

## DEPLOYMENT OF THE MOBILE OFFICE

### Operation Monet V

Under the remit of Operation Monet V, live analytical support was provided via the mobile office to Spanish law enforcement authorities in Gran Canaria, following a request from the Spanish Guardia Civil. One Europol analyst was present throughout the operation, which targeted cash couriers within high-risk destination environments. As a result of the operation, the Guardia Civil seized €402 090, 1.2 kg of cocaine and other illicit products.

### Operation Atlas

In October 2009 the Europol team deployed the mobile office at the World Customs Organization (WCO) to support the Joint Customs Operation Atlas. Europol analysts performed approximately 400 searches on people, locations, identity documents and organisations.

This Joint Customs Operation was led by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement with support from the Operational Coordination Unit at the World Customs Organization in Brussels. The main aim of this operation is to promote international cooperation to combat transnational illegal cash couriers and bulk cash smuggling. The operation was conducted worldwide and has involved the customs authorities of most European Union Member States.

## OPERATION ROSA

Four jewellery shop robberies took place in Paris. Another robbery in a jewellery shop took place at Boulevard Barceló (Brussels, Belgium). Austria also suffered six jewellery shop robberies, committed in Vienna and Salzburg by suspects from Estonia and with similar modus operandi.

On 31 March 2009 Europol organised a preparatory meeting on Operation Rosa which was attended by Austria, Belgium, Estonia, France and Germany. A joint police operation was carried out in Estonia.

This operation led to the identification and arrest of eight suspected members of an Estonian-based criminal organisation, believed to be responsible for a series of armed robberies of high-class jewellery shops in Austria, Belgium and France, during 2007 and 2008.

During the operation, all the suspects were arrested and house searches were carried out at their residences. Many cellular phones, SIM cards, notes and other records were seized. Europol analysed this data to identify further international links. Physical evidence linking the suspects to the robberies was also found.

Europol has been actively supporting these investigations since 2007. The data received from countries involved was constantly analysed and several reports were issued to the concerned Member States. On the day of action, arrests and house searches were supported by a Europol team: one specialist and one analyst were present at the coordination centre set up in Tallinn. An on-the-spot mobile office was used to support the operation.

According to the latest figures, in 2008, 178 million counterfeit and pirated articles (79 million in 2007), involving 49 000 cases in 2008 (43 671 in 2007), were detained by customs at EU borders. These figures do not take into account 'intra-EU seizures' and do not consider activities conducted by customs services that have the capability to control and to investigate within their respective national territory. Nor do the figures include activities by other law enforcement agencies, including police and other bodies such as the Drug Regulatory Agency who are also active in this area. Additionally, it does not take into account the detection of counterfeit products manufactured within the EU nor the seizures made by border police.

obtained proceeds in the offshore entity are generally controlled by the money launderer who transfers them to the accomplices involved in the boiler room scheme.

Europol supports and provides training on the subject of money laundering. The most recent examples include: TAIEX Seminar held in Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Financial Crime Conference held in Stockholm, Sweden. Active participation since the preliminary phase of the training programme has

also been ensured to the CEPOL training, Money Laundering Common Curriculum, held in Portugal.

### 3.8 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY CRIME

Intellectual property rights (IPR) infringement refers to the violation of two main categories of recognised and protected rights. The first one is related to industrial property which covers various fields such as distinctive signs (trademarks), patents, designs and models (counterfeiting). The second refers to

#### OPERATION DIABOLO

Europol contributed to the joint customs operation Diabolo II which took place in September 2009, targeting counterfeit goods, including cigarettes. This operation saw cooperation between customs authorities from the 27 EU Member States and 16 Asian countries under the auspices of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF). It resulted in the seizure of more than 65 million counterfeit cigarettes and 369 000 other counterfeit items (shoes, toys, cameras, headphones, hats, caps, gloves, handbags, etc), representing over 20 different trademarks. Europol and Interpol reported that 89 individuals or companies involved in criminal organisations were identified by cross-checking the information provided by customs authorities.

Thanks to 88 missing links generated by the various Europol analysis work files, the operation also resulted in further potential international investigations into criminal activities.

The Europol mobile office was used to: detect links with data currently stored in Europol databases; explore all follow-up opportunities; update information concerning the main maritime routes used when importing counterfeit goods; and to gather data for analysis work files affected by the hits generated.

<sup>3</sup> Figures published by the European Commission's Taxation and Customs Union, 7 July 2009.

## OPERATION KUSSEN

*Guardia di Finanza*, supported by Europol, has disrupted a huge criminal network involved in the massive illicit production and distribution of counterfeit commodities. The investigation has been going on for two years and has focused on counterfeit clothing originating from Turkey and Italy. The clothes were distributed throughout the EU via a criminal network linked to Chinese, Italian and Turkish syndicates.

The case, which was presented in Italy earlier this month, resulted in:

- The discovery and dismantling of 16 illicit factories in Italy where the majority of the counterfeit products were manufactured
- The arrest of 12 suspects in Italy and France
- A successful controlled delivery organised between *Guardia di Finanza Bolzano* and the French Customs Investigative Service, Marseille
- The seizure of 3 million counterfeit items in Italy, Germany and France affecting more than 10 different brands representing a value of more than €150 million
- The collection of evidence which linked the transnational organised crime groups to other criminal groups from Belarus, Canada, Israel, Mauritius and San Marino.

Besides generating huge profits for the criminals, the illicit actions also fuelled the establishment of black markets, illegal immigrants operating the production centres and knock-on crimes such as customs and VAT frauds.

Our operational success, based on teamwork, was achieved thanks to close cooperation between law enforcement agencies and judicial authorities from Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, San Marino and Spain under the effective guidance of *Guardia di Finanza*, supported by Europol, Eurojust and Interpol.

The partnership developed with the private sector, in particular with Intelligence and Investigation Services through the United Kingdom liaison bureau at Europol, was also important in establishing the links to the companies behind the brands primarily affected.

copyright of literary and artistic works such as film, musical work and software programmes (piracy).

According to the World Health Organization, trade in counterfeit medicines represents 10% of the trade of legal medicines around the world, with huge differences between the regions. It could be less than 1% of sales in developed countries, rising to over 10% in developing countries.



### OPERATION GOMORRAH I

In the field of combating intellectual property crime, Operation Gomorrah I targeted Italian organised criminal networks that were trafficking unsafe counterfeit commodities such as power tools and generators.

This operation involved actions in several EU Member States, and achieved the following results:

In June 2009, French Customs and Gendarmerie deployed 350 officers nationwide resulting in the arrest of 9 criminals and the search of 98 warehouses where counterfeit products were seized.

Evidence indicated that 748 tonnes of such items, representing an estimated value of 11 200 000 euros, were sold through these outlets since 2007. Close French cooperation with German Police led to a further simultaneous arrest in Germany.

In September 2009, 130 German police officers were involved in the arrest of 19 criminals and 30 premises searches where more than 30 tonnes of illicit products were seized. Evidence was also simultaneously gathered in both Austria and Italy.

On both occasions, actions were coordinated by Europol and Eurojust, with technical on-the-spot support provided by Europol.

Counterfeiting is no longer limited to luxury products but is now a global problem affecting all types of goods including a large range of commodities from cigarettes to clothing, accessories and also products which could affect health and safety such as electronic equipment, beverages, foodstuffs and medicines.

The widespread use of the internet is a factor which may affect this phenomenon and may be a facilitator for helping this illicit activity to develop under an anonymous umbrella. The internet can easily be used for advertising counterfeit products, taking orders and paying for purchases. The internet also potentially increases our exposure to piracy, due to the advances in technology and the ubiquitous use of computers, making it much easier for pirated software, CDs, DVDs and other types of intellectual property to be widely and easily distributed.

Europol participates in the Interpol Intellectual Property Crime Training Seminar. Since the beginning of this initiative, Europol has contributed and taken part in four training seminars which were hosted by the Guardia di Finanza police academy in Rome, where nearly 130 officers from various countries and several continents benefited from the courses.

Europol organises an annual workshop on intellectual property crime which has been delivered to intellectual property crime experts from EU Member States, and Europol partners, with support from the Belgian authorities.

Europol supports other initiatives in close coordination with TAIEX, such as cooperation with the Russian Federation in this field. In 2009, high level

**ATM CASH WITHDRAWALS - PROTECT YOURSELF:**

- **Be aware of others around you.** If someone is behaving suspiciously or makes you feel uncomfortable choose a different machine.
- If you spot **anything unusual** about the cash machine do not use the machine and report it to the bank or police immediately.
- **Be alert.** If someone is crowding or watching you, cancel the transaction and go to another machine.
- **Stand close** to the cash machine.
- Always **shield the keypad** with your spare hand and your body to avoid anyone seeing you enter your PIN.

representatives and intellectual property crime experts from police and customs took part in a week's study visit on intellectual property crime at Europol.

**3.9 PAYMENT CARD FRAUD**

Payment card fraud is a growing global problem. Financial transactions worldwide are migrating from cash into non-cash and electronic means of payment, and forgery of these methods of payment within the European Union (EU) causes huge financial losses. Simultaneously, these losses constitute assets for organised crime groups and illegal income is invested to develop other forms of criminal activity for the organised crime groups.

The damage in 2009, caused by skimming alone in the EU, is estimated to exceed **€350 million**

**DISRUPTION OF ILLEGAL SKIMMING DEVICE PRODUCTION SITES**

Europol has supported cooperation between law enforcement agencies from Austria, Bulgaria and Poland, resulting in the disruption of two illegal skimming device factories on Bulgarian territory and the arrest of 10 criminal gang members. The skimming devices seized in these factories were ready to be fitted to many different types of ATMs (Automatic Teller Machines) used all over Europe. Hundreds of counterfeit payment cards, raw card data, skimming devices, electronic equipment (micro cameras, PIN pads), and tools used for the production of counterfeit credit cards were also seized during the final raid. With this operation, law enforcement prevented significant financial losses, which could have amounted to several thousand euros per illegally-cloned payment card.

## OPERATION FJORD

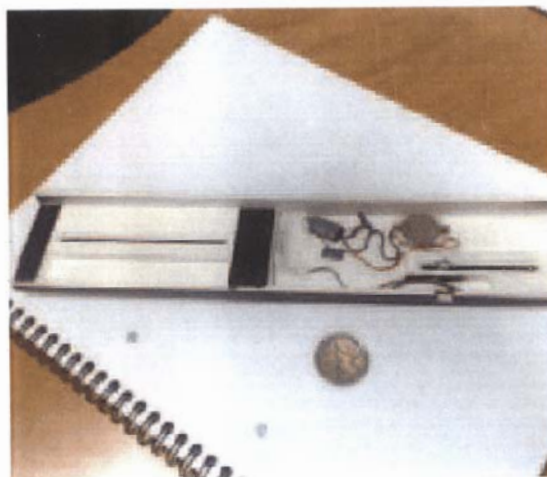
In 2008 as a result of a joint operation between the Payment Card Section, Garda Bureau of Fraud Investigation and Irish Customs, a Romanian suspect was arrested in Dublin for possessing ATM skimming equipment. The individual had arrived in Ireland as part of an organised crime gang with the intention of using the equipment to illegally acquire card information and PIN numbers from unsuspecting ATM customers. The card data and PINs would then be scanned and videoed by the criminals' sophisticated equipment while customers used the ATMs. The gang then planned to use the details scanned from the cards to clone the customers' debit or credit cards and then withdraw cash illegally from the victims' bank accounts.

Codenamed Operation Fjord, the successful operation culminated in the arrest, prosecution and conviction of an organised crime gang member and the disruption of the gang. It is estimated that the seized ATM card skimming equipment would have cost the gang up to €15 000 to acquire.

The information and shared intelligence in this case initially originated from Romanian law enforcement authorities. By use of the Europol Information Exchange channel, Garda and Irish Customs liaison officers based at Europol - in conjunction with various Member States law enforcement agencies that included Denmark, Sweden and Norway - were able to track the movements of the suspects as they travelled across Europe before reaching their ultimate destination of Dublin. The equipment seized was technologically advanced and had never before been encountered in Ireland or by Europol experts.

This is another example of the level of cooperation possible between law enforcement agencies based at Europol to effectively target and disrupt transnational organised crime gangs and bring the perpetrators to justice.

In this case the 'skimming' crime was committed by the perpetrator placing a device over the card slot of an ATM which reads the magnetic strip as the users pass their cards through it. These devices are often used in conjunction with a pinhole camera to read the users' PIN code at the same time. Details of copied payment cards are then used for illegal cash withdrawals.



## OPERATION CREIEUR

An operation against a large international skimming network, coordinated from the Europol operational centre, led to 24 arrests in September 2009. Eurojust coordinated the judicial part of the operation, which involved Belgium, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands and Romania.

Italy's **Polizia di Stato**, who led the investigation, considered this its biggest operation against a payment card fraud gang. So far the network is suspected of skimming at least 15 000 payment cards in the EU, with over 35 000 fraudulent transactions in total and losses amounting to around €6.5 million.

From the Europol operational centre, police officers, judges and prosecutors from the Member States concerned coordinated the joint operation via video link. Direct communication with prosecutors and police officers in the Member States during the three-day joint operation resulted in a total of 24 persons arrested: eight in Italy, twelve in Romania, two in the Netherlands and two in Belgium. In several house searches illegal equipment, counterfeit payment cards, drugs, weapons and a large sum of cash were seized.

During the operation two of the offenders were traced in Belgium and arrested red-handed. The arrestees had been targets of the Dutch Police for some time. The quick communication provided by the Europol liaison officers' network facilitated the short-term involvement of the Belgian Police, who succeeded in arresting the wanted persons. The suspects had made fraudulent withdrawals of €20 000 and were in possession of hundreds of duplicated bank cards.

The operational analysis carried out at Europol identified links to criminal offences in Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Moldova, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.



**Skimming:** The copying of a payment card's magnetic strip - without the knowledge or consent of the cardholder - generally happens when a payment card is used at a genuine Automatic Teller Machine (ATM) or Point of Sale terminal by the cardholder. The data is then written (cloned) to new cards which are used to make illicit cash withdrawals, commonly done outside the cardholder's country of residence.

The safety of non-cash transactions in the EU is important for card users and the banking industry (banks, payment institutions, clearing and settlement infrastructures, card processors and card schemes).

Europol responds to the needs of law enforcement agencies across the European Union. It assists Member States in combating payment card fraud by putting Europol's organisational, technical and legal capabilities at the disposal of law enforcement agencies. The vast experience and knowledge of Europol's officials has proven to bring additional value to investigations carried out in the European Union.

Europol, as a centre for assisting law enforcement agencies at an EU level, along with a network of assigned liaison officers from non-EU countries, is also able to facilitate cooperation of law enforcement agencies on a global level.

Most Member States are affected by card fraud and face specific problems related to this phenomenon. Based on intelligence received from Member States, Europol prepares analytical reports and threat assessments on this criminal activity. Joint Investigation Teams are also applied to combat payment card fraud on an EU level.

In 2009, Europol supported many EU law enforce-

ment investigations aimed at disrupting international criminal structures dealing with payment card fraud. Europol also provided specialised technical and forensic support and dispatched forensic reports to assist payment card fraud investigations. Europol's forensic mobile tool kit is ready to be deployed on-the-spot in any country.

Europol regularly organises expert meetings on the forensic examination of skimming devices. The last one took place at the forensic laboratory of the *Institut de Recherche Criminelle de la Gendarmerie Nationale* in France.

Criminals continuously develop more sophisticated techniques to compromise payment card data, therefore further proactive measures are needed to tackle this problem. Europol strongly supports forensic experts to develop their skills and we exchange best practices on the forensic examination of skimming devices.



### 3.10 CENTRAL OFFICE FOR COMBATING EURO COUNTERFEITING

Europol has the mandate to prevent and combat the forgery of money, in particular the euro, and Europol has been designated as the European Union's Central Office for combating euro counterfeiting. This legal status qualifies Europol to act as a worldwide contact point for combating euro counterfeiting.

To fulfil this central office function, Europol offers a wide range of products and services to EU Mem-

ber States and other partners. Europol actively supports law enforcement authorities by facilitating the exchange of information, gathering, analysing and disseminating criminal intelligence, as well as providing other expertise and knowledge to support investigations. That also includes participation in Joint Investigation Teams and granting financial support and on-the-spot assistance when requested. Moreover, Europol provides forensic support to law enforcement agencies. Forensic support aims to determine the origin of materials and devices used for the manufacturing of counterfeits. Additionally, Europol provides technical support and training on

#### EURO COUNTERFEITING TRENDS, 2009

A comparison with previous years demonstrates an increasing trend in the quantity of counterfeit euro banknotes being produced. However the total value of counterfeit euro banknotes detected in 2009 declined, when compared to 2008. This is attributed to the reduction in the number of high-denomination counterfeits, on the one hand, and growth in the number of counterfeits of 20 and 50 euro denominations. A noteworthy decrease has been observed in the quantity and total value of counterfeit coins.

#### DISMANTLING A PRINT SHOP IN BULGARIA

On 10 March 2009, a joint investigation team (JIT) was set up at Europol. Bulgaria and Spain decided to carry out a joint investigation into an organised criminal group producing and distributing counterfeit euros. The JIT was supported by Europol and Eurojust.

On 25 June 2009, the Bulgarian police, supported by the Spanish *Brigada de Investigación del Banco de España (Comisaria General de Policía Judicial)*, Europol and Eurojust disrupted a criminal group of 17 people who were behind the distribution of a large quantity of counterfeit euro notes. Twenty house searches were carried out in the region of Plovdiv, Bulgaria, where raw material and devices were seized. The counterfeit notes of 100, 200 and 500 euro denominations were printed by the criminal group and mainly distributed in Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands and Spain. An assessed face value of the counterfeit euros was €16 million.

This operation was an excellent international police cooperation led by the Bulgarian authorities and a great example of the potential of joint investigation teams. Europol assisted with operational analysis, coordination and information exchange, forensic, technical and operational support on-the-spot.

## JOINT INVESTIGATION TEAM (JIT)

Member States can set up joint investigation teams to improve police cooperation. The teams consist of judicial and police authorities from at least two Member States. They are responsible for carrying out criminal investigations into specific matters for a limited period. Europol and Eurojust can participate in and coordinate the work of JITs.

tactical and technical issues related to protecting the euro from counterfeiting.

Europol cooperates closely with European Union Member States, the European Central Bank, European Commission, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), Interpol and other partners.

### 3.11 HIGH-TECH CRIME

The High Tech Crime Centre at Europol provides support to Member States in the general fight against cybercrime. The High Tech Crime Centre is developing a European platform which can service the direct and indirect needs of Member States in this important emerging area of criminal activity.

#### 3.11.1 Cybercrime

Malicious activity on the internet continued to grow in 2009. Through attacking services on the web, for example through the use of malware (malicious software), end users are increasingly vulnerable to hackers. At the same time the underground economy where cybercriminals trade their illegally obtained information, skills and tools, continues to flourish.

The increasing threat of cybercrime in the EU has led to a situation where cybercrime is now a priority on Europe's agenda and consequently for Europol, too.

#### 3.11.2 Europol Cyber Crime Platform

In 2009, the implementation of the Europol Cyber

## OPERATION PARAISO

In August 2009, in Gandia (Spain), material and equipment for the production of more than 660 million counterfeit euros was seized, and an illegal print shop producing counterfeit 500 euro banknotes was dismantled near Valencia. Sixteen persons of Spanish and South American origin were arrested. More than 2 tonnes of high quality paper, fake documents, weapons, ammunition and 70 mobile phones were also confiscated. The operation named 'Paraiso' was carried out in collaboration between *Brigada de Investigación del Banco de España* (BIBE), the Judicial Police of Valencia and Europol. At the end of 2008, the Spanish investigations started focusing on an organised crime group dealing with the import of large quantities of cocaine from the Dominican Republic to Valencia, hidden in shipping containers. The profit generated by the drugs business was invested in the financing of counterfeit euro banknote production.

The criminal group invested more than 400 000 euros in equipment, acquiring the highest quality printing technology on the market. The perpetrators spent years preparing the illegal print shop and changed the layout of the counterfeits several times to improve their appearance. Europol became involved in the investigations after the first international criminal links were detected, and supported the investigations on-the-spot with technical and analytical assistance.

Crime Platform (ECCP) began. The ECCP rests on three pillars:

- The Internet Crime Reporting Online System (I-CROS), a European hub in a network of national online reporting points in the Member States, and third parties to Europol, where all offences noted on the internet can be reported and escalated to a European level if necessary. The primary tool that is used to host this information at Europol is the Information System (IS).
- The dedicated Europol analysis work file targets internet and ICT-driven organised crime aimed at financial gain. The focus is on identifying and eventually dismantling groups active in the cybercrime area. In general, cybercriminal activity is directed towards attacks on computer systems or networks. More specifically, the crimes committed include the



#### OPERATION ATLAS

On 10 August 2009, Europol received a request to support Operation Atlas, which concerned the hijacking of an Arctic sea ship in Swedish waters. Europol was requested to support an already-established joint investigation team involving Finland, Sweden and Malta. Based on the request, Europol immediately sent an analyst with a mobile office to Helsinki to support Operation Atlas on-the-spot. A back office was also created where up to five analysts worked and, during the weekend, four analysts were employed to work on the case. On 18 August, another Europol staff member - an expert in kidnapping - was sent to Helsinki.

The information derived from the joint investigation team was provided to the serious crime front office via the SIENA network, and expertise, advice and analytical support were constantly given to the JIT members.

In total 3814 entities were created; 14 436 links and 877 Mb of information were stored; more than 40 analysis charts and maps were produced directly to the investigators. A substantial amount of financial information on Russian companies was found and also a lot of maritime information came from Europol. An analysis of all calls also took place.

Europol's quick assistance to the operation was highly appreciated by the joint investigation team members. Europol's analysts and expert were well received and integrated quickly into the JIT team, rapidly contributing to moving the inquiry forward. The operation also proved the viability of using the newly-established environment to provide instant analytical and information exchange support to Member States' operations.

<sup>6</sup> Third parties are the bodies with which Europol has an operational agreement.

development of malware, hacking, identity theft and complicated phishing and e-commerce attacks. The work file is one answer to the request from EU Member States to be able to tackle cybercrime at an international level.

- The Internet FOREnsic EXPertise (I-FOREX) platform consists of a portal-based facility and comprises all information not related to personal/operational data that is in fact included in the two above-mentioned pillars. The information contained in this platform will mainly relate to police best practice and training, although it will not exclude other important cybercrime areas in the law enforcement community. This I-FOREX is considered a fundamental tool for Europol in supporting investigations on EU cybercrime and will help investigators to keep their technical skills up-to-date with respect to their cases.

### 3.12 MARITIME PIRACY

Over the last two years piracy off the coast of Somalia has become a cause for major international concern. Pirates are regularly demanding and receiving million dollar or euro ransom payments. Intelligence has it that piracy could tie in with other criminal phenomena such as the smuggling of human beings, weapons and drugs.

The overall pirate hijacking success rate for 2009 is significantly lower than the average in 2008 of 40%, and is probably due to the increased naval patrols and heightened security practices of the merchant vessels in the Gulf of Aden. Despite the relative decline in the pirate's success rate, there is an alarming increase in the absolute number of pirate attacks and an unprecedented expansion of pirate activity in the Indian Ocean.

In May 2009, Europol received a delegation from the Dutch National Crime Squad who were dealing with investigations into two hijacked vessels. The Dutch



delegation stressed the fact that there is a need for a common approach by analysing shared information and by looking at a harmonised, coordinated way of dealing with this evolving threat affecting a number of European Union Member States.

In response to the Dutch request, Europol hosted an ad-hoc expert meeting to discuss the criminal phenomenon of maritime piracy off the coast of the Horn of Africa. In its conclusions, a number of participating Member States committed to engage with Europol in order to open an analysis work file on the subject.

Additionally, an operational meeting took place with the participation of Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands. At this meeting the three participating Member States discussed the information available and which could be shared with Europol. Following this development, the decision was taken to set up a core team within Europol that will deal with this phenomenon. Moreover, Europol received a formal request from the Dutch Head of Europol National Unit to open an analysis work file on piracy. This was formally done, then signed by Europol's Director on 18 January 2010.

Europol's involvement in this phenomenon is focused on the identification of key perpetrators, logistical assets and financial flows linked to this criminal activity. Europol has committed itself to work together with Interpol and the international community at large in order to effectively tackle this issue.

## 4. EUROPOL'S REACH

### 4.1 EU MEMBER STATES' LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES





#### **4.2 EUROPOL'S EXTERNAL COOPERATION**

Europol cooperates with a number of EU partners, and with third countries and organisations. The exchange of information with these partners takes place on the basis of cooperation agreements.

Two types of agreement determine the nature of cooperation with third parties. Strategic agreements make it possible for the two parties involved to exchange all information with the exception of personal data, while operational agreements also allow the exchange of personal data.

Europol finds its cooperation with the Member States' and third partners' law enforcement authorities on the one hand, and other EU agencies and institutions on the other hand, vital.

Currently Europol cooperates with 17 non-EU countries, 9 EU bodies and agencies and 3 other international organisations, including Interpol, which features in many aspects of Europol's operational work. Europol collaborates closely with the EU's agencies in the area of Freedom, Security and Justice, namely CEPOL, Eurojust and Frontex. Together they have produced a report which focuses on exploiting their potential more fully by means of bilateral and multilateral cooperation. The report draws up concrete proposals to overcome any shortcomings, and objectives to further improve existing cooperation methods. This streamlined approach will benefit law enforcement and judicial cooperation.

Europol also cooperates with other EU actors such as OLAF (European Anti-Fraud Office), SITCEN (EU Joint Situation Centre) and the European Central Bank. All of these actors are part of the big EU family of institutions and agencies who work together to make the European Union safer.

## 5. MOVING AHEAD: STRATEGY AND GOALS

Europol is at a key point in its evolution, and is ready to take its place as the central player within the field of EU law enforcement. For the next five years, Europol's new strategy will be the frame of reference for Europol's daily business in order to ensure the best support for law enforcement cooperation in the European Union.

The strategy has identified the most important challenges ahead. Europol will use its unique strengths, and exploit all opportunities, to address these challenges. The new strategy is both focused and ambitious, and Europol will move on a planned five-year path to implement its main goals by delivering a unique set of operational services for the EU in three main areas:

- **To function as the principal EU support centre for law enforcement operations**

More will be done to maximise the operational value of information held by Europol and to streamline the delivery of analysis and other services. The new Europol strategy will allow for stronger, more effective cooperation and actions between agencies and law enforcement partners, including Eurojust and Interpol.

- **To become the criminal information hub of the European Union**

Coordination between Member States, in identifying common information gaps and priorities for the investigation of the most prominent criminal targets, is essential and will be strengthened. Europol's unique capabilities provide the opportunity to grow as a central 'information powerhouse' in the EU to address these issues and build an information platform capable of facilitating a more effective operational response to key security threats. Further development of Europol's

Secure Information Exchange Network Application (SIENA) will add enhanced intelligence analysis tools to the already efficient and user-friendly information exchange tool.

- **To develop further as an EU centre for law enforcement expertise**

Europol pioneers new techniques based on innovation and best practice as well as providing quality training in key techniques, thereby strengthening the knowledge of specialist areas such as euro counterfeiting, terrorism and the dismantling of drug laboratories.

We will address any gaps in knowledge and expertise by developing and promulgating best practice, and assisting Member States through support, advice and research in the areas of training, technical support, crime prevention, technical and forensic methods and analysis, and investigative procedures.

In summary, Europol has great potential which needs to be used more effectively by the EU Member States. At both EU and national levels, a smarter response is needed to fight serious international crime which can be achieved by Europe-wide integration of knowledge, operations and values coupled with an increase in EU law enforcement cooperation, and use of existing capabilities and tools.

These developments will make Europol pivotal in EU security architecture and a stronger Europol means a higher success rate and better protection of EU citizens against the threat of serious international crime and terrorism.