establishment/ deployments to the International Coordination Centres.
- Fulfil the role of business product manager of the mobile office solution. Manage the overview of mobile offices and other operational equipment.
- Support the coordination of operations and joint actions.

Expected results: Member States' operations and emergency cases and crisis response receive quality operational support.

Integrated Operational Services

Objectives and actions

A.2.3 Build-up Europol's operational services to comply with the legal obligations stemming from ETIAS, VIS and other EU information management systems.

- Following the initiation of ETIAS operations, ensure the implementation of Europol's tasks (within the limits of available resources)⁵⁵, which include:
 - 24/7 availability to process the hits of ETIAS applications against Europol data and provision of reasoned opinion within 60 hours;
 - Participation in the ETIAS Screening Board hosted by Frontex; contribution to the definition of ETIAS screening rules and security related risk indicators and management of Europol's entries in the ETIAS Watchlist;
 - Making duly justified searches in the data stored in the ETIAS Central System.
- Start operating Europol's access to ECRIS-TCN to support MS investigations.
- Subject to the necessary technical developments, initiate preparations for the entry into operation of the revised VIS, expected in 2026, ensuring readiness for the execution of Europol's tasks (within the limits of available resources), which include:
 - 24/7 availability to process the hits of applications for long-stay visas and residence permits against Europol data (including biometrics) and provision of reasoned opinion within 60 hours;
 - Participation in the VIS Screening Board hosted by Frontex; contribution to the definition of security related risk indicators;
 - Making duly justified searches in the data stored in VIS.
- Continue preparations for the implementation of Prüm II, the Screening Regulation and any other relevant information management legislative frameworks (within the limits of available resources).

Expected results: Operational implementation of Europol's ETIAS capabilities and adequate level of readiness for VIS capabilities.

⁵⁵ LFS of ETIAS Regulation, LFS for Interoperability and LFS for Europol Regulation Recast did not foresee additional resources for Europol for ETIAS purposes. Subsequently an agreement was reached for a temporary transfer of 25 posts from Frontex, which covers partially the estimated resource gap.

Europol Public Information

Increased quality and completeness of Europol's criminal intelligence picture, including travel information and biometric data, with regards to the identification and movement of persons who constitute a high security risk and whose criminal activities fall within Europol's mandate.

Integrated Operational Services

Objectives and actions

A.2.4 Ensure the provision of efficient services by Europol's SIRENE Office.

- Act as the single point of contact for MS' SIRENE Bureaux and carry out the activities stemming from the SIS regulations.
- Process, store and crosscheck hits on alerts related to terrorism sent to Europol by SIRENE Bureaux.
- Conduct the data review of information sent by SIRENE Bureaux in full respect of the Europol regulation and the specific SIS data review requirements.
- Report through the SIRENE communications infrastructure matches triggered in SIS.
- Exchange supplementary information and other relevant messages with SIRENE Bureaux through the SIRENE communications infrastructure.
- Subject to the finalisation of the necessary technical development work by eu-LISA and the MS, start working on a specific workflow for Europol to propose to MS the creation in SIS of information alerts in the interest of the EU following the new provisions of the amended Europol Regulation.
- Deliver training and awareness sessions on SIS/SIRENE related matters within Europol's mandate; provide advice and support to Europol's Analysis Projects.
- Maintain and further enhance the Europol SIRENE operator manual.
- Maintain fruitful, effective and efficient cooperation with SIRENE Bureaux and other external stakeholders.

Expected results: Full implementation and operational use of the capabilities of Europol's SIRENE Office.
Increased quality and completeness of Europol's criminal intelligence picture with regards to SIS alerts.

Integrated Operational Services

Objectives and actions

A.2.5 Build-up Europol's biometric capabilities and services⁵⁶.

- Process, compare and analyse biometric data received at Europol including dactyloscopic data, facial images and DNA profiles, maintaining quality and procedural standards throughout the process.
- Act as a single point of contact for biometric activities in the Operations Directorate; Coordinate and monitor the work of the authorised face reviewers of Analysis Projects, performing the mandatory peer review in case of positive identifications.

⁵⁶ Within the limits of available resources and subject to adoption of the AMS legislative proposal and the allocation of the corresponding additional resources to Europol.

Europol Public Information

- Perform biometric data searches against EU information management systems, such as SIS, VIS, EES and ECRIS-TCN, in full respect of the respective legal framework.
- Cooperate with the Biometric Service of The Netherlands to make an effective and efficient use of the indirect access that Europol has to Eurodac through this service.
- Maintain and review the data stored in Europol biometric databases, ensuring that it complies with Europol data processing rules and data retention policies.
- Provide expertise, training and support on the use of biometric technologies and their application to investigations.
- Provide operational input and feedback to internal stakeholders on the performance and further developments required of biometric identification systems.
- Collaborate with MS, EU agencies and other relevant cooperation partners in the area of biometric data exchange and standardisation.

Expected results: Increased quality and completeness of Europol's criminal intelligence picture with biometric data.

Member States' investigations receive the required support for the processing of biometric data and the results of such processing through Europol's operational products.

Enhanced support to Member States in identifying persons who constitute a high security risk and whose criminal activities fall within Europol's mandate.

Integrated Operational Services

Objectives and actions

A.2.6 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations with travel intelligence.

- Act as a single point of contact to support EU MS' Passenger Information Units (PIUs) and carry out the activities stemming from the PNR Directive and the future Advance Passenger Information (API) Regulation for countering serious crime and terrorism.
- Handle PNR data submitted to Europol by PIUs.
- Enrich the analytical activities of Europol's Analysis Projects with relevant PNR data and with travel data obtained from EU information management systems; develop a granular data access model to regulate the access to the different systems.
- Exploit opportunities in the use of PNR and ETIAS watchlists to collect specific travel information and to flag threats and possible risks.
- Contribute, as required, to the creation of PNR Rule Based Targeting (RBT), as well as ETIAS screening rules.
- Search against Europol data information sent by MS in the framework of travel monitoring activities or in operations to detect high risk passengers.
- Search operational data provided by third partners in the EU information management systems and include the relevant information retrieved in the operational outputs.
- Prepare to utilise the additional API data on both intra-EU and extra-EU flights following the adoption and operationalisation of the future API Regulation for countering serious crime and terrorism.
- Contribute to the coordination and delivery of dedicated training for the analysis of travel related information in partnership with CEPOL.
- Exercise the functions of secretariat of the Informal Working Group on PNR and support the organisation of IWG-PNR events.

Europol Public Information

Expected results: Increased quality and completeness of Europol's criminal intelligence picture with regards to the identification and movement of persons. Member States' investigations receive the required support for the processing of travel data and the results of such processing through Europol's operational products.

Enhanced support to Member States in identifying persons who constitute a high security risk and whose criminal activities fall within Europol's mandate.

Special tactics

Objectives and actions

A.2.7 Provide support to Member States in the area of special tactics.

- Act as the EU knowledge and expertise broker on specialist law enforcement techniques supporting MS investigations in the area of SOC, terrorism and cybercrime.
- Continue developing and maintaining expertise on covert human intelligence sources, covert surveillance and controlled delivery, covert entry, counter-kidnapping and -extortion, fugitive active search, witness protection, undercover policing, and satellite imagery.
- Develop and maintain expertise about all counter measures used by criminal networks to defeat police operations in general and special tactics policing operations in particular.
- Develop in-house expertise on crowd-sourcing tools and special tactics open source intelligence.
- Support the drafting and implementation of OAPs through the involvement in joint investigations, large-scale operations, on the spot deployments and joint action days.
- Manage the EU Most Wanted List containing high-profile internationally wanted criminals. Deliver operational support in fugitive search cases by using Europol's core capabilities. Organise an annual public awareness campaign.
- Manage the High-Risk Informant Database (HRIDB) - a coded database allowing a more accurate risk assessment when working with foreign informants.
- Manage and monitor the European Tracking Solution (ETS). Ensure the operational availability at large and aim to connect all interested MS and third parties.
- Manage the relevant community accesses to the Virtual Command Post (VCP Connect) for live information exchange during special tactics operations.
- Act as the EU Single Point of Contact for all Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (drones) related matters, handling MS requests for information and analysis.
- Facilitate the availability of geospatial images and other space assets for law enforcement by:
 - Sharing with MS the use of Europol's access to Integrated Maritime Services Portal at the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA);
 - Providing a central point of access for LEA to use the European Commission's Copernicus services; and for obtaining services from EUSATCEN; and
 - Supporting the informal network of experts on the use of geospatial images for law enforcement purposes.
- Explore new areas of special tactics support which Europol could potentially provide.
- Support the work and strengthen the implementation of the newly established EU wide informal expert network on covert surveillance.

Europol Public Information

- Manage and give guidance to EPE networks under the sosXnet⁵⁷ umbrella.
- Organise strategic expert meetings, training, awareness raising and prevention activities in the area of knowledge management and in support of specialist networks.
- Contribute to the delivery of training by CEPOL, e.g. on Witness Protection and Informant Handling.

Expected results: Member States' investigations receive quality special tactics support.

Deployment management and support

Objectives and actions

A.2.8 Manage and support deployments, incl. Europol's Guest Officers capabilities.

- Manage and support medium to long-term deployments by Europol, as well as deployments linked to first responses requested by Member States or partners, such as deployments to hotspots and other EU security-related incident areas.
- Coordinate, manage and support the Guest Officer (GO) deployments, including:
 - Maintaining a pool of GOs ready for deployment;
 - Managing ongoing deployments of GOs;
 - Delivering the GO training programme on Europol systems and the mobile office, as well as modalities for operating under Europol's aegis;
 - Providing input to the development and common training materials of the Migration Management Support Teams (MMST) together with FRONTEX and EUAA;
 - Further implementing the mobile team arrangements and rapid deployments upon operational needs (within the limits of available resources);
 - Extending the network of national contact points to ensure that more disembarkation points/areas of interest have a designated national contact point;
 - Maintaining and updating operational plans with the host MS/partner states in areas where Europol is deploying GOs;
 - Liaising with and raising awareness amongst seconding states so as to ensure a sustainable level of secondments to the GO deployment pool.

Expected results: Provision of efficient support to deployments in response to migration management developments, and smooth collaboration with the authorities in host and seconding countries.

Indicators	Latest result (Q2 2024)	Target 2025
Speed of first-line response to MS requests	4.1	5
Number of Accepted SIENA contributions by OAC ⁵⁸	4,960	10,000
Number of deployments of Guest Officers	383	700

⁵⁷ Specialist Operational Support Exchange Network

⁵⁸ The responsibility for this indicator is shared by Europol and its partners (MS, TP). As such, the target is indicative and used to monitor the trend of accepted contributions.

A.3. Combating Serious and Organised Crime

Overview

The work of Europol in the fight against serious and organised crime is delivered through the European Serious and Organised Crime Centre (ESOCC). The centre aims at providing the most effective operational support to priority cases and this encompasses criminal intelligence analysis, on-the-spot and real time information exchange and expertise, and operational capabilities support to Member States.



The ESOCC's primary goal is to deliver operational support to MS priority cases and High Value Target (HVT) investigations focusing on individuals and poly-criminal networks posing the highest risk of serious and organised crime to the EU. This is achieved by implementing a case prioritisation mechanism and a HVT/Operational Task Force (OTF) concept, ensuring a standardised application of operational services on the basis of case categories, improving internal and external coordination, allocating resources in a flexible manner and using a Task Force/project based working method with horizontal support from other centres to respond to emerging threats.

Europol has embedded the principles of criminal intelligence-led policing in its structure, processes and resources. The agency is currently supporting and facilitating EMPACT 2022-2025, which will be again a key driver for the operational support provided by Europol to MS competent authorities in 2025.

In 2025, ESOCC will continue targeting high-risk and cross-border criminal networks active in the areas of drugs, weapons and explosives, property crime and environmental crime, migrant smuggling, trafficking in human beings and different forms of human exploitation. Within each crime group the Analysis Projects (APs) are clustered and aligned to the EMPACT priorities. In addition, the agency has assumed the coordinator's function for the EMPACT Common Horizontal Strategic Goal on Investigations and judicial response, with a specific focus on high-risk criminal networks (HRCN) and key individuals and thus ensures the overall coherence of actions targeting key criminal structures and individuals (HRCN/HVT).

Europol is following closely EU policy developments and in 2025 it will be contributing to the implementation of, among others, the EU Roadmap to fight drug trafficking and organised crime, EU Strategy to tackle Organised Crime 2021-2025, the EU Strategy and Action Plan on Drugs 2021-2025, the EU Action Plan on Firearms Trafficking 2020-2025, the revised Environmental Directive, the EU Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings 2021-2025, the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, the renewed EU Action Plan against migrant smuggling 2021-2025 and the upcoming Regulation on countering migrant smuggling (once adopted).

2025 Objectives

European Serious and Organised Crime Centre (ESOCC)

Objectives and actions

A.3.1 Ensure the effective functioning of the ESOCC in providing strategic and operational support to EU Member States' investigations on SOC.

- Serve as the EU law enforcement hub for collecting, processing, analysing and exchanging information and criminal intelligence of relevance for serious and organised crime. Support MS, TP and other operational partners with operational capabilities and expertise that are not available widely at national level to bring high operational added value to the investigations.
- Ensure collaboration with front-line investigators by providing real-time operational analysis, operational coordination, information exchange and tactical expertise, including short and longer-term deployments of Europol experts.
- Use data from real-time investigations supported by the ESOCC to maintain an intelligence picture on SOC.
- Support the implementation of Operational Action Plans (OAP) under EMPACT priority threats.
- Support the implementation of the EU Strategy on Organised Crime 2021-2025. Support the strategic and operational implementation of the actions of the EU Roadmap to fight drug trafficking and organised crime, in particular, the follow-up of the first mapping of the criminal networks that pose the biggest threats to society.
- Ensure the provision of support to Member States in identifying HVTs - individuals and criminal organisations constituting the highest risk of organised and serious crime.
- Support Member States in establishing and operating OTFs facilitating complex and high profile resource-intensive investigations against HVTs, taking into account, where appropriate, the regional approach and the requirements for specialised skills and expertise in multiple domains, including seizure and confiscation of criminal assets.
- Provide management, administrative and logistical support to OTFs. Ensure the timely exchange of information within the OTF, in particular regarding the analysis of the OTF findings, and report to relevant OTF partners.
- Manage the dedicated OTF grant to finance the application of special investigative techniques and other resource demanding activities in MS. Ensure the complementarity of the grant mechanism to the EMPACT funding provided by Europol.
- Support MS participation in OTFs via the recruitment of short-term SNEs and deployment of national investigators to reinforce the operational support for HVT cases.
- Utilise new opportunities enabling joint operational analysis between Europol and Member States when conducting specific investigations (in line with corresponding technical advancement).
- Develop the capacity of the ESOCC in financial investigations and the tracing of proceeds of crime with the support of the EFEC.
- Develop the capacity of the ESOCC in open source and social media monitoring with the support of the ECTC/EU IRU.
- Support the implementation of special tactics targeting the illicit activities of High Value Targets.
- Utilise, where appropriate and subject to checking potential and actual conflicts of interest as well as checking available capacities, funding opportunities in relation to calls within Europol's remit for which the agency is eligible to apply together with MS. Depending on the call eligibility rules, this may include the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy (BMVI) and the Internal Security Fund (ISF).
- Support the preparation of prevention materials and campaigns.

Expected results: Member States' investigations receive quality analytical and operational support related to SOC.

Europol Public Information

Enhanced law enforcement coordination of actions and operational cooperation in the EU against criminal networks constituting the highest risk for the internal security.

Europol contributes to the objectives of relevant EU policies.

Arrests of High Value Targets, identification and seizures of criminal assets, and disruption/dismantling of criminal networks.

Operations on Drugs

Disrupt criminal networks involved in the illicit trafficking of cocaine, heroin, cannabis and synthetic drugs, as well as the illegal supply of logistical support, precursors and other services.

Objectives and actions

A.3.2 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on drug production and trafficking.

- Identify HVT(s) and criminal networks active in the field of drug production and trafficking, set up operational meetings and proactively support the coordination and the conduct of investigations by applying the HVT/OTF concept.
- Support the implementation of the EMPACT Operational Action Plans on cannabis, cocaine and heroin, and on synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances.
- Support the activities of the Programme Board on drug supply reduction. Contribute to the implementation of the EU Drugs Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2025, and the EU Roadmap to fight Drug Trafficking and Organised Crime.
- Perform data processing, criminal intelligence analysis and support MS with operational capabilities, a real-time coordination and expertise, including on-the-spot support.
- Support MS in identifying, tracking and dismantling illicit drug producing facilities in the EU, including by targeting precursors and designer precursors, by improving and making better use of forensic investigations, criminal intelligence and by developing and expanding detection techniques (e.g. via the Europol Illicit Laboratory Comparison System). Provide a training on Illicit laboratory dismantling together with CEPOL.
- Support investigations targeting dedicated encrypted communications used by criminal networks. Create a capacity within ESOC to address encrypted communication and other new technology-related methods used to protect criminal activities and to conceal related communications.
- Support MS investigations against environmental crime related to illicit drug production and trafficking.
- Operate the drug intelligence fusion platform within Europol that includes MS representatives, and has contact points with secured information exchange capacities in third countries and regions constituting drug trafficking hubs. Facilitate the exchange of intelligence in real time, analysis and support to live operations targeting international drug trafficking criminal networks affecting the EU.
- In cooperation with the European Union Drugs Agency (EUDA), support the EU Early Warning System on new psychoactive substances and/or other initiatives and projects concerning the EU Drugs Markets.
- Exploit the operational use of the new tool for monitoring and analysis of drug activity on Dark Web markets developed jointly with EUDA and JRC.
- Target concrete crime hubs, hotspots (such as main harbours) or key enablers, for which specific measures, addressing the specific crime-enabling factors or facilitating targeted regional coordination of interventions, can be set up in consultation with the main MS/TP concerned.

Europol Public Information

- Participate in the European Ports Alliance aiming to bring together all relevant public and private actors into a public-private partnership to identify and implement operational and concrete solutions to prevent criminal networks infiltrating EU ports and exploiting them for drug trafficking.
- Set up a Maritime Anti-Trafficking Coordination Hub (MATCH) to enhance the analysis and technical support to prioritised drugs related operations in the maritime domain, to improve the operational and strategical picture of maritime trafficking and to provide a secure real-time communication platform.
- Enhance cooperation with the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre – Narcotics (MAOC-N) by promoting exchange of intelligence and joint operations.
- Prioritise cooperation with high-risk countries from a drug production and smuggling perspective in order to support MS investigations, and trace and identify drugs-related criminal proceeds. Contribute to potential EU regional intervention tackling trafficking corridors and hubs in West Africa⁵⁹.
- Enhance and support EU MS investigative efforts, operations and/or projects in Latin America by implementing so-called “network attack approach” which would require EU MS, TP and Europol to jointly target not just one segment of a criminal enterprise, but the entire criminal network, from the production and supply infrastructures in Latin America to the importation logistics in the EU (within the limits of available resources).
- Support EU dialogues on drugs that focus on specific drug trafficking routes, involving producer, transit and consumer markets⁶⁰.
- Organise and fund the annual Drug Conference.

Expected results: Arrests of High Value Targets, identification and seizures of criminal assets, and disruption/dismantling of criminal networks.
Reduction of the drug supply by facilitating arrest and prosecution of its main criminal actors.
Enhanced law enforcement coordination and efficiency of action in the EU in the area of drug supply reduction.

Operations on Weapons & Explosives

Disrupt illicit trafficking in firearms and explosives.

Objectives and actions

A.3.3 Provide support to EU Member States’ investigations on weapons and explosives.

- Identify HVT(s) and criminal networks active in the field of weapons and explosives trafficking, set up operational meetings and proactively support the coordination and the conduct of investigations by applying the HVT/OTF concept.
- Support the implementation of the EMPACT Operational Action Plan on Firearms trafficking.
- Perform data processing, criminal intelligence analysis and support MS with operational capabilities, a real-time coordination and expertise, including on-the-spot support.
- Support the implementation of the EU action plan on firearms trafficking 2020-2025.
- Further develop a Firearms Intelligence Hub at ESOCC to facilitate the cross-border exchange and processing of ballistics and weapons identification information by:

⁵⁹ As put forward in the EU Roadmap to fight Drug Trafficking and Organised Crime.

⁶⁰ Regular EU dialogues should be conducted with the Western Balkan countries, Eastern Partnership countries, Central Asia region and countries, Colombia, China, USA, Latin America and the Caribbean regions and countries.

Europol Public Information

<ul style="list-style-type: none">- initiating the setting up of a Ballistic Intelligence Network integrating at Europol the two main Ballistic Identification Systems in the EU and providing an interoperability solution, and- initiating the establishment of a common weapons identification system and database at Europol to support the storage and comparison of such data at EU level. <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Support MS investigations countering the diversion of firearms and explosives and illicit trafficking of precursors, weapon parts and pyrotechnic products.o Conduct proactive criminal intelligence gathering on (dark web) online weapons and explosives trade, with the support of EC3's DarkWeb team.o Support the implementation of special tactics targeting the weapon/explosives production and trafficking logistical facilitators (defined as facilitators involved in the production, transportation or financing of weapons-related illicit activities).o Develop capacities for weapons and explosives tracing and utilise the access to CAR's iTRACE and Interpol's iARMS. Resume discussions with the US ATF's eTRACE⁶¹ in view of establishing access.o Focus on trafficking of weapons through postal and fast parcels.o Focus on the analysis of open source intelligence to identify and analyse patterns of firearms-related violence and firearms trafficking by utilising horizontal support from the EU IRU.o Develop, in cooperation with the European Commission, common reporting on firearms seizures to create conditions towards establishing a standard EU statistical data collection procedure, and an EU-level tool to track in real-time firearms-related incidents and seizures.o Contribute to the updates and regional versions of Frontex Firearms Handbook for Border Guard and Customs.
<p>Expected results: Member States' investigations receive quality analytical and operational support related to illicit trafficking in weapons and explosives.</p> <p>Arrests of High Value Targets, identification and seizures of criminal assets, and disruption/dismantling of criminal networks.</p>

Operations on High Risk criminal networks

Disrupt structures of high risk criminal networks.

Combat Organised Crime related violence (e.g. murders).

Disrupt the capacity of Organised Crime facilitators and enablers.

Objectives and actions

A.3.4 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on high risk criminal networks.

- o Support investigations on high risk criminal networks, especially those criminal activities involving extensive money laundering, extreme violence (murders, kidnap and torture) and corruption.
- o Support umbrella investigations against organised criminal groups offering facilitation services to other criminal networks or individual criminals.
- o Identify HVT(s) active in organised crime domain, set up operational meetings and proactively support the coordination and the conduct of investigations by applying the HVT/OTF concept.

⁶¹ CAR - Conflict and Armament Research; iARMS - Illicit Arms Records and tracing Management System; US ATF - US Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives

Europol Public Information

- Perform data processing, criminal intelligence analysis and support MS with operational capabilities, a real-time coordination and expertise, including on-the-spot support.
- Support as a coordinator the implementation of the Common Horizontal Strategic Goal and as a co-driver the Operational Action Plan under the EMPACT priority High Risk Criminal Networks (HRCN).
- Ensure the overall coherence of actions targeting key criminal structures and individuals (HRCN and HVT).
- Present to Member States the results of the evaluation of the merger of the previous Analysis Projects into AP High Risk OCGs. Follow-up on any findings and recommendations, in particular regarding the maintenance of expertise.
- Contribute to the development of innovative tools (e.g. machine learning tools) in view of facilitating data processing and analysis in support of HVT and priority cases.
- Coordinate investigations related to encrypted criminal communications and other new technology-related methods used to protect criminal activities and to conceal related communications.
- Support the implementation of special tactics targeting the illicit activities of the members of high risk criminal networks, including their money laundering operations.
- Organise and fund the Annual Plenary Meeting and other dedicated meetings, as needed.
- Establish cooperation with relevant EU-financed projects, which seek to support MS in identifying international criminal networks through intelligence-led actions, centralised analysis and effective use of forensic tools, and promote the use of Europol's services in achieving the objectives of such projects.

Expected results: Member States' investigations receive quality analytical and operational support related to high risk criminal networks.
Arrests of High Value Targets, identification and seizures of criminal assets, and disruption/dismantling of criminal networks.

Operations on Organised Property Crime

Combat organised property crime committed by Mobile Organised Crime Groups.

Objectives and actions

A.3.5 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on organised property crime.

- Identify HVT(s) and criminal networks active in the field of organised property crime, including cultural goods, set up operational meetings and proactively support the coordination and the conduct of investigations by applying HVT/OTF concept.
- Support the implementation of the EMPACT Operational Action Plan on Organised Property Crime.
- Perform data processing, criminal intelligence analysis and support MS with operational capabilities and expertise, including on-the-spot support. Provide mid-level financial analysis with the support of the EFECC.
- Prioritise investigations and promote the establishment of OTFs to counter property crime featuring extreme violence, high frequency and/or extensive illicit proceeds (such as attacks on ATMs and robberies).
- Contribute to the implementation of the EU Action Plan tackling trafficking in cultural goods by supporting investigations related to the looting of antiquities from archaeological sites, and thefts and forgeries of works of art.

Europol Public Information

- Provide expertise to the Core Group on the trafficking of cultural goods established within the EU Clearing Board for Innovation.
- Enhance the collaboration with the EU CULTNET through the newly established contact point at Europol who will streamline initiatives, explore new opportunities for cooperation, facilitate the interaction between Europol and the network and promote the implementation of the EU action plan.
- Organise and fund thematic conferences with participants of EU MS LEAs with a view to highlight features of criminal networks with high mobility/impact across multiple jurisdictions.

Expected results: Member States' investigations receive quality analytical and operational support related to organised property crime.
Arrests of High Value Targets, identification and seizures of criminal assets, and disruption/dismantling of criminal networks.

Operations on Environmental crime

Disrupt the capacity of **criminal networks** involved in environmental crime.

Objectives and actions

A.3.6 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on environmental crime.

- Identify HVT(s) and criminal networks active in the field of environmental crime, set up operational meetings and proactively support the coordination and the conduct of investigations by applying the HVT/OTF concept.
- Support the implementation of the EMPACT Operational Action Plan on Environmental crime.
- Perform data processing, criminal intelligence analysis and support MS with operational capabilities and expertise, including on-the-spot support. Share Europol's list of available technical support resources (such as accredited laboratories, sampling companies, etc.) in the EU which could be used to address concrete operational needs of MS investigations on environmental crimes.
- Support MS investigations in cross border waste and pollution crime and cases of infiltration of criminal networks in the respective legal business structures.
- Focus on trafficking of fluorinated greenhouse gases (F-gases) and ozone depleting substances and in particular on cases that include infiltration of legal business structures and internet enabled activities.
- Focus on the illicit management of Electronic and Electric Equipment Waste, especially the export to third countries.
- Respond to the impact of the revised Environmental Crime Directive, in particular regarding the broadened scope of offences. Support the reinforcement of new specialised units on environmental crime in the Member States.
- Contribute to the activities of the EnviCrimeNet.
- Boost partnerships for the combating of Environmental Crime through dedicated alliances, including relevant private parties, to strengthen targeted operational cooperation, addressing intelligence gaps, sharing of expertise, innovation, capacity building and joint constraint resolution.
- Strengthen the links with the active working groups of the Interpol Committee on Environmental Crime, in particular in the field of combating illegal exports of waste imports and the smuggling of endangered species of wild fauna and flora.
- Organise and fund an annual event on Waste & Pollution Crimes.

Europol Public Information

Expected results: Member States' investigations receive quality technical, analytical and operational support related to environmental crimes.
Arrests of High Value Targets, identification and seizures of criminal assets, and disruption/dismantling of criminal networks.

European Migrant Smuggling Centre

Migrant Smuggling: Disrupt criminal networks involved in the facilitation of illegal immigration into and within the EU Member States.

Objectives and actions

A.3.7. Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on organised crime related to migrant smuggling.

- Support investigations into criminal networks involved in migrant smuggling and fight organised crime on the main migratory routes and hubs at EU external borders.
- Identify HVT(s) and criminal networks active in migrant smuggling and proactively support the coordination and the conduct of investigations by applying the HVT/OTF concept.
- Host, coordinate, and supervise the deployment of Short Term SNEs and investigators to Europol as a concrete support for the OTF investigations with their operational and analytical capabilities.
- Perform data processing, criminal intelligence analysis and support MS with operational capabilities and expertise, including on-the-spot support. Identify links between migrant smuggling and other crime areas and terrorism.
- Support the implementation of the EMPACT Operational Action Plan on Migrant smuggling.
- Contribute to the objectives of the renewed EU Action Plan against Migrant Smuggling 2021-2025, in the area of dismantling migrant-smuggling networks, including the cooperation with third countries, in particular with the Western Balkans.
- Prepare for the upcoming Regulation on enhancing police cooperation and Europol's support to preventing and combating migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings (subject to adoption).
- Support relevant EU platforms, such as the EU Migration Preparedness and Crisis Blueprint Network and the EU Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR).
- Contribute to the "Situational Awareness, Early Warning and Forecasting Capacity Development Project" of the European Commission, which is building an EU wide IT Toolbox capable of providing better analytical situational overviews, timely identification and comprehensive understanding of emerging migratory trends.
- Coordinate the exchange of information and provision of support via the Joint Liaison Task Force on migrant smuggling and THB embedded within the EMSC and composed of liaison officers from EU MS, relevant third countries, Eurojust, Interpol and Frontex.
- Maintain the Information Clearing House (ICH) with the participation of EUNAVFOR MED, Frontex and Interpol representatives, to support effective and timely information sharing among participating stakeholders.
- Collaborate with Frontex to utilise the synergies in the work of the two agencies with regards to migrant smuggling counteraction and THB, including operational personal data processing (once the new working arrangement is concluded and the requirements for the data exchange are met).
- Promote, with the support of the EU Commission, cooperation with Anti-Smuggling Operational Partnerships, Immigration Liaison Officers Networks, CSDP missions and relevant EU funded projects and initiatives, if operationally focused and subject to legal

Europol Public Information

<p>possibilities, in the third countries that are considered to be the source and transit countries for migrant smuggling.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Review the solutions and tactics deployed and the partnerships with relevant counterparts at national and international level, including Frontex, Member States' LOs deployed in the regions concerned and relevant EEAS networks.○ Support the work of the Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling.○ Support different types of cooperation with relevant multi-actor platforms, acting as an intelligence collection hub, such as possible Joint Investigative Cells or any controlled centres, if established.○ Develop the financial investigation capabilities for enhanced support to investigations of migrant smuggling criminal networks, in close cooperation with the EFEC.○ Enhance information sharing, incl. by coordinating social media monitoring, especially on migrant smuggling routes and networks.○ Support the investigative and referral work in the area of social media, which are frequently abused by criminal groups by selling stolen or lost travel documents by developing capabilities and utilising support by the EU IRU.○ Support, through a co-ordinated and multi-disciplinary approach, the law enforcement response against criminal groups producing and distributing fraudulent documents to facilitate migrant smuggling. Enhance the criminal intelligence picture regarding the use of identity and document fraud.
<p>Expected results: Europol is able to base its operational support functions on real time information and to respond swiftly on changing organised migrant smuggling trends.</p> <p>Member States' investigations receive quality analytical and operational support in relation to dismantling of criminal networks active in migrant smuggling.</p> <p>Arrests of High Value Targets, identification and seizures of criminal assets, and disruption/dismantling of criminal networks.</p>

European Migrant Smuggling Centre

Trafficking in Human Beings: Disrupt criminal networks involved in intra-EU human trafficking and human trafficking from the most prevalent external source countries for the purposes of any form of exploitation (e.g. sexual, labour, forced begging, forced criminality, organ removal etc.), targeting their leadership, operations, facilitators and financial structures.

Objectives and actions

A.3.8 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on trafficking in human beings.

- Support Member States' and operational partners' investigations concerning trafficking in human beings affecting EU for the purpose of any form of exploitation (e.g. sexual, labour, forced begging, forced criminality, organ removal, etc.).
- Perform data processing and criminal intelligence analysis, and support MS with operational capabilities and expertise, including on-the-spot support.
- Identify HVT(s) and criminal networks active in THB, set up operational meetings and proactively support the coordination and the conduct of investigations on these individuals by applying the HVT/OTF concept.
- Host, coordinate, and supervise the deployment of Short Term SNEs and investigators deployed to Europol as a concrete support for the OTF investigation with their operational and analytical capabilities.

Europol Public Information

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support the implementation of the EMPACT Operational Action Plan on Trafficking in human beings. ○ In cooperation with MS, enhance the collection and exchange of operational and strategic information on trafficking in human beings by increasing the quantity and improving the quality of the contributions. ○ Support the implementation of the EU Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings 2021-2025, the revised EU Anti-trafficking Directive and the Common Anti-trafficking Plan combatting trafficking in human beings in relation to people fleeing from Ukraine. ○ Strengthen the support provided in THB investigations concerning criminal financial flows, in close cooperation with the EFCC. ○ Develop knowledge on key organised criminal groups involved in THB in the EU. ○ Improve the use of PNR data in THB investigations to identify victims and suspects and further develop effective targeting rules for red-flagging aviation-related trafficking situations.
<p>Expected results: Member States' investigations receive quality analytical and operational support related to THB.</p> <p>Arrests of High Value Targets, identification and seizures of criminal assets, and disruption/dismantling of criminal networks.</p>

Indicators	Latest result (Q2 2024)	Target 2025
Number of Accepted contributions by ESOCC ⁶²	27,018	40,000
Number of Operations supported by ESOCC	798	1,300
Number of Operational Task Forces supported by ESOCC (where ESOCC is in the lead)	42	20
Number of Operational Reports delivered by ESOCC	2,711	4,250
Number of Action Days coordinated/supported by ESOCC	140	230
Satisfaction with Operational Support and Analysis provided by ESOCC	9.4	8.5
Number of Operations supported by EMSC	294	250
Number of Operational Reports delivered by EMSC	627	1,250
Number of Action Days coordinated/supported by EMSC	41	50
Satisfaction with Operational Support and Analysis provided by EMSC	9.5	8.5

⁶² The responsibility for this indicator is shared by Europol and its partners (MS, TP). As such, the target is indicative and used to monitor the trend of accepted contributions.

A.4. Combating Cyber Crime

Overview

The European Cybercrime Centre (EC3) is devoted to combating cybercrime by delivering operational and investigation support to the services in the Member States competent to fight organised crime and terrorism. The work of the Centre encompasses the following main areas:



- Cyber-dependent crimes, which involve offenses that can only be committed through the use of computers or networks, such as hacking, malware distribution, and denial-of-service attacks, and in particular those affecting critical infrastructure, information systems and computer devices in the European Union.
- Cyber-enabled crimes, which refers to traditional crimes like fraud, theft, and harassment that are facilitated or enhanced by the use of the internet and digital technologies, and in particular those generating large criminal profits such as online fraud, or cause serious harm to their victims such as online child sexual exploitation.

EC3 works towards preventing and combating all forms of criminality associated with the sexual exploitation and abuse of children. It provides assistance and expertise in combatting the creation and distribution of online child abuse material as well as tackling forms of criminal online behaviour against children, such as grooming, self-generated indecent material, sexual extortion and live child abuse.

Another area of focus for the EC3 services is international payment fraud investigations. The aim is to respond effectively to new threats and target the criminal networks that affect electronic payments and ensure customers' security and trust in electronic and online payments inside a fast-growing digital payment ecosystem.

The support provided to MS extends also to tackling criminality on the Dark Web and alternative platforms. Europol targets criminal networks involved in the administration and moderation of Dark Web related activities, the related commodity-based vendors and buyers, as well as alternative communication platforms.

EC3 provides digital forensics on-the-spot and in-house support, computer forensic services, including decryption, live forensics, vehicle forensics, mobile device, and counterfeit banknote analysis. It delivers agile research and development of new digital forensic tools in response to operational needs. Gathering forensic data is of utmost importance for collecting evidence for investigations, and for the better understanding of cybercriminals' tools and methods.

For Law Enforcement to be able to effectively follow cybercriminals' tracks, it is increasingly important to combine different and complex datasets, both seized within investigations as well as from other sources. In order to support this, EC3 acts as a gateway focusing on the streams of cyber threat intelligence namely on actors, tactics, techniques, and procedures, malware and criminal services (enablers), as well as on cyber financial intelligence (cryptocurrency) tracing and blockchain analysis. The priority is to ensure that data is available, processed and enriched using the most advanced data science techniques, and actionable through the data and intelligence full cycles. EC3 participates in initiatives for lawful access to data that aim to facilitate the effective execution of law enforcement investigations. In this regard, it coordinates and steers EU MS in different efforts that aim to improve the

Europol Public Information

access, standardisation and retention of criminal data. The main objective is to avoid that law enforcement is hindered by new technology developments and inadequate legal frameworks.

Research and Development (R&D) and innovation are key for the evolution of combating cybercrime. In this context, EC3 has established several multi-stakeholder forums with law enforcement, private sector and academia in fields like digital forensics, decryption, cryptocurrency tracing and new technologies such as quantum. Furthermore, the centre contributes to R&D projects related to cybercrime, e.g. under the European Commission's Programme Horizon 2020 or the Internal Security Fund (ISF) Police programme.

The centre contributes to prevention and awareness campaigns with the objective to educate citizens and public and private partners about the risks and impact of cybercrime, and to promote cybercrime-proof practices. These campaigns also aim to foster international cooperation and information sharing to address global crime cyberthreats.

EC3 hosts the Joint Cybercrime Action Taskforce (J-CAT) which is composed of liaison officers from various EU Member States, non-EU law enforcement partners and EC3. The Taskforce members propose, select and work in a collaborative manner on high-profile cases for investigation.

2025 Objectives

European Cybercrime Centre (EC3)
Objectives and actions
<p>A.4.1 Ensure the effective functioning of EC3 in providing strategic and operational support to EU Member States' investigations on cybercrime.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Serve as the EU law enforcement hub for collecting, processing, analysing and exchanging information and criminal intelligence of relevance for cybercrime and cyber-enabled investigations.○ Provide cross-checking, operational analysis, support, coordination and de-confliction to MS cybercrime investigations in the areas of cyber-dependent crimes, payment fraud and online fraud schemes, child sexual exploitation, Dark Web and cross-cutting crime enablers.○ Provide an on-the-spot service by deploying cyber analysts and/or specialists to support ongoing operations.○ Provide management, administrative and logistical support to OTFs. Ensure the timely exchange of information within the OTF, in particular regarding the analysis of the OTF findings, and report to relevant OTF partners.○ Provide 24/7 support to MS for immediate reactions to urgent cyber cases and cyber crises situation via stand-by duty and the EU Law Enforcement Emergency Response Protocol (EU LE ERP).○ Support the implementation of Operational Action Plans under EMPACT priority threats.○ Focus on obtaining and processing datasets such as lawfully intercepted and decrypted communications of criminal networks, as well as seized Darknet servers used for criminal trade and the dissemination of child abuse material.○ Increase the focus on collection, processing and production of cyber threat intelligence, and the delivery of tactical analyses identifying and prioritising the most important cybercriminal data hubs and services (such as crime facilitating VPNs, Hosting Services, Communication Platforms, Financial Services, Dark Markets and Sharing forums, and Counter Antivirus Services).○ Develop a comprehensive outreach function to connect with partners in external events in order to identify new cooperation opportunities, promote investigation needs

Europol Public Information

in public debate, communicate on operational successes, and position Europol and EC3 as a major cooperation actor.

- Serve as the voice of EU law enforcement within the framework of the EU-wide Coordinated Response to Large-Scale Cybersecurity Incidents and Crises (EU Blueprint) and the EU Cyber Crisis Taskforce.
- Facilitate the multi-disciplinary interaction between partners and stakeholders, including Advisory Groups, Governance network, Eurojust and the European Judicial Cybercrime Network, ENISA, Europol Financial Coalition, EUCTF and academia for the purposes of establishing cooperation and information-sharing.
- Develop new thematic cooperation in the EC3 Advisory groups and working-subgroups, to foster information exchange on trends and criminal new modus operandi.
- Coordinate and support efforts to strengthen operational cooperation of law enforcement with Computer Security Incident Response Teams (CSIRT) community and in particular with the CSIRTs Network; organise the annual EC3-ENISA workshop for LE-CSIRT cooperation.
- Interact with law enforcement representatives in the EU, industry and academia to develop and present collective views in the global discussion on Internet Governance, in forums such as the Internet Cooperation for Assigning Names and Numbers (ICANN) and the Réseaux IP Européens Network Coordination Centre (RIPE NCC), and in relation to the EU policy making and legislative process.
- Chair and facilitate the work of the European Group of Heads of Lawful Interception Units (HoLI) and the European Working Group on Standardisation on Internal Security. Ensure the representation of the law enforcement interests related to lawful access to data, at rest and in transit, at the EU level and beyond.
- Participate and contribute in the discussions of the High Level Expert Working Group on access to data for effective law enforcement and its working groups as well as in the implementation of the relevant recommendations proposed by the group. Other significant initiatives on access to data, such as the G7 Lawful Access Working Group, will be supported in close alignment with the HoLI's work.
- Contribute from an operational perspective to the overall monitoring of developments of new policy/legislative initiatives and their potential impact on Europol, such as the Regulation laying down rules to prevent and combat child sexual abuse, the Digital Services Act, the Cyber Resilience Act and the Artificial Intelligence Package.
- Contribute to the preparation and delivery of prevention and awareness campaigns and activities in the cybercrime-mandated areas as detailed in the EC3 Cybercrime Prevention and Awareness Programme 2025. Work closely with partners who have the capacity either to develop educational content/material, videos, serious games, or to disseminate it (such as ENISA or ECTEG⁶³ among others).
- Promote 'operation amplification' in the operations carried out by MS and Europol (amplify the effects of an operation) taking into account the entire cybercriminal ecosystem, focusing on all levels (from the user to the administrator), and combining both pursuit and prevention.
- Promote the engagement of the private sector in cyber offender prevention activities aiming to deter and divert cybercriminal pathways.
- Increase the focus on promoting and scaling up successful national prevention initiatives or other types of projects/approaches among the rest of the Member States through Europol channels.
- Organise flagship events, such as the annual cybercrime conference of EC3 to promote EC3 capacities and achievements, foster synergies, and identify new cooperation opportunities.

⁶³ European Cybercrime Training & Education Group

Europol Public Information

- Continue to use the EC3 X (former Twitter) account as a fast dissemination channel for EC3's products and services, as well as to engage with the relevant external stakeholders. Promote operational results in combination with immediate public awareness and cyber offender prevention messages.

Expected results: Member States' investigations receive quality analytical and operational support related to cyber-crime.
Enhanced joint operational activities with public and private partners of relevance.
More effective levels of cooperation leading to better coordination and increased operational and strategic results.
Improved public awareness and prevention campaigns.
Europol contributes to the objectives of relevant EU policies.

Digital Support Services - Digital Forensics

Deliver digital operational support services to MS investigations across all crime areas.

Objectives and actions

A.4.2 Provide digital forensics support to EU Member States' investigations.

- Deliver digital operational support services in house and on-the-spot, such as criminal infrastructure oriented cyber forensics to tackle encrypted communication networks (in close cooperation with Cyber Intelligence) and ransomware infrastructure.
- Strengthen and prioritise the support to MS on Operational Task Forces targeting High Value Targets and priority investigations.
- Monitor new trends and actively support MS in overcoming technical challenges to their cyber and cyber-facilitated investigations by identifying suitable tactics, performing agile research, developing digital forensic tools and sharing best practices. Deliver agile data extraction services using forensic tools and methods.
- Provide decryption services using the Europol Decryption Platform to effectively decrypt data at rest to support prioritised investigations. Continue R&D to develop alternative decryption methods to expand the portfolio of decryption/access to data services.
- Further support the transition to the New Forensic Environment. Utilise the NFE to provide forensic extraction and reconstruction services.
- Collaborate closely with the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission to identify and develop new tools for law enforcement at the Europol-JRC common activity laboratory. Further create a set of forensic data extraction tools to enable data acquisition from vehicles with different hardware/software specificities.
- Automate forensic data extraction and indexing process using tailored automation solutions and maximise usage of automated processing of forensic images. Continue to develop the Forensic Automation Framework.
- Improve capabilities to perform in-depth hardware analysis and reverse engineering, to increase capacity to tackle encrypted communication networks, to extract data from mobile devices, portable encrypted devices, cryptocurrency wallets, as well as Internet of Things (IoT) devices.
- Establish capacity to use custom data extraction methods from mobile devices, not supported by commercial forensic tools.
- Contribute to the implementation of the EU Forensic Science Area 2.0 Action Plan, in particular in the areas of biometrics, artificial intelligence, digitalisation and emerging technologies.

Europol Public Information

- Maintain and support Forums and communities on EPE in relevant forensic areas such as digital forensics, vehicle forensics, decryption, etc. Organise annual meetings of the Forensic Expert Forum, Vehicle Forensic Experts and Decryption Experts Network.
- Provide highly specialised training on decryption in cooperation with ECTEG. Support ECTEG in the development of other training courses on encryption.
- Support CEPOL in delivering trainings in the area of Forensic Support Team expertise.

Document Forensics

- Support MS investigations concerning false documents, counterfeit Euro currency and printing devices. Assist in the dismantling of clandestine print shops.
- Share the expertise and provide training in false document and currency identification.
- Explore new areas of R&D in the domain of Document Forensics to prepare tackling emerging challenges such as criminal abuse of AI and machine learning techniques in the area of biometrics e.g. face, fingerprints and iris manipulation, which will become increasingly a cross cutting factor in many crime areas.

Expected results: Member States' investigations receive quality digital and document forensics support and enhanced access to criminal evidence.
Increased capacity and functionalities of Europol's Decryption platform.
Continuously developed expertise of the EC3 Forensic Lab to be in the forefront of R&D and in tackling technical challenges.

Cyber Intelligence

Objectives and actions

A.4.3 Provide cyber intelligence support to EU Member States' investigations.

- Collect information on cybercrime and cyber-facilitated crime threats and trends from a wide array of public, private and open sources.
- Provide knowledge products with regard to technology and new criminal *modi operandi* online.
- Improve the criminal intelligence position of EC3 and the Member States by proactively identifying significant cybercriminal facilitators and other HVT involved in the most prominent cyber threats.
- Within the Data science workstream and the temporary EC3 Data Science Task Force, enhance collection, processing and storage of large datasets, contributed by MS and other Europol crime centres to EC3, by utilising the latest data science techniques for data extraction, transformation, loading, and enrichment.
- Manage, enrich and further develop the EC3 Search Hub (EC3SH) project for complex ingestion, normalisation and analysis of large data sets.
- Pro-actively collect and share technical expertise and support tools on analytics of large datasets in collaboration with MS. Participate in collaborative international efforts to standardise and further develop tools and procedures.
- Support MS and TP investigations with advanced cryptocurrency tracing techniques and analysis. Enhance knowledge and capabilities through specialised training, other awareness forms (e.g. conference), and tailored products tackling contemporary challenges. Coordinate crypto-related projects to address specific thematic issues.
- Provide a dedicated, secure and automated malware analysis platform to MS through the Europol Malware Analysis Solution (EMAS). Enhance EMAS technical and analysis capabilities.

Europol Public Information

- Provide technical support and in-depth analysis on top malware in light of the proliferation of the threat and the exponential increase of requests for technical and financial investigative support by MS.
- Support EU MS with Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) collection, analysis, production of intelligence products and expertise, and the development of national cyber intelligence models. Enhance functionalities, resources, tooling, and operational security aspects of the Anonymous Internet Services (AIS) project as the main environment to conduct OSINT investigations.
- Utilise the MISP Threat Intelligence Sharing platform (MISP)⁶⁴ at Europol to further strengthen the operational collaboration among EC3, cyber law enforcement and cyber security/network, and information security community.
- Further implement and maintain MISP as a platform for operational data enrichment of the data contributed by MS with information coming from private partners, relevant EU bodies and OSINT.
- Maintain and support forums and communities on EPE in relevant Cybercrime intelligence areas such as cryptocurrency and block chain technologies, cyber threat intelligence/OSINT, data science, malware (EMAS), etc.
- Further develop the network of points of contact for cyber intelligence teams (designated staff) within the Cybercrime Units among MS and Third operational partners with a focus on threat intelligence, cryptocurrency, and data science domains; organise an annual network meeting.
- Establish Cyber Intelligence Gateway (CIG) as single entry with multiple channels to receive intelligence contributions from non-LE parties primarily focused on operational and tactical activities.
- Establish a Cyber Intelligence Exchange Program (CIEP) with both LE and non-LE organisations to improve knowledge exchange, threat landscape awareness, and technical deconfliction.

Expected results: Member States' investigations receive quality cyber intelligence support and benefit from improved criminal intelligence picture.

Operations on Cyber-Dependent Crimes

Disrupt criminal networks involved in cyber-dependent crimes associated with internet and ICT (Information and Communication Technology).

Objectives and actions

A.4.4 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on cyber-dependent crimes.

- Provide operational coordination and support to Member States' investigations with regards to cyber-dependent crimes of greatest concern. Organise investigational calls, operational meetings, sprints and action days.
- Focus on preventing and combating cyber criminality affecting critical infrastructure and network and information systems.
- Focus on investigating, targeting and disrupting cybercrimes associated with organised groups and/or most prolific cybercriminal facilitators generating greatest harm or large criminal profits, and cybercrime-as-a-service schemes.
- Perform quantitative (in depth data) analysis to create multiple actionable Top Targets of crucial facilitators and services.

⁶⁴ The original Malware Information Sharing Platform (MISP) was extended to cover threat intelligence, financial fraud information, vulnerability information and counter-terrorism information.

Europol Public Information

- Contribute to the implementation of the EMPACT Operational Action Plan on Cyber Attacks.
- Strengthen the support to the MS on Operational Taskforces, effective prioritisation of HVTs and identification of optimal follow-up response measures.
- Include and support offender prevention (i.e. activities to deter cybercriminal pathways) within intervention plans of operations.
- Expand the new International Law Enforcement Ransomware Response Model (IRRM), which was developed jointly with the J-CAT, in view of reinforcing the operational response to ransomware.
- Monitor, and when operationally relevant, contribute to the pertinent international ransomware initiatives in order to enhance international collaboration and complement the International Ransomware Response Model (IRRM).
- Further implement the No More Ransom project.
- In cooperation with MS and private entities, explore options for early disruptions of ransomware- and other ongoing cyber attacks.

Expected results: Member States' investigations on cyber-dependent crimes receive quality analytical and operational support.

Operations on Child Sexual Exploitation

Disrupt criminal networks involved in sexual exploitation of children, including the production of child abuse images and online dissemination.

Objectives and actions

A.4.5 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on child sexual exploitation.

- Support the MS in tackling forms of criminal online behaviour against children, such as grooming, self-generated indecent material, sexual extortion and coercion, and web live streaming.
- Fight distribution of child sexual exploitation material including preventing, intercepting and stopping the sharing through peer-to-peer networks, commercial platforms, and the Dark Web, as well as addressing the commercial sexual exploitation of children.
- Tackle the phenomenon of transnational child sex offenders by supporting the EU MS in detecting and intercepting travelling child sexual offenders.
- Tackle the phenomenon of Live Distance Child Abuse by supporting the EU MS in detecting financial indicators for financial institutions, the fintech sector and Financial Intelligence Units under the EFIPPP framework in a dedicated CSE workstream.
- Support the implementation of the EMPACT Operational Action Plan on Child sexual exploitation (CSE).
- Strengthen the support to the MS on Operational Taskforces, effective prioritisation of HVTs and facilitating criminal platforms and identification of optimal follow-up response measures.
- Identify High Value Targets, both abusers and their facilitating platforms, among the Dark Web's most prolific perpetrators and set up an annually recurrent OTF to coordinate and de-conflict operations.
- Perform quantitative (in depth data) analysis to proactively create multiple actionable Top Targets of crucial facilitators and services.

Europol Public Information

- Support investigations by organising and supporting investigational calls, operational meetings, sprints and action days.
- Include and support offender prevention (i.e. activities to deter cybercriminal pathways) within intervention plans of operations.
- Assess EC3 data collection modalities and the possibilities for establishing a data warehouse to ensure effective handling of the ever increasing data contributions, and also as an anticipation of trends of AI-generated CSAM.
- Update regularly MS experts on criminal intelligence relating to online platforms being set up, maintained or abused for the purpose of child sexual exploitation.
- Continue hosting the Victim Identification Taskforce to foster cooperation and pooling of expertise from different police agencies and Interpol.
- Deliver expertise within initiatives dealing with victim identification (operational actions and/or OTFs) undertaken by and with partners.
- Further develop the existing Image and Video Analysis Solution (IVAS) with AI functionalities and the internal expertise on victim identification.
- Utilise the benefits from the newly set up automated referral system, the European Union Child Abuse Referral Service (EU-CARES), facilitating the receiving, processing and disseminating of information on suspected child sexual exploitation online from pertinent non-law enforcement actors to the relevant competent authorities in the EU MS, and the automatic cross check of data against EAS and IVAS.
- Provide expertise, evidence and data, including trends and statistics, to the various studies that will be carried out in the framework of the different EU policy initiatives. In particular, contribute to the identification of areas of improvement at EU and national level where strengthening of law enforcement efforts in the fight against child sexual abuse will be required.
- Continue providing support to the Virtual Global Taskforce, to deliver innovative and global strategies for all, ensuring the use of the most relevant tools to counter CSE.
- Deliver and support training courses on Victim Identification and Combating Online Sexual Exploitation of Children.

Expected results: Member States' investigations receive quality analytical and operational support related to child sexual exploitation.

Operations on Payment Fraud and Online Fraud Schemes

Disrupt criminal networks involved in payment fraud and online fraud schemes.

Objectives and actions

A.4.6 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on payment fraud and online fraud schemes.

- Support the MS in combating forms of payment fraud such as skimming (duplication of a card's magnetic strip often through devices hidden within compromised ATMs and Point-Of-Sale terminals), banking phishing and online fraud (cyber-enabled fraud) schemes, incl. payment process compromise (business e-mail compromise BEC).
- Support the implementation of the EMPACT Operational Action Plan on Online fraud schemes.
- Strengthen the support to MS on Operational Taskforces, the effective prioritisation of HVTs and identification of optimal follow-up response measures.
- Target and identify online marketplaces offering illegal services using compromised credit card information, including illegal services (transport, accommodation, game tickets, etc.) offered on the occasion of large events.

Europol Public Information

- Coordinate and execute a coordinated joint action against digital skimming or other new forms of digital payment frauds, in cooperation with the Computer Security Incident Response Teams (CSIRT) community and private partners.
- Improve criminal intelligence on account takeover attacks (affecting financial institutions, payment gateways, airline, hotel and e-commerce sector) and create operational opportunities.
- Promote operational actions in the area of telecom fraud, including international mobile subscriber identity (IMSI)-catcher⁶⁵ attacks, vishing, spoofing caller ID, SIM swapping or smishing⁶⁶, in collaboration with law enforcement, judiciary and relevant private partners.
- Coordinate the detection, identification, dismantling, prosecution and prevention of money mules networks, together with private industry (banking sector, Fintechs, etc.).
- Support the MS in addressing emerging threats and new criminal *modi operandi* (e.g., digital skimming, Account Takeover, ATM malware, Black Box attacks, compromise of Near Field Communication transactions, shim⁶⁷ and relay attacks⁶⁸, etc.).
- Attend important platforms within the payment landscape in order to ensure fast awareness on new modus operandi and intervention options, such as the EAST Expert Group on Payment and Transaction Fraud.
- Facilitate cooperation among LEAs, the private sector and regulators (the European Central Bank at the European level and National Banks at a domestic level).
- Continue exploring and investing in cooperation with key private partners on non-cash payment fraud cases and online fraud and exchange of crime-relevant information with those private sector partners, by utilising new opportunities for cooperation with private parties stemming from the Europol Regulation.
- Actively engage with priority regions to address payment fraud migration. In particular, continue expanding the operational and strategic collaboration on payment fraud migration and card-not-present fraud.
- Deliver the annual training course on Payment Card Fraud Forensics and Investigations.

Expected results: Member States' investigations receive quality analytical and operational support related to non-cash payment fraud.

Operations on Criminal Online Trade and Use of Online Environments

Disrupt **criminal networks** and HVTs involved in the criminal online trade and the use of online environments for criminal purposes.

Objectives and actions

A.4.7 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on the criminal online trade and use of online environments for criminal purposes

- Support the MS and Europol's Analysis Projects in combating criminal networks involved in the administration and moderation of Dark Web related activities, the

⁶⁵ Device used for intercepting mobile phone traffic and tracking location data of mobile phone users.

⁶⁶ Smishing is a phishing cybersecurity attack carried out over mobile text messaging, also known as SMS phishing.

⁶⁷ A shim⁶⁷ attack, also known as Application programming interfaces (APIs) hooking, refers to a method introducing a small piece of code, or a shim, into a system in order to intercept API calls, modify or monitor data, and potentially execute malicious activities.

⁶⁸ A relay attack is a type of cyber-attack that involves intercepting and manipulating the communication between two devices or systems aiming to deceive them into believing they are in close proximity to gain unauthorised access or control.

Europol Public Information

<p>related commodity-based vendors and buyers, as well as alternative communication platforms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Coordinate, plan and execute joint technical, investigative and prevention actions to maximise impact and reduce crime on the Dark Web and alternative communication platforms.○ Strengthen the support to the MS on Operational Taskforces, the effective prioritisation of HVTs and identification of optimal follow-up response measures. Provide in-depth data analysis on Dark Web data repositories to enhance the data enrichment and the identification of High-Value Targets and of crucial facilitators and services involved in crime on the Dark Web and alternative platforms.○ Pro-actively support seizures and takedowns of Darkweb platforms and encourage MS and TP to contribute the related communication (between buyers, sellers and market administrators) and other datasets to Europol, to be used for operational and tactical analysis.○ Support the implementation of the EMPACT Common Horizontal Strategic Goal on Coordinated controls and operations targeting the online and offline trade in illicit goods & services, assuming the coordinator's functions (for the online component).○ Include and support offender prevention (i.e. activities to deter cybercriminal pathways) within intervention plans of operations.○ Maintain the strategic criminal intelligence picture for the online trade in illicit goods and services, in particular on the Dark Web and alternative platforms for threat intelligence and trend scenario purpose. Collaborate with private sector partners through EC3 Advisory Groups to enrich the intelligence picture.○ Maintain knowledge and expertise on tools, tactics and techniques for conducting Dark Web investigations.○ Explore options to acquire and implement tooling to efficiently de-anonymise cybercriminal communication identities for MS.○ Support MS in utilising the Dark Web data scraping tool developed under the lead of JRC and made available through the Europol Tool Repository.○ Further develop knowledge, expertise and the EU tools-box for the technical aspects related to the gathering and exploitation of data on Dark Web investigations in particular those that focus on dismantling the technical and operational criminal infrastructure.○ Organise an annual meeting for experts to share knowledge and expertise on developments and investigations on the Dark Web.○ Support the delivery of training related to Dark Web investigations.
<p>Expected results: Member States' Dark Web investigations receive quality analytical and operational support.</p>

Joint Cybercrime Action Taskforce (J-CAT)

Objectives and actions

A.4.8 Provide support and operational coordination to the J-CAT operations and activities.

- Host, support and coordinate the work of the Joint Cybercrime Action Taskforce (J-CAT) composed of Cyber Liaison Officers from closely involved Member States, non-EU law enforcement partners and EC3.
- Stimulate and facilitate the joint identification, prioritisation and preparation of cross-border investigations by the J-CAT partners.

Europol Public Information

- Support the development of a dedicated J-CAT case prioritisation model to assist MS in identifying the most relevant or effective investigations.
- Promote and support the establishment of an Operation Task Force with a special focus on cybercrime facilitators.
- Explore the possibility to facilitate temporary solutions for joint analysis.
- Expand the utilisation of the International Law Enforcement Ransomware Response Model (IRRM), in view of reinforcing the operational and tactical response to ransomware.
- Facilitate the collaboration and operational engagement of Eurojust in J-CAT operations and activities via the dedicated Eurojust liaison officer.
- De-conflict and identify synergies for joint operational activities with the other global cybercrime taskforces and key cyber operational centres (e.g. NCFTA and Interpol) towards optimising resources and the effectiveness of operations.
- Continue to engage with non-Taskforce members from relevant law enforcement agencies on cases affecting two or more J-CAT existing members.
- Explore options to intensify collaboration between J-CAT partners and key industry partners including those of EC3 Advisory groups to enable the undertaking of joint initiatives between J-CAT, EC3 and the private sector.
- Organise the annual J-CAT Board meeting. Organise regular chair group meetings to promote and support the strategic direction of the J-CAT activities.

Expected results: J-CAT investigations receive quality analytical and operational support.
Improved joint operational activities with public and private partners of relevance.

Research & Development

Objectives and actions

A.4.9 Proactively develop expertise and solutions related to challenges in cybercriminal investigations.

- Collect, analyse and manage strategic criminal intelligence, and further develop expertise with a view to supporting pro-active and innovative approaches.
- Develop capacities to apply the latest data sciences approaches from legal, technical and organisational perspectives.
- Support the cooperation with partners, including EU entities and academia and other expert networks, to facilitate the preparation of strategic analysis, detailed analysis of law enforcement needs and of existing gaps, cryptocurrency best practices and investigative guides, threat intelligence and forward-looking trends (e.g. the IOCTA, Europol's contribution to the EU Innovation Hub on Internal Security or the Cybercrime Training Competency Framework).
- Coordinate the demand and development of new technical solutions, including R&D with the Forensic Experts Forum, the Cyber Innovation Forum and other relevant networks and platforms, such as the Tools4LEAs project. Provide advice to R&D priorities at national and EU level and support the uptake of relevant project results, particularly in relation to EU funding programs, if and where appropriate.
- In coordination with Europol's Innovation Lab and other relevant stakeholders (e.g. JRC), organise a Cyber Innovation Forum for Law Enforcement to exchange best practices in combating cyber-dependent and cyber-enabled crime by employing innovative tools, tactics and techniques.

Europol Public Information

- In coordination with Europol’s Innovation Lab and other relevant stakeholders (e.g. JRC or the EC3 Advisory Group on Research and Development), further develop expertise on technological innovation such as 5G, AI, encryption, anonymisation services and any other relevant developments.
- Coordinate and when relevant support the demand, development and delivery of specialised cybercrime training under the umbrella of a Training Governance Model or Cybercrime Capacity Building Strategy at EU level, including the CEPOL Cybercrime Academy.
- Contribute with expertise to the elaboration of the DNS4EU - European Commission’s initiative to develop a public European Domain Name System (DNS) resolver service, as an alternative European service for accessing the global Internet.
- In coordination with the SIRIUS project, develop joint capacity building activities to ease the access to the data from E-governance actors, or to counter the abuses of DNS.
- Re-assess the possible role of Europol (in the context of the Europol Regulation) to facilitate access to WHOIS data for MS law enforcement authorities.
- In coordination with Europol’s Innovation Lab, broaden and continue to implement the technology watch function to pro-actively inform about criminal abuse of new technology while ensuring the consideration of the law enforcement angle in the process of development and innovation.
- Promote the EC3 Secure Platform for Accredited Cybercrime Experts (SPACE) as a centre of excellence where relevant experts exchange strategic information and best practices.

Expected results: Coordinated efforts in research and development lead to greater realisation of common projects and technical solutions in the cybercrime area.
Member States’ investigations receive up-to-date technical support in the cyber domain.

Indicators	Latest result (Q2 2024)	Target 2025
Number of Accepted contributions by EC3 ⁶⁹	4,960	9,000
Number of Operations supported by EC3	314	440
Number of Operational Task Forces supported by EC3 (where EC3 is in the lead)	2	2
Number of Operational Reports delivered by EC3	1,984	3,200
Number of Action Days coordinated/supported by EC3	19	50
Number of Decryption platform successes	23	30
Satisfaction with Operational Support and Analysis provided by EC3	n/a	8.5

⁶⁹ The responsibility for this indicator is shared by Europol and its partners (MS, TP). As such, the target is indicative and used to monitor the trend of accepted contributions.

A.5. Counter-Terrorism

Overview



The European Counter-Terrorism Centre (ECTC) works towards the maximisation of operational, technical and overall information exchange capabilities in the area of counter-terrorism and aims to ensure added value for EU Member States, as well as third party cooperation partners, namely by providing:

- An information hub for counter terrorism, with unique information and criminal intelligence sharing capabilities for law enforcement authorities in EU Member States and beyond.
- Effective operational support, coordination and expertise for Member States' investigations, by developing and deploying a comprehensive portfolio of support services.
- Proactive mitigation of the use of social media for radicalisation purposes through terrorist and violent extremist online content, as well as cyber-terrorist attack scenarios and support to operational analysis.
- A central strategic support capability, to identify European wide counter-terrorism implications and promote outreach with relevant (international) partners.

The ECTC also prevents and combats terrorism by supporting Member States with terrorism-related financial information. The Centre provides the information processing means by which the Agreement between the European Union and the United States of America on the Processing and Transfer of Financial Messaging Data from the EU to the US for the purposes of the Terrorist Finance Tracking Program (TFTP) is implemented.

Furthermore, the ECTC holds Europol's expertise in the area of Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear & Explosives (CBRN/E) and provides support to EU Member States' investigations on war crimes, genocide, crimes against humanity.

The EU Internet Referral Unit (EU IRU) of the ECTC coordinates and shares the identification tasks of terrorist and violent extremism online content with relevant competent authorities; carries out and facilitates referrals in an effective manner in close cooperation with the industry; and supports Member States' internet-based investigations and technical requests. The Unit is at the forefront of the development of PERCI, a collaborative tool facilitating EU-wide coordination and transmission of removal orders resulting from the TCO Regulation.

The EU IRU acts as a knowledge hub for Europol and the EU Member States in the field of cross-border access to e-evidence. The internet investigation field is a fast evolving environment where methodologies and tools get rapidly outdated. Market research activities, trends and upcoming milestones in the e-evidence field are key to delivering excellence and cutting edge products to Member States.

The EU IRU also acts as a centre of excellence for Europol and the EU Member States in the field of new technologies that could potentially be abused by criminals as regards online content, and in identifying and leveraging new technologies to support law enforcement leads.

Europol Public Information

Since 2019, the ATLAS Network of Special Intervention Units has been affiliated with Europol. The ECTC holds the ATLAS Support Office (ASO), which connects the ATLAS Network and Europol's counter-terrorism and serious and organised crime communities by facilitating the exchange of strategic and operational expertise and practices.

2025 Objectives

<u>The European Counter-Terrorism Centre (ECTC)</u>
Objectives and actions
<p>A.5.1 Ensure the effective functioning of the ECTC in providing strategic and operational support to EU Member States' investigations related to counter-terrorism.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Serve as the EU law enforcement hub for collecting, processing, analysing and exchanging information and criminal intelligence of relevance for a wide range of terrorism-related areas, including the response to major terrorist crises.○ Provide cross-checking, operational analysis, open-source investigations, coordination and de-confliction to MS counter-terrorism investigations. Provide technical/forensic support and operational support to MS on-the-spot.○ Identify new terrorist <i>Modi Operandi</i>, emerging threats and developments. Detect links between terrorism and organised crime and follow, in particular, the evolution of hybrid threats with the terrorism dimension.○ Provide tailored newsfeeds and contribute to strategic reports, including trend analysis, early warnings, the 6-month high-profile Outlook on developments in terrorism, and the annual high-profile TE-SAT report.○ Administer and support the CT Program Board (CTPB) as the MS steering board of the ECTC reflecting MS priorities. Ensure the ECTC involvement and coordination of the implementation of the CTPB work plan. Assess the potential to further strengthen the role of the CTPB and review and update the CTPB Terms of Reference, if necessary.○ In line with the CTPB Action Plan, modify and adapt the criteria for establishing OTFs targeting HVT individuals towards CT investigation requirements.○ Aim to enhance the CT Heads' input to the ECTC, including as regards to the TE-SAT report. Further develop the link between the CT Heads and the CTPB in order to ascertain a unified strategic direction increasing ECTC's operational relevance.○ Manage the Counter Terrorism Joint Liaison Team (CT-JLT) operational platform and ensure its performance as an effective mechanism for accelerating exchange of information and coordination.○ Embed experts from the CT units or other experts from EU bodies/agencies into the ECTC, and similarly ECTC staff members into CT units for short-term operational or strategic analysis joint projects. Aim to increase cooperation between the intelligence community and Europol in areas of common interest, where appropriate, while fully respecting the sole responsibility of Member States for national security.○ Take actions to meet the exponentially growing need for de-confliction of CT-related data with national CT units. Contribute to the development of a de-confliction solution at EU level by utilising PERCI for this purpose.○ Evaluate information on third-country nationals suspected to be jihadist terrorists received from TP or MS for possible processing in the SIS and support the voluntary process (coordinated approach) established by the Terrorism Working Party (TWP).

Europol Public Information

- Propose the insertion of the new information alerts on third-country nationals in the interest of the Union, once this new alert category is implemented in the Schengen Information System, following the provisions of the amended Europol Regulation.
- Increase the exploitation of SIS information on terrorist alerts obtained through the Europol SIRENE Office.
- Foster the complementarity between CT strategic work, operations and online investigations within the ECTC in view of maximising the response to politically motivated violent extremism and terrorism.
- Oversee the establishment of CT-related cooperation with EU institutions and agencies, international organisations, law enforcement, academia and private sector entities with a particular focus on stakeholders at policy level.
- Explore opportunities to enhance cooperation with MS, TP and other relevant partners to expand on ECTC's access to high quality data in the area of counter-terrorism.
- Explore opportunities for potential joint thematic trend reporting with agencies that hold relevant information on the topic concerned. Specific thematic trends to be identified and linked to current or emerging trends.
- Contribute from an operational perspective to the development and increase of the strategic cooperation with the United Nations (UNCTED, UNOCT, UNODC), EU institutions and bodies (EEAS CSDP missions, CT/Security experts in EU delegations, the EU Institute for Security Studies), NATO, etc. or regional agencies active in the CT field and exchange strategic outputs and products in consultation with Member States.
- Continue enhancing cooperation with the Western Balkan countries on the basis of the operational agreements and the Western Balkan CT Action Plan.
- Continue enhancing cooperation with the MENA countries and Türkiye:
 - 1) Through CT dialogues and by supporting CT/security experts deployed by MS to EU Delegations and CSDP-missions/operations;
 - 2) By participating in capacity building initiatives offered by CEPOL and EU-funded programmes, such as the CT JUST⁷⁰ or CEPOL INFLOW⁷¹;
 - 3) By participating in the Working Group on FTF and returnees of the EU-MENA Information Sharing and Analysis Network (EMISA); and
 - 4) By identifying strategic/technical partners for the establishment of a common product or specific strategic initiative.
- Organise stakeholder events, including the ECTC Advisory Network on Terrorism and Propaganda meetings and the annual conference. Organise/participate in High Level outreach meetings to promote the work of ECTC and encourage MS contributions.
- Contribute to and support the delivery of training by CEPOL Knowledge Centre on Counter-Terrorism (CKC CT).

Expected results: Member States' counter-terrorism investigations receive quality analytical and operational support.
Improved joint operational activities with EU institutions, bodies and agencies, as well as with public and private partners of relevance.
More effective levels of cooperation leading to better coordination and increased operational and strategic results.
Europol contributes to the objectives of relevant EU policies.

⁷⁰ CT JUST Project: Counter Terrorism in the MENA region, West Africa & the Horn of Africa

⁷¹ Counter-Terrorism Information Exchange and Criminal Justice Responses (CT INFLOW)

Operations on terrorist activities

Identify activities of terrorist groups listed by the Council of the European Union as posing a serious threat to the security of the EU Member States, and any associate criminal activities within Europol's mandate uncovered in the course of the investigations into these terrorist networks (including ethno-nationalist and separatist terrorism, left-wing and anarchist terrorism, right wing and single-issue terrorism).

Prevent and combat crimes committed or likely to be committed in the course of terrorist activities against life, limb, personal freedom or property, and related criminal offences associated with terrorism perpetrated by individuals, groups, networks or organisations networks or organisations that evoke religiously inspired justification for their actions.

Prevent or combat terrorism by sharing analysis on related travel activities to terrorist hotspots, e.g. conflict zones and training venues.

Objectives and actions

A.5.2 Provide support to EU Member States' counter-terrorism investigations.

- Perform criminal intelligence analysis and support Member States with operational capabilities and expertise, including on-the-spot support.
- Manage ad hoc deployments in the hotspots where Guest Officers are deployed to support CT-related cases and process operational information received from the secondary security checks on the inward flows of migrants, in order to identify suspected terrorists.
- Support an increased number of operations of the Terrorist Identification Task Force (TITF) targeting CT suspects for whom there is not enough evidence for opening prosecutions. Organise at least four TITF sessions per year focusing on the most significant and threatening terrorist phenomena in alignment with the priorities of the CTPB. Assess the results of operations and present the assessment to Member States via all appropriate channels.
- Provide management, administrative and logistical support to OTFs following the adjusted concept for establishing OTFs in the CT area. Ensure the timely exchange of information within the OTF, in particular regarding the analysis of the OTF findings, and report to relevant OTF partners.
- Perform priority actions related to politically motivated terrorism and violent extremism, aiming at identifying targets (Organisations/Individuals) in high profile cases.
- Following the continued increase in MS' and TP' operational contributions related to politically motivated terrorism and violent extremism, develop and facilitate a coordination mechanism, by means of clustering countries based on common targeting and tailored activity, for the effective disruption of networks and organisations.
- Make effective use of the new face recognition tool.
- Contribute to the update of Frontex's Common Risk Indicators to enhance rules-based screening and risk identification.
- Contribute to the collection of intelligence, analysis and reporting on used/seized terrorist weapons.

Expected results: Member States CT investigations receive quality analytical and operational support.

Operations on War Crimes, Genocide, Crimes against Humanity

Support Member States in the fight against impunity of War Crimes, Genocide, Crimes against Humanity.

Objectives and actions

A.5.3 Provide support to EU Member States’ investigations on war crimes, genocide, crimes against humanity.

- Streamline the gathering and processing of information at EU level for selected priority cases of war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity.
- Perform criminal intelligence analysis and support Member States with operational capabilities and expertise, including on-the-spot support.
- Provide support to the Operational Task Forces and Joint Investigation Teams established in the area of war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity.
- Streamline the gathering and processing of information and the exploitation of the available tools to assist investigations on war crimes committed in Ukraine. Manage the dedicated OSINT taskforce comprised of OSINT experts from different MS providing targeted support to ongoing investigations.
- Foster the collection of data from private parties, international organisations and other relevant sources (NGOs, UN, ICC/OTP⁷², military, immigration authorities, etc.).
- Initiate the development of sustainable practices for the pro-active detection of witnesses to atrocities. Explore modalities for appealing to witnesses to atrocities to come forward and provide information on perpetrators.
- Develop a joint operational platform with Eurojust aiming to provide coordinated support for operational needs in investigations related to Ukraine, identified as priority at judicial level.

Expected results: Member States’ investigations on war crimes, genocide, crimes against humanity receive analytical and operational support within the framework of available resources.

Counter Terrorism Financing

Prevent and combat terrorism by supporting Member States with terrorism-related financial information.

Prevent and combat terrorism and its financing by providing the information processing means by which Europol can fulfil its obligations in respect of the Agreement between the European Union and the United States of America on the Processing and Transfer of Financial Messaging Data from the EU to the US for the purposes of the Terrorist Finance Tracking Program (TFTP).

Objectives and actions

A.5.4 Provide support to EU Member States’ CT investigations with terrorism-related financial information.

- Support MS’ investigations targeting networks that are facilitating the financing of terrorist actions or organisations.
- Provide support, including information on financial transactional data, to all operations where there is a link to terrorism.
- Deal with MS requests for data on financial payments linked to terrorism including in accordance with the EU-US Terrorist Finance Tracking Programme Agreement (TFTP).

⁷² International Criminal Court - Office of the Prosecutor (OTP)

Europol Public Information

- Verify the link to terrorism in requests for data on financial payments.
- Enrich the leads that are received when appropriate. Disseminate other leads received from the US Treasury (Article 9).
- Actively promote awareness of the Terrorist Finance Tracking Program and provide training to MS on the possibility to request searches in financial payments data.
- Provide feedback to the US Treasury on the effectiveness of the TFTP. Explore mutually the potential to maintain a dynamic, accurate and result-oriented TFTP protocol.
- Liaise with Europol's Financial and Economic Crime Centre (EFECC) and with the competent ESOC and EC3 units to close information gaps and receive specialised support for complex cases. In particular, increase the interaction with EC3 on the use of cryptocurrency by a wide range of terrorist groups.
- Support the Europol Financial Intelligence Public Private Partnership (EFIPPP).
- Support the Counter Terrorism Financial Investigators Network, which facilitates the exchange of investigation techniques and experiences on CT financial investigations.

Expected results: Member States' investigations receive quality analytical and operational support with regards to terrorism-related financial information.

Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear & Explosives Support (CBRN/E)

Objectives and actions

A.5.5 Provide CBRN/E support to EU Member States' investigations.

- Provide support and expertise to Member States on CBRN/E security.
- Support the exchange of information and best practices on explosives and/or CBRN cases among Member States.
- Manage and administer the Europol Platform for Experts (EPE) pages:
 - EPE/EBDS (European Bomb Data System);
 - EPE/EEODN (European Ordnance Disposal Units Network).
- Ensure the permanent secretariat and the continuity of the activities of EEODN.
- Contribute to capacity-building initiatives, in particular trainings, for Member States, including the EEODN and the ATLAS networks, on CBRN and Explosives.
- Support the ISF project on EEODN aiming to reinforce activities in explosives and CBRN areas of expertise, in order to further develop technical skills of the bomb technicians and the CBRN experts from MS competent authorities.
- Prepare strategic and technical reports on CBRN and Explosives, including reporting on trends and statistics to policy-makers.
- Liaise with AP Weapons and Explosives to track possible new threats, trends and modus operandi involving CBRN materials and Explosives.
- Track potential developments, threats and trends in the area of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) in collaboration with inter alia Special Tactics and the Innovation Lab.
- Provide support to Member States' prevention programmes.
- Provide input to the European Commission's policy initiatives and contribute to the work of the different Working Groups, e.g. the CBRN Advisory Group, Standing Committee of Precursors, Chemical Detection Group, Civil Explosives WG, etc.
- Liaise and cooperate with other relevant partners in the area of CBRN/E.

Expected results: Member States' investigations receive quality analytical and operational CBRN/E support.

Europol Public Information

Alignment of Member States operational needs and European Commission’s policy initiatives.

ATLAS Support Office (ASO)

Objectives and actions

- A.5.6 Provide support to the ATLAS Network.**
- Serve as the main interface of the ATLAS Network for Europol’s CT and SOC communities and support the establishment of links with other relevant law enforcement expert networks supported by Europol.
 - Facilitate the exchange of strategic and operational expertise and practices with ATLAS in accordance with the applicable rules.
 - Provide administrative and logistical support to the implementation of the ATLAS Multi Annual Work Programme.
 - Further develop and manage the ATLAS connectivity initiative (EPE, ONEP-EPE, SIENA, NEOS, Pooling & Sharing, etc.).
 - Support New Operations System (NEOS) training activities and further the development of operational communication systems.
 - Continue the development of Pooling & Sharing programmes for specialised equipment as well as joint training facilities.
 - Organise the annual ATLAS Points of Contact meeting.
 - Conduct the ATLAS MB and ATLAS Commanders Forum every six months in cooperation with the ATLAS Executive Bureaux.
 - Organise seminars on the use of the EPE and on financial rules for ATLAS network members.
 - Act as a full member of the ATLAS Forum C4 (Command, Control, Communication, Coordination).

Expected results: Stable a more efficient administration of ATLAS through the use of Europol’s existing structures and tools.
Utilisation of links and synergies in terms of strategic and operational expertise between ATLAS, Europol and law enforcement networks.
Aligning EU standards through best practice findings, standard operational procedures, Manuals of Guidance and sharing outcomes across the ATLAS network members.

EU IRU Prevention and Crisis Response

Objectives and actions

- A.5.7 Provide quality internet referral services.**
- Perform scanning of the online environment (including the decentralised web and gaming and adjacent platforms) within the framework of prioritised areas such as religiously inspired and politically motivated violent extremism and terrorism or act upon Member States’ specific requests (terrorism, racism and xenophobia, migrant smuggling, etc.).
 - Coordinate and share the identification tasks (flagging) of online terrorist and violent extremist content with a network of national counterparts.

Europol Public Information

- Reinforce and streamline the ECTC expertise on the abuse of the Internet by right-wing terrorist and violent extremist networks.
- Gradually align monitoring capabilities, referral processes and analytical procedures in the area of violent left-wing extremism and violent anarchism with the other online terrorist and violent extremist areas.
- Increase the operational resources for referral and monitoring of channels related to migrants smuggling and reinforce the operational and analytical support provided to the EMSC in this area.
- Play a central role in the coordination of the emergency responses in the event of a terrorist attack with a significant online component following the EU Crisis Protocol (EUCP). Deliver an annual Table Top Exercise to test the protocol. Review the effectiveness of the EUCP after activation.
- Deliver operational and strategic products.
- Organise and coordinate Referral Joint Action Days in cooperation with experts from MS/TP and online service providers (OSPs), targeting violent extremist and terrorist content online, as well as online migrant smuggling.
- Support the activities of the EU Internet Forum's (EUIF) Action Plan. Maintain a close dialogue with the internet industry in the framework of the Forum.
- Contribute to the updating of the Commissions' Knowledge Package for the EU Internet Forum on violent extremist groups by supplying content and expert assessment.
- Engage with the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT) and other initiatives that focus on Crisis Response. Engage with relevant OSPs, also outside the scope of GIFCT and the EU Internet Forum, in the context of referrals and content moderation.
- Expand the EU IRU capabilities to the extent possible to meet the increasing workload from managing the PERCI platform, supporting Member States in using PERCI and utilising the crime intelligence emerging from the flagged content.
- Launch the new Check-the-Web Portal as the e-Library to store and analyse terrorist content online.
- Share IRU expertise in the field of internet investigations, monitoring, referral, e-evidence, and technical innovation with competent authorities in MS and prioritised Third parties (Western Balkans, MENA region).

Expected results: The referral process is managed efficiently.
 Cooperation with the private sector on content detection and referrals is growing.
 Increased number of online terrorist and violent extremist content and content promoting illegal immigration services is taken down.
 Countries and online service providers are provided with crisis response mechanism enabling them to respond rapidly, effectively and in a coordinated manner to viral dissemination of terrorist or violent extremist content following a terrorist event.

EU IRU Prevention and Crisis Response

Objectives and actions

A.5.8 Ensure the efficient functioning of the EU platform to tackle illegal content online (PERCI) as a communication and coordination tool for referrals and removal orders within the EU.

Europol Public Information

- Maintain and fine-tune PERCI’s functionalities as a cooperation platform to implement the Terrorist Content Online (TCO) Regulation and as a collaborative tool connecting MS competent authorities, EU Internet Referral Unit and Hosting Service Providers (HSPs), including:
 - the issuing of referrals and transmission of removal orders for terrorist content online;
 - de-confliction and coordination of action among EU MS;
 - the status check of content one hour after the transmission of the removal order;
 - the possibility for MS to work on the scrutiny process of cross-border removal orders; and
 - transparency reporting.
- Use PERCI to send referrals for illegal online content in Europol’s mandated areas.
- Initiate the first phase of establishing an automated workflow for the intake and handling of notifications of imminent threat to life stemming from illegal online content involving all crime areas covered by the Digital Services Act (art. 18) and from terrorist-related content as stipulated in the TCO Regulation (art. 14.5).⁷³
- Manage the PERCI Focus Group enrolling MS in support of the technical and operational development of the platform, and afterwards annual PERCI-meetings.
- Organise tailored trainings for MS competent authorities’ use of PERCI.
- Use PERCI platform as the operational platform for EUCP crisis mechanism to enable the 24/7 real time crisis response and knowledge sharing across sectors.
- Based on the consultation of Member States within the framework of the dedicated working group, further improve of the Whitelist functionality in PERCI to reinforce the protection of content put under de-confliction.
- Support the monitoring and evaluation of the TCO Regulation to enable the Commission to report on the application and the evaluation of the regulation.

Expected results: Coordination and de-confliction of the EU fight against terrorist content online.
 Increased efficiency of the work of the Member States’ competent authorities and increased performance of the response from the HSPs on taking down illegal content.

EU IRU - Internet Investigations

Prevent and combat terrorism by sharing analysis regarding the use of the Internet by terrorist organisations.

Objectives and actions

A.5.9 Provide support to EU Member States’ CT internet-based investigations.

- Provide operational support and facilitate coordination of CT internet-based investigations.
- Act as a knowledge hub within Europol in regards to internet-based investigations and provide support to other crime areas. In particular, contribute to the ESOCC’s HVT cases of trafficking in firearms and human beings, and migrant smuggling.
- Perform open source investigations using latest OSINT techniques and tools to swiftly provide relevant and actionable intelligence.

⁷³ Subject to the conclusion of a contribution agreement between the European Commission and Europol.

Europol Public Information

- Keep abreast MS and TP on a regular basis of the latest OSINT techniques and tools relevant for the CT area.
- Enhance OSINT capabilities in investigation on gaming platforms and Metaverse to retrieve actionable intelligence.
- Perform big data analysis on open source information to deliver actionable intelligence in support of CT cases.
- Deliver strategic assessments and draw up the online profile of targets using OSINT and information related to terrorist propaganda collected by the EU IRU.
- Provide social network analysis of information extracted from social media platforms to identify relevant users and key players in support of CT cases.
- Support Europol's operational centres with the development of capacity in open source investigations and social media monitoring.
- Improve capacities on crypto-currencies investigations and develop the tracing of decentralised assets within the frame of CT cases.
- Participate as expert to EU Core groups and EU project related to the use of AI and machine learning for big data analysis.

Expected results: Member States' CT internet-based investigations receive quality analytical and operational support.

EU IRU – Advanced Technical Solutions

Objectives and actions

A.5.10 Provide technical support to CT internet-based investigations and referrals.

- Explore leading technologies and perform market researches with a clear focus on the ones affecting the CT field.
- Assess, select and initiate the purchase of technical solutions that can support EU IRU's mandate.
- Provide advanced technical support to the EU IRU.
- Develop or purchase innovative OSINT tools in coordination with MS/TP to remain up to speed in the dynamic internet evolution.
- Develop methodologies and tools to investigate decentralised platforms and web 3.0 (Web3) based on blockchain technologies in coordination with MS/TP.
- Implement the use of tools enabling Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) to quickly analyse and assess open-source information to identify possible risks and threats linked to terrorism, in compliance with the European legal framework related to the use of Artificial Intelligence by Law Enforcement.
- Explore the possibilities to develop software solutions for countering fake news and trolls-driven communication within the realm of counter terrorism.
- In coordination with Europol's Innovation Lab explore new technologies to find suitable solutions for the operational needs, including engagement with relevant private sector stakeholders and setting up point of contacts with the industry on specific matters.

Expected results: CT internet-based investigations and referrals receive adequate technical support.
EU IRU's toolset remains at the forefront of the available technology.
Better cooperation with external partners on technical research and development.

EU IRU – Cross-border access to electronic evidence

Objectives and actions

A.5.11 Provide support to Member States on acquiring cross-border access to electronic evidence.

- Initiate the implementation of the third phase of the SIRIUS project in cooperation with Eurojust.
- Support Member States in connecting with service providers (SPs) and analysing the digital footprint of a target in CT investigations through the SIRIUS capability.
- Continue improving the knowledge of Member States’ law enforcement and judicial authorities on access to digital data from SPs, via general and targeted resources published on the SIRIUS platform on the EPE, co-created with Eurojust.
- Build the capacities of MS law enforcement and judiciary authorities to produce quality information requests to SPs.
- Facilitate the sharing of best practices and lessons learned among the Single Point of Contacts (SPoCs) in EU LEAs and/or officers in charge when a SPoC is not in place.
- Strengthen and speed up voluntary cooperation between EU LEAs and SPs for access to e-evidence through targeted exchange of practical experience and guidelines, as well as through training activities.
- Provide awareness and training opportunities for LEAs regarding the upcoming application of the EU Electronic Evidence Directive (in February 2026), the Second Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime and any potential outcome of the negotiations of an EU-US agreement on access to electronic evidence.
- Expand the geographical scope of SIRIUS, as a central hub for knowledge sharing on electronic evidence, to different regions and partners and support EU efforts in promoting EU standards and international legal instruments.
- Upgrade the work on the in-house development of tools for investigations to be shared via the EPE. Become a reference point for co-creation of technical investigative solutions in cooperation with Europol-wide expertise (such as Europol Tool Repository) and with IT developers in the EU MS.
- Lay the basis for setting up SIRIUS as a permanent team in the EU IRU to ensure the continuation of its services to MS.

Expected results: Improved Europol’s capabilities in the area of digital cross border investigations which leads to better and extended support to MS.
 Increased MS capacity to prepare effective digital data requests to SPs and obtain electronic evidence.
 Increased mutual trust and understanding between MS and SPs.

Europol Public Information

Indicators	Latest result (Q2 2024)	Target 2025
Number of Accepted contributions by ECTC ⁷⁴	6,829	11,000
Number of Operations supported by ECTC	667	1,100
Number of Operational Task Forces supported by ECTC (where ECTC is in the lead)	7	8
Number of Operational Reports delivered by ECTC	1,087	2,000
Number of Action Days coordinated/supported by ECTC	18	40
Satisfaction with Operational Support and Analysis provided by ECTC	n/a	8.5
Volume of content assessed by EU IRU related to terrorism and violent extremism	15,254	22,000

⁷⁴ The responsibility for this indicator is shared by Europol and its partners (MS, TP). As such, the target is indicative and used to monitor the trend of accepted contributions.

A.6. Combating Financial and Economic Crime

Overview

The European Financial and Economic Crime Centre (EFECC) is dedicated to maximising Europol's responsiveness and operational performance in the areas of fraud, money laundering, asset recovery, corruption and counterfeiting.



The EFECC strives to achieve the following goals:

- Reinforced operational effectiveness: by concentrating all financial intelligence and economic crime capabilities under one coordinated entity developing synergies between MS demands for vertical support (stand-alone investigations in money laundering cases) and requirements for horizontal operational support to other investigations with regards to financial intelligence as referred to in EMPACT;
- Increased operational visibility: by bringing a higher degree of organisational clarity, facilitating for both internal and external stakeholders the identification of the main sources of knowledge, expertise and operational support and a better understanding of the allocation of responsibilities; and
- Enhanced stakeholder management and funding opportunities: the Centre offers a single point of contact and is a reference for key operational stakeholders in the Member States (Financial Intelligence Units), as well as relevant institutional partners in the EU and private sector.

The EFECC follows closely the constant evolution of financial and economic crimes and its emerging threats in the EU and beyond. It provides specialised operational support to law enforcement and relevant public authorities in their international financial investigations and act as the EU law enforcement hub for collecting, processing, analysing and exchanging information and criminal intelligence on financial and economic crime. At the same time, the Centre strives to support joint operations with the other Europol's centres based on the relevance of the financial related aspects of their criminal investigations.

In the area of fraud, the EFECC provides strategic and operational support in the fight against criminal networks involved in serious and complex fraud, excise fraud and Missing Trader Intra Community (MTIC) fraud. The Centre collaborates with EPPO, OLAF, Eurojust, the EU 'Recovery and Resilience' Task force and Member States, to protect the EU financial interests.

The EFECC provides strategic and operational support in money laundering and criminal finances investigations and strives to identify High Value Targets and set up Operational Task Forces specific to targeting money laundering. In 2025, Europol will establish cooperation with the new Authority for Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (AMLA), which should become a key partner in combating financial crime.

In the area of asset recovery, the EFECC is the main contact point for the national Asset Recovery Offices (AROs) and hosts the secretariat of the Camden Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network (CARIN). Europol is also part of the 'Freeze and Seize' Task Force established by the European Commission to coordinate MS enforcement of the EU restrictive measures against Russian and Belarusian individuals and companies in the context of the war of aggression against Ukraine, in coordination with other EU agencies and bodies.

Europol Public Information

The Centre provides criminal intelligence, strategic and operational support, including on-the-spot support to investigations in all forms of corruption, including public and private corruption, and sports corruption. Europol follows closely the developments brought forward by the new anti-corruption legislative framework, and will contribute to its implementation.

Finally, in the area of counterfeiting, the EFECC supports Member States by providing criminal intelligence, expertise, strategic and operational support to disrupt criminal networks involved in the production and distribution of counterfeit goods. In this respect, Europol will continue the close collaboration with the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) and undertake work according to agreed joint priorities. The EFECC acts as the Central Office for the fight against Euro counterfeiting.

2025 Objectives

European Financial and Economic Crime Centre (EFECC)
Objectives and actions
<p>A.6.1 Ensure the effective functioning of the EFECC in providing strategic and operational support to EU Member States' investigations on financial and economic crime.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Serve as the EU law enforcement hub for collecting, processing, analysing and exchanging information and criminal intelligence of relevance for financial and economic crime. Provide operational support, expertise and stakeholder management in the field of fraud, money laundering, asset recovery, corruption and counterfeiting.○ Promote the systematic use of financial investigations as an investigative technique into organised crime and forge alliances with public and private entities in order to trace, seize and confiscate criminal assets in the EU and beyond.○ Provide management, administrative and logistical support to OTFs. Ensure the timely exchange of information within the OTF, in particular regarding the analysis of the OTF findings, and report to relevant OTF partners. Support the implementation of the EMPACT priorities on MTIC, excise fraud, counterfeiting, criminal finances, money laundering and asset recovery. Furthermore, contribute to the priority online fraud and migrant smuggling.○ Provide horizontal operational support in financial investigations to the other Europol centres, prioritising joint operations (within the limits of available resources). In particular, strive to contribute to EMSC's migrant smuggling cases and to the effective implementation of the EU Roadmap to fight drug trafficking and organised crime, by encouraging and supporting the launch of financial and asset recovery investigations.○ Continue to promote the provision of contributions (containing Suspicion Transaction Reports, Currency Transaction Reports, cash seizures or any information gathered under administrative powers) in particular from FIUs, Customs and Tax Agencies.○ Manage all EPEs relating to financial and economic crime.○ Contribute to dedicated risk and threat assessments, strategic and situation reports in the areas of EFECC competence. Contribute to the drafting of the biennial flagship report on economic and financial crime.○ Further extend and manage the Joint Financial Intelligence Group (JFIG) at Europol to improve communication and cooperation between Europol Liaison Bureaux and EFECC Analysis Projects in order to better align investigative priorities and improve effectiveness of pursued cases.

Europol Public Information

- Maintain the Customs cooperation function within the EFECCE including the cooperation with the Commission Service competent for customs matters. Support the Joint Customs Advisory Working Group (J-Customs) at Europol.
- Encourage the active participation of MS customs authorities in the relevant EMPACT OAPs and the Europol Analysis Projects.
- Further promote the utilisation of the connection between the Customs Information System (CIS) and Europol's databases, enabling automated cross-checking.
- Follow closely the developments related to the Customs Reform with respect to Europol's mandate. Follow the establishment of the new Customs Authority, in particular concerning its role of a central customs interlocutor for non-customs authorities (e.g. law enforcement authorities, including Europol).
- Foster the established cooperation with the European Public Prosecutor Office (EPPO) in line with the requirements of the amended Europol Regulation. Support an increasing number of EPPO operations.
- Enhance operational cooperation and exchange of strategic and technical information with OLAF by making extensive use of the established SIENA connection and dedicated OLAF Liaison Officer posted within the EFECCE. Increase the outreach towards the most relevant third countries in the field of EU related economic and financial crime, including China, UAE, Türkiye, Brazil and Morocco.
- Further promote EFECCE external communication and visibility.
- Enhance Europol's capabilities in handling an increasing number of contributions and requests from MS/TP concerning tracing and analysis of virtual assets.
- Contribute to policy development such as drafting of guidelines or revision of standards when requested by the Commission.

Expected results: Member States' investigations receive quality analytical and operational support related to financial and economic crime.
 Improved cooperation and joint undertakings with stakeholders and financial institutions leading to an increased operational impact.
 Europol contributes to the objectives of relevant EU policies.

Operations on Fraud

Disrupt the capacity of criminal networks involved in serious and complex fraud.

Disrupt the capacity of criminal networks and specialists involved in excise fraud.

Disrupt the capacity of criminal networks and specialists involved in Missing Trader Intra Community (MTIC) fraud.

Objectives and actions

A.6.2 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on fraud.

- Perform criminal intelligence analysis and support MS and EPPO priority and HVT investigations with operational capabilities and expertise, including on-the-spot support, with regards to serious and complex fraud, excise fraud and MTIC fraud.
- Support the implementation of EMPACT Operational Action Plans on Excise Fraud and MTIC fraud. Contribute to the EMPACT priority Online Fraud.
- Support at least one joint operation (Week of Action, Joint Action Day, etc.) developed in the frame of the EMPACT OAP Excise Fraud, also involving other EU bodies or agencies (OLAF, FRONTEX, etc.).

Europol Public Information

- Provide crypto tracing expertise and support to MS- and EPPO-led investigations into fraud.
- Support and foster the collaboration with EPPO, OLAF, Eurojust, the EU Task Force Recover and Member States to protect the financial interests of the EU.
- Continue implementing the Service Level Agreement with the EUIPO on acquisition fraud targeting IP Offices and Trademarks/Registered Community Designs users by producing operational and tactical analysis, and one annual strategic report.
- Organise at least one meeting on a selected fraud phenomenon with relevant stakeholders.
- Support to the extent possible strategic activities, including policy developments, relating to serious and complex fraud.
- Organise the Annual Plenary Meetings on serious and complex fraud, excise fraud and MTIC Fraud.

Expected results: Member States' and EPPO investigations into fraud receive quality analytical and operational support. Cooperation between Europol and other EU bodies and agencies is strengthened.

Operations on Money Laundering

Disrupt the capacity of criminal networks involved in money laundering.

Objectives and actions

A.6.3 Provide operational support to EU Member States' investigations on money laundering.

- Perform criminal intelligence analysis and support MS priority investigations with operational capabilities and expertise, including on-the-spot support, with regards to money-laundering investigations.
- Provide analytical and operational support to the ESOC, EC3 and the ECTC (with regards to terrorist financing) in joint operations.
- Identify High Value Targets - individuals or entities - facilitating money laundering. Facilitate the setting up of OTFs targeting money laundering criminal syndicates.
- Perform the role of coordinator of the EMPACT Common Horizontal Strategic Goal of criminal finances, money laundering and asset recovery.
- Support the implementation of EMPACT Operational Action Plan on criminal finances, money laundering and asset recovery, including the joint operations (Week of Action, Joint Action Day, Europol Action days, etc.) developed in the OAP framework.
- Support Joint Investigation Teams (JITs) in cooperation with Eurojust with regards to money laundering.
- Enhance operational support cooperation in the EU against criminal networks and professionals providing money laundering services to other criminal groups (crime as a service).
- Improve operational support by enhancing virtual assets expertise and provide tracing and analysis support to financial investigations involving virtual assets.
- Support the strategic and operational information exchange between the Member States' Financial Investigators.
- Detect novel money laundering methods, vulnerabilities, and risks that aid and support organised crime.
- Support the Joint Working Group on criminal finances and cryptocurrencies. Organise the Annual Plenary Meeting on money laundering.

Europol Public Information

Expected results: Member States' investigations into money laundering receive quality analytical and operational support.

Enhanced law enforcement capacity to combat organised crime by disrupting their financial structures and dismantling the networks that fund criminal activities for others or provide money laundering services (crime as a service).

Operations on Money Laundering

Objectives and actions

A.6.4 Provide strategic support to EU Member States and other stakeholders regarding money laundering and terrorist financing.

- Contribute, upon request, to the Commission's legal obligation to perform the continuous High-Risk Third Countries (HRTC) assessment and bi-annual Supra-National Risk Assessment (SNRA) on money laundering and terrorist financing.
- Continue engaging with the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and Egmont Group in view of developing global cooperation on money laundering and terrorist financing. Support targeted FATF projects when operational needs are identified (within the limits of available resources).
- Attend and contribute to WGs together with FIUs under the EU FIUs' Platform and Egmont Group.
- Promote and support the Europol Financial Intelligence Public Private Partnership (EFIPPP).
- Take up any potential new task arising from the anti-money laundering legislation for a comprehensive Union policy on preventing money laundering and terrorism financing⁷⁵.
- Work towards the establishment of a well-functioning working relation with the new EU Authority for Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (AMLA) and the future Cooperation and Support Mechanism (CSM) for the FIUs.
- Work towards the improvement of the cooperation with the FIUs and continue to promote the contribution of financial intelligence to Europol (Suspicious Transactions Reports (STRs), Suspicious Activity Reports (SARs), cash seizures and cash declarations).
- Support the negotiation of an SLA regarding the "Europol node" when the CSM / AMLA takes over the FIU.net as a channel of operational communication with EU FIUs and FIU Norway. Follow up on all developments and innovations of the FIU.net, thus ensuring Europol's effective use of the system and facilitation of the exchange with FIUs that cannot use SIENA.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of Europol's implementation of the Directive (EU) 2019/1153⁷⁶, in particular the possibility for Europol to request financial information from FIUs and information held in the national centralised bank account registries.
- Support and host the secretariat of the Anti-Money Laundering Operational Network (AMON). Follow the development of the Association of Law Enforcement Forensic Accountants (ALEFA) and support where appropriate.

⁷⁵ C(2020) 2800 final, published by the European Commission on 7 May 2020.

⁷⁶ Directive (EU) 2019/1153 of 20 June 2019 laying down rules facilitating the use of financial and other information for the prevention, detection, investigation or prosecution of certain criminal offences.

Europol Public Information

Expected results: Improved cooperation and joint undertakings with stakeholders and financial institutions leading to an increased operational impact.
Improved cooperation with FIUs and increased contribution of financial intelligence to Europol via FIUs.

Asset Recovery

Support investigations by tracing and identifying criminal proceeds linked to the mandated crime areas of Europol.

Objectives and actions

A.6.5 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations in identifying and tracing proceeds of crime.

- Perform criminal intelligence analysis and support MS priority- and HVT investigations with operational capabilities and expertise, including on-the-spot support, with regards to tracing and identifying criminal proceeds during investigation.
- Provide analytical and operational support to joint OTFs with the other Europol crime centers.
- Support the implementation of EMPACT Operational Action Plan on Criminal finances, money laundering and asset recovery.
- Co-chair with the European Commission the ARO platform meetings. Liaise with Asset Recovery Offices within the Member States to increase visibility of the EFEC's work and strengthen the partnership with Europol resulting in an increased level of AROs' contributions.
- Support and host the secretariat of the Camden Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network (CARIN). Organise the annual meeting of the Regional Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Networks.
- Connect to Siena EU Asset Recovery Offices that are not directly connected yet (if not finalised in 2024).
- Contribute to the work of the Task Force 'Freeze and Seize'⁷⁷ established by the European Commission to coordinate MS enforcement of the EU restrictive measures against Russian and Belarusian individuals and companies in the context of the war of aggression against Ukraine, in coordination with other EU agencies and bodies, such as Eurojust.
- Build up capacities within Europol in the area of circumvention of sanctions to support MS/TP investigations in regards to the violation of EU restrictive measures that correlates with crime areas under Europol's mandate.
- Improve operational support by enhancing virtual assets expertise and provide tracing and analysis support to ARO and the MS investigators involving virtual assets (within the limits of available resources).
- Exploit the opportunities provided by the EU Directive 2019/1153 to request from Member States bank account information and financial information and intelligence.
- Follow and support the implementation of the new Directive on Asset Recovery and Confiscation.
- Organise the sprint week of Project A.S.S.E.T. (Asset Search & Seize Enforcement Taskforce).

⁷⁷ If still existing in 2025.

Europol Public Information

- Support Project KLEPTOTRACE coordinated by Transcrime Institute and aiming to develop a data-driven tool-box for improving the asset tracing of high-level corruption and of sanctioned regimes and entities in the EU.
- Develop a concept for establishing a rapid response protocol and stop payment mechanism to provide real-time support in the cross-border tracing and interception of transactions and illicit financial flows arising from serious cases of cyber-enabled fraud and online fraud schemes.
- Organise the Annual Plenary Meeting on asset recovery.

Expected results: Member States' investigations receive quality analytical and operational support related to asset tracing and recovery.
Improved asset recovery rate within criminal investigations.

Operations on Corruption

Disrupt the capacity of criminal networks and specialists involved in all forms of corruption (public and private corruption, sports corruption, grand corruption, business corruption, political corruption and administrative corruption - including corruption in central or local governments, judiciary and law enforcement).

Objectives and actions

A.6.6 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on corruption.

- Perform corruption-related criminal intelligence analysis and support MS priority investigations with operational capabilities and expertise, including on-the-spot support.
- Support the operational actions related to corruption stemming from the relevant EMPACT OAPs.
- Support the implementation of actions focused on preventive anti-corruption measures and anti-corruption investigations at ports in line with the EU Roadmap to fight drug trafficking and organised crime. In cases of drug seizures, support MS to undertake follow up measures targeting the corruption aspects and the recovery of assets.
- Organise and fund the AP Corruption Annual Plenary Meeting.
- Organise a major event (conference) on corruption.
- Support strategic activities and policy developments, relating to sports corruption, including relevant activities of the Council of Europe such as the MARS Network⁷⁸.
- Finalise the drafting of a strategic report in the field of corruption.
- Support operationally and strategically the implementation of the Commission's Anti-Corruption package. Contribute to the work of the new EU Network against Corruption.
- Promote the use of the dedicated point-to-point (P2P) SIENA connection for anti-corruption agencies to increase the information exchange between the MS and Europol/AP Corruption.
- Implement joint actions or cooperation activities with external partners from the private sector that Europol has a MoU with, such as the International Olympic Committee (IOC), World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), Union of European Football Association (UEFA), International Tennis Integrity Agency (ITIA), Sportradar and United Lotteries for Integrity in Sports (ULIS).

⁷⁸ Network of Magistrates / Prosecutors dedicated to corruption in sport

Europol Public Information

- Continue the cooperation with the UN GLOBE network (Anti-corruption Network for Law enforcement practitioners) following the formal acceptance of Europol to the Network as an Observer in 2022.
- Contribute to the work of the European Anti-Corruption Network (EACN) and the European Partners Against Corruption (EPAC) network. Contribute to the work of the Internal Criminal Investigations Network (ICIN), for activities that are directly associated and relevant to corruption.
- Further strengthen the engagement with relevant stakeholders active in combating corruption through nurturing (new) partnerships and dedicated alliances, including with private parties.

Expected results: Member States' investigations receive qualitative analytical and operational support related to corruption.

Operations on Counterfeiting

Disrupt the criminal networks involved in the production and distribution of counterfeit goods and sub-standard goods violating health, safety and food regulations, and/or intellectual property rights.

Objectives and actions

A.6.7 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on the production and distribution of counterfeit goods.

- Perform criminal intelligence analysis and support MS with operational capabilities and expertise, including on-the-spot support, with regards to counterfeiting and intellectual property crime, and by focusing on cases affecting public health, consumer safety, the environment and online copyright.
- Support the implementation of the EMPACT priority on Intellectual property (IP) crime, counterfeiting of goods and currencies.
- Coordinate operational actions in the area of counterfeit and illicit foods and beverages, falsified medicines and anabolic substances, counterfeit clothing, toys, cosmetics, pesticides, automotive spare parts, and electronics.
- Continue to improve cooperation with OLAF in the fight against Intellectual Property Rights infringement, in particular through OLAF's participation to Europol operations on fake medicines, toys, pesticides, food and beverages, etc.
- Continue to improve operational actions to fight against illegal Internet Protocol Television (IPTV) being an increasing concern for intellectual property rights holders.
- Support the implementation of the EU Toolbox against counterfeiting under the lead of the European Commission.
- Support and host the secretariat of the IP Crime Network of the intellectual property crime experts from specialised LEAs.
- Maintain close cooperation with the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) and undertake work according to the SLA with EUIPO for 2024-2027.
- Gather information and monitor relevant trends in the field of counterfeiting and piracy with particular emphasis on online IPR infringement. Collaborate with EUIPO to prepare reports intended to inform policy makers, law enforcement authorities and other relevant stakeholders.
- Raise awareness on instruments which Europol and EUIPO offers to assist in the fight against IPR infringements. Develop and publicise crime prevention and other communication materials on intellectual property crime.

Europol Public Information

- Organise and financially support meetings, training, and a conference at Europol and/or in the Member States on intellectual property crime.

Expected results: Member States' investigations receive quality analytical and operational support related to counterfeiting.

Operations on Counterfeiting

Disrupt the criminal networks involved in currency counterfeiting, with a special emphasis on cases involving Euro counterfeiting.

Objectives and actions

A.6.8 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on Euro counterfeiting.

- Perform criminal intelligence analysis and support MS with operational capabilities and expertise, including on-the-spot support, with regards to currency counterfeiting, and in particular Euro counterfeiting.
- Support the implementation of the EMPACT priority on Intellectual property (IP) crime, counterfeiting of goods and currencies.
- Provide financial support to Member States' currency counterfeiting operations, with a focus on Euro counterfeiting.
- Provide to Member States technical-tactical training on currency counterfeiting.
- Support strategic activities, including policy developments, relating to Euro counterfeiting.
- Cooperate with the European Central Bank, European Commission and Europol's Forensic Lab on technical matters pertaining to Euro counterfeiting.
- Promote the establishment a connection to SIENA for the European Central Bank through which Europol can receive information with respect to (online) distribution of counterfeit banknotes and coins.
- Organise an annual meeting on currency counterfeiting.

Expected results: Member States' investigations receive quality analytical and operational support related to currency counterfeiting (Euro counterfeiting in particular).

Member States' investigations in relation to currency counterfeiting (Euro counterfeiting in particular) are initiated based on Europol's analysis.

Europol Public Information

Indicators	Latest result (Q2 2024)	Target 2025
Number of Accepted contributions by EFECC ⁷⁹	14,887	27,000
Number of Operations supported by EFECC	285	410
Number of Operational Task Forces supported by EFECC (where EFECC is in the lead)	9	6
Number of Operational Reports delivered by EFECC	1,333	2,000
Number of Action Days coordinated/supported by EFECC	51	100
Satisfaction with Operational Support and Analysis provided by EFECC	9.5	8.5

⁷⁹ The responsibility for this indicator is shared by Europol and its partners (MS, TP). As such, the target is indicative and used to monitor the trend of accepted contributions.

A.7. Strategic and Analysis Coordination

Overview



Criminal analysis remains at the core of Europol's business and it continues being a service that is highly demanded by the law enforcement agencies in Member States. Europol has a considerable wealth of knowledge, capabilities and expertise in this area, which the agency strives to further strengthen through enhanced coordination and attention to quality output and control, standardisation, training, specialised analysis and a more efficient and flexible reassignment of resources.

The area of data quality coordination, data analysis deployment and support is growing in importance and significance within the work of Europol, mainly due to the introduction of a new technical environment for the data handling and data processing for the purpose of strategic and operational analysis, and the increase of supervision from the European Data Protection Supervisor. The amended Europol Regulation has strengthened the focus on data protection by design and by default, pushing the work of data quality coordination and compliance to the front line. In 2025, in line with the renewed Europol Strategy, work will start to develop a Roadmap towards the implementation of the New Collaborative environment for the handling of data for Europol and MS.

Strategic analysis in the context of law enforcement aims at informing decision makers on current and emerging trends in serious crime and terrorism landscapes and helps with the identification of critical areas for prioritisation and policy development. The use of strategic intelligence analysis is one of the pillars of Europol, as it promotes an intelligence-led approach to fight international serious and organised crime and terrorism in a cooperative fashion among the EU law enforcement authorities, JHA agencies and external partners. The strategic analysis produced by Europol provides guidance also to the agency's management and the work of the Operational Analysis Projects (APs). In 2025, the agency will prepare the Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment (SOCTA) 2025, which will lay the basis for the Council's decision on the next EMPACT cycle.

The Analysis Training coordination function at Europol has two aspects: 1) internal – which comprises the responsibility to assess in-house skills, training needs and requirements; and to develop and provide in-house analysis trainings; and 2) external – which includes reviewing and responding to Member States' analysis training needs in collaboration with CEPOL. The team in charge is also assessing the possibilities for accreditation of analysis training at Europol and organises the Europol Summer School. In line with the renewed Europol Strategy, Europol will also initiate the implementation of the new analysis training and coaching program for Europol staff and Europol partners with the aim to satisfy the needs for state-of-the-art analytical competences.

Europol support to the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) is also essential for ensuring operational and strategic coordination of MS efforts to fight organised crime at the EU level. The EMPACT team facilitates the development, monitoring and reporting of the EMPACT operational action plans (OAP) and supports their implementation. With dedicated funds, the agency is in a position to financially support actions of the OAPs in the form of EMPACT grants. EMPACT is an essential part of the actionable operational mechanism for EU MS to react to major security crises, as demonstrated through the EMPACT drivers' response during the war in Ukraine to adjust OAPs according to the emerging operational needs.

Europol Public Information

Facilitating the cooperation among all competent law enforcement authorities, including Customs and Counter-Terrorism services in the Member States, is a crucial element of Europol's work and mandate. The agency supports the Liaison Bureaux of Member States and other cooperation partners at Europol and maintains Europol liaison offices in other countries and organisations.

In view of the global challenges facing the EU, effective investigations depend often on information exchange with third countries and private partners. In the past years, Europol succeeded in establishing cooperation with key external partners and it will continue working on the implementation of the different cooperation agreements. The agency aims at enhancing its cooperation with priority partners, in line with its new External Relations Strategy.

At the same time, Europol pursues the further strengthening of its partnership with Interpol, the EU Institutions and relevant EU agencies, in particular those active in the area of Justice and Home affairs, in order to ensure complementarity and maximum benefit from possible synergies. The finalisation and implementation of the new strategy for cooperation with private parties will also remain among Europol's priorities in 2025.

2025 Objectives

<u>Analysis coordination</u>
Objectives and actions
A.7.1 Reinforce criminal analysis coordination and expertise at Europol to ensure provision of quality analysis support to EU Member States' investigations. <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Expand the support to the work on criminal analysis at Europol by:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Further developing the Data Analysis Portal, the New Forensic Environment, including the Data Refinery and OSINT tools such as Check the Web.- Enhancing the Data Analysis Portal (DAP), including more advanced AI solutions for improving its functionalities;- Establishing a pool of analysts specialised in technical analysis and specialised methods and tools to support all Europol's Centres with expertise.○ Act a single point of contact for new tools for data handling, processing and analysis and in particular compliance.○ Continue the development of the case management system and the Joint Operational Analysis Case.○ Further invest in the development of handling and processing complex datasets.○ Develop mechanisms, based on data science to increase efficiency in monitoring and detecting trends in crime and terrorism data.○ Continue to improve data quality control mechanisms.○ Provide technical analytical support, including data science support, to internal stakeholders.○ Review and simplify the data ontology.○ Ensure the coordination of the implementation of tools for data handling and data analysis – including data science techniques – in close cooperation with relevant internal stakeholders.○ Develop a roadmap and coordinate the implementation of the New Collaborative environment for the handling of data for Europol and MS in line with the renewed Europol Strategy.

Europol Public Information

A.7.2 Ensure data and analysis quality control at Europol.

- Ensure that the Deputy Executive Director Operations can fully fulfil his responsibilities as Data Controller.
- Further foster the efficient functioning of the Data Quality Control Office under the lead of the Data Quality Control Coordinator.
- Support initiatives to enhance Europol's Data Governance framework.
- Ensure the implementation of the current data review mechanism and that data processing is performed in line with Europol's legal framework.
- Further implement a systematic review of all APs, including data quality reviews on biometric and travel related data.
- Strengthen the focus on data protection by design and by default throughout all data management tools and processes by further fine-tuning the Data Review module within the Data Analysis Portal.
- Work in close cooperation with the DPF and ensure compliance with the data protection rules.
- Report internally on regular basis on the enhanced data review activities; Provide progress reports to DPF.
- Provide guidance and training to improve the quality of analytical reporting.

Expected results: Compliance with the legal requirements for data processing.
Increased quality of the data input and analysis.
Increased efficiency of handling, processing, analysing and monitoring of data.
Increased standardisation and quality of products.
Enhanced quality of Europol's operational analysis support to Member States.

Analysis coordination

Objectives and actions

A.7.3 Reinforce analysis training capabilities at Europol.

- Maintain a centralised overview of in-house analytical competencies and knowledge.
- Provide regularly in-house analysis training. Train all relevant staff on the new features of the analysis environment for Operations, the Data Analysis Portal the Data Refinery, NFE, OSINT and other tools.
- Review and respond to Member States' analysis training needs in collaboration with CEPOL. Coordinate Europol's contribution to CEPOL's training activities (e.g. content development, expert presentations, moderation, etc.).
- Provide regular trainings to MS on criminal analysis and on the use of the Joint Operational Analysis Case.
- Develop and initiate the roll out of a new Analysis Training and Coaching program to satisfy the need for state-of-the-art analytical competence at Europol and the national competent authorities.
- Manage the online Intelligence Analysis Platform CONAN.
- Organise the annual EU Crime Analysis Conference.
- Organise the Europol Summer School.

Europol Public Information

Expected results: Provision of effective and up-to-date operational and strategic analysis training for Europol's operational staff leading to increased quality of Europol's analysis support to Member States.
Fully trained criminal intelligence analysts at Europol.
Higher quality of processing and analysing of data.
Increased standardisation and quality of products.

Strategic analysis

Objectives and actions

A.7.4 Deliver quality strategic reports.

- Deliver Flagship reports on serious and organised crime, cybercrime or terrorism that have a key importance for Europol, such as the Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment (SOCTA) and the EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT).
- Deliver Threat Assessments on current or future threats in the crime areas within Europol's mandate.
- Deliver Early warning notifications giving rapid alert on new and emerging threats and *modi operandi*, where relevant in cooperation with other partners.
- Deliver Intelligence notifications identifying intelligence gaps, recommendations or key areas to target, and present a basis for decision making.
- Deliver Joint reports with EU agencies/national authorities, such as:
 - Joint analysis with Frontex, Joint analysis with Frontex and EUAA on secondary movements, Joint analysis with EUIPO, Joint analysis with EUDA.
- Deliver Crisis response reports on crisis situations (geo-political crises or crisis events).
- Deliver ad-hoc reports requested by COSI or in the framework of VISA and Schengen evaluations, and risk assessments requested by the Council and Commission.
- Maintain a common, consistent and holistic approach towards strategic analysis across the Operations Directorate.
- Enhance networking with experts (e.g. SOCTA, TE-SAT, IOCTA Advisory Group) to advance methodologies, increase access to information and improve the quality of reports.
- Support as a coordinator the implementation of the EMPACT Common Horizontal Strategic Goal on Criminal intelligence picture.
- Support strategic analysis in the EU Southern Neighbourhood region by contributing to the EU funded project Euromed Police VI.
- Support strategic analysis in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) region by contributing to the relevant EU-funded projects.

Expected results: Provision of timely and quality strategic reports.
Enhanced analytical capacities of the EU Neighbourhood countries to perform threat assessments and other strategic analysis.
Strengthened strategic cooperation between national law enforcement authorities, as well as between the EU Neighbourhood countries and the EU MS and EU agencies.

EMPACT support

Objectives and actions

A.7.5 Provide support and funding opportunities to EMPACT priorities and actions.

- Contribute to the identification of key issues and good practices related to EMPACT and provide input to the Council’s Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation on Internal Security (COSI).
- Provide methodological, administrative and logistical support to the drafting of the Operational Action Plans (OAPs) and facilitate communication and collaboration between the crime priorities and horizontal goals. Provide support to the implementation of the operational actions.
- Facilitate the activation of the EMPACT community as an essential part of the actionable operational mechanism for EU MS to react to major security crises by supporting EMPACT drivers to adjust/reshape OAPs accordingly and by providing the pertinent intelligence picture.
- Manage the EMPACT Grant scheme and inform MS systematically about funding opportunities.
- Coordinate and support the planning of Joint Action Days.
- Monitor the implementation of the Operational Action Plans.
- Roll out the Online EMPACT tool and provide training to partners.
- In cooperation with CEPOL, contribute to the delivery of EMPACT-related training seminars and webinars to MS.
- In cooperation with CEPOL, contribute to the delivery of training to the Western Balkan countries on EMPACT priorities within the framework of the EU funded project WB Partnership against Crime and Terrorism (WBPACT II).
- Continue implementing the funding mechanism⁸⁰ earmarked for (Member-States-led) EMPACT-related projects for the benefit of the law enforcement authorities of the EU Eastern Neighbourhood countries.
- Implement the findings related to Europol of the independent EMPACT evaluation.

Expected results: Member States receive efficient support for the implementation of their OAPs, including the activation of EMPACT community as emergency mechanism.

Administrative aspects of EMPACT are improved in efficiency due to digitalisation.

Europol’s support to EMPACT increasingly contributes to operational and strategic outcomes in the Member States.

Strengthened partner countries’ institutional knowledge of and criminal intelligence capacity in the EMPACT priority crime areas.

Enhanced operational and strategic cooperation of partner countries with EU Member States and agencies.

⁸⁰ Funded through a grant from the European Neighbourhood East Instrument and based on an agreement with the European Commission on concrete priorities to be pursued by the programme.

Cooperation with Member States

Objectives and actions

A.7.6 Manage cooperation with EU Member States.

- Manage strategic cooperation of Europol with Member States' competent authorities including Law Enforcement, Counter-Terrorism services and Customs.
- Ensure appropriate intake of Member State's needs and priorities across all relevant areas of Europol's work.
- Coordinate Europol contribution to the Management Board/MB Working Groups ensuring submission of the relevant documentation according to the established deadlines, and follow up to MB decisions.
- Coordinate and prepare meetings of the Heads of Europol National Units (HENUs).
- Support the implementation of the operational agreement with Denmark.
- Support the liaison officers' community based at Europol, including by facilitating the regular meetings of the Heads of Liaison Bureaux (LB) and the newly established informal Consultation Group.
- Provide information to MS on agency's wide operational activities via Operational Meeting updates.
- Support Member States' cooperation on matters outside Europol's mandate by offering a specific EPE platform dedicated for such communication and exchanges of information.

Expected results: Effective involvement of Member States' competent authorities in the consultations and decision-making on Europol matters.
Enhanced cooperation with and between LBs, their respective national authorities and related stakeholders for the additional benefit in the operational area.

Cooperation with third countries

Objectives and actions

A.7.7 Manage cooperation with third countries.

- Support the implementation of the operational agreements with Albania, Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Colombia, Georgia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland, Ukraine and the United States, and the working arrangements with Andorra, Armenia, Chile, Ecuador, India, Israel, Japan, Kosovo⁸¹, Mexico, New Zealand, Qatar, San Marino, Singapore, South Korea and the United Kingdom.
- Support the implementation of the strategic agreements with Brazil, China, Türkiye and the United Arab Emirates.
- Monitor the implementation of cooperation agreements and the fulfilment of obligations and commitments.
- Manage Europol's Liaison Office in Washington.
- Support the establishment of new Partner Liaison Bureaux and their Liaison Officers at Europol.

⁸¹ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/99 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

Europol Public Information

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Initiate the implementation of the new External Relations Strategy and establish or reinforce cooperation with selected third countries in line with the updated external relations priorities. ○ In line with the new External Relations Strategy, prepare a comprehensive plan for strengthening cooperation with the Schengen Associated Countries in the short, medium and long term. ○ Further develop Europol’s relations with the Western Balkans. Contribute to the next iteration of the EU funded project Western Balkan Partnership against Crime and Terrorism (WBPaCT II) and monitor the development of EU funding schemes to support the operational cooperation in the region. ○ Further develop Europol’s relations with relevant countries from the Eastern Neighbourhood region. Contribute to the EU-funded project Training and Operational Partnership Against Organised Crime (TOPCOP II) and the next iteration of the Fighting organised crime in the Eastern partnership region project, if confirmed. ○ Further develop Europol’s relations with the countries from the MENA region building on the progress made in 2024. Continue contributing to the EU funded project Euromed VI⁸². ○ Assist the European Commission, where required and requested, in the negotiation of international agreements according to Art.218 TFEU. ○ Continue to support the negotiations and implementation of international agreements between the EU and third countries, in particular the upcoming agreements with the Latin America countries, with regards to the exchange of personal data between Europol and the national competent authorities. ○ Contribute, as appropriate, to the EU funded project EL PAcCTO. ○ Continue to conclude Working Arrangements with priority partners. ○ Elaborate legal advice on new possibilities for case by case cooperation with any third country, in the absence of an agreement or adequacy decision. ○ Provide legal advice as regards the possibilities stemming from the amended Europol Regulation concerning the exchange of personal data with third countries.
<p>Expected results: Increased involvement of Europol in information exchange with third countries and better access to criminal intelligence from abroad.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Enhanced cooperation and joint undertakings with third countries leading to an increased operational impact.</p>

<u>Cooperation with EU institutions, agencies or bodies</u>
Objectives and actions
<p>A.7.8 Manage cooperation with EU institutions, agencies or bodies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Manage strategic cooperation of Europol with EU institutions, agencies or bodies, including EU CSDP missions and operations; manage the Liaison Office in Brussels. ○ Manage and coordinate the interaction with the European Commission, the External Action Service (EEAS), including the EU Intelligence and Situation Centre (EU INTCEN), and EU Council and Parliamentary committees, including the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group (JPSG).

⁸² The Euromed VI project covers the following countries in the EU Southern Neighbourhood region: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Palestinian Authority* (* This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue).

Europol Public Information

- Provide (technical) advice and contribute to the preparation of new EU policy and legislative initiatives.
- Follow closely relevant EU policies and initiatives⁸³ for emerging tasks falling within Europol's mandate. In particular, monitor and contribute, where requested, to the evaluation and revision of key EU strategies, such as the Strategy to tackle Organised Crime (2021-2025), the EU Cybersecurity Strategy, the Counter-Terrorism Agenda for the EU (2020-2025), the EU Action Plan on Firearms Trafficking (2020-2025), the EU Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings (2021-2025) and the EU Drug Strategy (2021-2025).
- Contribute to the annual Schengen Cycle, which provides a new governance model for the Schengen area. Support activities regarding Schengen evaluations on police cooperation, such as evaluations, on-site visits to Schengen countries and training.
- Support the implementation of the operational agreement with Frontex, including through the mutual exchange of Liaison officers established in 2024.
- Enhance the cooperation with Frontex based on the new working arrangement, including exchange of personal data.
- Support the implementation of the operational agreement with Eurojust, in line with both agencies' new legal framework. Identify business needs and opportunities to enhance mutual cooperation in line with the discussions held during the joint meeting of the Europol's Management Board and the College of Eurojust in October 2024.
- Support the liaising of Eurojust's representatives with Europol's crime centres and the cooperation between the Eurojust's representatives and Europol's Analysis Projects with regard to exchange of information, identification of HVT and Eurojust's participation in EMPACT. Support the coordination of the annual networking meeting.
- Support the Joint Investigation Teams (JIT) of the Member States in cooperation with Eurojust and OLAF including the provision of complementary funding and training.
- Support the implementation of the strategic agreements, MoUs and administrative and working arrangements with CEPOL, ECB, ECDC, EIB, EEAS, EMCDDA, EMSA, ENISA, EPPO, EUIPO, EU-LISA, the European Commission, FRA and OLAF.
- Enhance cooperation with the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) based on the new working arrangement.
- Enhance cooperation with the European Labour Authority (ELA) through the conclusion of a working arrangement.
- Explore possibilities to further enhance cooperation with the EPPO.
- Further develop strategic cooperation with ENISA and eu-LISA.
- Follow closely and contribute to the establishment of new EU bodies involved in crime areas covered by Europol's mandate, such as the new EU Authority for Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism.
- Follow closely developments in Cyber Security, such as the EU's Cyber Crisis Management Blueprint, the Cyber Diplomacy Toolbox, and the work towards the EU's transition to post-quantum cryptography.
- Contribute to the work of the JHA Agencies Network.
- Progress with embedding the law enforcement component into CSDP missions and operations, in line with the Civilian CSDP Compact, as endorsed in May 2023. Establish structured cooperation based on operational needs with selected CSDP missions.
- Follow the implementation of Strategic Compass for Security and Defence, in particular the actions planned for strengthening the EU's security and defence policy by 2030 regarding cyber attacks and terrorism as key threats against the EU.

⁸³ The strategies, policies and legislative initiatives mentioned in Section I – General Context.

Europol Public Information

- Explore the establishment of links with EU defence structures and relevant bodies including the European Defence Agency (EDA), countering hybrid threats in order to enrich the intelligence picture with strategic information from military sources, while fully respecting the mandate of INTCEN and the mandate of national security and intelligence services.

Expected results: Utilisation of synergies, optimisation of information flow and alignment of actions between Europol and other EU institutions, agencies and bodies leading to better operational impact.

Cooperation with organisations

Objectives and actions

A.7.9 Manage cooperation with international and regional organisations.

- Support the implementation of the operational agreement with Interpol or any other Administrative or Working Arrangement concluded as a follow-up to the new EU-Interpol agreement. Manage Europol's Liaison Office at Interpol.
- Support the implementation of the strategic agreements with the United Nations and the World Customs Organisation (WCO). Continue to build relations with relevant UN offices for establishing of cooperation in line with Europol's operational needs.
- Support the implementation of the working arrangement with the International Criminal Court (ICC).
- Monitor developments in relevant regional organisations and collaboration platforms such as OSCE, the Baltic Sea Task Force, Danube River Strategy group, the Western Balkan regional initiatives, SELEC, MAOC-N, and EUMed, Afripol, GCCPOL, the Western Africa Platforms, and Aseanapol, and identify areas of collaboration depending on operational needs.
- Continue to prepare for the possible conclusion of a Working Arrangement with AMERIPOL.
- Work to enhance cooperation with NATO in line with the EU Security Architecture.
- Provide legal advice related to Europol's negotiation and conclusion of working arrangements with international organisations.

Expected results: Cooperation with international and regional organisations brings forward better criminal intelligence picture and operational results.

Cooperation with private parties

Objectives and actions

A.7.10 Finalise the new Strategy on cooperation with private parties and initiate its implementation.

- Finalise and begin to implement the new Strategy on cooperation with private parties in light of the new possibilities stemming from the amended Europol Regulation.
- Assess opportunities and reach out to the private sector following the established priorities of the new Strategy.
- Enhance the intake of relevant information from the private sector enriching the criminal intelligence picture.
- Exploit the potential of technological advancements and innovation for law enforcement, boosting collaboration with research and industry partners.

Europol Public Information

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assess the possibility to increase effectiveness of prevention outreach, through the involvement of relevant companies and NGOs.
<p>Expected results: Cooperation with private parties improves in effectiveness and reduces information gaps.</p>

Indicators	Latest result (Q2 2024)	Target 2025
Number of Strategic Analysis Reports	18	30
Satisfaction with Strategic Analysis Reports	8.5	8.5
Satisfaction with Operational Analysis	9.4	8.5
Satisfaction with Operational Training delivered to MS/TP	9.2	8.5
Number of SIENA messages exchanged by Third Parties ⁸⁴	150,946	260,000

⁸⁴ The responsibility for this indicator is shared by Europol and its partners (MS, TP). As such, the target is indicative and used to monitor the trend of accepted contributions.

A.8. Governance, support and administration

Overview

As provided for in Article 32 of the Europol Financial Rules, the Europol Internal Control Framework (ICF), adopted by the Europol MB in December 2018, represents the overall strategy on the organisational and internal control approach, as well as for Europol's ethics, compliance, corporate risk management and anti-fraud related components. The ICF is monitored through a set of control indicators that are integrated in Europol's corporate performance monitoring. The Code of Conduct, Europol's cornerstone for the organisational ethics, was put in force in an updated version at the end of 2019, including based on a review of staff from across the organisation. The Code of Conduct gives an essence statement for each of the 6 Europol Values (Service, Integrity, Accountability, Initiative, Partnership and Diversity), underlining a zero tolerance to fraud and the requirement to perform duties impartially and without favouring any particular individual, group, organisation or country, for preventing any potential conflict between personal and work related interests.



Europol strives for full compliance with principles of sound financial management, security, data protection, fundamental rights protection and internal control standards, as demonstrated by the overall positive findings resulting from the internal and external audit mechanisms. In the spirit of ensuring clear accountability towards its stakeholders, Europol also applies robust document and records management procedures, and adheres to a systematic performance monitoring and reporting practice.

In 2025, work will continue to implement organisational initiatives or changes identified through the renewed Europol Strategy, while the agency will continue making progress in promoting workforce diversity and inclusion, in line with Europol's Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

The HR and Finance Strategies will be reviewed and updated to continue to guide and ensure the efficient and effective management of budget and resources.

The agency aims at maintaining effective communication to both external partners and stakeholders, and internally to staff. Increasing the awareness of the general public and the law enforcement community of Europol's work is continuously pursued. The broader awareness of Europol's products and services among MS' competent authorities is a prerequisite for their full and effective utilisation, and for bringing forward better operational results. Transparent communication towards staff is an important factor to ensure engagement and motivation.

The growth of the agency led to the establishment of the Strategic Housing Roadmap, which comprises the relocation of part of Europol's staff to temporary satellite buildings in the short to mid-term and the arrangement of second permanent headquarters in the longer term. Work will also continue to prepare for the implementation of a second Data Centre to ensure Europol's business continuity, in 2026. At the same time, existing workspace is regularly re-organised to ensure optimal utilisation and compliance with the new governmental standards. These activities require a major effort and ultimately an expansion of the necessary facilities, ICT, security and administrative services for the years ahead. Finally, Europol will further strengthen its cybersecurity and information security policies and capabilities.

Objectives 2025

<u>Corporate affairs and services</u>	
Objectives and actions	
<p>A.8.1 Continue optimising Europol’s corporate functions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coordinate and oversee the implementation of organisational initiatives and changes in line with the renewed Europol Strategy. ○ Support and promote workforce diversity and inclusion in line with Europol’s Diversity & Inclusion Strategy. ○ Provide policy, technical and expert advice, and prepare related policy documents; Identify key strategic opportunities for Europol's growth in priority areas. ○ Consolidate further the implementation of the compliance management framework at Europol, to effectively implement (internally and externally driven) change across the organisation, including regulatory changes impacting the agency, such as interoperability, the IED, the DSA, and the EU AI Act. ○ Explore and prepare for a future implementation of an internal control and compliance management tool. ○ Coordinate all audit activities and Europol’s response to audit activities and findings and discharge observations. ○ Ensure monitoring and annual assessment of the effectiveness of the internal control system, including through a set of a dedicated internal control indicators. ○ Monitor Europol's corporate risks through an up-to-date corporate risk management framework. Enhance risk awareness, through training and communication measures. ○ Contribute to the work of the EU Agencies Network, including in the context of the annual risk peer review exercise and of the activities of the relevant subnetworks. ○ Prepare Europol’s multi-annual and annual business planning documents, and quarterly, bi-annual and annual corporate performance reporting. ○ Streamline the use of corporate analytics and reporting to ensure high quality and accurate corporate performance measurement and reporting. ○ Maintain and further develop the User Survey. ○ Provide legal advice on the implementation of Europol’s legal framework and data protection rules. Advise on legality and compatibility of new Europol initiatives with EU law, as well as on new EU initiatives having an impact on Europol. ○ Handle Europol’s mandate-related cases brought before the Court of Justice of the EU. ○ Coordinate strategic, legal and internal data protection aspects, including operational elements, in matters related to the interaction with the EDPS. ○ Develop and maintain Europol’s legal framework for finance, procurement, grants and facilities. Review the financial model, based on the new Financial Regulation and the expected implementation of the new accounting system. ○ Provide internally legal support on contracts, service level agreements, licenses, grant agreements, etc. Handle contract related complaints and court cases. ○ Develop and maintain the HR legal framework and implementing rules to the EU Staff Regulations. Handle staff related complaints, requests and court cases. ○ Manage public access to Europol’s documents. 	
Expected results:	Europol progresses along the strategic and operational priorities and stakeholders’ expectations; monitors and manages corporate risks; identifies and maximises opportunities and areas for further development.

Europol Public Information

Transparency and accountability of the organisation's strategic planning and performance. Increased benefits to Europol's stakeholders.

The implementation of the regulatory framework is up-to-date and compliant.

Fundamental Rights Officer (FRO)

Objectives and actions

A.8.2 Ensure fundamental rights compliance in all internal and external operational and administrative processes.

- Continue monitoring Europol's compliance with fundamental rights with respect to internal and external processes, including deployments.
- Advise on fundamental rights compliance in the innovation domain, including on AI and interoperability.
- Promote Europol's respect of fundamental rights in the performance of its tasks and activities, including by regularly organising targeted training activities for staff and senior management and proposing relevant communication measures.
- Continue the assessment of working arrangements and engagement with Third Parties and of Europol's external relations and cooperation with private parties, with a view to ensure fundamental rights compliance.
- Network and ensure coordination with FRA, and with the fundamental rights officers of EUAA, Frontex and CEPOL, including via the network of FROs.

Expected results: Fundamental rights compliance in all Europol's operational and administrative processes.

Corporate communications

Objectives and actions

A.8.3 Ensure efficient internal and external communication.

- Maintain and further develop media, press and public relations; develop and coordinate external and internal communication networks and coordinate external publications.
- Manage, maintain and continuously develop Europol's website.
- Continue mapping and documenting processes and workflows in the area of digital communication. Continue evaluating external communication campaigns, including by further developing an impact-based approach to (digital) communication evaluation.
- Further explore and develop actions to engage with MS on awareness and preventions activities, based on the principle of joint responsibility between Europol and MS.
- Provide corporate audio-visual productions and campaigns targeting awareness raising of Europol's products and services. Optimise internal AV production capacity, including by setting up an AV production studio.
- Provide user support and training on the use of Open Source (OS) platforms and subscriptions.
- Produce media intelligence briefs.
- Deliver the annual Europol Excellence Award in Innovation.

Europol Public Information

- Deliver effective media monitoring, crisis monitoring and media impact products and services.
- Maintain and develop Europol's intranet as the main internal communication tool. Continue work towards the implementation of an upgraded internal communication platform.

Expected results: Europol maintains effective communication to external partners and stakeholders. Europol and its brand identity are well positioned among media.

A wider group of MS' law enforcement officers are aware of Europol's products and services and of the benefits of international law enforcement cooperation.

Effective media monitoring and open sources tools are in place and broadly used.

Europol maintains effective internal communication.

Administration of Human resources

Objectives and actions

A.8.4 Ensure efficient human resource management.

- Initiate the revision of the HR Strategy taking into account the actions and strategic objectives stemming from the renewed Europol Strategy, as well as other organisational changes across Europol as approved by the MB.
- Plan and monitor the implementation of the establishment plan.
- Carry out effective and compliant selection and recruitment processes.
- Ensure the coordination of talent acquisition, learning and development, appraisal, probation and reclassification, on boarding and personnel administration for staff (TA/CAs), SNEs, interns, law enforcement trainees and interim workers.
- Review existing HR processes on a regular basis. Develop and update HR related policies and implementing rules, as relevant.
- Coordinate and monitor the implementation of the Diversity & Inclusion Strategy, in line with the approved D&I Implementation Plan, which includes key actions, tasks and responsibilities addressing i.a. gender balance.
- Manage the salary administration and payment of allowances to staff and SNEs.
- Manage the HR Management System (SYSPER) and coordinate the implementation of new functionalities.
- Contribute to the Commission-led HR Transformation Programme and review HR processes resulting from the gradual delivery of the programme and related functionalities.
- Coordinate training of Europol staff. Further implement the Leadership and Management Development Program.
- Ensure quality occupational health services.

Expected results: Increased HR efficiency, effectiveness and customer service delivery.

Financial and budget management

Objectives and actions

A.8.5 Ensure efficient financial and budget management.

- Plan and monitor the implementation of the budget.
- Ensure compliance of all financial processes with the revised Financial Regulation.
- Finalise and implement the new Finance Unit Strategy.
- Further review existing financial processes in all financial areas, ensuring further streamlining and simplification.
- Monitor and further develop activity based budgeting and costing.
- Execute financial initiation of revenue and expenditure; Perform ex-ante and ex-post financial verification of all financial operations while advancing towards the full ex-ante model as per Finance Unit Strategy (within the limits of available resources).
- Manage procurement planning and procedures in line with annual business and budget planning.
- Further improve sustainable procurement by integrating social consideration elements, stemming from the Diversity & Inclusion Strategy.
- Expand financial reporting via the new automated reporting solution.
- Maintain the Travel Management System.
- Finalise preparations for the replacement of the current accounting system ABAC at Europol and explore interoperability possibilities with other systems.
- Manage the administration and coordination of grants awarded by Europol, including EMPACT, OTF, ATLAS, EaP, Euro counterfeiting and Innovation.
- Assess and utilise, where appropriate and subject to checking potential and actual conflicts of interest as well as confirming availability of capacities, funding opportunities in relation to calls within Europol’s remit for which the agency is eligible.
- Advise and support Member States and third parties on funding opportunities.

Expected results: Reliability and accuracy of Europol’s budget management.
Increased efficiency and effectiveness of financial processes and client satisfaction.

Physical, personnel and information security

Objectives and actions

A.8.6 Ensure the necessary level of physical, personnel and information security at Europol.

- Ensure the physical security of Europol’s buildings. Execute protective security operations for the Executive Director, staff and participants at high-level meetings and events.
- Continuously strengthen operational effectiveness, improve incident response and security compliance capabilities, enhance the security posture and foster cross-departmental cooperation.
- Ensure that security requirements concerning the expansion of Europol to two new satellite buildings are fulfilled.
- Continue supporting the preparations for acquiring Europol’s second permanent headquarters and second Data Centre in terms of security requirements.

Europol Public Information

- Continue upgrading the Security Control Room to cope with expanding security tasks (e.g. monitoring of the satellite buildings).
- Upgrade the security infrastructure of the agency.
- Identify innovative ways to communicate security awareness to Europol users.
- Continue providing awareness and risk assessment for Europol staff deployed in mission.
- Ensure timely accreditation of information systems to ensure Information Security; assess information security risks and provide risk treatment options.
- Perform technical security assessments of Europol's ICT systems and propose appropriate actions.
- Implement necessary changes to Europol's information security rules and procedures in line with the requirements of the new Regulation laying down measures for a high common level of cybersecurity, and the new Regulation on information security in the institutions, bodies, offices and agencies of the Union.
- Ensure Europol's cyber resilience by reviewing and enhancing internal cybersecurity and information security policies and capabilities.
- Develop, implement and validate the business continuity framework.
- Coordinate Europol's overall crisis management capability and Disaster Recovery activities. Review and revise the current recovery strategies and develop alternative ones.
- Finalise the revision and initiate the implementation of the Europol Anti-Fraud Strategy.
- Implement the overall Business Continuity Strategy.
- Implement new logbook or workflow application for physical security shift controllers, to optimise and modernise the process, following the increase of the number of buildings under Europol's responsibility.

Expected results: Improved safety and security for Europol's buildings, staff and visitors.
Europol fulfils its obligations in terms of confidentiality and information security.

Facilities services and environmental management

Objectives and actions

A.8.7 Progress towards the rationalisation and expansion of Europol's facilities services and enhanced environmental management.

- Develop, maintain and implement the policies, guidelines and processes related to services and products.
- Develop, maintain and implement the budget, contracts and agreements related to services and products.
- Manage the non-ICT related assets and ensure compliance with the financial processes and insurance scope.
- Develop, maintain and implement digital workflows and self-service functionalities via the Facilities Management Information System (FMIS).
- Provide integrated, cross-horizontal services, with a focus on prioritising sustainability.
- Support high-level visits and organise high-level events, such as the European Police Chiefs Convention (EPCC).

Europol Public Information

- Manage and improve Europol's environmental management system and maintain the registration of the EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS).
- Undertake initiatives to improve the environmental performance of the organisation in terms of sustainable procurement, carbon footprint, paper and water consumption, and waste management and separation, in line with the Environmental Vision 2030 and the Environmental Objectives and Action Plan for the period 2023 – 2025.

Expected results: Effective processes and tooling are in place to ensure optimal facilities services and proper corporate environmental management.

Strategic Housing Roadmap

Objectives and actions

A.8.8 Steer and coordinate the implementation of the Strategic Housing Roadmap.

- Advance with the implementation of the Mid-Term Housing Solution (MTHS) project in the HQ to increase workplace capacity, provide additional meeting rooms and other related facilities, and strengthen the building according to the applicable governmental building regulations.
- Temporary Satellite Building 1 (TSB 1) project: decommission the building and return it to the Host State.
- Temporary Satellite Building 2 (TSB 2) project: create additional workplaces, meeting rooms and other related facilities to support the implementation of the MTHS in the HQ and cover organisational growth and new business demands until the delivery of HQ2. Building delivered and operational for use.
- Temporary Satellite Building 3 (TSB 3) project: create additional workplaces, meeting rooms and other related facilities to support organisational growth and new business demands, until the delivery of HQ2. The first stage of the building completed and operational for use.
- Long-Term Housing Measures (LTHM) project: advance with the implementation of the project to secure and deliver a second permanent headquarters (HQ2).
- Hot Data Centre (HDC) project: finalise the selection of the location and the preliminary design of a second Data Centre in the Netherlands in order to ensure Europol's business continuity, in accordance with business requirements.
- Low-rise Toren van Oud project: continue the project for the relocation of the Medical Centre and Gym & Fitness facilities, in order to create space in the HQ for the implementation of the MTHS (forecasted delivery date Q1 2027).
- Alternative Temporary Housing: progress on establishing alternative temporary workplaces and meeting spaces to support organisational growth and new business demands until the delivery of HQ2.

Expected results: The existing and new workplaces, meeting rooms and other related facilities are used in an efficient and effective manner to support organisational growth, new business demands and establish a pleasant work environment.

Europol Public Information

Indicators	Latest result (Q2 2024)	Target 2025
% of pending critical/very important audit recommendations implemented within the timeline committed to by Europol and agreed with the auditing body	80%	85%
Total number of News Articles mentioning Europol (high-impact web-based media)	3,520	5,500
User Satisfaction	87%	85%
Vacancy rate	4.2%	2%
% of Female Staff	33%	35%
Budget Outturn Rate	n/a	5%
Budget Commitment Rate	87.5%	95%
Budget Payment Rate	45.6%	90%
% of Late Payments (in value)	0.7%	5%
Emissions (tonnes CO2)	n/a	2,804

Management Board Functions

Accountancy Unit (ACCU)

The Accountancy Unit is an independent unit within Europol with its Accounting Officer appointed by/reportable directly to Europol's Management Board (MB). Its main tasks and responsibilities are to:

- Implement all payments (including salaries and allowances);
- Collect revenue and recovering amounts established as being receivable;
- Implement the accounting rules and chart of accounts in accordance with the provisions adopted by the European Commission;
- Keep, prepare and present the annual accounts of Europol (financial statements and reports on the implementation of the budget);
- Lay down and validating the accounting systems; Manage the Treasury.

Data Protection Function (DPF)

The DPF is an integral part of Europol and the initial point of contact for all data protection matters. The Data Protection Officer who acts as the Head of DPF is appointed by the MB in accordance with Article 41 ER. DPF main tasks and responsibilities are to:

- Ensure lawfulness and compliance in regards to data protection (e.g. compliance reviews, annual activity report, written record of the transmission of data, register of processing operations, handling of data subject request, handling of inquiries etc.);
- Provide consultation in relation to legal and technical-organisational data protection safeguards;
- Provide training and awareness program for staff handling personal data;
- Perform as the main contact point to external data protection supervisors (e.g. Europol Data Protection Supervisor / National Data Protection Authorities).
- Following the amended Europol Regulation, establish in timely manner new data protection safeguards in order to ensure compliance with the amended rules.

Internal Audit Capability (IAC)

The IAC's mission is to enhance Europol's organisational value, by providing risk-based and objective assurance, advice and insight. Its main tasks and responsibilities are to:

- Evaluate the appropriateness of Europol's risk identification and management system, and the effectiveness of the Internal Control Framework;
- Review the arrangements established to ensure compliance with applicable legislation, policies, plans and procedures;
- Review the reliability and integrity of significant operating and financial information and the means used to identify, measure, classify and report such information;
- Evaluate the economy and efficiency with which resources are employed;
- Review programs or operations to ascertain whether results are consistent with established plans and objectives, and determine whether goals have been achieved;
- Monitor and report on the implementation of audit recommendations issued by IAC.

Management Board Secretariat (MBS)

MBS is responsible for supporting the Chairperson of the Management Board in compliance with the Europol Regulation. Its main tasks and responsibilities are to:

- Support the coordination of the MB's work and ensure its coherence;
- Organise activities and meetings of the MB and its Working Groups on Corporate matters (legal, financial and personnel issues) and on Information Management, as well as ad hoc meetings and working groups established by the Board;
- Provide the MB with the necessary administrative support;

Europol Public Information

- Support oversight and policy-making activities regarding matters such as the appointment of Executive Directors and Deputy Executive Directors, corporate governance, human resources and external relations.

ANNEXES

Annex I: Organisational chart

Annex II: Resource allocation per Activity 2025-2027

Annex III: Financial Resources 2025-2027

Table 1 – Revenue

Table 2 – Expenditure

Table 3 – Budget outturn and cancellation of appropriations

Annex IV: Human resources - quantitative

Table 1 – Staff population and its evolution; Overview of all categories of staff

Table 2 – Multi-annual staff policy plan year 2025-2027

Table 3 – Recruitment forecasts 2025

Annex V: Human resources qualitative

A. Recruitment policy

B. Appraisal of performance and reclassification/promotions

C. Gender representation

D. Geographical balance

E. Schooling

Annex VI: Environment management

Annex VII: Building policy

Annex VIII: Privileges and immunities

Annex IX: Evaluations

Annex X: Strategy for the organisational management and internal control systems

Annex XI: Grants

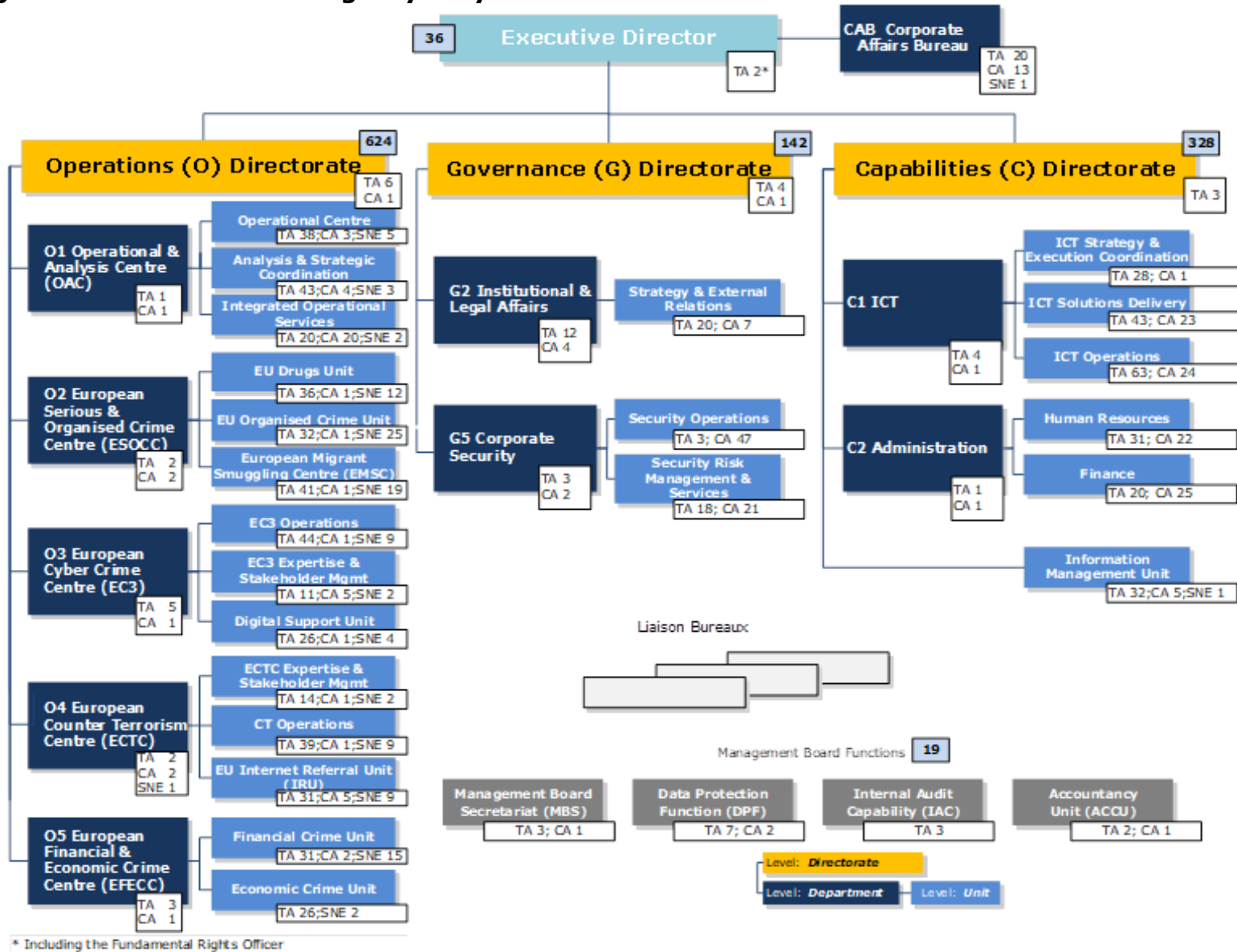
Annex XII: Strategy for cooperation with third countries and/or international organisations

Annex XIII: Procurement plan 2025

Annex XIV: Corporate risks 2025

Europol Public Information

Annex I: Organisational chart of the agency for year 2025⁸⁵



⁸⁵ The resources (3 TA, 2 CA, 11 SNE) allocated in the proposal for an anti- migrant smuggling Regulation [COM(2023) 754] are not included, as they are subject to the conclusion of the legislative process. Due to timing reasons, the 15 posts granted through the EU Budget 2025 are also not shown – they will be allocated to the (re-prioritised) actions.

Europol Public Information

Annex II: Resources allocation per activity 2025 – 2027

	Year 2024			Year 2025			Year 2026 ⁸⁶ Resource estimates			Year 2027 ⁸⁹ Resource estimates		
	TA	CA & SNE (FTE)	Budget allocated	TA	CA & SNE (FTE)	Budget allocated	TA	CA & SNE (FTE)	Budget allocated	TA	CA & SNE (FTE)	Budget allocated
A.1. Development of operational ICT and IM capabilities	165	55	78,404,600	170	55	80,224,592	167	55	83,980,900	168	55	83,183,500
A.2. Operational Coordination	73	34	16,996,200	74	34	19,540,102	76	34	20,214,700	76	34	20,164,300
A.3. Combating Serious and Organised Crime	109	78	30,747,200	110	78	24,078,866	113	78	30,646,300	114	78	29,765,000
A.4. Combating Cyber Crime	83	23	17,176,300	83	23	17,407,013	85	23	18,816,900	86	23	17,628,700
A.5. Counter-Terrorism	88	23	18,567,000	89	23	20,406,837	91	23	17,610,700	92	23	23,391,700
A.6. Combating Financial and Economic Crime	59	10	11,800,100	58	10	11,492,179	62	10	13,084,700	63	10	11,500,600
A.7. Strategic and Analysis Coordination	50	10	9,112,100	54	10	10,472,810	53	9	10,215,000	53	9	10,079,300
Total Operational Activities	627	233	182,803,500	638	233	183,622,399	647	232	194,569,200	652	232	195,713,100
A.8. Governance, support and administration (incl. MBF)	127	143	37,427,100	135	143	42,927,204	133	144	41,079,499	133	144	41,213,211
Anti-migrant smuggling ⁸⁷ regulation COM(2023) 754 (LFS)				3	16	15,758,000	7	31	19,679,000	10	40	13,456,000
Re-prioritised activities				15		5,000,000	121	24	34,630,064	161	26	47,959,220
Total	754	376	220,230,600	791	392	247,307,603	908	431	289,957,763	956	442	298,341,531

⁸⁶ Figures for 2026 and 2027 in Annexes II, III and IV are indicative and prepared on the basis of Europol’s estimated needs 2025-2027, as elaborated in January 2024. The figures will be adjusted once the agency reviews its estimated needs 2026-2027, as part of the draft Programming Document 2026-2028.

⁸⁷ Subject to the conclusion of the legislative process.

Annex III: Financial Resources 2025 – 2027

**Table 1 - Revenue
General revenues**

REVENUES (Payment Appropriations)	2024	2025
	Revenues estimated by the agency	Budget forecast
EU contribution	217,722,400	246,025,103
Other revenue		
TOTAL REVENUES	217,722,400	246,025,103

REVENUES	General revenues						
	Executed 2023	Estimated by the agency 2024	2025		VAR 2025/ 2024 (%)	Envisaged 2026 ⁸⁸	Envisaged 2027 ⁹¹
			Agency request	Budget forecast			
1 REVENUE FROM FEES AND CHARGES	207,176,212	217,722,400		246,025,103	1.13	289,957,763	298,341,531
2 EU CONTRIBUTION							
- Of which assigned revenues deriving from previous years' surpluses	5,098,619	10,314,092		6,283,397			
3 THIRD COUNTRIES CONTRIBUTION (incl. EEA/EFTA and candidate countries)							
- Of which EEA/EFTA (excl. Switzerland)							
- Of which candidate countries							
4 OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS							
5 ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS							
- Of which interest generated by funds paid by the Commission by way of the EU contribution (FFR Art. 58)							
6 REVENUES FROM SERVICES RENDERED AGAINST PAYMENT							
7 CORRECTION OF BUDGETARY IMBALANCES							

⁸⁸ Figures for 2026 and 2027 in Annexes II, III and IV are indicative and prepared on the basis of Europol's estimated needs 2025-2027, as elaborated in January 2024. The figures will be adjusted once the agency reviews its estimated needs 2026-2027, as part of the draft Programming Document 2026-2028.

Europol Public Information

REVENUES	General revenues						
	Executed 2023	Estimated by the agency 2024	2025		VAR 2025/ 2024 (%)	Envisaged 2026 ⁸⁸	Envisaged 2027 ⁹¹
			Agency request	Budget forecast			
TOTAL	207,176,212	217,722,400		246,025,103	1.13	289,957,763	298,341,531

Additional EU funding: grant, contribution and service-level agreements

REVENUES	2024	2025
	Revenues estimated by the agency	Budget forecast
TOTAL REVENUES	2,594,716	1,489,600

REVENUES	Additional EU funding: grant, contribution and service-level agreements						
	Executed 2023	Estimated by the agency 2024	2025		VAR 2025/2024 (%)	Envisaged 2026	Envisaged 2027
			Agency request	Budget forecast			
ADDITIONAL EU FUNDING STEMMING FROM GRANTS (FFR Art.7)	787,881	222,800		167,100	0.75	-	-
ADDITIONAL EU FUNDING STEMMING FROM CONTRIBUTION AGREEMENTS (FFR Art.7)	1,688,942	1,095,666		-	-	-	-
ADDITIONAL EU FUNDING STEMMING FROM SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS (FFR Art. 43.2)	1,062,144	1,276,250		1,322,500	1.04	1,322,500	1,322,500
TOTAL	3,538,967	2,594,716		1,489,600	0.57	1,322,500	1,322,500

Europol Public Information

Table 2 - Expenditure

Expenditure	2024		2025	
	Commitment appropriations	Payment appropriations	Commitment appropriations	Payment appropriations
Title 1 - Staff expenditure	125,204,109	125,204,109	142,601,813	142,601,813
Title 2 - Infrastructure and operating expenditure	12,900,714	12,900,714	12,950,575	12,950,575
Title 3 - Operational expenditure	82,125,777	79,617,577	91,755,215	90,472,715
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	220,230,600	217,722,400	247,307,603	246,025,103

EXPENDITURE	Commitment appropriations						
	Executed Budget 2023	Budget 2024	Budget 2025		VAR 2025/2024	Envisaged 2026	Envisaged 2027
			Agency request	Budget forecast			
Title 1 Staff Expenditure	114,234,450	125,204,109		142,601,813	1.14	151,864,565	163,230,527
11 Salaries & allowances	105,395,153	115,902,986		130,681,000	1.13	136,554,768	147,621,034
- of which establishment plan posts	87,964,759	97,563,315		108,191,000	1.11	114,291,980	124,832,833
- of which external personnel	17,430,394	18,339,672		22,490,000	1.23	22,262,788	22,788,201
13 Socio-medical infrastructure	878,665	919,418		1,280,200	1.39	1,489,401	1,519,189
14 Training	135,000	102,500		258,613	2.52	303,960	310,039
15 Other staff-related expenditure	7,704,910	8,166,305		10,277,800	1.26	13,403,012	13,664,572
16 Entertainment and representation expenses	120,722	112,900		104,200	0.92	113,424	115,692
Title 2 Other administrative expenditure	15,310,202	12,900,714		12,950,575	1.00	23,039,067	22,102,848
20 Rental of buildings and associated costs	10,487,653	9,130,124		9,172,600	1.00	18,818,528	17,797,899
21 Administrative information technology	1,919,781	1,316,976		1,218,275	0.93	1,365,780	1,393,096
22 Movable property and associated costs	643,909	1,014,178		879,200	0.87	1,169,155	1,192,538
23 Current administrative expenditure	391,968	679,136		831,900	1.22	580,224	591,828
24 Postal charges and telecommunications	1,009,196	51,300		70,600	1.38	73,140	74,603
25 Statutory expenditure	857,695	709,000		778,000	1.10	1,032,240	1,052,885

Europol Public Information

EXPENDITURE	Commitment appropriations						
	Executed Budget 2023	Budget 2024	Budget 2025		VAR 2025/2024	Envisaged 2026	Envisaged 2027
			Agency request	Budget forecast			
Title 3 Operational activities	77,176,709	82,125,777		91,755,215	1.12	115,054,131	113,008,156
30 Operations	16,090,786	14,406,375		17,557,862	1.22	17,841,859	15,849,939
31 Operational information technology	40,692,851	45,192,089		53,532,553	1.18	71,465,496	67,845,963
32 Telecommunication costs for operational activities	606,210	1,443,113		1,892,800	1.31	1,839,175	1,875,959
33 Seconded National Experts (Operational) ⁸⁹	6,508,092	6,416,000		7,962,000	1.24	9,149,000	9,662,522
34 EPCC	251,499	285,000		300,000	1.05	275,400	280,908
35 Heads of Europol National Units	127,016	145,500		160,000	1.10	163,200	166,464
38 Decryption Platform	1,128,308	512,700		1,000,000	1.95	1,020,000	1,040,400
39 Grants ⁹⁰	11,771,947	13,725,000		9,350,000	0.68	13,300,000	16,286,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	206,721,361	220,230,600		247,307,603	1.12	289,957,763	298,341,531

EXPENDITURE	Payment appropriations						
	Executed Budget 2023	Budget 2024	Budget 2025		VAR 2025/2024	Envisaged 2026	Envisaged 2027
			Agency request	Budget forecast			
Title 1 Staff Expenditure	114,234,450	125,204,109		142,601,813	1.14	151,864,565	163,230,527
11 Salaries & allowances	105,395,153	115,902,986		130,681,000	1.13	136,554,768	147,621,034
- of which establishment plan posts	87,964,759	97,563,315		108,191,000	1.11	114,291,980	124,832,833
- of which external personnel	17,430,394	18,339,672		22,490,000	1.23	22,262,788	22,788,201
13 Sociomedical infrastructure	878,665	919,418		1,280,200	1.39	1,489,401	1,519,189
14 Training	135,000	102,500		258,613	2.52	303,960	310,039
15 Other staff-related expenditure	7,704,910	8,166,305		10,277,800	1.26	13,403,012	13,664,572
16 Entertainment and representation expenses	120,722	112,900		104,200	0.92	113,424	115,692
Title 2 Other administrative expenditure	15,310,202	12,900,714		12,950,575	1.00	23,039,067	22,102,848

⁸⁹ Including for 2025 EUR 3M for Short-term SNEs.

⁹⁰ Including for 2025 differentiated appropriations amounting to EUR 9,350,000 (EUR 2 000 000 for EMPACT, EUR 4 000 000 for OTF, EUR 3 000 000 for ATLAS and EUR 350 000 for Innovation grants). This includes EUR 4 000 000 allocated in the LFS of COM(2023)754 for grants, i.e. EUR 2 000 000 for EMPACT, and EUR 2 000 000 for OTF.

Europol Public Information

EXPENDITURE	Payment appropriations						
	Executed Budget 2023	Budget 2024	Budget 2025		VAR 2025/2024	Envisaged 2026	Envisaged 2027
			Agency request	Budget forecast			
20 Rental of buildings and associated costs	10,487,653	9,130,124		9,172,600	1.00	18,818,528	17,797,899
21 Administrative information technology	1,919,781	1,316,976		1,218,275	0.93	1,365,780	1,393,096
22 Movable property and associated costs	643,909	1,014,178		879,200	0.87	1,169,155	1,192,538
23 Current administrative expenditure	391,968	679,136		831,900	1.22	580,224	591,828
24 Postal charges and telecommunications	1,009,196	51,300		70,600	1.38	73,140	74,603
25 Statutory expenditure	857,695	709,000		778,000	1.10	1,032,240	1,052,885
Title 3 Operational activities	75,085,605	79,617,577		90,472,715	1.14	115,321,631	111,742,156
30 Operations	16,090,786	14,406,375		17,557,862	1.22	17,841,859	15,849,939
31 Operational information technology	40,692,851	45,192,089		53,532,553	1.18	71,465,496	67,845,963
32 Telecommunication costs for operational activities	606,210	1,443,113		1,892,800	1.31	1,839,175	1,875,959
33 Seconded National Experts (Operational) ⁹¹	6,508,092	6,416,000		7,962,000	1.24	9,149,000	9,662,522
34 EPCC	251,499	285,000		300,000	1.05	275,400	280,908
35 Heads of Europol National Units	127,016	145,500		160,000	1.10	163,200	166,464
38 Decryption Platform	1,128,308	512,700		1,000,000	1.95	1,020,000	1,040,400
39 Grants ⁹²	9,680,843	11,216,800		8,067,500	0.72	13,567,500	15,020,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	204,630,257	217,722,400		246,025,103	1.13	290,225,263	297,075,531

⁹¹ Including for 2025 EUR 3M for Short-term SNEs.

⁹² Including for 2025, among others, differentiated payments appropriations amounting to EUR 8 067 500 (EUR 2 362 500 for EMPACT, EUR 120 000 for fighting EURO counterfeiting, EUR 2 400 000 for OTF, EUR 3 000 000 for ATLAS and EUR 185 000 for Innovation grants). This includes EUR 800 000 allocated in the LFS of COM(2023)754 for grants, i.e. EUR 400 000 for EMPACT, and EUR 400 000 for OTF as payment appropriations.

Europol Public Information

Table 3 Budget outturn and cancellation of appropriations 2020-2023 (N-4 – N-2)

Budget outturn	2020	2021	2022	2023
Revenue actually received (+)	160,660,117	177,370,336	201,325,849	217,166,022
Payments made (-)	(132,636,293)	(148,871,757)	(165,414,326)	(191,340,681)
Carry-over of appropriations (-)	(32,201,626)	(37,028,367)	(40,478,220)	(30,754,730)
Cancellation of appropriations carried over (+)	2,471,557	2,926,585	3,802,497	3,737,470
Adjustment for carry-over of assigned revenue appropriations from previous year (+)	5,056,138	10,702,251	11,078,105	7,475,344
Exchange rate differences (+/-)	(424)	(428)	186	(28)
Total	3,349,469	5,098,619	10,314,092	6,283,397

Descriptive information and justification on: Budget outturn

The overall budget result for the financial year 2023 comes to EUR 6 283 397. This includes the following:

- An amount of EUR 454 662 of not committed and lapsed commitment appropriations for non differentiated appropriations;
- An amount of EUR 14 493 of not paid payment appropriations for differentiated appropriations;
- An amount of EUR 3 737 470 of not used payment appropriations carried forward from 2022 to 2023;
- An amount of EUR 2 076 800 cashed for the differentiated appropriations which was not used for the payment appropriations;
- The exchange rate difference in 2023 was EUR 28 (loss).

Cancellation of payment appropriations carried forward

The carry forward to 2023 came to a total of EUR 33 002 876 to cover existing commitments. The final implementation rate of the carry forward was 88.7% at the end of the year. A total of EUR 3 737 470 was not used and is thus incorporated in the final budget outturn.

- EUR 202 640 relates to Title 1, which is 19.1% of the carried forward amount under Title 1 (EUR 1 059 629);
- EUR 534 966 relates to Title 2, which is 13.1% of the carried forward amount under Title 2 (EUR 4 078 648); and
- EUR 2 999 864 relates to Title 3, which is 10.8% of the carried forward amount under Title 3 (EUR 27 864 599).

Annex IV: Human resources quantitative

Table 1: Staff population and its evolution; Overview of all categories of staff

A. Statutory staff and SNE

Staff	Year 2023			Year 2024	Year 2025	Year 2026 ⁹³	Year 2027 ⁹⁶
ESTABLISHMENT PLAN POSTS	Authorised Budget	Actually filled as of 31/12/2023	Occupancy rate %	Authorised staff	Authorised staff	Envisaged staff	Envisaged staff
Administrators (AD)	693	682	98.4%	731	768	885	933
Assistants (AST)	23	22	95.7%	23	23	23	23
Assistants/Secretaries (AST/SC)							
TOTAL ESTABLISHMENT PLAN POSTS	716	704	98.3%	754	791	908	956
EXTERNAL STAFF	FTE corresponding to the authorised budget	Executed FTE as of 31/12/2023 ⁹⁴	Execution rate %	Headcount as of 31/12/2023	FTE corresponding to the authorised budget	Envisaged FTE	Envisaged FTE
Contract Agents (CA)	235	218.4	92.9%	223	260	289	295
Seconded National Experts (SNE)	121	94.3	77.9%	89	132	142	147
TOTAL EXTERNAL STAFF	356	312.7	87.8%	312	392	431	442
TOTAL STAFF	1072	1016.7	94.8%				

⁹³ Figures for 2026 and 2027 in Annexes II, III and IV are indicative and prepared on the basis of Europol's estimated needs 2025-2027, as elaborated in January 2024. The figures will be adjusted once the agency reviews its estimated needs 2026-2027, as part of the draft Programming Document 2026-2028.

⁹⁴ CA financed from the EU contribution: 223 Headcount (218.4 Annual average FTE); CA financed from other sources: 17 Headcount (18.7 Annual average FTE). SNE financed from the EU contribution at 31/12/2023: 55 Headcount (55.7 Annual average FTE) and Short-term costed SNE: 34 Headcount (38.5 Annual average FTE). SNE financed from other sources: 7 Headcount (5.8 Annual average FTE). Cost free SNE: 26 Headcount (26.3 Annual average FTE); SNE Guest Officers: 63 Headcount (75.6 Annual average FTE).

Europol Public Information

B. Additional external staff expected to be financed from grant, contribution or service-level agreements

Human Resources	Year 2024	Year 2025	Year 2026	Year 2027
	Envisaged FTE	Envisaged FTE	Envisaged FTE	Envisaged FTE
Contract Agents (CA)	17	8	5	5
Seconded National Experts (SNE)	8	8	8	8
TOTAL	24	13	10	10

C. Other Human Resources

Structural service providers⁹⁵

	Actually in place as at 31/12/2023
IT	197
Facilities	48
Security	22
Other	4
TOTAL	271

Interim workers

	Total FTEs in year 2023
Number	N/A

⁹⁵ Service providers are contracted by a private company and carry out specialised outsourced tasks of a horizontal/support nature. At the EU Commission, following general criteria should be fulfilled: 1) no individual contract with the EU Commission 2) on the EU Commission premises, usually with a PC and desk 3) administratively followed by the EU Commission (badge, etc.) and 4) contributing to the added value of the EU Commission. Similarly, Europol reports on the number of contractors with IT access.

Europol Public Information

Table 2 – Multi-annual staff policy plan 2025 - 2027

Function group and grade	Year 2023				Year 2024 ⁹⁶		Year 2025		Year 2026 ⁹⁷		Year 2027 ¹⁰⁰	
	Authorised budget		Actually filled as of 31/12		Authorised budget		Authorised budget		Envisaged		Envisaged	
	Permanent posts	Temporary posts	Permanent posts	Temporary posts	Perm. posts	Temp. posts	Perm. posts	Temp. posts	Perm. Posts	Temp. posts	Perm. posts	Temp. posts
AD 16		1		1		1		1		1		1
AD 15				1		1		2		2		2
AD 14		3		2		2		1		1		1
AD 13		2				3		4		5		8
AD 12		11		14		11		11		13		14
AD 11		10		4		11		15		18		21
AD 10		21		20		24		29		35		43
AD 9		47		46		51		62		77		78
AD 8		92		79		105		133		157		194
AD 7		216		225		239		246		267		276
AD 6		282		281		276		242		303		290
AD 5		8		9		7		22		6		5
AD TOTAL		693		682		731		768		885		933
AST 11												
AST 10												
AST 9												
AST 8		1		1		1		1		1		2
AST 7		2		1		3		3		3		3
AST 6		5		5		5		6		6		5
AST 5		4		4		3		2		2		3
AST 4		3		3		3		3		3		3
AST 3		2		3		3		4		4		4
AST 2		6		5		5		4		4		3

⁹⁶ In accordance with Article 38, paragraph 1, of the Decision of the Europol Management Board on the adoption of the Financial Regulation applicable to Europol (EDOC#1032027v6), the Management Board hereby agrees with a modification of the establishment plan, should the interest of the service so require (e.g. in the context of the reclassification exercise), by up to 10% of posts authorised subject to the following conditions:

- a) the volume of staff appropriations corresponding to a full financial year is not affected;
- b) the limit of the total number of posts authorised by the establishment plan is not exceeded;
- c) Europol has taken part in a benchmarking exercise with other Union bodies as initiated by the Commission's staff screening exercise.

⁹⁷ Figures for 2026 and 2027 in Annexes II, III and IV are indicative and prepared on the basis of Europol's estimated needs 2025-2027, as elaborated in January 2024. The figures will be adjusted once the agency reviews its estimated needs 2026-2027, as part of the draft Programming Document 2026-2028.

Europol Public Information

Function group and grade	Year 2023				Year 2024 ⁹⁶		Year 2025		Year 2026 ⁹⁷		Year 2027 ¹⁰⁰	
	Authorised budget		Actually filled as of 31/12		Authorised budget		Authorised budget		Envisaged		Envisaged	
	Permanent posts	Temporary posts	Permanent posts	Temporary posts	Perm. posts	Temp. posts	Perm. posts	Temp. posts	Perm. Posts	Temp. posts	Perm. posts	Temp. posts
AST 1												
AST TOTAL		23		22		23		23		23		23
AST/SC 6												
AST/SC 5												
AST/SC 4												
AST/SC 3												
AST/SC 2												
AST/SC 1												
AST/SC TOTAL												
TOTAL		716		704		754		791		908		956
GRAND TOTAL		716		704		754		791		908		956

External personnel

Contract Agents

Contract agents	FTE corresponding to the authorised budget 2023	Executed FTE as of 31/12/2023	Headcount as of 31/12/2023	FTE corresponding to the authorised budget 2024	FTE corresponding to the authorised budget 2025	FTE envisaged 2026	FTE envisaged 2027
Function Group IV	59	57.3	62	79	84	98	104
Function Group III	118	106.8	109	118	118	122	122
Function Group II	58	54.3	52	58	58	69	69
Function Group I							
TOTAL	235	218.4	223	255	260	289	295

Seconded National Experts

Seconded National Experts	FTE corresponding to the authorised budget 2023	Executed FTE as of 31/12/2023	Headcount as of 31/12/2023	FTE corresponding to the authorised budget 2024	FTE corresponding to the authorised budget 2025	FTE envisaged 2026	FTE envisaged 2027
TOTAL	121	94.3	89	121	132	142	147

Europol Public Information

Table 3 - Recruitment forecasts 2025 following retirement/mobility or new requested posts

(information on the entry level for each type of posts: indicative table)

Job title in the Agency	Type of contract (Official, TA or CA)		TA/Official Function group/grade of recruitment internal (brackets) and external (single grade) foreseen for publication		CA Recruitment Function Group (I, II, III or IV)
	Due to foreseen retirement/mobility	New posts requested due to additional tasks	Internal (brackets)	External (brackets)	
Allocation of new posts / replacement of staff members due to resignation / contract expiry and definition of profiles will be done in line with Europol's mandate and business priorities and on the basis of the MASPP.	<p>Number of anticipated compulsory retirements: 5 (2 TAs and 3 CAs)</p> <p>End of 2nd contracts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TA contracts: 16 (restricted) + 21 potentially (non-restricted – pending outcome of different indefinite contract procedures) - CA contracts: 15 (5 FGII, 7 FGIII and 3 FGIV) 	<p>77 TA posts. This includes 19 posts stemming from amended Europol Regulation, 3 from legislative proposal to prevent and fight migrant smuggling COM(2023) 754 final and 55 as agency request to fulfil tasks for Interoperability (incl. establishing a second data centre), Digital Services Act, Information Exchange Directive and to implement the Strategic Housing Roadmap), of which 15 were granted by the budgetary authority.</p> <p>25 CA posts. This includes 5 posts stemming from the legislative proposal to prevent and fight migrant smuggling COM(2023) 754 final and 20 as agency request to implement the Strategic Housing Roadmap – the latter is not part of the budgetary authority's decision on the establishment plan and corresponding budget for the agency.</p>	Most internal recruitments will be in the brackets AD5-AD12 and AD7-AD12	Most recruitments will be AD6/Specialist or AD7/Senior Specialist	No significant change expected vis-à-vis current CAs.

Number of inter-agency mobility Year 2024 from and to the agency (up to September 2024):

To Europol (in)		To other Agencies (out)	
TA	CA	TA	CA
0	3	13	7

Europol Public Information

Annex V: Human resources qualitative

A. Recruitment policy

Implementing rules in place:

		Yes	No	If no, which other implementing rules are in place
Engagement of CA	Model Decision C(2019)3016	x		
Engagement of TA	Model Decision C(2015)1509		x	Decision of the Management Board of Europol of 28 February 2019 laying down general implementing provisions on the procedures governing the engagement and use of temporary staff under Article 2(f) of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union
Middle management	Model decision C(2018)2542		x	Decision of the Management Board of Europol of 04 October 2019 on middle management staff
Type of posts	Model Decision C(2018)8800	x		
Function of Adviser	Model Decision C(2018) 2209	x		
Others				Decision of the Management Board of Europol of 19 March 2024 defining the Europol posts that can be filled only by staff engaged from the competent authorities of the Member States ("restricted posts") Decision of the Management Board of Europol of 21 March 2023 laying down rules on the secondment of national experts to Europol Rules for the selection, extension of the term of office and removal from office of the Executive Director and Deputy Executive Directors (adopted by the MB)

B. Appraisal and reclassification/promotions

Implementing rules in place:

		Yes	No	If no, which other implementing rules are in place
Reclassification of TA	Model Decision C(2015)9560	X		
Reclassification of CA	Model Decision C(2015)9561	X		
Appraisal of TA	Model Decision C(2015) 1513		X	Commission Decision C(2013)8985 and C(2016) 7270 (automatic entry into force)

Europol Public Information

Appraisal of CA	Model Decision C(2015) 1456		X	Commission Decision C(2014)2226 (earlier entry into force by means of Management Board Decision of 3 December 2014)
Others				Decision of the Management Board of Europol on the appraisal, probationary period and management trial period of the Executive Director and Deputy Executive Directors.

Table 1 - Reclassification of TA/promotion of officials

Grades	Average seniority in the grade among reclassified staff						
	Year 2020	Year 2021	Year 2022	Year 2023	Year 2024	Actual average over 5 years	Average over 5 years (According to Decision C(2015)9560)
AD05	4.0			5.3			2.8
AD06	5.0	4.8	5.3	5.0	5.6		2.8
AD07	5.2	5.2	5.3	5.0	4.6		2.8
AD08	5.8	7.1	5.8	7.3	5.6		3
AD09	7.2	8.2	3.9	3.9	6.8		4
AD10		6.8	7	10	6.0		4
AD11			5.5	6.8			4
AD12					6.3		6.7
AD13							6.7
AST1							3
AST2				6.8			3
AST3				4.4			3
AST4	2.3	3.4		9.0			3
AST5			5.71	3.25	4.7		4
AST6							4
AST7		8.0					4
AST8							4
AST9							N/A
AST10 (Senior assistant)							5
AST/SC1							4
AST/SC2							5
AST/SC3							5.9
AST/SC4							6.7
AST/SC5							8.3

Europol Public Information

Table 2 -Reclassification of contract staff

Function Group	Grade	Staff in activity at 1.01.2023	How many staff members were reclassified in Year 2024	Average number of years in grade of reclassified staff members	Average number of years in grade of reclassified staff members according to decision C(2015)9561
CA IV	17	5			N.A
	16	14	1	5.8	Between 5 and 7 years
	15	12	1	5.0	Between 4 and 6 years
	14	35	6	3.9	Between 3 and 5 years
	13	9			Between 3 and 5 years
CA III	12	25			N.A
	11	21	2	6.0	Between 6 and 10 years
	10	23	5	4.5	Between 5 and 7 years
	9	34	3	6.3	Between 4 and 6 years
	8	5	3	3.6	Between 3 and 5 years
CA II	7	6			N.A
	6	15	2	4.5	Between 6 and 10 years
	5	25	4	4.9	Between 5 and 7 years
	4	4	1	2.8	Between 3 and 5 years
CA I	2				Between 6 and 10 years
	1				Between 3 and 5 years

Europol Public Information

C. Gender representation

Table 1 - Data on 31/12/2023 - statutory staff (only officials, TA and CA)

		Official		Temporary		Contract Agents		Grand Total	
		Staff	%	Staff	%	Staff	%	Staff	%
Female	Administrator level			184	92%				
	Assistant level (AST & AST/SC)			17	8%				
	Total			201	30%	124	52%	325	36%
Male	Administrator level			465	99%				
	Assistant level (AST & AST/SC)			5	1%				
	Total			470	70%	116	48%	586	64%
Grand Total			671	100%	240	100%	911	100%	

Table 2 - Data regarding gender evolution over 5 years of Middle and Senior management⁹⁸

	2019		2023	
	Number	%	Number	%
Female Managers	5	16%	8	22%
Male Managers	27	84%	28	78%

⁹⁸ Staff defined as middle manager by the applicable General Implementing provisions on middle management.

Europol Public Information

D. Geographical Balance

Explanatory figures to highlight nationalities of staff (split per Administrator/CA FG IV and Assistant /CA FG I, II, III)

Table 1 - Table on 31/12/2023 - statutory staff only (officials, AD and CA)

Nationality	AD + CA FG IV		AST/SC- AST + CA FGI/CA FGII/CA FGIII		TOTAL	
	Number	% of total staff members in AD and FG IV categories	Number	% of total staff members in AST SC/AST and FG I, II and III categories	Number	% of total staff
Austria	8	1%	0	0%	8	0.9%
Belgium	39	5%	4	2%	43	4.7%
Bulgaria	21	3%	8	4%	29	3.2%
Croatia	16	2%	2	1%	18	2.0%
Cyprus	7	1%	0	0%	7	0.8%
Czech Republic	6	1%	2	1%	8	0.9%
Denmark	0	0%	0	0%	0	0.0%
Estonia	5	1%	0	0%	5	0.5%
Finland	13	2%	2	1%	15	1.6%
France	47	7%	3	2%	50	5.5%
Germany	48	7%	4	2%	52	5.7%
Greece	71	10%	12	6%	83	9.1%
Hungary	17	2%	9	5%	26	2.9%
Ireland	11	2%	3	2%	14	1.5%
Italy	69	10%	13	7%	82	9.0%
Latvia	3	0%	2	1%	5	0.5%
Lithuania	13	2%	7	4%	20	2.2%
Luxembourg	0	0%	1	1%	1	0.1%
Malta	2	0%	0	0%	2	0.2%
Netherlands	65	9%	57	30%	122	13.4%
Poland	29	4%	4	2%	33	3.6%
Portugal	32	4%	8	4%	40	4.4%
Romania	84	12%	27	14%	111	12.2%
Slovakia	6	1%	1	1%	7	0.8%
Slovenia	10	1%	2	1%	12	1.3%
Spain	86	12%	16	9%	102	11.2%
Sweden	12	2%	1	1%	13	1.4%
<i>United Kingdom</i>	3	0%	0	0%	3	0.3%
TOTAL	723	100%	188	100%	911	100%

Table 2 - Evolution over 5 years of the most represented nationality in the agency

Most represented nationality	2019		2023	
	Number	%	Number	%
The Netherlands	99	13%	122	13%

In case of significant continuous imbalance, please explain and detail action plan implemented in the agency: N/A

Europol Public Information

E. Schooling

Agreement in place with the European School(s) of The Hague				
Contribution agreements signed with the EC on type I European schools	Yes		No	X
Contribution agreements ⁹⁹ signed with the EC on type II European schools	Yes	X	No	
Number of service contracts in place with international schools:	N/A			
Description of any other solutions or actions in place: N/A				

⁹⁹ A *Contribution Agreement* was concluded between the European Commission and Stichting Het Rijnlands Lyceum to define the conditions for payment of the *EU Contribution* for pupils of Europol staff enrolled in the European School in The Hague. A *Mandate and Service Agreement* was concluded between Europol and the European Commission to define the collaboration with respect to the implementation of the aforementioned *EU Contribution*.

Annex VI: Environment management

1. Context of the agency and its environmental management strategy

Europol recognises its responsibility for making a positive contribution to sustainable development and commits itself to protect the environment by limiting the environmental impact of its activities and to continuously improve its environmental performance.



2. Overview of the agency's Environmental Management System

Europol uses and maintains an Environmental Management System (EMS), implemented in line with the requirements of EMAS and ISO 14001:2015. Its components, scope, responsibilities, activities of yearly cycle, processes and related EMS documentation are documented in the *Environmental Management System Manual* (Europol internal document). The EMAS process descriptions are integrated in the Europol process landscape.

The implementation of EMAS directly supports Europol's Strategy "Delivering Security in Partnership", and in particular, the strategic priority number 6, which is to 'be the model EU organisation for law enforcement cooperation'. EMAS also supports Europol in its commitment to contribute to the EU Green Deal's main objective of a climate neutral Europe by 2050.

3. Environmental areas, indicators and targets

Europol's activities, products and services have both direct and indirect impacts on the environment. Under EMAS, Europol monitors those activities and significant environmental aspects that influence Europol's carbon footprint and impact for environment. In particular, the **environmental areas** defined in the EMS and implemented at Europol, are the following:

- Carbon footprint
- Energy efficiency
- Water consumption
- Waste management (separation and generation)
- Paper consumption
- Sustainable procurement (green public procurement)
- Biodiversity

Europol's **Environmental Vision 2030** was finalised and approved by Europol management and the Management Board in July 2023. The Vision establishes the organisational long-term ambitions and objectives and also addresses a set of short to mid-term measures that support the new EMAS perspective 2023- 2025.

The agency has committed to reducing its emissions by 55% by 2030 compared to 2018. Since the vast majority of Europol's emissions (more than 95%) are related to business travel, in particular flights, rationalising the carbon emissions management policy is treated as a priority.

This strategy is intended to contribute to the goals of the EU Green Deal and to guide Europol's development with respect to the environment by taking into account the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) due to the climate change.

The main pillars of the strategy are the following:

- Sustainable business travel;
- Sustainable meetings and events;
- Zero-emission vehicle fleet;
- Efficient use of the building.

For each pillar, specific initiatives and measures have been defined that will ultimately support the sustainable development of the agency and help achieve its environmental vision.

Europol Public Information

In the beginning of 2024, Europol published its third updated environmental statement demonstrating the implementation of EMAS at Europol and the agency's environmental performance for 2022. Additionally, the collection of the environmental performance data for 2023 was completed and the environmental performance evaluation is currently being finalised.

Furthermore, the first Travel Emissions report to be delivered in 2024 covering the period of January to April 2024 was developed and submitted to Management¹⁰⁰.

4. Actions to improve and communicate environmental performance

Europol has an action plan in place, which defines three areas for sustainable and environmental improvement:

- *Structural environmental management and compliance*; relates to the periodic activities pertaining to environmental management, including communication, which are necessary for the EMS maintenance;
- *Sustainable operations*; is the overall reduction of the carbon footprint and improved environmental performance by implementing organisational measures to reduce water, energy and paper consumption, waste generation and improved waste separation, reduce CO2 impact of business related travel, as well as employing sustainable procurement processes and awareness raising activities e.g. on promoting virtual meetings;
- *Social responsibility*; includes initiatives to small-scale nature development possibilities in the direct surrounding of Europol's accommodation.

The aim is to implement environmentally friendly measures to improve the environmental performance of the organisation and organise the involved processes in a sustainable manner, with the support of EMAS and implemented EMS tools.

Integral elements of the actions for improving environmental performance and in support of the implementation of the Environmental Vision 2030 are the following:

- A Carbon Emissions Management Policy along with the respective Policy Implementation Guidance. The policy provides a framework for the management and reduction of Europol's carbon emissions associated with business travel in order to adhere to the decarbonisation pathway (i.e., the gradual annual reduction of the GHG emissions) and to achieve the decarbonisation target by 2030 (reduce 55% Europol's carbon emissions). The policy introduces, amongst other measures, carbon budgeting, which serves the purpose of integrating carbon footprint considerations into the financial business travel planning and management. The Implementation Guidance document provides supplementary guidelines to be considered when making decisions about business travel and meetings or events requiring travel of both Europol and non-Europol staff.
- Monthly reporting on Business Travel for all Directorates to support the monitoring of the carbon emissions and future annual carbon budget allocation; the aforementioned Carbon Emissions Management Policy, calls for systematic and periodic tracking and reporting of emissions generated due to business travel. The monthly reporting is based on tools and templates¹⁰¹ that have been developed to address the policy requirement and provide information on Europol's progress against the target of achieving the adopted Environmental Vision 2030.

¹⁰⁰ This is the product of the newly developed reporting tool and templates to address the Carbon Emissions Management policy requirement and provide information on Europol's progress against the target of achieving the adopted Environmental Vision 2030.

¹⁰¹ It is noted that these tools are an interim solution until Europol launches a tender procedure for a new Events and Travel Services Provider.

Europol Public Information

- New template for the collection of the Business Travel Data.
- Environmental criteria for travel and event services providers.
- Reporting requirements for travel and event services providers.
- Green Events guide (for internal use).
- Information for external visitors communicating Europol environmental objectives.

Europol's intended actions can be summarised as follows:

- Maintaining of EMAS certification:
 - Implement the annual Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle (PDCA);
 - Conduct annual internal and external audits (surveillance and re-certification);
 - Conduct a legal compliance audit and update of the legal register;
 - Prepare and publish annually the Environmental Statements demonstrating the implementation of EMAS at Europol and the agency's environmental performance for the previous year.
 - Implementing its *Environmental Vision 2030*, particularly by implementing the supporting actions of its short to mid-term action plan (2023-2025).
- In cooperation with the Central Government Real Estate Agency (CGREA) of the Host State, implement various actions significantly improving environmental aspects pertaining to the operation of Europol's building such as energy and gas efficiency, water and waste management.
- Continue to include and consider EMAS and organisations' environmental requirements in the development process of Strategic Housing Roadmap (referred to in Annex VII).

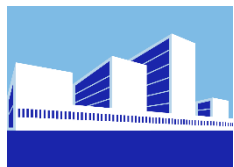
Europol Public Information

Annex VII: Buildings – year 2025

#	Building Name and type	Location	SURFACE AREA (in m ²)			RENTAL CONTRACT					Host country (grant or support)
			Office space	non-office	Total	RENT (€/year)	Duration of the contract	Type	Breakout clause Y/N	Conditions attached to the breakout clause (if applicable)	
1	Headquarters	Eisenhowerlaan 73, 2517 KK, The Hague Netherlands			32,500	N/A	20 years	Lease agreement			Host State support by providing and maintaining the accommodation regarding the owner related elements.
2	Temporary Satellite Building 1	Jan Willem Frisolaan 13, 2517 JS The Hague			2,700	N/A	4 years	Lease agreement			Host State support by providing and maintaining the accommodation regarding the owner and user related elements. The Lease agreement has been prolonged until the delivery / operational usage of Temporary Satellite Building 2 (TSB2) or Temporary Satellite Building 3 (TSB3), Phase 1.
TOTAL											

Building projects in planning phase:

Strategic Housing Roadmap (SHR)



a larger time span until 2045.

In 2011, the Host State delivered the Headquarters (HQ1) with 850 workplaces and 750 conference and training seats. Since then, the capacity of the HQ1 was optimised into 1,025 workplaces to cover the organisational growth and new business demands. In 2016, the Host State and Europol established a Strategic Housing Roadmap (SHR) Programme¹⁰² to be implemented during the period 2016 – 2031. The main objective of the SHR is to proactively align Europol's growth and new business demands with the housing needs of the organisation, enabling timely planning and development of the necessary housing solutions. The SHR enables the necessary updating and planning of real estate developments covering

¹⁰² In line with the recommendations of the ECA report "Office accommodation of EU institutions – Some good management practices but also various weaknesses" of 2018, the Host State and Europol will maintain a strong SHR Programme governance structure, including a formalised cost demarcation.

Europol Public Information

The provision of 500 temporary workplaces, additional meeting rooms and other related facilities is of high importance until the implementation of the Long-Term Housing Measures, which is the delivery of a second headquarters. This provision is essential for supporting organisational growth and new business demands and making the construction works of the Mid-Term Housing Solution in the HQ1 possible.

An overall minimum capacity of 2,100 permanent workplaces (WP) is essential, for up to 2,500 users until 2045, taking into account the flex ratio of 0.8 (1 FTE: 0.8 WP). In 2023, Europol implemented this flex ratio of 0.8 in the office environment by applying a flexible office concept in combination with hybrid working. These figures will be analysed regularly against the organisational growth and new business demands.

Mid-Term Housing Solution (HQ1)

Via the Mid-Term Housing Solution - MTHS (HQ1), the spaces (m²/m³) in the building will be further optimised to increase workplace capacity, meeting spaces and other supporting spatial functions. This will help accommodate organisational growth, support new working arrangements, as well as provide agile and hybrid workplace solutions (physical workplaces in combination with teleworking solutions).

The total number of physical workplaces foreseen to be realised in the office environment is 1,077 functional workplaces, including 48 silent workplaces and 30 meeting rooms, with a total capacity of 144 seats. Additionally, 58 workplaces will be created via a new Operational Coordination Centre, including 2 meeting rooms, with a capacity of 10 seats each, while the number of meeting seats in the conference and restaurant area will be increased, aligned to the overall new capacity of the building and the number of daily users.

The Mid-Term Housing Solution Project is in progress and the Host State foresees the actual construction works to be executed during the period 2026 – 2028. The availability of the Temporary Satellite Buildings TSB2 and TSB3 is a precondition to start the construction works in the headquarters.

Temporary Satellite Building 1

Temporary Satellite Building 1, in The Hague, was delivered in 2019. The lease of the building expired on 31 December 2023 and was prolonged via an addendum signed by the Host State and Europol for a period of maximum 2 years (1 January 2024 - 31 December 2025).

As the lease cannot be prolonged after this period, the Host State is establishing a Temporary Satellite Building 3 (TSB3) as replacement for this building.

The Re-Commissioning process of the building is in progress.

Temporary Satellite Building 2

In October 2022, the Management Board of Europol endorsed the offer of the Host State to develop a second office building in The Hague, as Temporary Satellite Building 2.

The building is located within the International Zone in The Hague, easily accessible to/from the headquarters. The building's quality location offers the opportunity to implement the security measures in the public surroundings, inside the building and on its premises. The gross floor space is 2,823 m²; the building consists of 5 storeys and supports the accommodation of 150 workplaces, the Energy label is A++. The distance from the headquarters is 700 metres.

The project is ongoing and the Construction Process is in progress. The delivery of the building is forecasted in Q3/2025.

Temporary Satellite Building 3

In October 2023, the Management Board of Europol endorsed the Host State's offer to develop a third office building in The Hague, as Temporary Satellite Building 3 (TSB3) to replace TSB1.

The building is built in 1989, renovated in 2009 and is provided with Energy label A+. The gross floor space is 9.148 m², consist of 5 storeys and the capacity is 280 workplaces, plus spatial supporting functions (e.g. meeting rooms, catering facilities). The distance from the headquarters is 800 metres and the building is adjacent to the International Zone. The location offers opportunities to implement the security measures in the public surroundings, inside the building and on its premises.

The building will be developed in a shortened period, by following an agile development process. Phase 1 and 2 are forecasted, respectively, to be completed in Q3/2025 and Q3/2026.

Long-Term Housing Measures (HQ2)

Based on Europol's growth and the supporting spatial needs this entails, the Host State purchased an office building in 2019 in The Hague, to become the future HQ2.

Work to establish the project scope and objectives of this building's development process is underway. A security assessment on how Europol's security measures can be implemented in the building and its public surrounding, as well a Feasibility Study on the number of workplaces and spatial supporting functions that can be realised in the building are in progress.

In parallel, the Host State has elaborated a study, being performed by the University of Amsterdam (UVA), on the building's cultural heritage in relation to the "International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia", as this organisation was the previous user.

Information from these three components together are required to understand if Europol's Programme of Requirements can be implemented in the building developed by the Host State via the Long-Term Housing Measures.

Toren van Oud, Low-rise building

The Toren van Oud is an adjacent building near the headquarters and redeveloped in 2020. The building consists of a tower with apartments and a low-rise building, with a gross surface of 710 m² for redevelopment. Since the development of the headquarters, the low-rise building was marked by Europol as a serious security and safety concern.

In 2023, the Host State was able to establish a lease for utilising the low-rise building. These spaces will be used to relocate some supporting services from the headquarters to the low-rise building. Originally it was foreseen that these services would be relocated via the Long-Term Housing Measures in HQ2. Via this solution, more space will become available in HQ2 for workplaces, and the security and safety concerns regarding the Toren van Oud will be mitigated.

The project is in progress and the forecast to deliver the low-rise building is Q1/2027.

Hot Data Centre (HDC)

Europol's Programme of Requirements of the Long-Term Housing Measures includes a second high-availability (Hot) Data Centre. As both buildings HQ1 and HQ2 are connected to the same electricity grid in The Hague, Europol requested the Host State to establish this data centre at a different, highly secure location in the Netherlands in 2021.

The location search is ongoing and the Host State initially proposed three locations in 2023: two of them are being actively investigated, and the third one remains as a fall-back option should the other two locations not be deemed appropriate. The main aspect which

Europol Public Information

influences the selection process is the latency of the data connection with the headquarters in The Hague.

The establishment of a (Hot) Data Centre is of key importance for the agency, in order to ensure business continuity of the current information systems towards the Member States and Third Parties.

The results of these locations' studies are expected in 2024 and the project is foreseen to start in 2026.

Satellite Locations Member States

Data Recovery Site Austria

Europol's Data Recovery Site is hosted at a location owned by the Republic of Austria. The lease agreement has been renewed in 2021 by an Addendum, for a period of 5 years, starting as of 1 August 2021 until 31 July 2026. The Data Recovery Site is used to continuously store a backup of Europol's data and is therefore important for Europol's ICT business continuity.

Brussels Office

Due to the increased interaction with EU institutions and other EU agencies, a Europol office in Brussels was established in 2019. The office is located within the Council building. The administrative Arrangement with the General Secretariat of the Council was signed in 2018, and is extended tacitly, unless terminated by a party with six months written notice.

Europol Decryption Platform

The European Commission, represented by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) and Europol, established a Service Level Agreement (SLA) in 2019. This SLA regulates the setup and maintenance of a high-performance computing platform for decryption, located in one of the JRC's premises. The services are operational since 2021.

Satellite Locations Strategic Partners

Interpol Office

Europol and Interpol have Liaison Bureaux accommodated in each other's headquarters. The Europol Liaison Bureau is positioned in the Interpol headquarters at 200 Quai Charles de Gaulle, 69006 Lyon, France.

Washington D.C. Office

In order to facilitate interaction with US partners and other institutions based in the US, a Europol Liaison Office was established, located at the premises of the European External Action Service Delegation in Washington D.C., USA.

Annex VIII: Privileges and immunities

Agency privileges	Privileges granted to staff	
	Protocol of privileges and immunities / diplomatic status	Education / day care
<p>According to Article 63(1) Europol Regulation the Protocol on Privileges and Immunities of the European Union ("Protocol No. 7"¹⁰³ to the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union) applies to Europol. The Protocol is supplemented by the Agreement of 15 October 1998 between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Europol concerning the Headquarters of Europol (<i>see Art. 70 Europol Regulation</i>).</p>	<p>According to Article 63(1) Europol Regulation the following legal acts apply to Europol's staff (including the Executive Director and the Deputy Executive Directors):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protocol on Privileges and Immunities of the European Union ("Protocol No. 7" to the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU) - Regulation (Euratom, ECSC, EEC) No. 549/69 of 25 March 1969 determining the categories of officials and other servants of the European Communities to whom the provisions of Article 12, the second paragraph of Article 13 and Article 14 of the Protocol on the Privileges and Immunities of the Communities apply (as last amended by Regulation (EC) No. 371/2009 of 27 November 2008) <p>Protocol and Regulation are supplemented by the Agreement of 15 October 1998 between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Europol concerning the Headquarters of Europol (<i>see Art. 70 Europol Regulation</i>), which is itself supplemented regarding staff privileges and immunities by a number of <i>Notes Verbales</i> some specific to Europol and others directed towards all international and EU organisations in The Netherlands. The most significant of these is an exchange of <i>Notes Verbales</i> of 25 October 2007.</p>	<p>Europol staff members are eligible to receive national childcare and education allowances provided that they satisfy the criteria imposed by the applicable Dutch laws and regulations.</p>

¹⁰³ Please note: Protocol No. 7 has been renumbered, compared to the Protocol on Privileges and Immunities of the European Communities. Its Article 15 empowers the European Parliament and the Council to determine acting by means of regulations the categories of officials and other servants of the Union to whom the provisions of Article 11, the second paragraph of Article 12, and Article 13 of this Protocol shall apply, in whole or in part. -Regulation No. 549/69 (see above) has not been amended following the entry into force of the new Protocol No. 7 (1 Dec. 2009), thus still contains the references to the old numbering.

Annex IX: Evaluations

From an overall perspective, evaluation activities are an integral part of Europol's governance set-up. Europol assesses the recommendations, observations and opportunities for improvement put forward during internal and external audits, inspections and other review or supervisory activities, which are facilitated by the agency. The implementation of corresponding action plans is monitored and reported upon, including in the CAAR.

Internal monitoring & evaluation

Europol management monitors the implementation status of all planned actions, projects and indicators on a quarterly basis, to assess the overall progress and to take corrective actions where needed.

The **Consolidated Annual Activity Report (CAAR)** is submitted on behalf of the Executive Director of Europol to the Management Board (MB) and presents the activities performed to implement the annual Work Programme. The document provides an overview of the extent to which the annual objectives were achieved, information about the budget implementation, human resources, risk management activities, efficiency and effectiveness of the internal control system and audit results. All building blocks of assurance are also included in the report. An analysis and assessment of the CAAR is made by the MB.

Internal Audit Capability (IAC)

The function and role of the IAC are enshrined in Article 78 of the Financial Regulation applicable to Europol and defined further in the IAC Charter. The mission of the IAC is to enhance and protect Europol's organisational value, by providing risk-based and objective assurance, advice and insight. The IAC helps Europol in accomplishing its objectives by bringing a systematic and disciplined approach to evaluate the effectiveness of risk management, control, and governance processes, and by issuing recommendations for their improvement, thereby promoting a culture of efficient and effective management within Europol.

As part of its audit work, the IAC issues recommendations and opportunities for improvement. Europol has a system in place to develop and monitor the implementation of actions to address the risks identified by the IAC and reports in the CAAR on the progress achieved in implementing the audit recommendations.

Data Protection Function (DPF)

The tasks of the Data Protection Officer (DPO) are provided in Article 41 of the Europol Regulation and the related MB Implementing Rules. The DPO and Head of the Data Protection Function (DPF) is accountable to the MB and has to ensure, in an independent manner, that the processing of personal data by Europol, including personal data relating to staff members, is done in a way that is both lawful and in compliance with the provisions set out in the Europol Regulation. According to his mission the DPO provides objective assurance and consultation, which is designed to add value to and improve Europol's data processing operations. In the performance of his duties the DPO is supported by the DPF.

The protection of personal data remains a key factor that enables Europol to successfully fulfil its mission. Europol's tailor-made data protection framework is widely recognised as adhering to the highest standards of data protection in law enforcement. It is designed to serve the needs of the operational units in preventing and combating serious and organised crime and terrorism, while simultaneously protecting the personal data processed in Europol's systems. In addition to law enforcement data, the DPO also ensures the protection of Europol staff data as determined by Regulation (EC) No 2018/1725¹⁰⁴.

¹⁰⁴ Regulation (EC) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data.

Europol Public Information

External monitoring & evaluation

The **Internal Audit Service (IAS)**, supported by the IAC and Europol, regularly performs a risk assessment on Europol's governance, administrative and support process areas, with a view to identifying the overall risk profile of these processes outside the core business area. On the basis of the IAS risk assessment concerning Europol's governance, administrative and support processes, the IAS issues a multi-annual IAS Strategic Internal Audit Plan (SIAP) for Europol, which is presented to the Europol Management Board and subsequently implemented by corresponding IAS audit engagements at Europol. The last risk assessment was concluded in 2022 with the SIAP 2022-2024 for Europol. The next risk assessment and SIAP is envisaged in 2025.

The **European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS)** exercises continuous inspection and oversight activities at Europol which also involve the Data Protection Function (DPF) of Europol.

The **European Court of Auditors (ECA)** conducts in particular annual audits on the accounts of Europol to issue a statement of assurance on the reliability of the annual accounts, and the legality of regularity of the underlying transactions. In addition to the examination of the annual accounts, the ECA examines topics of horizontal nature across EU Agencies. The ECA also conducts performance and ad-hoc audit engagements with respect to the mandate of Europol.

An **independent external auditor** also verifies that the annual accounts of Europol present fairly, in all materials aspects, the revenue, expenditure and financial position of Europol at the end of the respective financial year, in line with Article 104 of the Financial Regulation (FR) applicable to Europol. The findings and related audit opinion of the external audit inform the statement of assurance in the annual report of the ECA.

Ad-hoc evaluations

Evaluations planned for a specific year are referred to in the Annual Work Programme.

Annex X: Strategy for the organisational management and internal control systems

The renewed Europol Strategy sets out the strategic direction for Europol and the six strategic priorities. Europol's **Internal Control System (ICS)** is a key component to help deliver the renewed Europol Strategy and achieve the corresponding objectives for Europol.

Organisational management

The Executive Director is responsible for the implementation of the tasks assigned to Europol and puts in place the necessary organisational structure and the ICS. The Executive Director is supported in the design and implementation of internal controls by the Deputy Executive Director in charge of the Governance Directorate, as the directorate member in charge of risk management and internal control, senior management, the Internal Control Coordinator (ICC), (IT) security, financial actors and the planning and performance and process management functions. The Management Board and independent functions have a distinct role in Europol's administrative and management structure.

Organisational management is designed in line with the applicable regulatory framework and integrates the Three Lines of Defence model with specialised (support) functions, a dedicated risk management and compliance function, a Fundamental Rights Officer (FRO), an Internal Audit Capability (IAC), an Accounting Officer (ACCO), a Data Protection Officer (DPO).

Internal Control System (ICS)

The **ICS** translates the **Europol Internal Control Framework (ICF)**, adopted by the Management Board, and which was developed in line with the COSO Integrated Internal Control Framework and the ICF of the European Commission. Europol's ICS represents the system of controls including the regulatory instruments, delegations, processes, resources (technical and human) and organisational structure to enable Europol to achieve its strategy and objectives.

The ICS aims at providing reasonable assurance regarding the achievement of the elements of internal control, as set out in the FR applicable to Europol, with regard to the implementation of the budget, namely:

- a. effectiveness, efficiency and economy of operations;
- b. reliability of reporting;
- c. safeguarding of assets and information;
- d. prevention, detection, correction and follow-up of fraud and irregularities;
- e. adequate management of the risks relating to the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions, taking into account the (multi-) annual character of programmes as well as the nature of the payments concerned.

The Europol ICF consists of five components¹⁰⁵ and seventeen principles - underpinned by fifty-eight so-called 'Points of Focus'¹⁰⁶ - to achieve the operational, reporting and compliance objectives.

Europol continuously monitors, using both quantitative and qualitative measurements including a set of internal control indicators and an annual assessment, the functioning of the ICS to determine whether each of the five components of internal control, including the underlying principles, is present and functioning and whether the components operate in an integrated manner and effectively reduce, to an acceptable level, the risk of not achieving the (multi-) annual objectives - relating to the operations, reporting, and compliance. Europol

¹⁰⁵ (1) Control environment, (2) Risk assessment, (3) Control activities, (4) Information and communication, (5) Monitoring activities

¹⁰⁶ Important characteristics of the internal control principles

Europol Public Information

also assesses the costs and benefits of control. Improvements identified in the annual assessment of the ICS set the strategy for the further development of the existing internal controls on an annual basis. Dedicated tooling for the management of internal controls, risks, compliance and internal audits will be further scoped and implemented as of 2025, moving forward.

Further to the control environment, control activities, management of information and communication as well as monitoring activities, a **corporate risk management** process aggregates and assesses risks (including the related responses) at organisational level. Risk management is expanded from a vertical (e.g. in departments or programmes/projects) to a horizontal perspective (corporate, organisational wide view) in line with the four principles and related points of focus of the risk assessment component, and Europol's risk management policy and process, whereby corporate risks are considered internally by Europol at regular intervals throughout the year and on an immediate ad hoc basis in the event of the identification of corporate risks which are of a time-critical or high impact nature.

Measures to prevent cases of conflict of interest, irregularities and fraud include a robust ethics framework and dedicated rules and guidance, including mechanisms to report issues, management supervision and delegations - observing the segregation of duties and sound financial management principles, monitoring and regular reporting, ex-ante and ex-post controls and anti-fraud risk assessment and specific actions. Europol has an Internal Investigations Service (IIS) to investigate suspected breaches of professional obligations.

Anti-Fraud Strategy

The Anti-Fraud Strategy 2022-2024, adopted by the Management Board in March 2022 was implemented throughout 2022 and 2024. This Strategy set out the identified anti-fraud objectives and corresponding measures (such as regular awareness sessions, management of sensitive functions, conflict of interest management), including based on a fraud risk assessment, making use of the common fraud risk scenarios developed OLAF.

A review is currently ongoing and the revised Anti-Fraud Strategy is planned to be adopted by the Management Board in 2025.

Europol Public Information

Annex XI: Grants

A. Grant, Contribution and Service-level Agreements resulting in revenue and additional budget

	General information					Financial and HR impacts								
	Date of signature	Total amount	Duration	Counterpart	Short description	N-1 (2024)		N (2025)		N+1 (2026)		N+2 (2027)		
Grant agreements														
1. H2020 - STARLIGHT 101021797 - part of consortium coordinated by CEA, FR	05/05/2021 (starting date 1/10/2021)	17,000,000 for the consortium of which 891,200 for Europol	48 months	European Commission Research Executive Agency	Sustainable Autonomy and Resilience for LEAs using AI against High priority Threats	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA
							222,800	222,800	167,100	167,100	-	-	-	-
						Number of CAs	3		3		0		0	
						Number of SNEs	0		0		0		0	
Total grant agreements						Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA
							222,800	222,800	167,100	167,100	-	-	-	-
						Number of CAs	3		3		0		0	
						Number of SNEs	0		0		0		0	
Contribution agreements														
1. EaP EMPACT ENI/2020 / 416-376	11/06/2020 (starting date 1/7/2020)	2,500,000	54 months (extension of 6 months)	European Commission DG Near	Fighting organised crime in the EaP region	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA
							555,556	555,556	-	-	-	-	-	-
						Number of CAs	2		0		0		0	
						Number of SNEs	0		0		0		0	
2. SIRIUS phase 2 New Agreement	21/12/2020 (starting date 1/1/2021)	3,491,891.50 (2,160,441.25 Europol, 1,331,450.25 Eurojust)	48 months (6 months extension)	European Commission Service for Foreign Policy Instruments	International Digital Cooperation - Cross border access to electronic evidence	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA
							540,110	540,110	-	-	-	-	-	-
						Number of CAs	7		0		0		0	
						Number of SNEs	0		0		0		0	
Total contribution agreements						Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA
							1,095,666	1,095,666	-	-	-	-	-	-
						Number of CAs	9		0		0		0	
						Number of SNEs	0		0		0		0	

Europol Public Information

General information														
Date of signature	Total amount	Duration	Counterpart	Short description	N-1 (2024)		N (2025)		N+1 (2026)		N+2 (2027)			
Service-level agreements														
1. EUIPO - IP Crime and Fraud	26/07/2023 (starting date 1/1/2024)	maximum 4,120,000 (1,030,000 per year)	48 months	The European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO)	To support law enforcement authorities preventing crime and fraud related to Intellectual Property Rights	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA
							1,030,000	1,030,000	1,030,000	1,030,000	1,030,000	1,030,000	1,030,000	
						Number of CAs	2		2		2		2	
						8		8		8		8		
2. The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (funded via Contribution Agreement with DG Near)	05/08/2020	850,000	Maximum duration until 30/9/2024	The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training	EUROMED POLICE V (Contract No. ENI/2020/414-940), WB PaCT (Contract No. 2019/413-822) and TOPCOP (Contract No. ENI/2020/415-941) projects	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA
							100,000	100,000	-	-	-	-	-	-
						Number of CAs	2		0		0		0	
						0		0		0		0		
3. The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (funded via Contribution Agreement with DG Near)	01/04/2024	390,000	48 months	The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training	Western Balkans Partnership Against Crime and Terrorism - WB PACT II (Contract No. ...)	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA
							73,125	73,125	97,500	97,500	97,500	97,500	97,500	97,500
						Number of CAs	1		1		1		1	
						0		0		0		0		
4. The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (funded via Contribution Agreement with DG Near)	01/07/2024	390,000	48 months	The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training	Training and Operational Partnership against Organised Crime (TOPCOP) II (Contract No. 700001970)	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA
							48,750	48,750	97,500	97,500	97,500	97,500	97,500	97,500
						Number of CAs	1		1		1		1	
						0		0		0		0		
5. The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (funded via Contribution Agreement with DG Near)	01/10/2024	390,000	48 months	The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training	EUROMED Police VI (Contract No. 700002160)	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA
							24,375	24,375	97,500	97,500	97,500	97,500	97,500	97,500
						Number of CAs	1		1		1		1	
						0		0		0		0		
Total service-level agreements						Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA
							1,276,250	1,276,250	1,322,500	1,322,500	1,322,500	1,322,500	1,322,500	1,322,500
						Number of CAs	5*		5		5		5	
						8		8		8		8		
TOTAL AGREEMENTS						Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA
							2,594,716	2,594,716	1,489,600	1,489,600	1,322,500	1,322,500	1,322,500	1,322,500
						Number of CAs	17*		8		5		5	
						8		8		8		8		

* the total for CAs under the SLAs is adjusted to take into account that the 2 CAs under SLA 2 are also included in SLA 3 and SLA 5. This concerns a continuation of the previous actions and the staff continues to work on the next phase of the action.

B. Grants to be awarded

In 2023, Europol modified its financial management system in order to create differentiated appropriations which allow Europol to award grants on multi-annual basis.

The reasoning behind this change was threefold:

- From an internal perspective, running grant schemes under strictly annual budgets ("non-differentiated appropriations") was causing more and more challenges, especially because grants must be closed before the end of year N+1 and the peaks in workload are difficult to manage with limited staff resources.
- Publishing invitations for two years will enable the organisation to re-use the unspent funds in a more systematic way and will consequently decrease the lapsed budget in the grant area.
- From an external perspective, Europol's beneficiaries, mainly the EU MS law-enforcement community (law-enforcement public bodies such as police, criminal investigation offices, gendarmerie, border guards, customs, etc.) were seeking possibilities for multi-annual funding and planning. As an example, for EMPACT, the Council requested Europol to introduce grants that run over multiple years, in support of the development of multi-annual Operation Action Plans (OAP) and similar signals are received from the ATLAS community.

From 2024 onwards, Europol uses the opportunity created by the differentiated appropriations to incrementally publish multi annual calls and invitations.

1. Second year of Restricted call for proposals to support the implementation of activities identified by the Council – EMPACT High Value Grants 2024/2025

Legal basis

Article 4 and Article 61 of the REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) and replacing and repealing Council Decisions 2009/371/JHA, 2009/934/JHA, 2009/935/JHA, 2009/936/JHA and 2009/968/JHA.

Council conclusions on setting the EU's Priorities for the fight against organised and serious international crime between 2022 and 2025, doc. 8665/21 COSI 90 of 12 May 2021.

Budget line

3920 EMPACT Grants

Priorities of the years, objectives pursued and expected results

Enhancing the fight against serious and organised international crime during the last year of implementation of EMPACT activities 2022-2025.

The call is restricted to EMPACT participants, while all relevant documents are published on the Europol Platform for Experts – a communication tool with EMPACT participants used to reach all potential applicants. In accordance with the Europol legal basis, the Europol National Unit (ENU) shall be the liaison body between Europol and the competent authorities of the Member States. Thus, the applications must always be submitted via the ENU of the Lead Applicant.

The objective of the call is to provide support to Operational Actions laid down in the fifteen Operational Action Plans (OAPs) as adopted by the Council. EMPACT 2022-2025 addresses the following crime areas: High-risk criminal networks; Cyber-attacks; Trafficking in Human Beings (THB); Child sexual exploitation; Migrant smuggling; Drugs trafficking: (i) the production, trafficking and distribution of cannabis, cocaine and heroin, (ii) the production, trafficking and distribution of synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances (NPS); Fraud, economic and financial crimes: (i) online fraud schemes, (ii) excise fraud; (iii) MTIC fraud, (iv) intellectual property (IP) crime, counterfeiting of goods and currencies, (v) Criminal Finances, Money Laundering and Asset Recovery; Organised Property Crime; Environmental crime; and Firearms trafficking.

It is expected that the support will provide for improved cooperation between Member States law enforcement agencies, EU Institutions, EU Agencies and relevant third parties, while delivering coherent actions targeting the most pressing criminal threats facing the EU.

Description of the activities to be funded under the call for proposals

Transnational operational and non-operational activities addressing in each of the EMPACT Priorities at least one of the following objectives: awareness raising and exchange of best practices; improving data gathering and intelligence sharing, providing strategic support for current or proposed operational activities; enhancing operational support and cross-border cooperation.

Grants may not be awarded for activities that are funded under another EU programme or from Europol's budget. In this respect, it is noted that Europol is active in an environment which has undergone a proliferation of EU funding sources. A statement to ensure respect for the principle of no double funding from EU sources must be made by applicant(s) in the Application form. Europol is entitled to perform checks in this respect, including by liaising with external partners (e.g. DG HOME, Eurojust).

Calls will be designed with the aim of promoting one or more of the following outcomes which projects applications should aim at achieving:

- fostering communication and coordination amongst participants of OAPs;
- sharing of experiences and best practices between EU Member States;
- improving intelligence gathering and analyses;
- expanding data sharing with Europol information systems and prioritising the use of SIENA (secure line) as an operational communication tool;
- establishing support frameworks to implement operational activities, including where relevant with third countries or the private sector;

Europol Public Information

- enhancing cross-border/transnational operational cooperation between EU Member States and, where relevant, with third countries or the private sector;
- establishing joint investigations, joint operations or joint action days.

To take into account the specificities of the law enforcement operations, Europol may allow use of contingency budget for unplanned actions ("red-envelope procedure") in addition to planned actions ("blue envelope"). This is justified based on the need for law enforcement to respond quickly to opportunities and challenges and is further specified in the Call documentation.

Europol may award using simplified cost options provided that a decision by the Executive Director has been adopted.

Essential eligibility, selection and award criteria

Eligibility criteria:

I. In order to be eligible the Applicant must be a public body established in an EU Member State participating in the OAP in question (i.e. the particular EMPACT crime priority) and in the law-enforcement cooperation under Europol Regulation.

No differentiation is made in Europol's constituent act between different Member States. However, the opt-in structure used for JHA under the TFEU creates a varying degree of participation of Member States. Europol pays due regard to the status of EU Member States with regard to the Europol Regulation and/or Justice and Home Affairs matters as regards eligibility to be a (lead) Applicant.

II. The Co-Applicants must be:

- An entity explicitly mentioned as a participant in the OAP;
- If the entity is not explicitly mentioned in the OAP, any of the following entities may be Co-Applicants, provided their participation is justified by the nature of the action:
 - A public body established in an EU Member State or in a third country OR
 - A profit or non-profit-oriented organisation established in an EU Member State or in a third country, OR
 - An International Organisation.

As regards co-applicants, even non-opting-in Member States could be eligible as co-applicants on the same basis as third countries and third parties provided that their participation is justified by the nature of the action. Their meaningful participation has however to be possible having due regard to Europol's legal obligations on exchange of information with third countries.

III. Applications must involve at least two (2) public bodies established in two (2) different EU Member States.

Law Enforcement applicants may involve non-LE entities for the purpose of managing a grant provided that the manner and degree of their involvement satisfies security and confidentiality concerns. Costs incurred by other types of bodies could be eligible, provided that these can be justified by the aims of the action and respect the principle of sound financial management.

IV. The proposed activities must be mentioned in the respective OAPs as approved by COSI Council decisions.

Selection criteria:

In accordance with Article 198 of the Financial Regulation, proposals for action shall be evaluated on the basis of the following selection criteria:

- Financial capacity - Applicants and co-applicants must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain their activity throughout the period during which the activity is being carried out and to participate in its funding.
- Operational capacity - Applicants and co-applicants must have the professional resources, competences and qualifications required to complete the proposed action.

The verification of the financial and operational capacity shall not apply to public bodies and international organisations in accordance with Article 198(5) and (6) of the Financial Regulation.

Award criteria:

In accordance with Article 199 of the Financial Regulation, proposals for an action shall be evaluated on the basis of the quality and expected results and cost-effectiveness of the

Europol Public Information

proposed action. Applications will also be assessed with regard to their impact on the implementation of the OAPs concerned, European added value and involvement of Europol. Ex-post publicity for award of grants (in particular their publication in accordance with Article 189 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046) and the financial verification of the payment requests, including the required supporting documentation, shall take into account the confidentiality and security of the operational and classified information.

Indicative timetable and indicative amount of the call for proposals

Date	Amount
Publication: Q4 2023 Award of grants: Q1 2024 Implementing period: April 2024 – March 2026	EUR 4,500,000 (as integrated in the 2024 budget)

Maximum possible rate of co-financing of the total eligible costs

95%

2. Second year of Ad-hoc low-value grants invitation in support of operational activities as laid down in the Operational Action Plans implementing the EMPACT Priorities.

Legal basis

Article 4 and Article 61(3) of the REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) and replacing and repealing Council Decisions 2009/371/JHA, 2009/934/JHA, 2009/935/JHA, 2009/936/JHA and 2009/968/JHA.

Council conclusions on setting the EU's Priorities for the fight against organised and serious international crime between 2022 and 2025, doc. 8665/21 COSI 90 of 12 May 2021.

Budget line

3920 EMPACT Grants

Priorities of the years, objectives pursued and expected results

Enhancing the fight against serious and organised international crime during the last year of the implementation of EMPACT activities 2022-2025. These grants are focussed on supporting Member States' cross-border operations and investigations as well as joint investigation teams as per Europol's tasks under Article 4(1)(h) of the Europol Regulation. Applications from eligible applicants can be submitted throughout the period indicated below rather than on any fixed deadline(s).

The objective of the low-value grants is to provide support tailored to operational activities within the fifteen Operational Action Plans (OAPs) adopted by the Council. They target activities that are developed on an ad-hoc basis rather than as a result of a long-term planning, due to their investigative nature or other quickly changing aspects of crime phenomena and crime-countermeasures. EMPACT 2022-2025 addresses the following crime areas: High-risk criminal networks; Cyber-attacks; Trafficking in Human Beings (THB); Child sexual exploitation; Migrant smuggling; Drugs trafficking: (i) the production, trafficking and distribution of cannabis, cocaine and heroin, (ii) the production, trafficking and distribution of synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances (NPS); Fraud, economic and financial crimes: (i) online fraud schemes, (ii) excise fraud; (iii) MTIC fraud, (iv) intellectual property (IP) crime, counterfeiting of goods and currencies, (v) Criminal Finances, Money Laundering and Asset Recovery; Organised Property Crime; Environmental crime; and Firearms trafficking.

It is expected that the support will provide for effective cooperation between Member States law enforcement agencies, EU Institutions, EU Agencies and relevant third parties while delivering coherent operational actions targeting the most pressing criminal threats facing the EU. The funded measures should achieve concrete, quantifiable / measurable operational

Europol Public Information

results. This scheme shall take due consideration of the existence of a separate grant scheme supporting actions against euro-counterfeiting.

Description of the activities to be funded through low-value grants

Transnational short-term operational and/or investigative activities within the EMPACT Priorities, with a budget not exceeding 60,000 EUR (in line with the threshold defined in the EU Financial Regulation), aiming to enhance operational cross-border cooperation, establish joint investigations, joint operations or joint action days.

Grants awarded under this Article have a maximum duration of 9 months with possibility to extend at Europol's discretion for an additional period of 3 months, if justified operationally.

Europol may use simplified cost options provided that a decision by the Executive Director has been adopted.

Essential eligibility, selection and award criteria

Eligibility criteria:

I. In order to be eligible the Applicant must be a public body established in an EU Member state participating in the OAP in question (i.e. the particular EMPACT crime priority) and in the law-enforcement cooperation under the Europol Regulation.

No differentiation is made in Europol's constituent act between different Member States. However, the opt-in structure used for JHA under the TFEU creates a varying degree of participation of Member States. Europol pays due regard to the status of EU Member States with regard to the Europol Regulation and/or Justice and Home Affairs matters as regards eligibility to be a (lead) Applicant.

II. The Co-Applicants must be:

- An entity explicitly mentioned as a participant in the OAP;
- If the entity is not explicitly mentioned in the OAP, any of the following entities may be Co-Applicants, provided their participation is justified by the nature of the action:
 - A public body established in an EU Member State or in a third country OR
 - A profit or non-profit-oriented organisation established in an EU Member State or in a third country, OR
 - An International Organisation.

As regards co-applicants even non-opting-in Member States could be eligible as co-applicants on the same basis as third countries and third parties provided that their participation is justified by the nature of the action. Their meaningful participation has however to be possible having due regard to Europol's legal obligations on exchange of information with third countries.

III. Applications must involve at least two (2) public bodies established in two (2) different EU Member States.

IV. The proposed activities must be mentioned in the respective OAPs as approved by COSI Council decisions.

V. The requested grant cannot be higher than 60,000 EUR, or in line with the current threshold for low-value grants established by the EU Financial Regulation.

Selection criteria:

In accordance with Article 198 of the Financial Regulation, proposals for action shall be evaluated on the basis of the following selection criteria:

- Financial capacity - Applicants and co-applicants must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain their activity throughout the period during which the activity is being carried out and to participate in its funding.
- Operational capacity - Applicants and co-applicants must have the professional resources, competences and qualifications required to complete the proposed action.
- The verification of the financial and operational capacity shall not apply to public bodies and international organisations in accordance with Article 198(5) & (6) of the Financial Regulation.

To ensure that the operational needs are met, a pool of evaluators shall be duly appointed by the responsible authorising officer. In each evaluation at least 2 evaluators from that list (with complementary expertise in law enforcement and finance) shall perform the evaluation (without a separate ad hoc appointment).

Europol Public Information

To allow for fast processing, applicants must use the templates to apply and reply within maximum 24 hours to any questions raised during evaluation.

Award criteria:

In accordance with Article 199 of the Financial Regulation, proposals for an action shall be evaluated on the basis of the quality and expected results and cost-effectiveness of the proposed action. Applications will also be assessed with regard to their impact on the implementation of the OAPs concerned, European added value and involvement of Europol. Ex-post publicity for award of grants (in particular their publication in accordance with Article 189 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046) and the financial verification of the payment requests, including the required supporting documentation, shall take into account the confidentiality and security of the operational and classified information.

Indicative timetable and indicative amount

Date	Amount
Publication: Q1 2024 Award of grants: Q1 2024-Q4 /2025	EUR 3,500,000 (as integrated in the 2024 budget), divided as follows: 1 st instalment of EUR 1,750,000 available in 2024 and 2 nd instalment of EUR 1,750,000 available in 2025) + internal assigned revenue ¹⁰⁷ + 2,000,000 in 2025 from the legislative proposal to prevent and fight migrant smuggling ¹⁰⁸

Maximum possible rate of co-financing of the total eligible costs

95%

3. Support for combatting Euro-counterfeiting

Legal basis

Article 4(4) and Article 61(3) of the REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) and replacing and repealing Council Decisions 2009/371/JHA, 2009/934/JHA, 2009/935/JHA, 2009/936/JHA and 2009/968/JHA.

Budget line

3930 Support against Euro Counterfeiting Grants

Priorities of the year, objectives pursued and expected results

Operational actions and support for coordination activities within the guidelines approved by the Europol Management Board with the objective of protecting the euro currency from counterfeiting activities.

Description of the activities to be funded through low-value grants

Applications from eligible applicants can be submitted throughout the period indicated below rather than on any fixed deadline(s). Applications submitted must involve at least one of the following activities, all designed with the objective of protecting the integrity of the Euro currency:

- Investigations into or related to euro counterfeiting. This means inquiries related to counterfeit euro banknotes and counterfeit euro coins, as well as the production and the distribution of them;
- Technical investigations using forensic and/or scientific analysis to identify, sites, raw materials and technical equipment used for the production of counterfeit euro notes and coins as well as measures to locate technical equipment used;
- Investigative measures carried out in compliance with the applicable national law and in accordance with these guidelines;

¹⁰⁷ If operationally justified, the authorising officer may decide to increase the maximum amount for this scheme, subject to Europol budget availability.

¹⁰⁸ COM(2023) 754 final. Subject to adoption of the proposal and to the relevant funds becoming available.

Europol Public Information

- Operational or technical investigations into euro counterfeiting involving cooperation with third countries.

In addition, the applicant must commit to a degree of involvement of Europol:

- as a minimum to ensure the role of Europol as the Central Office, the law enforcement information, including samples of any counterfeit currency recovered, must be shared with Europol via the appropriate channels;
- on the spot support where an application involves a production site(s).

Essential eligibility, selection and award criteria

This is not a general advertised call due to the restricted pool of potential beneficiaries. The possibility and funds available shall be made known to the entities foreseen under the Europol Management Board approved rules. Any ex-post publicity will also take this into account excluding operational, strategic and classified information.

Eligible applicants:

- A law enforcement public body established in an EU Member State;
- A law enforcement public body in a third country, where foreseen by Europol legal framework.

To ensure that the operational needs are met, a pool of evaluators shall be duly appointed by the responsible authorising officer. Considering the low value of individual awards made, a single evaluator shall evaluate based on objective criteria established to assess the award criteria. These criteria include: anticipated Quality of the Counterfeits, impact of proposed operational measure, involvement of Europol, value for money and involvement of National Central Office. To allow for fast processing, applicants must use the templates to apply and reply within maximum 24 hours to any questions raised during evaluation.

Indicative amount available

Date	Amount
Q1 2024-Q4 2025	EUR 300,000 (as integrated in the 2024 budget divided as follows: 1 st instalment of EUR 150,000 available in 2024 and 2 nd instalment of EUR 150,000 available in 2025) + internal assigned revenue

Maximum possible rate of co-financing of the total eligible costs

100% maximum

4. ATLAS Network grant

Legal basis

Article 4(1)(h) and (i) and Article 61(3) of the REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) and replacing and repealing Council Decisions 2009/371/JHA, 2009/934/JHA, 2009/935/JHA, 2009/936/JHA and 2009/968/JHA. Terms of Reference signed between Europol, Atlas Chair and Austrian Ministry of Interior and entering into force on 10 October 2018.

Budget line

3950 ATLAS Grants

Priorities of the year, objectives pursued and expected results

The ATLAS Network is a cooperation structure between 38 Special Intervention Units (SIUs) that includes and supports different training platforms and sharing of best practices in terms of proficiency and tactics.

The main priority for the year 2025 is the execution of cross border operations and the implementation of trainings, workshops and exercises. These priorities as well as the overall ATLAS strategy are influenced amongst others by the tailor-made strategic document of the European Counter Terrorism Centre - "ECTC Outlook for ATLAS Commanders". The identified challenges need special attention and preparation on all levels and areas of competence:

Europol Public Information

intervention in urban, rural and maritime areas; transport means and buildings are focal points as well as drone handling/robotics, sniper, communication, negotiation skills and others. In addition, the capability to render medical first aid during field operations needs to be trained, developed and improved.

Joint trainings, workshops, courses and project groups are the systematic approach to increase the readiness of involved units to handle possible terrorist attacks and/or incidents. Another priority is the development of Common Training Centres, acting as "Centres of Excellence" (CoE). These structures serve as dedicated facilities to provide standardised training and knowledge transfer to the ATLAS member units. Thus, the quality of the delivered training can be kept consistently on the highest level. At the same time, the amount of the target groups/participants can be increased. Along with this structure, a dedicated programme for "Pooling and Sharing" of special equipment will be further developed.

Description of the activities to be funded

The allocation of funds will cover numerous activities which allow the different specialised groups to increase its operational proficiency and to aid in carrying out various training/tactical response building exercises and workshops.

The activities, dependent on budget availability, are:

- fostering communication and coordination amongst SIUs;
- delivery and/or design of training on:
 - o entry techniques
 - o silent techniques
 - o rural mountain operations
 - o buildings (assault tactics and knowledge)
 - o Rigid Hulled Inflatable Boats
 - o naval targets
 - o Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs)
 - o sniper techniques
 - o urban rappelling
 - o first aid (intervening in cases of most serious crimes with a high risk of life threatening and/or mass injuries)
 - o specialised parachute use: "Silent Approach Tactics"
 - o K9 techniques: interventions with specialised dogs' assistance
- sharing of experiences and best practices between EU MS and third countries;
- further development of the secure information exchange tools;
- maintenance of the mock-ups set up as part of the Common Training Centre "Centres of Excellence" Aircraft;
- establishing support frameworks to implement operational activities;
- enhancing cross-border/transnational operational cooperation between EU Member States in the areas of competence of SIUs;
- establishing joint training and preparation for challenges impacting on several activities focussed on evaluation of training and cooperation results;
- exploring further development of secure communication tools;
- fostering cooperation with third countries: Police Special Intervention Units Conference (POLSPEC).

Europol may award using simplified cost options, provided that a decision by the Executive Director has been adopted.

Justification Direct Grant

Under Article 61(3) of the Europol Regulation, the grant may be awarded without a call for proposals where the grant action is supporting specific tasks referred to in points (h) and (i) of Article 4(1) of the Europol Regulation. This grant provides support to the Atlas network that represents the Member States' special intervention units (via the legal entity of the country chairing Atlas on behalf of the network).

Indicative timetable and indicative amount of the grant

Europol Public Information

Date	Amount
Q1 2025 Expected implementing period: Q1 2025- Q1 2026	EUR 3,000,000

Maximum possible rate of co-financing of the total eligible costs

95%

5. OTF grants

Legal basis

Article 4(1)(h) and (i) and Article 61(3) of the REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) and replacing and repealing Council Decisions 2009/371/JHA, 2009/934/JHA, 2009/935/JHA, 2009/936/JHA and 2009/968/JHA.

Standard Operating Procedure - Standard Operating Procedure on the Selection of High Value Targets and Establishment of Operational Task Forces within O2-ESOC, EDOC #901933v18A.

Budget line

3940 OTF Grants

Priorities of the year, objectives pursued and expected results

Priority: Europol will focus on the identification of High-Value Targets and the establishment of Operational Task Forces addressing the individuals and organised crime groups posing the highest serious and organised crime risk for the MS.

Objective: Creation and support of an environment for multi-disciplinary teams and transnational investigations aiming at having a stronger impact in destabilising activities of high risk organised crime groups and disrupting criminal markets.

Expected results: deliver qualitative operational support to OTFs, which are focusing on poly-criminal networks and their leaders posing the highest risk of serious and organised crime.

Description of the activities to be funded

Operational and/or investigative activities (e.g. travel and accommodation for operational meetings outside Europol HQ, direct operational costs such as informant rewards, buying/renting operational technical and forensic equipment, interpretation or deployments, etc.) implemented by the Operational Task Forces, established in accordance with the SOP with a budget not exceeding 60,000 EUR (in line with the threshold defined in the EU Financial Regulation), aiming to support MS investigations against individuals and criminal organisations constituting highest serious and organised crime risks to more than one MS and to intensify asset tracing and increase the rate of confiscation of criminal proceeds.

Each application, within the limit of 60,000 EUR, could cover a particular stage of the ongoing investigation. The operational stages will be pre-defined within the Operational Plan of an established OTF in accordance with the Standard Operating Procedure in place. If operationally justified, several subsequent applications could be submitted, enabling Member States to apply for funding throughout the lifetime of the operation.

Europol may use simplified cost options provided that a decision by the Executive Director has been adopted. The duration of grants will be 9 months extendable for a period of 3 months, if operationally justified.

Essential eligibility, selection and award criteria

Eligibility criteria:

I. In order to be eligible the Applicant must be a public body established in an EU Member State and in the law-enforcement cooperation under Europol Regulation. In addition, the Applicant must be a member of established Operational Task Force applying Standard Operating Procedure on the Selection of High Value Targets and Establishment of Operational Task Forces.

No differentiation is made in Europol's constituent act between different Member States. However, the opt-in structure used for JHA under the TFEU creates a varying degree of participation of Member States. Europol pays due regard to the status of EU Member States

Europol Public Information

with regard to the Europol Regulation and/or Justice and Home Affairs matters as regards eligibility to be a (lead) Applicant.

II. The Co-Applicants must be members of established Operational Task Force:

- a public body established in an EU Member State or in a third country OR
- an International Organisation.

As regards co-applicants, even non-opting-in Member States could be eligible as co-applicants on the same basis as third countries and third parties provided that their participation is justified by the nature of the action. Their meaningful participation has, however, to be possible having due regard to Europol's legal obligations on exchange of information with third countries.

III. Applications must involve at least two (2) public bodies established in two (2) different EU Member States.

IV. The proposed actions must be related to activities of established Operational Task Force, which carry out intelligence and investigative activities against selected HVT as defined within the Standard Operating Procedure¹⁰⁹ on Selection of High Value Targets and Establishment of Operational Task Forces.

V. The requested grant cannot be higher than 60,000 EUR, or in line with the current threshold for low-value grants established by the EU Financial Regulation.

Selection criteria:

In accordance with Article 198 of the EU Financial Regulation, proposals for action shall be evaluated on the basis of the following selection criteria:

- Financial capacity - Applicants and co-applicants must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain their activity throughout the period during which the activity is being carried out and to participate in its funding.
- Operational capacity - Applicants and co-applicants must have the professional resources, competences and qualifications required to complete the proposed action.
- The verification of the financial and operational capacity shall not apply to public bodies and international organisations in accordance with Article 198 of the EU Financial Regulation.

To ensure that the operational needs are met, a pool of evaluators shall be duly appointed by the responsible authorising officer. In each evaluation at least 2 evaluators from that list (with complementary expertise in law enforcement and finance) shall perform the evaluation (without a separate ad hoc appointment).

To allow for fast processing, applicants must use the templates to apply and reply within maximum 24 hours to any questions raised during evaluation.

Award criteria:

In accordance with Article 199 of the EU Financial Regulation proposals for an action shall be evaluated on the basis of the relevance, quality, cost-effectiveness and European added value of the proposed action.

Ex-post publicity for award of grants (in particular their annual publication in accordance with Article 189 of EU Financial Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046) and the financial verification of the payment requests, including the required supporting documentation, shall take into account the confidentiality and security of the operational and classified information.

Information for Applicants

The Invitation to submit applications shall be restricted to OTF participants only. Once an OTF is established, the Invitation, accompanied by the application package, shall be circulated to the targeted audience only. All OTF participants shall receive the information simultaneously, in accordance with the principle of equal treatment.

Indicative timetable for the direct award and indicative amount of the grant

¹⁰⁹ EDOC #901933 v13 "Standard Operating Procedure - Selection of High Value Targets and establishment of Operational Task Forces within O2-ESOC".

Europol Public Information

Date Publication Q1 2025 Award of Grants: Q1 2025-Q4 2025	Amount EUR 2,000,000 ¹¹⁰ + 2,000,000 in 2025 from the legislative proposal for a Regulation to prevent and fight migrant smuggling ¹¹¹ .
---	--

Maximum possible rate of co-financing of the total eligible costs

95%

6. Ad-hoc low-value grants in support of Innovation

Legal basis

Article 4(1)(h) and (i) and Article 61(3) of the REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) and replacing and repealing Council Decisions 2009/371/JHA, 2009/934/JHA, 2009/935/JHA, 2009/936/JHA and 2009/968/JHA.

Budget line

3960 Innovation Grants

Priorities of the year, objectives pursued and expected results

The objective of this scheme will be to support the cooperation in combating serious crime affecting two or more MS, by facilitating the delivery of innovative solutions addressing common security challenges.

Description of the activities to be funded

Operational and/or innovative activities (e.g. direct operational costs pertaining to Innovation such as the acquisition of Software licenses, equipment and materials and hiring of consultants).

Each application, within the limit of 60,000 EUR, could cover a particular stage of an innovation project, as defined by the European Clearing Board (EuCB).

Europol may use simplified cost options provided that a decision by the Executive Director has been adopted. The duration of grants will be 9 months extendable, if operationally justified.

Essential Criteria

The new Scheme should not only acknowledge, but also strengthen the central role of the European Clearing Board (EuCB) for all matters related to research and innovation for law enforcement.

The EuCB is composed of at least one representative per EU MS and per Schengen-associated countries (larger countries have a larger delegation, the decision being taken at national level). These representatives are named "Single Points of Contact" (SPoCs) and are responsible, at national level, for disseminating and raising awareness about opportunities and benefits of cooperation with other European LEAs and with Europol in the field of research and innovation.

In principle, a grant application should be considered to be within scope if:

- The related project is taking place as part of an EuCB Core Group;
- It has a clear innovation focus and a well-defined scope;
- The related result has a cross-border relevance, for example it addresses a need identified by more than one MS.

The new Scheme should deliver low-value grants only to Law Enforcement Authorities of EU Member States and Schengen-associated countries.

¹¹⁰ If operationally justified, the authorising officer may decide to increase the maximum amount for this scheme, subject to Europol budget availability.

¹¹¹ COM(2023) 754 final. Subject to adoption of the proposal and to the relevant funds becoming available.

Europol Public Information

The grants should be presented by a partnership of LEAs, composed of at least two LEAs from two different MS.

Indicative timetable and indicative amount

If the overall budget allows for it Europol intends to introduce differentiated appropriations with a multi-annual invitation to apply for the Innovation Grant scheme from 2025 onwards.

Date	Amount
Publication: Q1 2025 Award of grants: Q1 2025-Q4 2026	EUR 350,000 ¹¹² Possibly broken down into smaller calls, depending on the experience in 2024 with this new scheme.

Maximum possible rate of co-financing of the total eligible costs

95%

7. Low-value grants for cooperation with Eastern Partnership countries

This is a P.M. section, conditional to a future contribution agreement with DG NEAR. Updates will be required to align with the final Description of Action which is planned to be agreed in Q4 2024.

Legal basis

Article 4(1)(h) and (i) and Article 61(3) of the REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) and replacing and repealing Council Decisions 2009/371/JHA, 2009/934/JHA, 2009/935/JHA, 2009/936/JHA and 2009/968/JHA.

Contribution Agreement between the European Commission and the EU Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation ENI/2024/XXX/XXX.

Budget line

B-3600

Priorities, objectives pursued and expected results

Supporting the cooperation of the six Eastern Partnership countries with EU Member States and Europol for the fight against serious and organised international crime, including through their participation in EMPACT.

The Invitation to submit applications is directed to EU Member States and the Eastern Partnership countries collaborating in the framework of a specific action. In accordance with Europol legal basis, the Europol National Unit (ENU) shall be the liaison body between Europol and the competent authorities of the Member States. Thus, the applications must always be submitted via the ENU of the Lead Applicant.

It is expected that the support will provide for improved cooperation between Member States' and Eastern Partnership countries' law enforcement agencies, EU Institutions, EU Agencies while delivering coherent actions targeting the most pressing criminal threats facing the EU.

Description of the activities to be funded

Activities addressing at least one of the following objectives: (i) strengthening Eastern Partnership countries' institutional knowledge and capacity on EMPACT crime areas and increasing cooperation within EMPACT; (ii) enhancing criminal intelligence in the countries of the Eastern Neighbourhood region as well as the exchange of intelligence and information between EaP countries, EU MS and Europol; (iii) enhancing operational cooperation with of the EaP countries with the EU Member States and Agencies, including through EMPACT.

¹¹² If operationally justified, the authorising officer may decide to increase the maximum amount for this scheme, subject to Europol budget availability.

Europol Public Information

The activities to be funded include operational and/or investigative activities (e.g. travel and accommodation for operational meetings, direct operational costs such as informant rewards, buying/renting operational technical and forensic equipment, interpretation or deployments, etc.) as well as activities related to strategic or operational intelligence exchange (e.g. meetings and workshops) implemented by the targeted law enforcement agencies.

Furthermore, activities and equipment related to identification and setting of legal and technical requirements for the exchange of intelligence.

In case of larger investigations, if operationally justified, subsequently submitted applications, each within the limit of 60,000 EUR, could cover a particular stage of the ongoing investigation enabling the participating countries to apply for funding throughout the lifetime of the operation.

Grants may not be awarded for activities that are funded under another EU programme or from Europol's budget, including through EMPACT grants. In this respect, it is noted that Europol is active in an environment which has undergone a proliferation of EU funding sources. A statement to ensure respect for the principle of no double funding from EU sources must be made by applicant(s) in the Application form. Europol is entitled to perform checks in this respect, including by liaising with external partners (e.g. DG HOME, Eurojust).

Europol may award using simplified cost options provided that a decision by the Executive Director has been adopted.

The maximum duration of grants will be 6 months extendable by 3 months, if justified.

Essential eligibility, selection and award criteria

Eligibility criteria:

I. In order to be eligible the Lead Applicant must be a law enforcement or judiciary public body established in an EU Member State participating in EU law enforcement cooperation under Europol Regulation (EU) 2016/794 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2016 on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol).

II. The Co-Applicants must be:

- a public body established in an EU Member State OR
- a public body established in one of the six Eastern Partnership countries⁹⁹ or, if relevant for the action, in a third country OR
- a profit or non-profit-oriented organisation established in an EU Member State or in one of the six Eastern Partnership countries or, if relevant for the action, in a third country, OR
- an International Organisation.

The meaningful participation of co-applicants based in third countries, has to be possible having due regard to Europol's legal obligations on exchange of information with third countries.

III. Applications must involve at least two (2) public bodies established in two (2) different EU Member States and at least one (1) public body of one of the six Eastern Partnership countries, which have a status of a law enforcement authority or judiciary.

IV. The requested grant cannot be higher than 60,000 EUR, or in line with the current threshold for low-value grants established by the EU Financial Regulation.

Selection criteria:

In accordance with Article 198 of the EU Financial Regulation, proposals for action shall be evaluated on the basis of the following selection criteria:

- Financial capacity - Applicants and co-applicants must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain their activity throughout the period during which the activity is being carried out and to participate in its funding.
- Operational capacity - Applicants and co-applicants must have the professional resources, competences and qualifications required to complete the proposed action.

Europol Public Information

- The verification of the financial and operational capacity shall not apply to public bodies and international organisations in accordance with Article 198 of the EU Financial Regulation.

To ensure that the operational needs are met, a pool of evaluators shall be duly appointed by the responsible authorising officer. In each evaluation at least 2 evaluators from that list (with complementary expertise in law enforcement and finance) shall perform the evaluation (without a separate ad hoc appointment).

Award criteria:

In accordance with Article 199 of the EU Financial Regulation proposals for an action shall be evaluated on the basis of the relevance, quality, cost-effectiveness and European added value of the proposed action.

Ex-post publicity for award of grants (in particular their publication in accordance with Article 189 of EU Financial Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046) and the financial verification of the payment requests, including the required supporting documentation shall take into account the confidentiality and security of the operational and classified information.

Information for Applicants

The Invitation to submit applications and the relevant application documents are published on Europol website.

Indicative timetable and indicative amount

Date	Amount
Publication: Q1 2025 Award of grants: Q1 2025-Q3 2028	EUR 960,000 divided over four annual invitations of € 240,000, subject to the overall implementation of the Contribution Agreement.

Annex XII: Strategy for cooperation with third countries and/or international organisations

External Relations Strategy 2025+

1. INTRODUCTION



Europol has a **well-developed network of external partners** which has been steadily growing since the first cooperation agreements were signed with Iceland and Norway in June 2001. Europol has now concluded agreements with 37 third countries and five international organisations, guided by successive External Relations Strategies and decisions of Europol's Management Board.

Under the current strategy, Europol made considerable progress by signing new working arrangements with countries such as Ecuador, India and UK and international organisations such as the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the European Investment Bank (EIB). Significant investment in fostering cooperation with MENA countries was also made, and meaningful progress was achieved at bilateral and multilateral levels.

Despite challenges such as pandemics, shifting crime patterns and an unstable geopolitical landscape, Europol continues to invest in a balanced way in its external relations programme at both strategic and operational level to support the Member States' Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs). This **investment has paid dividends**, notably in the rising number of international investigations involving third parties, such as SKY ECC, Encrochat and Operation Greenlight/Trojan Shield; coordinated takedowns and seizures in cyber and drug domains; and the detection and prevention of terrorism.

The latest Europol Strategy¹¹³ "Delivering Security in Partnership" reflects the changes in the criminal landscape over the past few years and outlines how the Agency will increase its capacity to support complex, cross-border investigations in line with the needs of the Member States. The Europol Strategy puts a greater focus on external relations introducing an additional priority '**bringing relevant partners together for cross-border operational cooperation**'. This acknowledges the **need for a more collective and complementary approach** from law enforcement agencies in light of the evolving nature of serious organised crime which has become more transnational and more sophisticated, exploiting differences in legal systems and enforcement capabilities among countries.

In line with the Europol Strategy and the new strategic priority, this document presents a blueprint for Europol's external relations for the coming years. It is consistent with and draws upon the experiences of the former external relations strategies, including the assessment of the cooperation with third parties with which cooperation agreements have been signed; on the input of Member States and the European Commission collected during regular meetings, focus discussions and via the recent questionnaire and follow-up interviews; and on Europol's operational insights. The findings and lessons learned from the past years, as well as the current and foreseen policy and operational developments, shape the new **External Relations Strategy 2025+**.

1.1 Goal

The goal of Europol's external relations is to **enhance cooperation with external partners to support the Member States in preventing and combating serious organised crime and terrorism**. This support often involves cooperation with non-EU countries, INTERPOL and other international organisations, and increasingly with private parties. In the interest of coordination at EU level, the engagement with EU Institutions, Bodies and Agencies and CSDP missions is also indispensable. Europol will continue to support the Commission, the Council and the European External Action Service (EEAS) in

¹¹³ Adopted by the Management Board in June 2023.

Europol Public Information

advancing EU external priorities, particularly in the conclusion of International Agreements with key third countries.

Europol continues to analyse and respond to the changing criminal landscape and shifting geopolitical trends that impact the operational context of policing, such as war, instability, climate change, pandemics or natural disasters. To anticipate emerging threats, Europol is dedicated to building an **agile and flexible external relations framework** that enables law enforcement to cooperate with the global stakeholders involved in a **targeted, tailored** way, focussing on operational needs.

1.2 Priorities

In line with the Europol Strategy, the **External Relations Strategy 2025+ priorities** will be:

1. **To intensify the cooperation with existing key partners;**
2. To establish cooperation with other **third countries of operational interest** and **other (non-EU) Agencies and international organisations;**
3. To develop **practical solutions for a more targeted operational cooperation** with strategic third parties within the applicable legal framework.

1.3 Guiding principles

The Europol External Relations Strategy 2025+ builds on achievements from the past years and explores more agile ways of working, following relevant guiding principles:

- **Novel approach:** it ushers new tools and approaches to Europol's engagement with third parties in terms of prioritisation, focussing on operational aspects, innovation and agility.
- **Operationally-oriented:** it intends to be a support tool to Europol's operational work and to Member States' external relations, also based on Europol's extensive catalogue of products and services.
- **Flexible and targeted:** it explores flexible tools and formats for dedicated tailored-made engagement with some future or existing key partners.
- **Deepening Europol's engagement:** it puts emphasis on deepening Europol's existing network, while not excluding the possibility of selectively identifying additional partners.
- **Complementarity and added value:** it assesses roles and competences between Europol and other organisations, in particular INTERPOL, to further enhance complementarity. It takes into account the expected operational return for a proportional engagement with partners in order to add value to and to complement Member States' own network.
- **Fundamental rights:** it considers Europol Fundamental Rights Officer's opinions in the procedures for engaging with partners and it pursues compliance with fundamental rights, including data protection, in strategic and operational exchanges.

2. Priority 1: INTENSIFIED COOPERATION WITH EXISTING KEY PARTNERS

Europol will continue to **maintain and improve relations with its entire current network of partners**, which includes European Neighbourhood, Western Balkan Region, Middle East and North African countries, Eastern Partnership countries, Transatlantic and transpacific cooperation, Asia, Latin America and International Organisations and Regional Policing Bodies.

Beyond ongoing cooperation there are **some regions, countries and international organisations**¹¹⁴ which require **particular consideration** in light of their strategic and operational importance to the Member States. **Europol will explore avenues to deepen existing relations and develop new areas of engagement.** At the same time, the entire

¹¹⁴ Mention of partners in this section is based on this order.

Europol Public Information

Europol network remains relevant to prevent and counter serious cross border crime. Special attention goes to countries and regions neighbouring the EU, to jointly address criminal and security threats, including in the context of accession processes. Europol will continue to support **Ukraine and Moldova**, where information exchange and operational support remain crucial for the security of the EU. Developments in criminal trends and cooperation will be monitored and improvements will take place where needed.

2.1 Schengen Associated Countries (SACs)

Being part of the Schengen area, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland are of exceptional importance in securing the integrity of the EU's borders and in the fight against organised crime and terrorism in Europe. These countries have a long-standing relationship with Europol, participate in joint investigations and actions, and share strategic and operational information. Their own willingness to **deepen the cooperation further** is well established and expressed at the highest level.

The Europol Strategy commits to intensifying the cooperation with the Schengen Associated Countries as essential partners of the EU Internal Security Architecture. Europol encourages the countries to **make full use of the instruments and capabilities already available** to them at Europol. Europol endeavours to **eliminate any obstacles to efficient information exchange**, and invites Member States to do the same.

With Europol's increasing role in the Schengen-related instruments, such as SIS, ETIAS, EES and VIS, and the collective dependency on each other's ability to uphold security, cooperation with the SACs will only increase. Europol welcomes this development. A **deeper inclusion of these countries in the Europol framework**, and for the Agency and the Member States to be able to draw on the SACs' expertise, capabilities and information will benefit the Member States and the SACs alike. During the implementation of this strategy, Europol will explore possibilities to facilitate the access to operational information, to improve information sharing, to enhance the SACs' role in EMPACT and their participation in meetings, innovation and other matters.

Key action:

- **To prepare and implement a comprehensive plan for strengthening cooperation with the SACs in the short, medium and long term**

2.2 Western Balkans

The Western Balkans **remains a top priority area** for Europol's external relations. The region continues to function as an external hub for criminal activities affecting the EU being for example an important transit point for migrant smuggling and illicit commodities entering and leaving the EU via various corridors of the Balkan routes.

All Western Balkan partners recognise the importance of further enhancing cooperation within the EU, also with the support of Europol. Enhancing cooperation with the Western Balkan region has been a priority of the EU, striving to make tangible progress in the EU enlargement negotiations and integration in the Union. In line with that and within its area of competence, Europol has supported and will **continue supporting the EU political dialogue with the Western Balkan partners**.

While the cooperation with the region continues to develop and expand, **enhanced engagement in some areas** could be foreseen, as for example cybercrime (internet related fraud, investment fraud) and financial and economic crime (asset recovery, money laundering, corruption) and better use of SIENA could be made including further rollout to additional competent authorities. Europol could also consider taking a more regional

Europol Public Information

approach particularly in **targeted operations**¹¹⁵, where such a regional approach brings added value. In line with increased operational activities, possibilities to expand the network of already existing partners should be further explored.

Consideration should also be given to increasing Europol's involvement in **EU funded projects in the region** primarily those 1) providing adequate budgetary and human resources; 2) whose scope are fully aligned with the agency priorities; 3) with a strong operational component; with a view to building up Europol's visibility and enhancing the operational, analytical and technical capacities of law enforcement in the region.

Key actions:

- **To consider additional areas for cooperation, such as cybercrime and financial and economic crime**
- **To take a more regional approach regarding targeted operations, where such a regional approach brings added value**
- **To engage in EU funded projects of operational interest in the region subject to available resources**
- **To encourage the WB to make optimal use of SIENA and extend its use to more competent authorities**

2.3 United Kingdom

The UK is a unique partner of Europol given its former status as Member State. The objective remains to **retain and increase the high level of operational cooperation enjoyed before Brexit**, given the important contribution the UK makes to Europol's work and vice versa. **Reciprocity** is a key element for the cooperation, especially regarding operational data and information sharing. While the Adequacy decision¹¹⁶ together with the Trade and Cooperation Agreement¹¹⁷ allow for the continuation of pre-Brexit operational cooperation, the UK is no longer a member of the internal governance bodies and is unable to contribute to the more strategic aspects of Europol's work as a result. Therefore, in addition to the regular ongoing operational cooperation, Europol and the UK could **consider options for a more structured engagement on strategic aspects** of law enforcement cooperation. UK expressed a specific interest for a closer cooperation with Europol in the fight against irregular migration.

Areas where further engagement might be explored include:

- Maintaining a regular structured dialogue at senior level on strategic and operational matters;
- Collaborating on Innovation and technical tools;
- Enhancing operational cooperation with other UK agencies dealing with security and terrorism in coordination with the NCA as appropriate.

Key actions:

- **To retain and increase the pre-Brexit high level of operational cooperation**
- **To explore further cooperation in specific crime areas (e.g. financial crime, terrorism, irregular migration)**
- **To explore options for regular structured strategic cooperation**

¹¹⁵ Similar to what has been done in the context of the Joint Action Days "South East Europe", targeting firearms trafficking, migrant smuggling, drugs trafficking in the wider Balkan region or as in the case of the Referral Action Days (RAD) Western Balkans of 2020 targeting jihadi terrorist groups operating from/in the WB region.

¹¹⁶ Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2021/1773 of 28 June 2021 pursuant to Directive (EU) 2016/680 on the adequate protection of personal data by the United Kingdom (OJ L 360, 11.10.2021)

¹¹⁷ Trade and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community, of the one part, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, of the other part.

2.4 United States

The US remains a critically important partner of Europol and the **cooperation continues to grow at both strategic and operational level**. Through the representation of key law enforcement agencies at Europol HQ and the building up of cooperation at agency and national level, Europol and the Member States have benefited from a wealth of expertise, enhanced information sharing and joint efforts to target and disrupt OCGs, cyberthreats and terrorism. The posting of Europol liaison officers (LOs) in Washington continues to promote the agency in the US and has allowed for significant information sharing, outreach and networking opportunities.

Going forward, the main objective is to maintain the excellent cooperation while **exploring new opportunities for enhancing this cooperation** further in line with operational needs. This collaboration could include:

- Continuing to develop pilot projects with US agencies to ensure cooperation and joint action where needed;
- Continuing to develop the framework and model for information sharing to ensure the best use of battlefield data provided by the US;
- Enhancing cooperation in targeted crime areas such as Environmental Crime and Financial Crime;
- Increasing collaboration on technical tools and innovation;
- Work with other US partners such as the International Association of the Chiefs of Police (IACP) to further achieve strategic objectives.

Key actions:

- **To explore new opportunities for enhanced information exchange in key crime areas**
- **To increase strategic collaboration, for instance on technical tools and innovation**
- **To continue the successful use of pilot projects for information exchange in specific crime areas**

2.5 Türkiye

There is an operational need at Europol for increased cooperation with Türkiye across a wide range of crime areas, such as drug trafficking, migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings, terrorism, money laundering, and environmental crimes. In the absence of a full operational agreement the cooperation remains limited.

Europol will continue to support the European Commission in its negotiations for an international agreement between the EU and Türkiye on the exchange of personal data between Europol and the Turkish competent authorities for fighting serious crime and terrorism. In the interim, additional actions may be required to optimise the cooperation within the limits of the current legal framework, including:

- Promoting EMPACT and encouraging Türkiye's continued collaboration;
- Involvement of Türkiye in OTFs and other actions in coordination with the Member States¹¹⁸;
- Greater participation in strategic and capacity building measures to support Turkish law enforcement;
- Encouraging Turkish competent authorities to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the legal framework in place including making full use of SIENA.
- Exploring practical solutions for a more targeted co-operation as outlined under point 4.

Key actions:

¹¹⁸ Exchange of operational personal data within the OTF framework will depend on the possibilities enabled by the Europol Regulation.

- **To continue the support to the European Commission in its negotiations for an international agreement between the EU and Türkiye**
- **To promote participation in EMPACT, OTFs and in strategic activities**

2.6 INTERPOL

Europol and INTERPOL have a close and strong partnership via an operational agreement in place since 5 November 2001, as well as under additional agreements on specific crime areas¹¹⁹. For many years INTERPOL has been a **key partner at both operational and strategic level**, with actionable Joint Key Operational Priorities (JKOPs) agreed biennially. Cooperation is based on the respective agencies' mandate and geographical scope and the desire to fulfil common objectives.

Europol and INTERPOL actively cooperate in the framework of Europol's Analysis Projects, OAPs under EMPACT, as well as in Joint Action Days (JADs) and Large-Scale Joint Action Days (LS-JADs) and **large-scale operations**. Both INTERPOL and Europol have posted Liaison Officers to each other's Headquarters to enhance **cooperation on a day-to-day basis**. Information is shared through the secure communication channels in each organisation, which unfortunately are not interoperable yet. **Strategic conferences and meetings** take place regularly at top management, senior official and working levels and **strategic reports** are contributed to and shared. In addition, cooperation regarding **innovation, knowledge-sharing and staff** exchanges is also part of Europol-INTERPOL engagement.

The existing legal framework that forms the basis of cooperation between Europol and INTERPOL is currently being revised, as part of the process of negotiating a cooperation agreement between the EU and INTERPOL. This reflects the need for a modern and tailored regime that caters for the specificities of each EU JHA agency and INTERPOL, while ensuring effective safeguards for the processing of information. Europol supports the overall goals of the envisaged EU-INTERPOL agreement and remains invested in ensuring **better complementarity and interoperability**, and fostering the operational dimension of this partnership even further.

To achieve further operational cooperation, the **challenging legal, technical and administrative issues** raising from the different legal frameworks and policies on issues such as Information Management need first to be solved. Europol relies on the **Member States and the European Commission** to resolve these current obstacles to making enhanced cooperation possible. Nonetheless, until Europol can make full use of the provisions of the future EU-INTERPOL cooperation agreement, it will continue to explore possibilities to enhance cooperation with INTERPOL under the existing legal framework.

Consideration could be given to:

- Developing best practices leading to enhanced operational cooperation such as building upon successful experiences (JKOPs, EMPACT);
- Fostering top level engagement in view of the future legal framework in order to jointly tackle implementation challenges;
- Exploring additional access to INTERPOL's databases in line with operational interest;
- Considering the establishment of an interface between i24/7 and SIENA;
- Exploring the complementary use of INTERPOL's services and global outreach;
- Enhancing strategic cooperation under the INTERPOL-led *"Dialogue on effective multilateral policing architecture against global threats"*¹²⁰;

¹¹⁹ ICSE, i-ARMS.

¹²⁰ The Dialogue includes high-level delegates from the following organisations: AFRIPOL, AMERIPOL, ASEANAPOL, the Arab Interior Ministers Council (AIMC), CARICOM IMPACS, the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO), EUROPOL, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency – Frontex, and the Gulf Cooperation Council-POL (GCCPOL), as well as INTERPOL. There are two observer organisations: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Europol Public Information

- Seeking synergies between the EU Innovation Lab and INTERPOL's Global Complex for Innovation in Singapore.

Key actions:

- To explore new opportunities for enhanced information exchange
- To design targeted JKOPs, which allow for expanded operational cooperation
- To explore access to additional INTERPOL's databases of operational interest
- To increase strategic collaboration, for instance on technical tools and innovation

3. Priority 2: COOPERATION WITH OTHER THIRD COUNTRIES, (NON-EU) AGENCIES AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

In a rapidly changing criminal landscape which is increasingly transnational and evolving, Europol needs to keep its external relations network under review. Europol shall continue in its efforts to establish cooperation with **countries and agencies already prioritised by the Member States**¹²¹ in the framework of the Europol External Relations Strategy 2021-2024. The existing priority list serves as a baseline in order to assure continuity. The Member States operational needs and the **Management Board decisions will continue to guide and determine the new key partners for Europol.**

In order to remain agile and operationally focused, Europol will continue to monitor the criminal landscape to **identify new and emerging threats** through SOCTA, IOCTA, TE-SAT, EFECTA and other analytical products. The results of these assessments together with operational work may lead to the identification of new priority partners. When there is a necessity to establish formal relations with a new partner, Europol will prepare a **business case for the Management Board's approval**. The need for an agile and targeted cooperation could result in **different tailored-made possibilities with different partners**, based on operational needs.

3.1 Middle East, North Africa and other African countries

Europol considers in line with the feedback received by the EU MS and the EU COM the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) as a priority. The region has featured in Europol's external relations for more than a decade. The findings of the European Union Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment and other analytical reports produced by Europol, show an intertwined security nexus of criminal threats and common challenges between the EU and Middle East and North African (MENA) countries.

The identification of mutual interests reinforces the need to build stronger cooperative relationships between MENA countries and Europol. While Europol experienced some **success in establishing partnerships in the Middle East** and the Gulf, having established structured cooperation through means of Strategic Agreement and Working Arrangements with the United Arab Emirates, Israel, and more recently with Qatar, engagement with North African countries could further improve.

Conscious of the diversity comprising the MENA region, Europol has focused on enhancing and/or establishing relations with its partners at both multilateral and bilateral levels through the support of a resource-neutral tool: the **Policing Partnership concept**. This project is a tool that develops tailored-made strategies to enhance cooperation with each

¹²¹ EDOC #1262066: Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia, Jordan, Lebanon, Algeria, Singapore, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, Iraq, Argentina, Peru, Bolivia, NATO, UNCTED, UNOCT, UNITAD, UN IIIM, EUGENDFOR, AFRIPOL, AMERIPOL, ASEANPOL, OSCE, OPCW, Intra-European Organisation of Tax Administrations, EUBAM Libya, EUNAVFOR Somalia, EUAA, EBA, EU SatCen, EUCAP SAHEL Niger, ELA.

Europol Public Information

country in the region while maximising EU resources and inter-agency cooperation. The project has already generated successes in the dialogue with Egypt, Morocco and Jordan.

Europol will continue to actively progress formalising bilateral cooperation with other MENA and African **countries previously prioritised by the Management Board including Morocco, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Nigeria**. Europol will also support the European Commission in any future negotiations on International Agreements with mandated partners in this region.

Seeking direct cooperation at regional level, Europol actively participates in several regional fora, such as AIMC and MENA-focused INTERPOL and UN initiatives, and has built up engagement with GCCPOL and AFRIPOL. While pursuing enhanced cooperation with North African countries, Europol could assess on a **case-by-case** basis whether to extend its outreach to **other African countries** where targeted cooperation could be justifiable due to emerging criminal trends, for instance regarding migrant smuggling, drug trafficking and cybercrime.

Going forward, the targeted approach could include:

- Expanding the Policing Partnerships;
- Engaging in relevant regional initiatives in the fight against serious and organised crime on the basis of operational interest e.g., migrant smuggling; and subject to available resources.
- Making better use of Member States Liaison Officers in the Region and engaging with INTERPOL for strategic purposes;
- Creating more opportunities to cooperate with AIMC, AFRIPOL and GCCPOL.

Key actions:

- **To further improve engagement with North African countries**
- **To enhance the Policing Partnership concept**
- **To explore a targeted approach to the region**

3.2 Latin America

Engagement with Latin American partners should be **sustained at both bilateral and multilateral level**. Latin American countries represent a priority geographical area for Europol to tackle many areas of transnational crimes. Europol has already concluded several bilateral agreements with countries in the region and will continue to support the Commission in International Agreements negotiations in order to support efforts to tackle issues, such as drug trafficking, trafficking in human beings, cyber threats, or financial and environmental crimes.

At regional level Europol will continue to seek **engagement via AMERIPOL**, Europol's natural counterpart in the region once legal personality is acquired. In a similar vein, Europol will continue to develop relations with CLASI (Latin America Internal Security Committee) and support the work of EL PAcCTO (Europe Latin America Programme of Assistance against Transnational Organised Crime). Besides, **multilateral cooperation** with relevant operational partners such as MAOC-N will be explored.

Other possibilities for cooperation could be considered such as:

- Enhancing Europol's visibility in the region;
- Making use of Member States and third country's networks in the region for strategic cooperation;
- Establishing ties with CARICOM IMPACs if the crime patterns continue to shift.

Key actions:

- **To sustain and enhance bilateral engagement with key operational partners in the region**

- **To engage with AMERIPOL in order to facilitate a more efficient regional outreach**

3.3 Regional Policing Bodies and International Organisations

In addition to AMERIPOL, AFRIPOL and AIMC, Europol should continue to **foster closer ties with other regional policing bodies** such as ASEANAPOL, SCO-RATS, and CARICOM IMPACS, particularly in the context of the INTERPOL-led Dialogue on effective multilateral policing. This offers the possibility to engage at regional level with law enforcement agencies and to build a network of partners. It could be explored if Europol's partner networks could be a way to engage with countries where there is no structured cooperation established. Europol should continue to explore **targeted cooperation** with relevant UN bodies, NATO, the Council of Europe, OECD and ICC in line with the operational and strategic needs of the Member States, respecting the legal requirements for the exchange of personal data.

Key actions:

- **To foster closer ties with other regional policing bodies**
- **To explore targeted cooperation with other international bodies**

4. Priority 3: PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS FOR A MORE TARGETED COOPERATION

The provisions for Europol's relations with partners are laid down in **Chapter V of the Europol Regulation** which governs Europol's cooperation with Union bodies, third countries, international organisations and private parties¹²².

Although the current possibilities for the exchange of non-personal data have been fruitful so far, some limitations and difficulties have taken place with regards to operational information-exchange. While the practice of **law enforcement requires a quick and flexible response to the threats of organised crime and terrorism**, the exchange of personal data is subject to numerous limitations, which in turn can prolong the process.

4.1 Operational cooperation

Europol will continue to rely, as necessary, on **the legal options set out in Article 25** of the Europol Regulation and will **support the European Commission in its negotiations of International Agreements and Adequacy decisions** with relevant third countries and bodies.

In addition, Europol could also **seek to utilise** the existing possibilities provided by the **Europol Regulation**, such as **Article 25(4a), Article 25(6), while increasing the exceptional transfer procedure under Article 25(5) where required.**

Article 25(4a) – Transfers based on appropriate safeguards

Article 25(4a) is the novelty of the amended Europol Regulation offering a new and additional legal basis to transfer personal data to third countries and international organisations, namely "transfers based on appropriate safeguards", a possibility which is also available to other Union bodies and Member States' law enforcement authorities. This is a new legal basis which can be considered for establishing **structured and regular cooperation with countries which do have certain level of data protection in their national law**, but not sufficient to pass the strict requirements for an Adequacy Decision.

Article 25(5) – Exceptional transfer with authorisation of Europol's Executive Director

¹²² A separate strategy is being developed on Europol's cooperation with private parties.

Europol Public Information

Article 25(5), the exceptional transfer decided by the Executive Director, requires a careful and detailed assessment of operational, legal and data protection related considerations. This procedure has broader application and should be considered in other situations for instance for several transfers in the same case or in other types of cases.

Article 25(6) - Exceptional transfer based on a decision of the MB and the EDPS

Article 25(6) provides that, in the absence of dedicated international cooperation arrangements under Article 25(1), the MB may, in agreement with the EDPS, authorise for a period not exceeding one year, which shall be renewable, a set of transfers in accordance with the safeguards set out in Article 25(5).

Key actions:

- **To further assess the possibilities of Article 25(4a) and Article 25(6) – particularly for countries with a proven high level of data protection in other sectors**
- **To make better use of the exceptional clause provided for by Article 25(5)**

4.2 Strategic cooperation

With regards to **cooperation limited to the exchange of non-personal data**, the conclusion of a standard **Working Arrangement** is reflected in the Europol Regulation. The Working Arrangements are concluded where the Parties are expected to engage in a structured and regular cooperation. The added-value of using a standardised model for all partners is to ensure uniformity in the applicable rules.

Given the need for a more flexible approach, **alternative and lighter means and frameworks of cooperation could be considered for those third countries and international organisations with which the envisaged strategic cooperation will not be structured or systematic, but rather occasional** (for example, in the context of cooperation for a particular sport event or for a specific case only).

In case of a clearly identified need to formalise the engagement with a third party, Europol could consider for example the conclusion of a **Memorandum of Understanding** or other instruments outlining the basic principles of cooperation and providing sufficient guarantees in terms of data protection. Such an instrument would be approved by the Executive Director while the Management Board would be subsequently informed. This option would also not entail formal negotiations and hence provide for much quicker finalisation and adoption for those **partners with which cooperation is needed for specific purposes**.

Key action:

- **To explore more flexible and lighter frameworks for strategic cooperation**

4.3 Cooperation through EU Member States' networks

While Europol will continue to develop and enhance its strategic relationships with external partners, there is an opportunity to make better use of the Member States established networks to optimise existing resources and avoid duplication and inefficiencies.

New possibilities for strategic cooperation could be explored taking into account **useful instruments or mechanisms at Member State level**, for instance Member States' bilateral agreements with third countries and their Liaison Officers network¹²³. Some Member States have long standing cooperation with third countries of particular operational

¹²³ Some Member States have experiences with this, for instance the Nordic Cooperation and the Benelux shared pool of Liaison Officers.

Europol Public Information

interest with which Europol does not have any cooperation agreement in place. While this approach would not allow for the exchange of personal data, optimising these existing frameworks could greatly assist with the common goal of combatting cross-border crime and terrorism from a strategic perspective. These networks could also help facilitate contacts with relevant law enforcement agencies in third countries. **Decisions** on whether these mechanisms could be used **will rest with the Member State(s) concerned**, who will also determine the nature, criteria and extent of the use of these networks.

Besides, sharing common resources responds to the scarcity of staff and financial or technical resources that law enforcement agencies are confronted with, and follows the **principle of solidarity**. While respecting the autonomy of Member States to manage their own resources, there is a collective responsibility to work together at EU level to deal with common challenges.

Key action:

- **To explore strategic cooperation through EU Member States' networks**

4.4 Cooperation through EU Mechanisms

The European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) is a key tool for strengthening and establishing cooperation with third countries in the fight against serious organised crime and terrorism. EMPACT could be used for strengthening and establishing cooperation with third countries both within and outside of Europol's network, in consultation with EMPACT drivers and EU Member States. The EMPACT network can provide, on demand, valuable operational feedback on the level of EMPACT involvement of third parties and **information on their readiness and preferred way to cooperate** with the EU. The level of involvement could be a basis, among others, for evaluating the operational need for closer cooperation with the respective third partners.

Another possibility is offered by EEAS – Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) Missions. Improving links and cooperation between CSDP missions/operations and JHA agencies has been considered a component in achieving cooperation in both EU defence and security matters. Several priorities for actions have been identified over the years, from countering migrant smuggling to counterterrorism, among others. Europol has been working on setting a structured dialogue with CSDP missions, adjusting, with a coherent plan, to the implementation of the Compact CSDP. Given the **interest of the EU Member States in monitoring neighbouring countries and creating synergies between CSDP missions and JHA agencies**, from both a strategic and operational perspective, Europol will continue to develop **relations with the most relevant missions**, particularly those covering countries with which Europol does not have an agreement.

Europol should **continue to engage in EU-funded initiatives and projects** covering key regions in line with operational need and strategic value and subject to the available resources. Greater participation in capacity building can promote and increase trust in the Agency and deepen relations with third countries and regions. Upskilling and supporting law enforcement in third countries can build capacity and lead to better operational outcomes.

Key action:

- **To support the Commission in its role for structured operational cooperation and continue the strategic engagement through EU avenues**

4.5 Other types of cooperation

Europol should continue to make use of **targeted action days and events** involving third countries and organisations. These events not only lead to operational results, but can serve

Europol Public Information

to increase resilience of third country partners against terrorism, online radicalisation and other forms of crimes.

4.6 Technical enablers

The Information Exchange Directive¹²⁴ introduces SIENA as the “default channel” of communication for cross border cooperation between law enforcement of Member States and the Schengen Associated Countries. As such, **SIENA remains the “preferred channel” for communication when it comes to third parties** where it is already available and for future strategic partners where a long term and permanent relationship is envisaged.

When, however, SIENA is not available for a third party and there is an **exceptional and urgent need** to cooperate, **Large File Exchange (LFE)** could be the solution. LFE is a well-established solution (complementing SIENA whose attachments are limited to 55 MB) allowing to transfer large volume data sets (e.g. video files) between Member States, third parties and Europol. LFE is currently undergoing a significant change. A specific change, Internet facing, could be considered for exchanges with third parties when SIENA is not available and there is an urgent operational need.

Key action:

- **To elaborate a policy for the use of LFE with third parties.**

5. ASSESSMENT OF NEW COUNTRIES FOR COOPERATION - METHODOLOGY

Europol continuously monitors the criminal landscape to identify new and emerging threats. This provides an **overview of the most relevant third countries for different crime areas**. For some of these countries, operational or strategic cooperation possibly already exists bilaterally or multilaterally; for some others, new ways of cooperation might be needed **to assure the security of Europe or to support EU Law Enforcement Agencies at national level**.

The main principle for proposing new countries or partners with which Europol can conclude a Working Arrangement is the **operational need** identified by the Member States and Europol.

More specifically the criteria to be used for assessment includes:

- References to the third countries in analytical products such as SOCTA, IOCTA, TE-SAT and EFFECTA;
- Presence of the third countries in ongoing investigations;
- Assessment of the third countries situation regarding organised crime
- An ‘Operational Input’ by the Operations Directorate outlining the operational prioritisation it attaches to the proposed candidate;
- Potential ‘EMPACT Actions’ which the candidate could be associated with (subject to the approval of the other participants);
- Real possibilities of operational return;
- Policy-related and fundamental rights considerations;
- Experiences related to flexible cooperation.

The need for cooperation with a new partner will be presented to the Management Board as a **business case**.

¹²⁴ Directive (EU) 2023/977 on the exchange of information between the law enforcement authorities of Member States.

6. REPORTING

Europol's External Relations Strategy 2025+ explicitly sets an open timeline because of evolving operational needs and developments. Europol will report **annually on cooperation** with third countries and international organisations, outlining the level of engagement with each partner and region and highlighting trends and evolution, including feedback from the third parties.

The annual report will include quantitative and qualitative elements to allow the Management Board to assess and discuss from Member States' perspective the current and future level of engagement with each partner via Europol. The Management Board will reflect on the cooperation and decide together on reprioritisation of third countries and international organisations according to the Member States' needs.

Annex XIII: Procurement Plan 2025

1. Introduction (Legal basis and financing decision):

Procurement initiatives are implemented in line with the Financial Regulations as follows:

- Article 89 of the Europol Financial Regulation¹²⁵ states that: *“as regards procurement, Title VII of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046¹²⁶ and Annex 1 thereof shall apply, subject to Article 90 (procurement procedures)”*
- Article 110(1) (financing decision) of the EU Financial Regulation¹²⁷ states that: *“A budgetary commitment shall be preceded by a financing decision adopted by the Union institution or by the authority to which powers have been delegated by the Union institution. The financing decisions shall be annual or multiannual. The first subparagraph of this paragraph shall not apply in the case of appropriations for the operations of each Union institution under its administrative autonomy that can be implemented without a basic act in accordance with Article 58(2), point (e), of administrative support expenditure and of contributions to the Union bodies referred to in Articles 70 and 71”*
- Article 110(2) and (3) of the EU Financial Regulation states that *“The financing decision shall indicate the total amount it covers and shall contain a description of the actions to be financed. It shall specify:*
 - (a) the basic act and the budget line;*
 - (b) the objectives pursued and the expected results;*
 - (c) the methods of implementation;*
 - (d) any additional information required by the basic act for the work programme.**In addition, (...) the financing decision shall set out the following:*
 - (b) for procurement: the global budgetary envelope reserved for procurements”.*

2. Rules for participation in Europol tender procedures:

Eligibility and exclusion criteria

- The tenderers must be established in an EU Member State. This implies that tenderers established in third countries (non-EU countries) do not have the right to participate in Europol tendering procedures, unless other bilateral or special international agreements in the field of public procurement grant them the right to do so. In case there is no such agreement, or the agreement does not apply to the kind of contracts put out to tender, tenderers of third countries are not entitled to participate, unless otherwise explicitly allowed in the given calls published by Europol;
- The tenderers shall not be, at the time of a contract award procedure, in one of the exclusion situations referred to in Article 140 (Exclusion criteria and decisions on exclusions) of the EU Financial Regulation.

Selection and award criteria

¹²⁵ Decision of the Europol Management Board on the adoption of the Financial Regulation applicable to Europol (EDOC#1032027v6 4 October 2019)

¹²⁶ Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, was repealed by Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (recast) - OJ L, 2024/2509, 26.9.2024. The recast Financial Regulation applies from 30 September 2024.

¹²⁷ Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (recast) - OJ L, 2024/2509, 26.9.2024. The recast Financial Regulation applies from 30 September 2024.

Europol Public Information

- The eligible proposals/tenders will be evaluated against the selection criteria indicated in each call. In general, there are three sets of selection criteria to be assessed which are specified on a case by case basis in each tender procedure:
 - Legal and regulatory capacity;
 - Economic and financial capacity;
 - Technical and professional capacity.

- The tenders which meet the selection criteria are evaluated against the award criteria indicated in each call. In general, the award criteria require the assessment of quality and price.

3. Green procurement:

Europol recognizes its responsibility for making a positive contribution to sustainable development and commits itself to protect the environment by limiting the environmental impact of its activities and to continuously improve its environmental performance.

- In November 2021, Europol was awarded the ISO 14001:2015 certificate for its own Environmental Management System (EMS) by the accredited certification body, followed by EMAS¹²⁸ registration on 23 February 2022. Europol has become the first Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) Agency to do so and joining a selective group of EU Institutions and bodies being EMAS registered. The Europol Environmental Policy and Europol annual Environmental Statement¹²⁹ are available for consultation online on the Europol's website.
- In line with EMAS Regulation (EC) No 1221/2009, Annex I 2b, suppliers and contractors must comply with Europol's Environmental Policy within the remit of the activities carried out for the contract and should consider their environmental performance and practices. Contractors are encouraged to prefer electronic communication and take measures to reduce the overall carbon footprint through green procurement, waste management, energy efficiency and to promote to their staff climate neutrality sustainable environmental behaviours.
- Europol takes into consideration suppliers and contractors' environmental performance and practices when awarding tenders. Europol has introduced, where applicable with the scope of the contract, green public procurement (GPP) or environmental considerations in its own procedures, either at the selection criteria stage, technical specifications, award criteria and/or as part of the contract performance clauses, where relevant.

4. Europol diversity and inclusion strategy:

Europol is an equal opportunities employer and encourages diversity (national origin, race, colour, disability, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation etc) and inclusion among Contractors' personnel in accordance with the Europol contractual terms.

5. Overview of the main procurement initiatives for year 2025:

Procurement initiatives are implemented either via existing (framework) contracts or via tender procedures on the basis of the following outsourcing financing scheme:

- I. Implementation of existing framework contracts through order forms (including specific contracts) or of direct contracts;
- II. Other Procurements (mainly through call for tenders under open/restricted and negotiated procedures).

¹²⁸ Eco- Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS), EMAS is a premium management instrument developed by the European Commission for companies and other organisations to evaluate, report, and improve their environmental performance.

¹²⁹ To consult the latest online version at the time of preparation of this document, follow this link: <https://www.europol.europa.eu/publications-events/publications/europol-environmental-statement-2022>

Europol Public Information

A summary of the main procurement initiatives is outlined in Table 1 below. It includes generic information about the procurement initiatives performed in the previous year of the current work programme as well as the initiatives planned for the following year.

A detailed overview of the procurement initiatives for **YEAR 2025** is provided in Table 2 below. The table indicates the **number of the main contracts** (i.e. above EUR 15,000) in force in 2025 and divided into two parts:

- Part A includes administration and general services-related procurement initiatives.
- Part B includes IT-related procurement initiatives.

The table also includes the **indicative list of procurement procedures** to be initiated in 2025¹³⁰. The list of tender procedures will be further detailed once more details on calls timing will be available.

The table does not include the following data/information:

- tender procedures below EUR 15,000;
- exceptional negotiated procedures without prior publication of a contract notice under point 11, Annex I of the EU Financial Regulation;
- restricted procedures to be launched under existing (published) calls for expression of interest;
- inter-institutional procurement or procedures launched by the EU institutions, bodies and/or agencies;
- joint procurement procedures launched by EU Member States, in particular the Host State (the Kingdom of the Netherlands);
- tender procedures under framework contracts with reopening of competitions or restricted procedures under a Dynamic Purchasing System, unless otherwise justified.

In addition, Europol will place orders for supplies, services, including IT consultancy services either under Europol framework contracts or under framework contracts resulting from inter-institutional procurement procedures. These orders and the inter-institutional framework contracts are not reflected in the table below.

Due to the high volume of procurement procedures, the timely implementation of the procurement initiatives depends on the commitment of all the stakeholders involved and the resources available for the handling of the procurement procedures.

Interested economic operators are invited to consult regularly the Europol website for low value and middle value procedures (between EUR 15,000 and below the EU thresholds) and the Official Journal of the European Union for all tender procedures from the applicable EU thresholds (EUR 143,000 for Europol as of 01.01.2024).

¹³⁰ Where relevant the list includes procedures already mentioned in the previous plan but to be initiated in Q4 of the preceding year.

Europol Unclassified – Basic Protection Level

Table 1: Summary of the main procurement initiatives

Table Code	Other initiatives and services	Total Initially Budget value	Total review value	Total Initially budget value	Total review value	Total Initially budget value ¹³¹	Number of contracts / SLA / etc	Expected number of procurement procedures
		2023	2023	2024	2024	2025		
Part A	Total Procurement (non-ICT)	35,286,400	35,363,275	36,873,458	28,235,700	29,325,884	80	18
Part B	Total ICT Procurement	48,859,300	45,419,300	48,987,569	47,952,178	67,785,653	74	4
Total							154	22
Parts A & B	Total all procured budget value	84,145,700	80,782,575	85,861,027	76,187,878	97,111,537		
% of the Europol budget for procurement initiatives		41%	39%	39%	34.6%	36.9%		

¹³¹ Estimated value, subject to change. The total review value (procured) for 2025 will be only available by mid-January.

Europol Public Information

Table 2: Overview of the main procurement initiatives for 2025

TABLE PART A - Main procurement initiatives 2025 (Non ICT-related activities)

List of running contracts in 2025 (Framework Contracts (FWC), Direct Contracts or Other, such as Service Level Agreements (SLA), Memorandum of Understanding)					
Category	Main procurement initiatives (services, supplies/goods and other initiatives) (categorised per budget headings)	Value (in Euro)	Contracts		Tenders
			Number of main contracts valid in 2025	Type of contracts	Number of tenders to be initiated by EUROPOL
Category A1	Staff-related expenditure, excluding salaries or allowances (medical services, training, etc.)	3,458,500	25	FWC Direct SLA Other	2
Category A2	Building-related expenditure (e.g. rent, energy, cleaning, maintenance, furniture, security, etc.)	13,769,900	23	FWC Direct SLA Other	5
Category A3	Administrative –related expenditure (e.g. postal services, stationary, open source, library, catering, insurance, publication, uniform, legal, promotional items, etc.)	3,481,720	28	FWC Direct	11
Category A4	Meeting-related expenditure (e.g. travel, hotels, interpretations, hospitality)	8,615,764	4	FWC SLA Other	0
Sub-Total Category A		29,325,884	80		18

Europol Public Information

Part A - Main procurement initiatives 2025 (NON-ICT-related activities)						
No	Type of Procurement initiatives (as divided in accordance with table above)	Subject	Estimated budget in Euro ¹³²	Indicative timeframe		Comments
				Indicative time frame for tender initiation	Indicative time frame for tender completion	
01	Category A1	Medical Laboratory tests and related services (for risk category group of Europol Staff)	Above EU threshold (around 200,000 out of 4 years)	Q4.2025	Q1.2026	Recurrent needs: Contract expiry date: 06.03.2026
02	Category A1	Risk Inventory and Evaluation services	Below EU threshold (around 30,000 – 40,000 out of 4 years)	Q3.2025	Q4.2025	New needs
03	Category A2	Technical Surveillance Countermeasures services <i>(from 2024 list of procurement initiatives)</i>	Above EU threshold (around 2,400,000 out of 4 years)	Q4.2024	Q1.2025	New needs <i>(Services previously provided by the Host State)</i>
04	Category A2	Uniforms for security guards, staff and deployed personnel	below EU threshold (around 140,000 out of 4 years)	Q3.2025	Q4.2025 Q1.2026	Recurrent needs: Contract expiry date: 16.12.2025
05	Category A2	Gym equipment and (corrective and preventive maintenance) <i>(from 2024 list of procurement initiatives)</i>	Above EU threshold (around 220,000 out of 4 years)	Q3.2025	Q4.2025 Q1.2026	New needs
06	Category A2	Consultancy building and facilities management services <i>(from 2024 list of procurement initiatives)</i>	Above EU threshold (around EUR 3,000,000 out of 4 years)	Q4.2024 Q1.2025	Q2.2025	Recurrent needs. Contract expiry date: 24.10.2025 <i>(contract maximum value might be</i>

¹³² Estimated amounts provided for information only where available. Below EU threshold = below EUR 140,000; Above EU threshold = above EUR 140,000.

Europol Public Information

						<i>exhausted prior to October 2025)</i>
07	Category A2	Purchase of bicycles (inclusive maintenance) <i>(from 2024 list of procurement initiatives)</i>	Below EU threshold (No estimation available yet)	Q2.2025/ Q3.2025	Q4.2025	New needs due to the distance between different satellite buildings and HQ.
08	Category A3	Catering and Banqueting Services	Above EU threshold (around EUR 4,500,000 out of 4 years)	Q3.2025/ Q4.2025	Q2.2026	Recurrent needs: Existing Contract expiry date: 30 June 2026
09	Category A3	Legal Advice and Services (incl. court representation)	Above EU threshold (around EUR 400,000 out of 4 years)	Q1.2025/Q2.2025	Q3/Q4.2025	Recurrent needs: Existing Contract expiry date: 22 June 2026 <i>Expected to initiate a procedure due to exhaustion of contract budget ceiling</i> <i>Europol may decide to split the procedure into separate procedures with different initiation dates</i>
10	Category A3	Gift and conference personalized promotional items	Above EU threshold (around 300,000 out of 4 years)	Q1/Q2.2025	Q3.2025	Recurrent needs: Existing Contract expiry date: 26 May 2027 <i>(Expected to initiate a procedure due to exhaustion of contract budget ceiling)</i> <i>Joint procedure with another EU agency envisaged</i>
11	Category A3	Communication services: Support for prevention and awareness campaigns <i>(from 2024 list of procurement initiatives)</i>	Below EU threshold (around 60,000/120,000 -out of 4 years)	Q2.2024	Q2/Q3.2025	New needs

Europol Public Information

12	Category A3	Communication consultancy and narrative services (storytelling)	Below EU threshold (around 100,000 -out of 4 years)	Q1.2025	Q2/Q3.2025	New needs
13	Category A3	Exhibitions, campaigns and outreach related printing	Below EU threshold (around 80,000 out of 4 years)	Q2.2025	Q2/Q3.2025	New needs
14	Category A3	Coins and Medals <i>(from 2024 list of procurement initiatives)</i>	Below EU threshold (around 80,000 out of 4 years)	Q4.2024	Q1.2025	New needs
15	Category A3	Leasing of and/or acquisition of Europol's fleet (including trade-in option) <i>(from 2024 list of procurement initiatives)</i>	Above EU threshold (around 580,000 out of 4 years)	Q4.2024	Q1/Q2.2025	Recurrent needs: Existing Contract expiry date: 10.05.2024
16	Category A3	Insurance Services (glass, content, decontamination)	Above EU threshold (around 450,000 out of 4 years)	Q2.2025	Q4.2025	Recurrent needs: Existing Contract expiry date: 23.11.2025 <i>(Tentative, only if an existing contract cannot be used)</i> <i>Joint procedure with another EU agency envisaged</i>
17	Category A3	Actuarial Services for Defined Benefit Obligation <i>(from 2024 list of procurement initiatives)</i>	Below EU threshold (around 120,000 out of 4 years)	Q4.2024 Q1.2025	Q3.2025	New needs
18	Category A3	Imagery Satellite services <i>(from 2024 list of procurement initiatives)</i>	Above EU threshold (around 200,000 out of 4 years)	Q2.2025	Q4.2025	New needs <i>(Tentative – cooperation agreement with another EU body envisaged)</i>

Europol Public Information

TABLE PART B - Main procurement initiatives 2025 (ICT-related activities)

Part B - Main procurement initiatives 2025 (ICT-related activities)					
Category	Main procurement initiatives (services, supplies/goods and other initiatives) (categorised per budget headings)	Value (in Euro)	Contracts¹³³		Tenders
			Nr of main contracts valid in 2025	Type of contracts	Nr of tenders to be initiated by EUROPOL
Category B1	Administrative and operational purchase and maintenance of Hardware and Software	42,773,972	18 + 18	FWC	1
Category B2	Administrative and operational ICT External Service Provision including development and maintenance of solutions and strategic consultancy services	23,118,881	12 + 13 +5	FWC	1
Category B3	Administrative and operational Telecommunications costs	1,892,800	6 + 2	FWC	2
Sub-Total Category B		67,785,653	74		4

¹³³ A contract may cover several categories and be counted more than once.

Europol Public Information

Tentative detailed overview of ICT-related procurement procedures to be initiated in 2025:						
No	Category	Subject	Estimated budget	Indicative timeframe		Comments
				Indicative time frame for tender initiation	Indicative time frame for tender completion	
19	Category B1	Acquisition of miscellaneous IT Equipment (including forensic equipment) <i>(from 2024 list of procurement initiatives)</i>	Above EU threshold (around 2,800,000 out of 4 years)	Q4.2024/ Q1.2025	Q2.2025	Recurrent needs: Existing Contract expiry date: 14.04.2025
20	Category B2	Service Desk Services	Above EU threshold (around 4,000,000 out of 4 years)	Q4.2025/ Q1.2026	Q2.2026	Recurrent needs: Existing Contract expiry date: 17.07.2026 <i>(Tentative – use of an existing framework contract under assessment)</i>
21	Category B3	Internet services (for Europol new Satellite buildings)	Above EU thresholds (200,000 EUR – out of 4 years)	Q4.2024 Q1.2025	Q2.2025	Recurrent needs <i>(Tentative – use of a restricted procedure via an inter-institutional Dynamic Purchasing System under and existing framework contract))</i>
22	Category B3	Landline, fixed telephony	Above EU thresholds (200,000 EUR out of 4 years)	Q1.2025	Q3.2025	Recurrent needs: Existing Contract expiry date: 17.08.2025 <i>(Tentative, only if an existing contract/ Dynamic Purchasing System cannot be used) Joint procedure with another EU agency envisaged</i>

Annex XIV: Corporate Risks 2025

Europol's corporate risk management process aggregates risks (including the related responses) at organisational level. In doing so, Europol expands risk management from a vertical (e.g. in departments or programmes/projects) to a horizontal perspective (corporate, organisational wide view), meeting the required elements on risk management set out in the Internal Control Framework (ICF) of Europol¹³⁴, which takes into account the COSO ICF¹³⁵ and the European Commission's ICF¹³⁶, international standards¹³⁷ and the European Commission's risk management guide¹³⁸. In line with this, corporate risks are considered internally by Europol at regular intervals throughout the year and on an immediate ad hoc basis in the event of the identification of time-critical or high impact risks.

For Europol, a risk is an uncertain event or set of events that, should it occur, would have an effect on the achievement of objectives related to the annual business planning (i.e. Work Programme) and the Europol Strategy from an overall perspective. Risks are understood in two dimensions: **Threats** (expected negative effect on a business objective) or **opportunities** (expected positive effect on a business objective). Both types of risk – those identified as threats and opportunities – are listed below.

The overview shows the **most important corporate risks** with reference to 2025, in total **4 threats** and **1 opportunity**, reflecting the risk exposure at the second half of 2024 concerning the business planning, as well as the outlook for the 2025 planning¹³⁹. The overview is synchronised with the outcome of the **Home Affairs Agencies peer review risk assessment exercise for 2025** (chaired by Europol in October 2024 for the Home Affairs Agencies¹⁴⁰).

¹³⁴ Internal Control Framework (ICF) of Europol, Europol file no. EDOC #951032v13

¹³⁵ Committee of Sponsoring Organisations of the Treadway Commission (COSO) Internal Control Integrated Framework, May 2013

¹³⁶ Communication to the European Commission – Revision of the Internal Control Framework, C(2017) 2373, Europol file no. EDOC #911042v1

¹³⁷ ISO Standard on Risk Management: ISO-31000(2018)

¹³⁸ Risk Management in the European Commission – Implementation Guide, September 2022 Europol file no. EDOC #1032716v3

¹³⁹ It should be noted that the critical risks, in terms of threats and opportunities, represent an aggregate "snapshot" at a moment in time. The corporate risks are integrated into the risk register as part of the corporate risk management process at regular intervals for assessment and decision making within Europol and subsequent monitoring. This facilitates and ensures that the risks are regularly assessed and amended where required. The Europol MB will be informed of any significant change to the risks.

¹⁴⁰ For the peer risk review exercise in October 2024, the guidance developed by the EU Agencies Network (EUAN) – Performance Development Network (PDN) includes risks as threats only.

List of corporate risks for 2025

No	Short risk title	Risk description	Risk response
1	<p>Geo-political developments and security threats</p>	<p>Against the background of fast evolving geo-political developments¹⁴¹ and conflicts affecting the interests of the EU, Europol is exposed to elevated security including cyber threats, next to potential sabotage as well as infiltration risk scenarios by a diverse range of threat actors¹⁴², in particular in light of technological advancements (increased use of Artificial Intelligence).</p>	<p>Threat – Share¹⁴³, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • performing 2025 Work Programme Activities; • monitoring the political situation & coordinate activities with EU stakeholders; • employing 24/7 ICT & security monitoring (for early detection) & response capabilities; • taking ad-hoc response measures based on emerging trends; • performing business continuity/contingency planning & related response measures; • implementing enhanced information security management; • expanding security clearance related processes and corresponding activities to detect and counter infiltration and compromise exposure threats; • decommissioning ICT legacy or obsolete systems; • implementing applications & software upgrade lifecycle process; • providing security training for staff (in particular for sensitive mission deployments); • engaging with cooperation partners and stakeholders for preparedness and resilience.

¹⁴¹ Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine (as well as corresponding adversary activities towards the EU and its Member States, third countries and international organisations) and other conflicts affecting the EU (in particular the Gaza & Lebanon - Israel conflict)

¹⁴² Including with respect to IT infrastructure (especially for internet facing systems), and physical security & critical infrastructure (such as energy supply, telecommunications) hybrid threat scenarios (e.g. misinformation combined with attacks on critical infrastructure)

¹⁴³ Threat risk type responses are: Reduce (pro-active actions are undertaken to minimise the probability or impact; the responsibility for the risk effect(s) and response measure(s) stay with Europol); Remove (changing the scope of the business objective concerned); Transfer (a third party takes responsibility for the risk); Retain (conscious and deliberate decision to accept the risk and, especially, the possible effect(s) on the business objective); Share (the responsibility for the risk effect(s) and risk response measure(s) are shared between the involved parties, i.e. Europol and Member States take responsibility for certain aspects of the risk).

Europol Public Information

No	Short risk title	Risk description	Risk response
2	<p align="center">Incomplete implementation of expanding mandate and tasks</p>	<p>The Agency is exposed to the risk of not accomplishing its mandate and tasks resulting from new legislative and policy initiatives, as well as not meeting the demand from Member States and increasing expectations from Europol's stakeholders, including from a compliance perspective, given in particular the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expanding mandate & tasks (resulting from changes to the Europol Regulation, Europol's share of the EU Interoperability agenda, Digital Services Act, Cybersecurity Regulation etc.); • complexity and overall increasing requirements emanating from regulatory change (such as timelines and implementation reporting); • impact of increased supply of value (resulting in rising demand, e.g. through the Operational Task Forces (OTFs), Europol's analysis products); • increase in the complexity and volume of demands from supervisory stakeholders (especially from a data protection perspective) which adds lead time, reduces implementation pace and binds significant resources for realising organisational change; • continuously evolving timelines for deliverables, resource margins and requirements ('scope creep'), next to ad hoc tasks and requests; • annual cycle of audit activities performed by the IAS, EDPS, ECA (with increasing number of performance audits) etc.; • increasing volume of public and data subject access requests which consume significant resources. 	<p>Threat – Share, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • performing 2025 Work Programme Activities; • identifying and managing stakeholder expectations, including by communicating clearly about the needs and Europol's capacity to deliver new tasks; • performing robust planning & performance measurement processes, next to close monitoring of audit follow-up; • de-prioritising relevant activities where feasible in order to perform emerging or additional tasks of new or evolving mandate; • engaging with European Commission & supervisory authorities to identify efficiency gains; • adjusting strategic programming, where needed, to reflect realistic ambitions & plans; • monitoring & reporting any structural risk concerning the deficit of resources to the Management Board (MB), the European Commission & Budgetary Authority; • enhancing and employing effective & efficient change management to allow for the expected delivery of Europol's mandate and tasks, as well as compliance requirements and demands from stakeholders.

Europol Public Information

No	Short risk title	Risk description	Risk response
3	Inadequate resources	<p>The Agency faces a shortage of the required financial, human and physical resources when compared with the estimates expressed in particular in the annual programming documentation, due to the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • static Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) with pre-defined financial and staff contingents; • expanding mandate and tasks, as well implementation scope not being adequately accounted for, either during the process for developing the respective Legislative Financial Statement (LFS) accompanying regulatory change, or in the course of subsequent implementation; • constraints in the applicable staff rules, or the impact of national legislation for employing contractors. • inability to attract, recruit & retain staff (particularly in the Operations Directorate and in the ICT Department which is exposed to a challenging labour market); • insufficient facilities (including for ICT data centres and redundant business continuity capabilities), as well office and meeting space due to Europol's growth and structural limitations in the current Headquarters. 	<p>Threat – Share, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • performing 2025 Work Programme Activities, in particular implementing Europol's HR Strategy; • ensuring a flexible approach of allocation of resources in the annual budgetary process, for identifying the required adjustments to the pre-defined resource envelopes during the MFF period (for decision-making by the budgetary authority, in coordination with the European Commission); • exercising stringent budget monitoring to ensure the early identification of savings for enabling corresponding budget transfers; • identifying the areas with highest priority for the allocation of staff; • recruiting the right talent, as well retaining highly qualified staff, while making use of reserve lists and internal mobility; • reviewing recruitment and procurement processes to identify efficiency gains; • tailoring staff implementing provisions and procurement contracts based on Europol's needs where feasible; • maintaining an attractive work environment and flexible working arrangements (such as teleworking and flexitime); • providing personal development and training to develop the competency and skill base; • exploring the sharing of resources, knowledge & experience across Agencies where feasible; • deploying a continuously developing in-/outsourcing strategy, based on Europol's needs; • ensuring follow-up of change to ensure continuity and predictability (knowledge transfer etc.); • negotiating with the Host State authorities on housing & office planning (Strategic Housing Roadmap).

Europol Public Information

No	Short risk title	Risk description	Risk response
4	Insufficient capabilities	<p>The Agency is exposed to the risk of insufficient internal capacity and externally dependent capabilities, in particular to deliver the required change given the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • operational as well as overall technological and ICT developments which affect the organisation; • external stakeholder dependencies; • complexity of regulatory requirements (including national legislation), next to political aspects; • increase in data volume and complexity of requests from Member States and partners which drives the operational demand for advanced ICT tools and automation of tasks; • highly regulated environment for researching and deploying innovative ICT solutions supported by Artificial Intelligence (AI); • limited capacity to deliver necessary ICT infrastructure and tools in order to meet the operational demand, especially due to applicable regulatory constraints for processing operational personal data off-premise; • continuously increasing costs for running the business systems (licences, hardware and software maintenance), decreasing budget availability for new initiatives and developing existing ICT infrastructure and tools; • overall limited capacity to manage organisational change. 	<p>Threat – Share, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • performing 2025 Work Programme Activities; • applying strategic demand management; • engaging into continuous dialogue with Member States and cooperation partners; • considering and making use of ICT cost reduction options on a continuous basis; • improving ICT delivery capabilities; • exploiting innovative AI based solutions on the basis of proactive engagement in particular with the EDPS; • strengthening project and process management to ensure an efficient implementation of the applicable regulatory requirements; • making Member States and cooperation partners regularly aware of corresponding legal as well as other obligations; • enhancing engagement and collaboration with relevant stakeholders (beyond Member States and cooperation partners), in particular at EU level.

Europol Public Information

No	Short risk title	Risk description	Risk response
5	<p style="text-align: center;">Enhanced public awareness on the added value of Europol in times of crises</p>	<p>Europol creates public awareness on the organisation's added value in times of crises, in view of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • security representing a connecting & cohesion factor for citizens in Member States; • demonstrating joint work with Home Affairs and other EU Agencies; • Europol (and other JHA Agencies) directly contributing to the expectations of citizens. 	<p>Opportunity¹⁴⁴ - Enhance, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pro-active awareness building & media outreach on successes; • promoting the work and outcome of Europol's work on social media platforms; • optimising public visibility via Europol's website and other platforms; • engaging with Member States, Home and other EU Agencies, the European Commission & other partners.

¹⁴⁴ Opportunity risk type responses are: Realise (identifying and seizing a chance to realise the concerned business objective with fewer resources or earlier than planned); Enhance (seizing and improving on an identified opportunity, thus achieving additional gains of relevance to more than one concerned business objective); Exploit (expanding the scope of business objectives by taking advantage of multiple benefits).