The Hague,   27 May 2014

EDOC#   693401v9

EUROPOL REVIEW

GENERAL REPORT ON EUROPOL ACTIVITIES

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

You have in your hands the Europol review 2013 which is an overview of Europol's work in the past year showing the main developments which have affected the agency[1].

The year 2013 reflected a further steady increase in the number of tasks carried out by Europol. The European Cybercrime Centre at Europol was officially opened in January 2013 and fully assumed its expanded tasks, resulting immediately in a rapid growth of supported international investigations.

Altogether, Europol supported more than 18 000 cases. The main ones are presented in detail in this publication. This is 15% more than last year and an increase of 120% compared to 2005. Europol also increased the quality and quantity of the data stored in its databases. This has increased trust in Europol due to Europol's proven track record in adding value to national investigations. As a result, Europol analysts are capable of generating more links which in turn leads to more successes in dismantling organised criminal networks. Substantial growth in criminal data delivered to Europol over recent years, achieved by Europol offering modern automatic data loading solutions but also due to increased efforts on the part of Member States' services, is also demonstrated in this publication.

Not only the quantity of work but also the quality of services has increased significantly. In 2013 Europol produced a new EU serious and organised crime threat assessment (the SOCTA), the most detailed study of its kind ever undertaken in the European law enforcement community. This flagship Europol product directly influences law enforcement priorities across the European Union which in turn increases the effectiveness of our common fight against organised crime.

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[1]   The presentation of the *Europol review — General report on Europol activities* is done in accordance with Article 37(10) c of the Europol Council Decision (Council Decision 2009/371/JHA of 6 April 2009 establishing the European Police Office). The report is submitted to the Council of the European Union for endorsement and the Council forwards it to the European Parliament for information.

Europol's effort to pool the crucial law enforcement expertise across Europe resulted in creating the experts' platforms which currently have more than 4000 users operating in 33 online communities. These experts use safe channels of communication created by Europol to exchange best practices, know how and other professional information.

Europol also stimulates the exchange of ideas at the highest levels by organising an annual meeting of European police chiefs attracting around 200 high level law enforcement officers every year. In 2013, with support from the Lithuanian Police, the participants proposed a series of solutions in four areas: modern technology, witness protection, police leadership and data protection.

Europol maintains its central role in European law enforcement cooperation. We focus our efforts on pioneering new ideas, offering unique networking possibilities, and providing cutting-edge technology and state-of-the-art capabilities and skills to the Member States' law enforcement services.

I encourage you to explore this report further and wish you an enjoyable read!

Rob Wainwright
Director of Europol

1: MISSION AND GOALS

MAKING EUROPE SAFER – MISSION

Large-scale criminal and terrorist networks pose a significant threat to the internal security of the European Union (EU) and to the safety and livelihood of its people.

Europol helps to make Europe a safer place for the benefit of all EU citizens. As the European Union's law enforcement agency, its mission is to support the European Union Member States in preventing and combating all forms of serious international crime and terrorism.

HOW – VISION, OBJECTIVES, PRIORITIES

The Europol Strategy spells out its strategic objectives and way of achieving them. Europol's vision is to contribute to a safer Europe by providing the best possible support to law enforcement authorities in EU Member States.

Europol achieves this by delivering a unique set of operational services for the European Union, developing as the principal:

- Support centre for law enforcement operations
- Criminal information hub, and
- Centre for law enforcement expertise.

Europol is guided by the European Union Internal Security Strategy in which it plays a pivotal role. The document shapes the European Union's long-term policy in the field of law enforcement cooperation. It identifies five security-related objectives, three of which are covered by the mandate of Europol:

- Disruption of criminal networks
- Prevention of terrorism
- Security of cyberspace.

Furthermore, Europol promotes intelligence-led policing which is one of the key concepts of modern law enforcement. The concept lies at the heart of the EU policy cycle for organised and serious international crime. The policy cycle is anchored around EMPACT, which stands for the European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats. There have been eight EMPACT projects in the first cycle. The primary premise behind the EMPACT is an international teamwork approach in responding to security threats in the European Union. The first two-year cycle was finalised in 2013. It established procedures, clarified roles and responsibilities and ensured coherence in EU law enforcement's efforts to combat serious and organised international crime. You can learn more about the eight EMPACT projects in Annex I.

In parallel with implementing the first cycle, the policy cycle for 2014-2017 was developed. Europol contributed significantly to this process, starting with the preparation of the 2013 European Union serious and organised crime threat assessment (SOCTA), the first of its kind.

Based on an in-depth analysis, the SOCTA 2013 identified a number of key areas which will require concerted action by EU Member States and others. The report informed discussions in the Council of Ministers of the European Union, which decided on a set of nine priorities for the fight against serious and organised crime during the period 2014-2017. These priorities are focused on the following crime areas:

- Facilitation of illegal immigration
- Trafficking in human beings
- Producing and distributing counterfeiting goods with an impact on health and safety
- Excise fraud and missing trader intra community fraud
- Production and trafficking of synthetic drugs
- Cocaine and heroin trafficking
- Cybercrime
- Illicit trafficking in firearms
- Organised property crime.

The nine new priorities are the basis for prioritised operational coordination in the European Union. In 2013, to support the planning of operational action, a detailed assessment was drafted for each of the priorities.

RESOURCES AND VALUES

Europol uses its unique information capabilities and the expertise of approximately 850 personnel, including 100 analysts and 160 Europol liaison officers, to identify and track the most dangerous criminal and terrorist networks in Europe. Europol seeks to maintain a workforce that is made up of people who are highly qualified, motivated, committed to the vision and values of Europol, and reflecting the diversity of the European Union.

In line with its mission and vision, Europol staff attaches importance to the following five values which best characterise the culture of Europol and the work of its people:

- Integrity
- Accountability
- Initiative
- Teamwork
- Effectiveness.

Europol is financed from the EU community budget. The Council of the European Union and the European Parliament decide Europol's budget, based on proposals from the European Commission and Europol's Management Board. In 2013 the Europol budget was EUR 82.5 million.

BASIC FACTS ABOUT EUROPOL, 2013

Headquarters   The Hague, Netherlands

Staff   850 personnel at headquarters
                 Including
                 160 liaison officers

Budget   EUR 82.5 million

Servicing   28 EU Member States
                 (through a network of dedicated Europol National Units)
                 503 million EU citizens

Supporting   18 300 cross-border law enforcement cases

2: HOW EUROPOL WORKS

Supporting Member States' investigations, identifying, tracking down and disrupting international criminal networks and terrorist activities are the primary tasks of Europol.

Europol strives for the best operational results by providing a unique set of high quality services and products that respond to Member States' needs. The operational services and products are delivered in the three main areas, as defined by the needs of Europol's stakeholders and reiterated in the Europol Strategy:

- Support for law enforcement operations
- Criminal information hub, and
- Law enforcement expertise.

EUROPOL ORGANISATION CHART
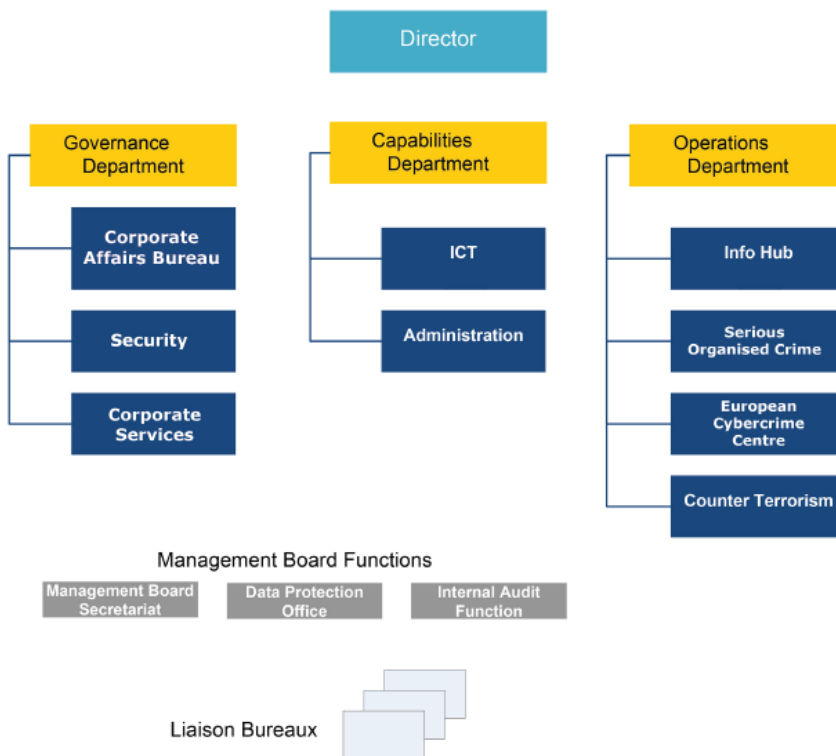
SUPPORTING LAW ENFORCEMENT OPERATIONS

Europol supports European Union Member States' investigations and operational activities by means of:

- Coordinating and financing operational meetings
  - Operational rooms at Europol headquarters are used for major cross-border investigations
  - In 2013, 100 law enforcement officers from more than 20 countries have coordinated major cross-border operations from there
  - Financing operational meetings
- Operational analysis
  - Possible thanks to a range of interoperable communications, information storage and analytical capabilities maintained at Europol
  - The Europol mobile office is a powerful and secure solution that allows Europol officers access to information retrieval and analysis tools from a remote location, using the highest security standards.
  - Last year Europol deployed the mobile office 90 times to support ongoing Member States' investigations on the spot
- Strategic analysis enabling informed decision-making at tactical and strategic levels concerning the combating and prevention of serious and organised crime and terrorism
  - The European Union serious and organised crime threat assessment (SOCTA) is the most important strategic analysis document produced by Europol. On its basis, the Council of Ministers of the EU define their priorities and recommendations for the fight against organised crime in Europe. The SOCTA has taken on added significance since the creation and implementation of the EU policy cycle for serious international and organised crime. This policy cycle identifies the SOCTA as the basis for the identification of EU crime priorities and, thereafter, a coherent EU response to address those priorities.

o In 2013, Europol produced its seventh annual EU terrorism situation and trend report (TE-SAT). Since 2007, the TE-SAT has been informing the European Parliament and the Council on the phenomenon of terrorism in the EU from a law enforcement perspective. The report aims to provide law enforcement and intelligence officials, the European Parliament, policymakers and the general public with facts and figures regarding terrorism in the EU, while also seeking to identify trends in the development of terrorism.

o Europol's scanning, analysis, and notification (SCAN) team provides national competent authorities and policy-makers at national and EU level with early warning notifications on new organised crime threats. The team delivers intelligence-based SCAN threat notices and expertise-based SCAN early warning briefs on potential threats associated, for instance, with the use of new resources by organised crime groups. Following its recent reorganisation, the SCAN team now uses innovative tools and monitors all daily incoming intelligence for new threats.

- Within these activities, an Early Warning Community was created, comprised of over 80 strategic analysts and experts in environmental and open sources scanning. The community uses the Europol Platform for Experts and produces a joint scan report providing regular and coordinated early warnings about serious and organised crime threats.

- Additionally, an inter-agency report produced with Interpol is also envisaged to produce warnings on external threats.

INFORMATION EXCHANGE VIA SIENA IN 2013

- 18 310 new cases were initiated

- (Increase of 15% compared to 2012)

- 85% of the cases were initiated by Member States, 5% by Europol and 10% by third parties

- 24% of the new cases were related to drugs, followed by fraud and swindling (16%), robbery (12%), money laundering (11%) and illegal immigration (9%)

- 456 598 operational messages were exchanged

- Monthly average: 38 000 messages

- (Increase of 10% compared to 2012)

- 452 competent authorities were configured in SIENA by the end of 2013

- 28 Member States, and 42 third parties (13 third parties connected directly and 29 third parties connected indirectly)

- 4150 users

New cases initiated in the years 2009-2013 via SIENA (and its predecessor INFO-EX 2005-2009)
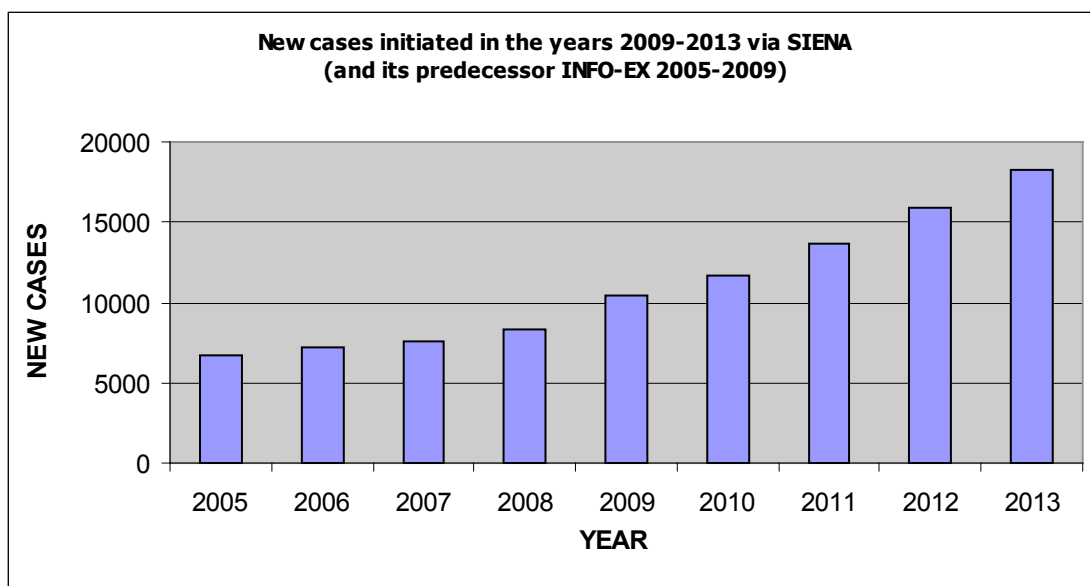
CRIMINAL INFORMATION HUB

Europol collects the most and best possible criminal information available from EU Member States and other partners, deriving maximum value from its analysis and exchange through Europol.

As the European Union's central hub for criminal information and intelligence, Europol operates state-of-the-art, dedicated and secure communication and information storage systems. This enables the exchange of operational information and other criminal data, as well as the storage, analysis and cross-checking of all available criminal intelligence by using:
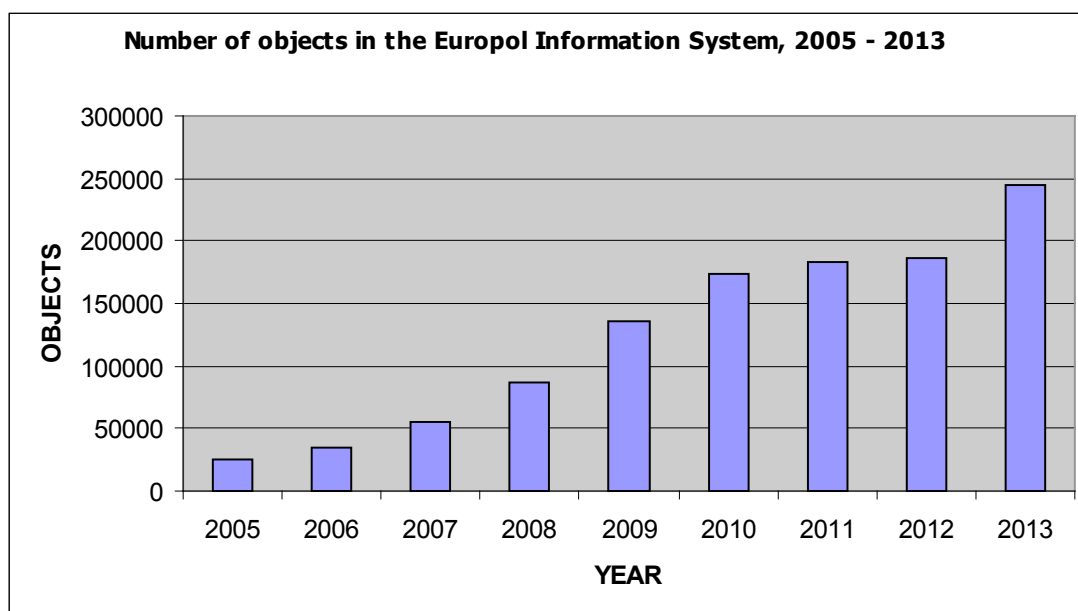
- 24/7 operational coordination centre which
    - Constantly handles data exchange between Europol, EU Member States and third parties. All information exchanged with third parties is processed here.
        - More than 300 operational messages a day
    - Assesses incoming data to be included in the Europol databases.
    - Runs a centralised cross-checking service consisting of a quick cross-check of all data against criminal intelligence gathered in Europol's databases. If there are common elements found (hits), an analytical report is produced, and rapid feedback, highlighting the links, is given to the providing party. This way, new trends and developments in the EU criminal landscape can be identified.
- Operational and criminal information exchange by means of
    - Secure Information Exchange Network Application (SIENA) which is a new generation communication tool designed to enable swift, secure and user-friendly exchange of operational and strategic crime-related information and intelligence between Member States, Europol and third parties that have cooperation agreements with Europol.
    - SIENA is interoperable with other systems at Europol, in Member States and other international organisations.
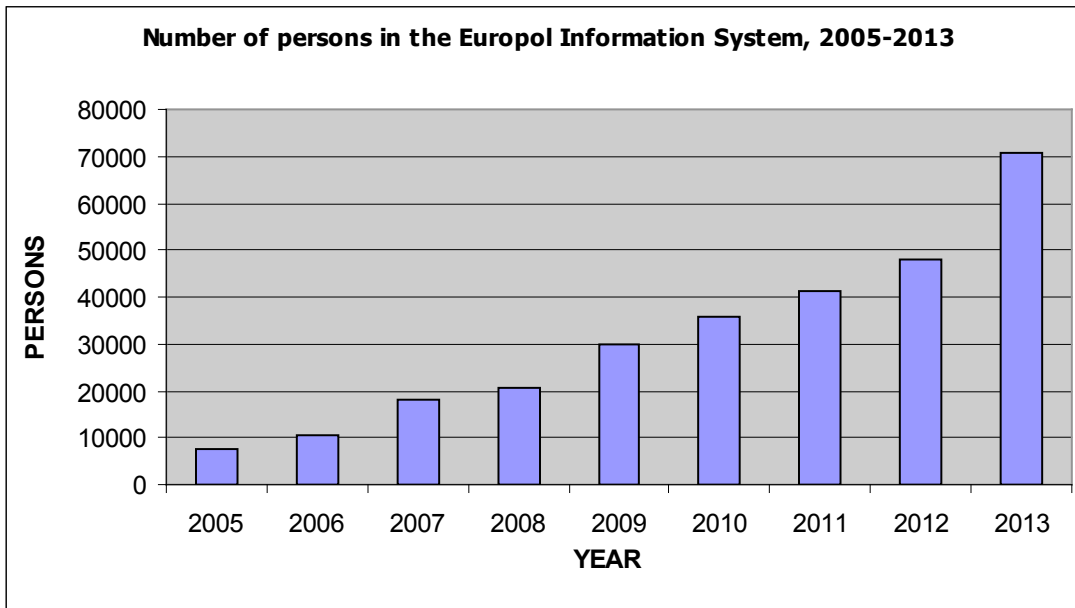
- Storing and cross-checking of all the pooled data and identification of links:

  o The Europol Information System (EIS) stores information about offences, individuals involved and other related criminal data.

  o Member States' law enforcement agencies are increasingly interested in sharing data and having access to this Europol tool. The vast majority of data in the EIS is inserted by means of automated data loading systems.

    ▪ For example, in 2013 Finland implemented an automatic data loader solution which inserts objects from the Finnish national crime database. The solution has significantly increased the operational capabilities of the Finnish Police. Only the first upload immediately resulted in 17 cross-border crime checks (with Denmark, Sweden, Estonia and Germany) and 53 potential matches with criminal data available in the Europol databases.

  o The Europol Information System can be cross-checked via the so-called Cross Border Crime Check (CBCC) that allows instant identification of possible links upon the uploading of new data into the EIS. All parties involved in such a check are automatically informed by system notifications about possible data synergies. Data from the EIS is also automatically cross-checked with all other Europol databases and open source intelligence.

  o Operation Bad Boys launched by Poland, the UK and Europol, targeting top criminals who pose a significant threat to EU citizens, is an excellent example to show the effectiveness of the EIS. 23 parties currently participate in the initiative and over 30 000 criminals have been prioritised and inserted into the EIS resulting in a large number of cross-matches. In 2013, the Dutch National Police uploaded their 17 000 suspects involved in extremely serious crimes. This immediately triggered over 600 hits with investigations in other EU Member States.

- Production of tailored analytical reports and products
    - o Analysis is the cornerstone of all modern intelligence-led law enforcement activities and is critical to all Europol activities.
    - o The Europol Analysis System is an operational information system hosting data contributed by Europol's stakeholders. The system manages information as well as provides a series of analytical capabilities through a wide range of tools.
    - o Analysts employed at Europol use the latest methodologies and techniques to identify missing links in cross-border EU investigations. They work with subject-focused projects and provide information to ongoing operations in EU Member States. This information can often provide a breakthrough for many international investigations.

CONTENTS OF THE EUROPOL INFORMATION SYSTEM, DECEMBER 2013

- Content: 245 142 objects

  An increase of 31% compared to 2012

  70 917 suspected/convicted criminals

  An increase of 47% compared to 2012

- Major crime areas: Drugs trafficking - 29%

  Robbery – 18%

  Forgery of money – 10%

  Illegal immigration - 9%

  Fraud and swindling - 7%

- Usage: 321 429 searches were run

Number of objects in the Europol Information System, 2005 - 2013

Number of persons in the Europol Information System, 2005-2013

Year	Persons (approx.)
2005	7500
2006	10000
2007	18000
2008	21000
2009	30000
2010	36000
2011	41000
2012	48000
2013	71000

LAW ENFORCEMENT EXPERTISE

Europol also pools specialised law enforcement expertise and enables the swift exchange of best practices and latest developments. This happens thanks to:

- Expertise gathered at its headquarters
    - In all mandated areas
    - In 2013, additionally strengthened by the creation of the European Cybercrime Centre (EC3) at Europol
- Forensic and technical expertise
    - Specialised laboratories, toolkits and databases are maintained and extended to the Member States to support live investigations
- Specialised Europol Platform for Experts (EPE)
    - Secure environments for specialists from a variety of law enforcement areas, enabling them to share — within their respective communities — knowledge, best practices and non-personal data on crime

- o In 2013, 33 online communities were open to external users and the number of users doubled, reaching a total of 4,419
- o The EPE was accommodated to meet the requirements of the European Cybercrime Centre created at Europol. SPACE, the Secure Platform for Accredited Cybercrime Experts, was officially launched in 2013. In particular this platform facilitates the work of an expert community dealing with child sexual exploitation and payment card fraud.
- Law enforcement training and capacity building
  - o Europol provides, in close cooperation with CEPOL, specialised law enforcement training as part of its expertise sharing and capacity building in the EU Member States
  - o Europol continuously hosts law enforcement interns from Member States which enables them to deepen their understanding of Europol's capabilities and international law enforcement cooperation.

SECURITY, DATA PROTECTION AND TRANSPARENCY

All of Europol capabilities and services to support Member States' investigations are provided in a secure environment with the application of strict data protection rules, which promotes trust and information sharing between Member States and Europol's other partners.

Europol has one of the most robust data protection regimes in the area of law enforcement. Europol's Data Protection Officer (DPO) ensures compliance, in an independent manner, within the data protection framework. In 2013, the Data Protection Officer presented his annual report to the Management Board and the Joint Supervisory Body.

In line with the European Union's policy of transparency, Europol has created a public repository of documents which can be accessed by any interested parties[2]. Europol also responds to a number of requests for documents addressed either directly to Europol or coming via external institutions.

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[2] Available at www.europol.europa.eu/latest_publications/85.

3: NETWORKING POWER

One of the key guiding principles of Europol is maintaining effective partnerships with its Member States, EU bodies, international organisations and non-EU countries, as well as private sector partners who work together with Europol to secure common goals.

To this end Europol maintains a comprehensive outreach function connecting relevant national law enforcement services, EU bodies and third parties, as well as the private sector, academia and other non-law enforcement partners.

EUROPOL LIAISON OFFICERS

Europol is constantly in touch with Member States' law enforcement agencies. Communication between Europol in The Hague and the Europol National Units in the Member States is facilitated by Europol liaison officers (ELOs). This connects Europol with approximately two million law enforcement officers employed in the European Union Member States and a big group of law enforcement officers outside of the EU.

Law enforcement agencies, currently represented by 160 Europol liaison officers, work in conjunction with Europol's 24/7 high-security operational service centre and its secure databases, and have been successful in disrupting many criminal and terrorist networks. This has resulted in arresting thousands of dangerous criminals, recovering millions of euros and rescuing hundreds of victims of crime, including trafficked and abused children.

JOINT INVESTIGATION TEAMS

Joint investigation teams (JITs) are an instrument for achieving closer cooperation between law enforcement and judicial authorities in two or more EU Member States which face complex cross-border investigations. The competent authorities of two or more EU Member States can set up a JIT for a fixed period of time for a specific purpose. JITs are typically set up when the case necessitates coordinated action in other states. In addition to the competent authorities of the EU Member States setting up the JIT, members from other states, Europol, Eurojust and OLAF may also take part in a JIT and support the team.

In 2013 Europol supported 44 JITs. It also organised the ninth annual meeting of national JIT experts in conjunction with Eurojust and the JIT network secretariat. In addition, Europol continued to actively participate in training programmes and seminars raising awareness about JITs, in particular in CEPOL JIT-related training.

EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS AND AGENCIES

Europol actively supports the strengthening of ties between Freedom, Security and Justice and Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) initiated by the European External Action Service. Mutual awareness raising, improved exchange of information on criminal and terrorist threats and enhanced cooperation between Europol and CSDP missions are issues of primary importance.

Europol cooperates closely with all European Union agencies whose mandates and mission are related or complementary to Europol's. Europol has cooperation agreements and close links to 10 such EU entities[3].

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[3]   CEPOL (European Police College), ECB (European Central Bank), ECDC (European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control), EMCDDA (European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction), Eurojust, European Commission, Frontex (The European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union), INTCEN (EU Intelligence Analysis Centre), OHIM (Office for Harmonization in the Internal Market) and OLAF (European Anti-Fraud Office).

Eurojust remains an important partner of Europol at a strategic and operational level. The mutual participation in operational meetings and the joint support to Member States' Joint Investigation Teams forms the basis for daily cooperation. Eurojust has been involved in the creation of the European Cybercrime Centre, located at Europol, whose work it has supported since the centre's inception.

Throughout 2013, Europol continued to cooperate with the European Police College (CEPOL) and the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (Frontex), supporting some of its operations.

REACHING BEYOND THE EUROPEAN UNION

Apart from 28 EU Member States, Europol also reaches out to a number of other countries, international organisations and EU bodies via its cooperation agreements. Europol has cooperation agreements in force with 21 other parties: 18 non-EU countries[4] and three international organisations[5]. There are two types of agreements Europol concludes with its partners. 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 and Interpol continued their close cooperation throughout 2013. A new Joint Annual Action Plan was concluded following the successful implementation of its predecessor. The partnership between Europol and Interpol is particularly valuable in relation to activities in countries outside the EU.

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[4] Albania, Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Colombia, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Norway, Russian Federation, Republic of Serbia, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine and United States of America.

[5] Interpol, UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) and WCO (World Customs Organization).

Following the opening of the European Cybercrime Centre in early 2013 and with a view to the opening of the Interpol Global Complex for Innovation in Singapore in 2014, Europol and Interpol convened several meetings to discuss synergies in the fight against cybercrime, including the Europol-Interpol Cybercrime Conference which will continue to be held annually in The Hague and Singapore.

EUROPEAN POLICE CHIEFS CONVENTION (EPCC)

In September 2013, Europol hosted the third European Police Chiefs Convention (EPCC) at its headquarters in The Hague. The event was co-organised by the Lithuanian National Police under the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The convention drew together more than 200 chiefs of police, senior law enforcement officers and academics from 43 countries and nine EU bodies and international organisations. Participants debated issues in four main areas pertaining to modern law enforcement challenges: modern technology, witness protection, data protection, and police leadership.

The 2013 convention was the first one in a new format which resulted in more in-depth contributions from high-level law enforcement experts that had previously been elaborated throughout the year in expert working groups convening at Europol. As a result, the police chiefs could discuss and agree on a number of European law enforcement cooperation issues addressing wider policy and legislative developments at the European level.

This top forum has become a key annual conference in Europe and one of the most important events of its kind in the world. The convention's programme in 2013 was well received by the European Union law enforcement leadership who also appreciated meeting their colleagues in specially tailored bilateral and multilateral sessions.

4: SUPPORTING CROSS-BORDER INVESTIGATIONS

Europol's mandate covers a broad spectrum of crimes in the following main areas:

- Drugs
- Cybercrime
- Euro counterfeiting
- Trafficking in human beings
- Facilitation of illegal immigration
- Intellectual property crime (piracy and counterfeiting)
- VAT fraud
- Mobile organised crime groups
- Outlaw motorcycle gangs
- Terrorism
- Money laundering and asset tracing.

For more insights into these main areas, please see Annex II.

Annually, Europol coordinates and supports an impressive number of complex international investigations run by Member States' law enforcement services. In 2013, more than 18 300 new cross-border cases — a 15 % increase compared to the previous year — were initiated by Member States, Europol and third parties. Each month 38 000 operational messages in support of ongoing cases were exchanged. Altogether 456 598 messages were exchanged during the year between 452 competent authorities in 28 Member States and 42 third partners.

2013 IN FIGURES - OPERATIONAL SUPPORT BY EUROPOL

To support Member States' investigations, Europol produced:

- 1656 cross-match reports
- 220 operational analysis reports
- 385 other operational reports.

Europol deployed its capabilities granting direct access to its databases and sending its experts to the scenes of ongoing investigations:

- 90 times with the mobile office
- 56 times with the mobile forensic IT kit.

This report presents seven major operations, to illustrate the range and scope of some of the international investigations supported by Europol. Each operation shows a mandated area under which Europol was working, a general overview of the crime(s) that were under investigation and the set of Europol's capabilities that were employed in support of the given operation:

- Operational support
  - Operational coordination
  - Exchange of criminal information via SIENA
  - Operational analysis
  - Specialised and forensic expertise
  - Mobile office
  - Financial support
- Networking power
- Strategic analysis
- Warning.

OPERATION POLICE RANSOMWARE

Scope of criminal activities

A major organised cybercriminal network based in Europe exploited a police ransomware malware worldwide. This international criminal gang used a type of malware which pretends to be a communication from a local law enforcement agency and blocks computers, accusing the victims of conducting illicit or malicious activities online and requesting the payment of a fine (in this case EUR 100), through an online payment to unblock it. The criminal network used a variant of malware from Russia and waged campaigns targeting victims in Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the UK. Estimations are that tens of thousands of computers worldwide were affected, bringing profits of more than a million euros per year. Additionally, one of the criminal network's largest financial cells in the Costa del Sol specialised in laundering the proceeds of the crimes by employing both virtual systems for money laundering and other traditional methods.

Law enforcement cooperation

- Initiated in April 2012 by the Spanish Police
- Extensive investigation of over a year which led to two operations
- Europol supported both operations
- The first operation in April 2012 was also supported by Germany, United Arab Emirates and the United States of America (FBI) and as well as Eurojust and Interpol
- The second operation in April 2013 was supported by Austria, Germany, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and Interpol
- Finalised in November 2013.

Europol's role

- Initiated and facilitated international law enforcement cooperation

- Organised six operational meetings at Europol
  - o Financed five of these operational meetings

- Exchanged operational information – 200 messages exchanged via SIENA

- Analysed complex criminal intelligence from 27 states and organisations
  - o Including the data from the compromised computers in 80 countries
  - o Contributed significantly to the identification of key suspects
  - o More than 30 analytical reports provided to the involved countries

- Provided expertise, technical advice and forensic support, also on-the-spot

- Deployed its mobile office on the spot

- Networking power - reaching interested EU Member States (MS) via its network of Europol Liaison Officers and using their bilateral channels beyond (e.g. the attaches of the Ministry of Interior of the Spanish Embassy in Moscow and the Spanish Embassy in the UAE) and third parties (e.g. US FBI), cooperating with Interpol and Eurojust

- Developed a barrier model for police ransomware

- Notifying the Member States about the individuals affected in their jurisdictions based on ongoing analysis

- Strategic analysis – production of a police ransomware threat assessment and recommended action plan

- Warned the EU public about police ransomware via a dedicated brochure

Results

- Dismantling the largest and most sophisticated cybercrime network dedicated to spreading police ransomware
    - Arresting altogether 13 suspects during two operations
        - 11 arrests in December 2012 and February 2013
        - 2 further arrests in July 2013
    - Locating 21 000 compromised servers of companies in 80 countries (1500 of them in Spain)
    - Six premises searches in Spain
        - Confiscating IT equipment used by the criminals
        - Seizing numerous electronic devices and digital evidence
        - Seizing more than 200 fraudulent credit cards (used to withdraw EUR 26 000)
        - Confiscating EUR 50 000 in cash and EUR 5000 in e-currency
- Dismantling the sophisticated money laundering facility which was processing around EUR 10 000 daily through various electronic payment systems and virtual currencies.

GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE INVESTIGATION

Europol mandate

Cybercrime

Related to: money laundering

Europol capabilities deployed to support the investigation

- Operational support
  - Operational coordination √
  - Exchange of criminal information via SIENA √
  - Operational analysis √
  - Specialised and forensic expertise√
  - Mobile office √
  - Financial support√
- Networking power √
- Strategic analysis √
- Warning√

Ransomware cybercrime in a nutshell

- The first piece of ransomware malware appeared in 1989
- 2005-2006, more ransomware malware infections observed in Russia
- Since then, the ransomware malware evolved and its tactics changed to include the police ransomware variant
- Spring 2011, the first cases of police ransomware in the EU detected (first reported case in Germany)
- By 2012, most EU Member States and other countries worldwide were affected by this type of malware attacks.

OPERATION PANDORA-STORM

Scope of criminal activities

A powerful global organised crime network, consisting of 6 organised crime groups and 100 members, dealt with online and electronic payment fraud in Europe, North and South America and Asia from 2011 until 2013. It was engaged in the worldwide illegal compromise and dissemination of payment card data as well as skimming, fraudulent transactions and other related crimes. The criminal network is estimated to have made illegal profits of approximately EUR 2 million. It has affected 36 000 bank and credit card holders in 16 European countries.

Law enforcement cooperation

- Initiated in December 2011 by the Romanian National Police Cybercrime Unit
- Coordinated by Romania and Europol
- Involving 17 EU Member States, five third states and Europol[6]
    - More than 400 law enforcement officers involved
- Final raids on 28 March 2013 in Romania and the UK
- Finalised in May 2013.

Europol's role

- Initiated and facilitated international law enforcement cooperation
- Provided communication exchange via the Europol Liaison Officers (ELOs)
    - Multilateral and bilateral channels to reach key overseas partners
- Organised and financed two ground-breaking operational meetings in 2012
- Organised several other operational meetings
- Pooled and analysed complex international criminal data contributions - almost 2500 intelligence exchanges

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[6]   Participating countries and organisations: Romania (leader), plus Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, United Kingdom, Switzerland, Australia, Colombia, Dominican Republic, US Secret Service.

- Provided more than 50 analytical products, including 30 analytical reports and identified cross-matches and links to other investigations
- Provided operational support and coordination during the raids
    - Command centre at the European Cybercrime Centre, Europol
    - On-the-spot technical and expert support
- Warned the EU public via press releases

Results

- Dismantling of the organised crime groups and arresting their leaders
- Dismantling of two illegal workshops manufacturing skimming devices (in Bucharest, Ramnicu Valcea)
- Arrest of altogether 44 organised crime group members (Denmark, France, Germany, Lithuania and Romania)
- Confiscation of more than 200 pieces of IT equipment, cars, real estate and weapons, seized during 90 searches in Romania and the UK

GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE INVESTIGATION

Europol mandate

Cybercrime: online payment and electronic payment fraud

Illegal dissemination of payment card data

Europol capabilities deployed to support the investigation
- Operational support
    - Operational coordination √
    - Exchange of criminal information via SIENA √
    - Operational analysis √
    - Specialised and forensic expertise√
    - Mobile office √
    - Financial support√
- Networking power √

- Strategic analysis
- Warning√

Payment card fraud in a nutshell

- The EU is the world's largest market for payment card transactions
- Payment card fraud is an extremely lucrative business
- Organised crime groups derive more than EUR 1.1 billion a year from payment card fraud in the EU (according to recent ECB data)

OPERATION CASABLANCA

Scope of criminal activities

Members of the Hells Angels Motorcycle Club (HAMC) Nomads Luxembourg and Turkey, together with high-level executive members from the Hells Angels Motorcycle Club Germany, were suspected of running an international criminal organisation in Palma de Mallorca involved in a high number of various serious offences across a number of European countries - Spain, Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland and Bulgaria – as well as Turkey, South American and African countries. This international criminal gang was suspected of committing crimes including assault and attempted murder, trafficking in human beings for prostitution, kidnapping, threats, extortion, drugs trafficking, illegal possession of firearms, money laundering, fraud, forgery of documents and corruption.

Law enforcement cooperation

- Initiated by the Spanish National Police and the Spanish Guardia Civil in December 2011
- Coordinated by Europol and Eurojust
- Supported by Austria, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands and Interpol
- Raids on 23 July 2013 in Palma de Mallorca
  - 200 law enforcement officers from five countries
- Additional raids in Mallorca in September 2013
- Phase 2 finalised in September 2013

Europol's role

- Operational coordination and support
  - o Operational meetings organised at Europol headquarters
    - ▪ 10 investigators and officers from Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Spain and Switzerland
  - o Operational meetings in Mallorca, Madrid and Eurojust headquarters in The Hague either funded or supported by Europol
- Financial support to operational meetings
- Operational support on the spot
  - o Expertise on outlaw motorcycle gangs during house searches and arrests
  - o Forensic data extraction
  - o Mobile office deployed on the spot
- Exchange of operational information via SIENA – 150 messages exchanged
- Analytical support
  - o Analysis of a high volume of complex data
  - o Identifying links to other investigations
  - o Production and dissemination of analytical reports (eight dedicated analytical and cross-match reports)
- Networking power – network of Europol Liaison Officers, experts on organised motorcycle criminal gangs, cooperation with Eurojust and Interpol
- Warning law enforcement authorities about the danger and high importance of targets
- Operational and expert advice (in cooperation with the Spanish authorities), including recommendation on the provision of expert witness reports for court.

Results

- International criminal gang disrupted
    - o Top targets arrested including a high influential HAMC member
    - o 42 arrests in total
- 31 simultaneous house searches
- EUR 2.5 million worth of real estate seized
- Seizure of luxury objects (yachts, cars, motorcycles and EUR 100 000 worth of jewellery, among others)
- Confiscation of drugs (cocaine, marijuana, anabolic steroids), weapons and a large quantity of electronic and IT equipment
- Confiscation of EUR 50 000 in cash and HAMC paraphernalia
- Seizing of counterfeit documents, including 2 police ID cards and a bullet proof vest
- Dismantling of an illicit drug laboratory
- 200 police officers from 5 states engaged

GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE INVESTIGATION

Europol mandate

Drug trafficking, trafficking in human beings, kidnapping, threats, extortion, illegal possession of firearms, money laundering, fraud, forgery of documents, attempted murder, assault, corruption

Europol capabilities deployed to support the investigation

- Operational support
    - o Operational coordination √
    - o Exchange of criminal information via SIENA √
    - o Operational analysis √
    - o Specialised and forensic expertise√
    - o Mobile office √
    - o Financial support√
- Networking power √
- Strategic analysis √
- Warning √

<u>Outlaw Motorcycle Criminal Groups in a nutshell</u>

Outlaw motorcycle gangs are considered a national threat and a national policing priority in 17 European Union Member States and in 6 Europol partner states. There has been a steady expansion in the growth of the Hell Angels Motorcycle Clubs worldwide since 2005. Their number more than doubled in Europe and more than tripled in Central and South America. In 2013, there was a noticeable increase in members of outlaw motorcycle gangs convicted for criminal activities. This trend is likely to continue in 2014.

OPERATION PARADISE CITY

Scope of criminal activities

An international criminal group was dismantled that was producing and distributing counterfeit 50 and 100 euro banknotes from their base in Vienna, Austria. Its members originated from the former Yugoslavia (mainly Serbia). The criminal network was active in Austria and Serbia but the counterfeit currency produced by it was detected in 12 European states[7]. The organised crime group produced in total over 1 million in counterfeit euros (in 10, 50 and 100 denomination banknotes) and over 12 million Serbian dinar (1000, 2000 and 5000 denomination banknotes).

Law enforcement cooperation

- Initiated in August 2012 by the Austrian Police
    - Involving the Austrian National Bank
- Supported by Europol
- Cooperation between Austria, Serbia, and Slovenia
- Final raids on 18 June 2013 in Vienna
    - More than 200 law enforcement officers involved
- Finalised in June 2013

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[7] 11 EU Member States: Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Slovakia, and Slovenia, plus Serbia.

Europol's role

- Facilitated international law enforcement cooperation – using ELOs' network

- Exchanged related criminal data - 50 messages exchanged via SIENA

- Operational support and coordination

    o Operational meeting organised and financed

    o Financing police measures against euro counterfeiting

    o Action plan set up for the final stage of the investigation

    o On-the-spot support by means of expertise, mobile office, technical assistance (UFED, forensic tools and expertise)

- Technical and forensic support

    o Extracting data from the seized equipment

    o Technical report on 100 euro banknote counterfeiting

    o On-the-spot technical support in the dismantling of the illegal printshop

- Analytical support

- Analytical reports

- Mobile office deployed on the spot.

Results

- Disruption of an international criminal network

- Arrest of 13 people and 16 house searches in Vienna

- Seizure of

    o Counterfeit 10, 50 and 100 euro denomination banknotes worth over EUR 300 000

    o Counterfeit 1000, 2000 and 5000 Serbian dinars worth 1.5 million

    o Confiscation of several pieces of counterfeiting and IT equipment, fake IDs and other forged documents

    o Dismantling of a clandestine print shop in Vienna

GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE INVESTIGATION

Europol mandate

Euro counterfeiting

Related to: forgery of documents

Europol capabilities deployed to support the investigation

- Operational support
    - Operational coordination √
    - Exchange of criminal information via SIENA √
    - Operational analysis √
    - Specialised and forensic expertise√
    - Mobile office √
    - Financial support√
- Networking power √
- Strategic analysis
- Warning

Euro counterfeiting in a nutshell

Europol data indicates that more than 620 000 counterfeit banknotes were found in circulation in 2013 - an increase of almost 20% on the previous year. Out of this more than 73 000 pieces were seized before being put into circulation - an increase of 28% compared to 2012.

OPERATION VETO

Scope of criminal activities

An extensive international criminal network was involved in widespread football match-fixing. The network's activities took the form of a sophisticated organised crime operation, which generated huge illicit profits estimated in the hundreds of millions by gambling on fixed matches in the Asian betting markets. Illegal operations were run out of Singapore with bribes of up to EUR 100 000 paid per match. For the first time a joint investigation team was created to fight this type of crime.

Law enforcement cooperation

- Initiated in July 2011 by Finland, Germany and Hungary
- Europol coordinated and supported the operation from the beginning
- Participating countries and organisations:
    - 15 European countries[8]
    - Eurojust and Interpol
- Joint investigation team ran between July 2011 and January 2013
    - Led by Europol, Austria, Finland, Germany, Hungary and Slovenia
    - Supported by investigators from eight other countries and Eurojust
- Finalised in January 2013

Europol's role

- Operational support and coordination
    - Coordinating multiple police enquiries across Europe
    - Organising eight operational meetings with 30 investigators from the participating countries
    - Supporting seven other external meetings in Austria, Finland, Germany and Hungary
    - Financial support for operational meetings
- Criminal data exchange – SIENA (337 messages)
- Operational analysis
    - More than 13 000 email exchanges and other material
    - 31 analytical reports
    - Identification of links between matches and suspects
    - Identification of an organised criminal network behind illegal activities
- Deployment of the mobile office in Hungary and in Bulgaria
- Networking power – communication exchanges via the network of Europol Liaison Officers and beyond involving sports organisations (FIFA, UEFA, FIFPRO) and Interpol
- Warning the public across the EU

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[8]   Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Moldova, Netherlands, Slovakia, Slovenia and the United Kingdom.

Results

- Disrupting the international criminal network and preventing further financial losses
    - Illicit profits estimated in the hundreds of millions of EUR
- Investigating a total of 425 match officials, club officials, players, and serious criminals
    - From 13 countries
    - Suspected of attempts to fix more than 380 professional football matches
- The investigation led to several prosecutions in the countries involved
    - 14 persons convicted and sentenced to a total of 39 years in prison in Germany
- Identification of
    - 380 suspicious matches including World Cup and European Championship qualification matches, two UEFA Champions League matches and several top-flight matches in European national leagues
    - 300 suspicious matches outside Europe, mainly in Africa, Asia, South and Central America.

GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE INVESTIGATION

Europol mandate

Corruption, fraud and swindling

Related to: money laundering, tax evasion

Europol capabilities deployed to support the investigation

- Operational support
    - Operational coordination √
    - Exchange of criminal information via SIENA √
    - Operational analysis √
    - Specialised and forensic expertise√
    - Mobile office √
    - Financial support√
- Networking power √
- Strategic analysis
- Warning√

OPERATION FIMATHU

Scope of criminal activities

A major international people smuggling criminal network in Europe was involved in the clandestine smuggling of a large number of irregular migrants into and within the European Union mainly via Turkey and the Western Balkan region. The irregular migrants came from Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Syria and Turkey and the criminal network used various modi operandi to smuggle them into and within the EU. The migrants were often smuggled in inhumane and dangerous conditions in very small, hidden, compartments of buses or trucks, by freight trains or boats. In some cases falsified travel documents were used by the migrants. Marriages of convenience were also used as a modus operandi to regularise their status in the EU.

Law enforcement cooperation

- Initiated in September 2011 by Austria and Hungary who launched a joint response to the significant increase in illegal immigration in their jurisdictions
- Coordinated by Austria, Hungary and Europol
- Involving in total 14 European countries, EULEX (European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo) and Europol[9]
  - More than 1200 law enforcement officers involved
  - One of the largest international actions against people smugglers in Europe
- Final raids on 29 January 2013
- Finalised in January 2013, Project Fimathu is ongoing

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[9]   Participating countries and organisations: Austria; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Bulgaria; Croatia; Czech Republic; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Poland; Romania; Serbia; Slovakia; Slovenia; Switzerland; EULEX and Europol.

Europol's role

- Initiated and facilitated international cooperation
  - Reaching EU law enforcement and beyond via its network
- Operational information exchange via SIENA - more than 2500 exchanges
- Operational coordination
  - Operational meetings regarding individual, parallel or partially linked investigations
  - 4 major operational meetings to coordinate all the ongoing investigations
    - Almost 100 participating investigators and officers from 14 states
  - International Coordination Centre set up at Europol, staffed with senior investigators from participating countries
- Tailored operational support, also on the spot
  - Financial, technical and expert support
  - Deployment of the mobile office in Germany
- Operational analysis
  - 38 analytical reports
  - Identification of links between Austria, Hungary and the source and transit countries
  - Identification of participating criminal organisations
- Warning the public across the EU

Results

- Dismantling a major international people smuggling criminal network
- 7500 irregular migrants identified in the Western Balkans
- 891 smuggling incidents identified in Austria and Hungary
- 103 suspects arrested throughout Europe (Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Turkey and Kosovo region)
- 117 searches of houses and other properties carried out in 14 European states
- Seizure of EUR 176 500 in cash, over 500 mobile telephones, laptops, bank statements, weapon and ammunition
  - Additionally seizure of EUR 300 000 in frozen assets

GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE INVESTIGATION

<u>Europol mandate</u>

Facilitated illegal immigration

Related to: money laundering, tax evasion

<u>Europol capabilities deployed to support the investigation</u>

- Operational support
    - o Operational coordination √
    - o Exchange of criminal information via SIENA √
    - o Operational analysis √
    - o Specialised and forensic expertise√
    - o Mobile office √
    - o Financial support√
- Networking power √
- Strategic analysis
- Warning√

<u>Facilitated illegal immigration in a nutshell</u>

Facilitation of illegal immigration constitutes a significant threat to the European Union and is expected to further increase in scale. The criminal networks involved quickly adapt and exploit multiple opportunities to enable irregular migrants to enter, reside and work in the European Union. The abuse of legal channels is an important modus operandi. The considerable profits involved have given rise to a small industry, with its own infrastructure of criminal specialists and apparently legitimate professionals, such as legal advisors, who provide documents and materials or identify legal loopholes for criminal exploitation.

OPERATION ELLENIKA

Scope of criminal activities

An international criminal network was trafficking large quantities of heroin to the illicit drug markets. The trafficking from Albania to Italy was taking place via Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The apprehended criminals were accused of international drugs trafficking and other related crimes.

Law enforcement cooperation

- Initiated in March 2009 by the Italian Carabinieri in cooperation with the District Prosecutor's Office in L'Aquila and the Italian National Directorate against Drugs
- Support and coordination provided by Europol
- Cooperation with police in Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Slovenia, Turkey and EULEX
- Final raids on 21 October 2013
- Finalised in October 2013

Europol's role

- Operational support
  - Two operational meetings at Europol
  - Expert assistance and coordination on the spot
- Operational coordination
  - Assisting with cross-data checks during the final raids
  - Support and coordination facilities on the day of the final raids
- Exchange of live data – SIENA
  - More than 40 live data and analytical contribution exchanges
- Analytical support

Results

- 71 suspects arrested in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Italy and Kosovo
- Evidence suggesting trafficking of over 600 kg of heroin and 500 kg of marijuana
- Seizure of several hundred kilos of heroin
- Seizure of numerous assets of significant value

GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE INVESTIGATION

Europol mandate

Drugs trafficking

Europol capabilities deployed to support the investigation

- Operational support
    - Operational coordination √
    - Exchange of criminal information via SIENA √
    - Operational analysis √
    - Specialised and forensic expertise√
    - Mobile office √
    - Financial support√
- Networking power √
- Strategic analysis
- Warning√

Heroin trafficking in a nutshell

The European Union is a significant market for opiates including heroin. Increasingly, the organised crime groups dealing with heroin trafficking collaborate across national, ethnic and business boundaries. Heroin consignments destined for the EU are often not controlled by a single criminal organisation, but rather facilitated by several, increasingly cooperative, organised crime groups. Virtually all heroin encountered in the EU originates in Afghanistan. To assist the EU Member States, Europol is involved in a wide range of law enforcement operational support activities connected to the trade.

5: CHALLENGES AHEAD

Europol has gained an improved position on the EU stage in the last couple of years, partly thanks to the Lisbon Treaty, its new legal status as an EU agency and Europol's own strategy and improved capabilities. These developments make Europol a unique cooperation partner for EU law enforcement agencies and also an important actor in the EU decision-making process.

As a leading EU law enforcement agency, Europol is always looking ahead for opportunities to streamline the fight against serious and organised crime and terrorism. Such new opportunities have been recently embodied by:

- Exploring, and including into Europol's work, better cooperation with the private sector, to make greater use of expertise on issues like cybercrime, money laundering and intellectual property crime;
- Centralising resources in various fields of law enforcement expertise, already initiated in the area of cybercrime by creating the European Cybercrime Centre at Europol.

These aspirations are being vested upon Europol by European decision makers in recognition of Europol's unique capabilities and role in combating serious crime and terrorism. Europol's legal basis is currently being adjusted in accordance with the Treaty of the European Union[10]. The legal proposal was prepared by the European Commission in March 2013[11] and is now being debated following standard EU legal processes. The objective behind the Commission's proposal is to adjust the legal framework of Europol with the requirements of the Treaty of Lisbon, which will result in a strengthening of Europol's democratic legitimacy and accountability. The proposal also aims to further strengthen Europol's robust data protection regime and its operational capabilities. This will reinforce Europol's current tasks but also its future responsibilities in particular those relating to becoming a centre of specialised law enforcement expertise.

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[10] Article 88 of the Treaty of the European Union which stipulates that Europol shall be governed by a regulation to be adopted by the ordinary legislative procedure.
[11] COM (2013) 173 final.

Having said this, Europol may face some limitations, especially in the area of capabilities and resources, in view of increasing ambitions and expectations from its stakeholders on the one hand, and the unfavourable economic situation and ensuing budgetary restrictions on the other.

Europol's primary purpose remains to support the EU law enforcement community to disrupt and dismantle serious organised crime and terrorist groups. The law enforcement community as a whole needs to continue innovating tools, tactics and policies to keep pace with global developments and stay ahead of the criminals.

In view of the ever-increasing sophistication of criminal activity, local or even national efforts to tackle international organised crime and terrorism alone can only enjoy limited success. However, together with EU Member States and partner organisations, Europol can play an increasingly prominent role in safeguarding EU internal security.

A stronger Europol means more successful investigations and better protection for EU citizens against the threats of serious international crime and terrorism.

EMPACT PROJECTS

The eight EMPACT projects, based on priorities decided by the Council of the EU, address the criminal activities and mitigate the threats coming from:

- Organised crime groups active or based in West Africa, trafficking cocaine and heroin to and within the EU

- Organised crime groups, including Albanian-speaking organised crime groups, using the Western Balkans as a key transit and storage zone for illicit commodities destined for the EU

- Organised crime groups facilitating illegal immigration to the EU, particularly via southern, south-eastern and eastern Europe and notably at the Greek-Turkish border and in crisis areas of the Mediterranean close to North Africa

- Production and distribution in the EU of synthetic drugs, including new psychoactive substances

- Trafficking to the EU of illicit commodities, including cocaine, heroin, cannabis, counterfeit goods and cigarettes

- All forms of trafficking in human beings and human smuggling, targeting the organised crime groups conducting such criminal activities in particular at the southern, south-western and south-eastern criminal hubs in the EU

- Mobile (itinerant) organised crime groups engaging in criminal activities

- Cybercrime and the criminal misuse of the internet by organised crime groups.

OVERVIEW OF EUROPOL'S MANDATED AREAS, 2013

DRUGS

Fighting drug-related crime has been a priority for Europol since its very beginning.

Cannabis

- The cannabis market constitutes the largest portion of the illicit drugs industry. Cannabis is the most prevalent drug in terms of production, trafficking and consumption. It is also the most widely used illicit drug in the European Union whose annual consumption is currently estimated to be around 2500 tonnes, at an estimated market value of EUR 18-30 billion.

- Europol initiates, supports and coordinates the intelligence aspects of cannabis investigations.

- Specifically, Europol supports Member States investigators engaged in complex cross-border investigations and associated money laundering cases.

- It also maintains the Europol Logo System on Cannabis (ELSC), used as a tool that contributes to the identification of potentially correlating investigations.

Cocaine

- After cannabis, cocaine is the second most commonly used illicit substance in Europe. It is estimated that around 15.5 million adults (aged 15–64) have used cocaine in their lifetime.

- Next to the United States, the European Union remains the second largest consumer of cocaine in the world.

- Europol collects and analyses intelligence associated with the activities of suspected criminal organisations and networks involved in the production, processing or trafficking of cocaine, including intelligence relating to precursor chemicals and cutting agents.

- Europol also traces the money flows originating from cocaine trafficking and assists Member States in freezing and confiscating these illegal proceeds, helping to weaken the position of the criminal groups producing and trafficking cocaine.

- Europol experts provide on-the-spot support to investigations and expertise in dismantling cocaine conversion/extraction laboratories.
- Europol runs the Europol Cocaine Logo System (ECLS) which consists of the Cocaine Logo, Cocaine Punch and Specific Means of Concealment databases. The ECLS collates information on modi operandi, photographic and basic forensic information on cocaine seizures, and on logos or markings on the drugs and their packaging.

Synthetic drugs

- The European Union remains a significant region for the illicit production of synthetic drugs, particularly amphetamine and ecstasy. Each year around 60 to 90 large-scale production sites are identified and dismantled. Storage sites for potentially dangerous precursor chemicals used in the drug manufacturing process are also often discovered during the course of investigations in Member States.
- Europol's operational support includes the coordination and initiation of criminal drugs investigations as well as providing on-the-spot assistance to EU law enforcement agencies during the secure dismantling of illicit drug production facilities and the collection of evidence
  - In 2013, 116 dump sites, 42 storage sites and 41 illegal laboratories were dismantled with Europol's assistance.
  - 39 specialist reports were made which contributed to linking operations, supporting on-going investigations and some of them were also used for court testimonies.
  - Specialised technical assistance on the spot was provided four times.
- The Europol Illicit Laboratory Comparison System (EILCS) comprises detailed photographic and technical information on synthetic drug production, storage and dump sites. This enables the identification of matches between seized equipment, materials and chemicals
  - Currently, more than 130 000 photos are stored in the system.

Heroin

- The European Union is also a significant market for opiates. Although demand and supply of opiates, mainly heroin, is relatively small when compared to other illicit drugs like cannabis and synthetic drugs, the social, economic and health problems associated with its use are huge. It is therefore considered a major threat to the security and health of European society.

- In recent years, organised crime engaged in the illicit heroin trade has been characterised by increasing collaboration across national, ethnic and business boundaries. Heroin consignments to the EU are not controlled by a single criminal organisation, but rather facilitated by several, increasingly cooperative organised crime groups.

CYBERCRIME

- The European Cybercrime Centre (EC3) was launched at Europol in January 2013 to strengthen the EU law enforcement response to cybercrime. The centre was tasked to focus on three areas:
  - Cybercrimes committed by organised groups, particularly those generating large criminal profits such as online fraud
  - Cybercrimes which cause serious harm to their victims, such as online child sexual exploitation
  - Cybercrimes (including cyber-attacks) affecting critical infrastructure and information systems in the European Union.

- Since EC3's inception, the number of large-scale cross-border investigations supported by Europol has rapidly increased. It can be noted that the size of the operations has increased significantly as well, consequently leading to more follow-up actions and arrests.

- In 2013, the forensic lab was developed to provide a professional and fully equipped environment for technical support in digital forensics.

- Moreover, the Multi-Disciplinary Centre for Cyber Innovation was built, and provides a dedicated, technically suited environment for collaboration between law enforcement, the private sector and academia.

- Several ICT tools and applications were delivered for the specialised processing of cybercrime related data.

- In 2013, the first joint Europol-Interpol Cybercrime Conference was organised at Europol headquarters in The Hague. The conference gathered 260 high level practitioners from law enforcement and the private sector from 42 countries.

TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

- Trafficking in human beings (THB) remains a serious problem in the EU. The scale and nature of THB in the EU is not easy to define, not least because it is often hidden within other criminal activities, such as prostitution, illegal immigration and labour disputes.

- Contributions from recent Member States' operations sent to Europol show the organised and transnational nature of human trafficking. Criminal networks operate in more than two Member States moving their victims from one country to another, not only with the aim of maximising the profits, but also with the aim of avoiding law enforcement detection. Trafficking networks take advantage of legal loopholes. In addition to traditional forms of exploitation (i.a. sexual and labour exploitation), the traffickers are more and more engaged in new and emerging forms of exploitation, such as forced begging and other criminal activities.

- Europol supports counter-trafficking operations both in their preparatory phases, with the provision of operational analysis and facilitating information exchange, or by way of operational support including on the spot.

FACILITATION OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

- This term covers a number of different serious crimes, all aimed at facilitating, for financial gain, entry to or residence in a country, in violation of that country's laws. Facilitated illegal immigration thus covers the production and procurement of falsified travel documents or permits obtained under false pretences, and the provision of clandestine transport or other assistance, in order to obtain illegal entry or stay.

- The facilitation of illegal immigration constitutes a significant threat to the European Union and is expected to further increase in scale. Irregular migrants increasingly use organise crime groups' support and guidance. The criminal networks involved are able to quickly adapt and exploit multiple opportunities to enable irregular migrants to illegally enter, reside and work in the European Union. The abuse of legal channels is an important modus operandi employed. The considerable profits involved have given rise to a small industry, with its own infrastructure of criminal specialists and apparently legitimate professionals, such as legal advisors, who provide documents and materials or identify legal loopholes for criminal exploitation.

- Europol provides operational and analytical support to EU Member States to combat facilitated illegal immigration. The criminal networks involved are sometimes also involved in other crime areas such as forgery of travel documents, drug trafficking, money laundering, trafficking in human beings and the like.

EURO COUNTERFEITING

- Europol has the mandate to prevent and combat the forgery of money, in particular the euro, and has been designated as the European Union's central office for combating euro counterfeiting. Thus, Europol acts as a worldwide contact point for combating counterfeiting of the euro.

- To fulfil this function, Europol offers a wide range of products and services to its partners. Europol actively supports law enforcement authorities by gathering, analysing, disseminating and facilitating the exchange of criminal intelligence, as well as providing other expertise and knowledge to assist investigations.

- Europol is also involved in all major euro counterfeiting investigations in the EU, including joint investigation teams. Financial support and on-the-spot assistance is also given when requested.

- Europol provides forensic support to law enforcement agencies to determine the origin of materials and devices used for the manufacturing of counterfeits. Finally, Europol also provides technical support and training on tactical and technical issues related to protecting the euro from counterfeiting.

- In 2013, more than 600 000 counterfeit euro banknotes were detected in circulation. The 20 and 50 euro notes were the leading denominations - each representing 40% of all the counterfeits seized.

- Law enforcement agencies supported by Europol prevented more than 70 million worth of counterfeit euro banknotes from entering into circulation.

- Europol financed 62 police measures in 11 countries which led to the arrest of 70 suspects and the dismantling of six print shops.

VAT FRAUD

- Missing trader intra-community (MTIC) fraud is a form of organised, sophisticated tax fraud carried out by criminals attacking the value added tax (VAT) regimes of EU Member States.

- The basic model of transnational intra-community VAT fraud involves at least two Member States, whereby the criminals put in place a structure of linked companies and individuals to exploit the differences in national VAT systems while disguising the real links between participants. The schemes may be based on real, or now more frequently virtual, 'carousel fraud' transactions, where the same 'goods' are sold and resold several times. Increasingly, fraudsters show interest in intangible items and have extended their criminal activities into the environmental and energy markets.

- The precise level of value added tax fraud throughout the European Union is difficult to quantify, with the most up-to-date figures released by the European Commission stating that the VAT gap for 2011 was EUR 193 billion. The figure represents a loss of around 18% of the theoretically expected VAT take across the Member States, although it must be stressed that it includes losses not only due to fraud, but also due to bankruptcies, financial insolvencies as well as tax 'legally' avoided.

- Europol maintains the only EU level database for storing criminal case material and intelligence on the phenomenon and this has become the principal source of reference for law enforcement operations. The knowledge and data stored within Europol enables the development of a solid picture of this crime area and identifies the most prominent criminal targets. Europol has become a centre of excellence for fighting cross-border MTIC fraud and related offences.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY CRIME

- Intellectual property rights (IPR) infringement refers to the violation of two main categories of recognised and protected rights. The first one relates to industrial property covering fields such as trademarks, patents, designs and models (counterfeiting). The second refers to copyright of literary and artistic works such as film, musical work and software programmes (piracy). Counterfeiting is the offence linked to industrial property violation, while piracy is the offence connected to a violation of copyright.

- Counterfeiting is a global problem, affecting all types of goods, which causes serious harm to the economy, consumers and society. Even more importantly, counterfeiting can pose a significant health and safety risk to consumers, particularly when counterfeited products include electronic equipment, beverages, cigarettes, food stuffs, medicines, pesticides, clothing and toys.

- The economic impact of this crime is significant. The total value of counterfeit products worldwide is estimated to be as much as EUR 505 billion per year. The Frontier Economics and Business Action to Stop Counterfeiting and Piracy (BASCAP) have projected that the global value of counterfeiting and piracy will have risen by 2015 to EUR 1.4 trillion. These large-scale profits provide organised crime groups with resources to branch into other criminal markets, such as drugs and cigarette trafficking. The loss of revenue also affects legitimate businesses that lose money to counterfeiters. As a result, they face lower levels of resilience to the economic crisis and substantial losses in potential innovation and product development. It is estimated that G20 economies lose up to 2.5 million jobs due to counterfeiting and piracy.

- In 2013, Europol supported seven major operations concerning counterfeit/substandard medicines.

MOBILE ORGANISED CRIME GROUPS

- Mobile organised crime groups continue to be active throughout the European Union. They are mostly engaged in opportunistic crimes such as (armed) bank or jewellery store robberies, cash-in-transit and ATM physical attacks, cargo and metal theft, theft of luxury vehicles and high-volume crimes such as serial burglaries, organised shoplifting and pick pocketing.

- Every EU Member State is affected by their offences to a greater or lesser extent. Although single offences committed by members of these groups do not fall into the category of serious organised crime, the accumulated offences have a significant impact on the security of EU citizens and legitimate business. Mobile organised crime groups increasingly pose an EU-wide threat owing to their international networks and involvement in cross-border criminal and serious organised crime activities.

- The substantial illicit profits generated by these types of groups, as well as their increasing levels of sophistication and involvement in other forms of criminal activities, including drugs trafficking and trafficking in human beings, demands a targeted EU-level response. Mobile organised crime groups have been on Europol's radar since 2009 and investigations into their activities are supported by various dedicated analytical projects.

OUTLAW MOTORCYCLE GANGS

- Outlaw motorcycle gangs are considered a national threat and a national policing priority in 17 of the EU Member States and in six Europol partner states.

- Europol helps prevent and combat the criminal activities of outlaw motorcycle gangs such as the Hells Angels Motorcycle Club, Bandidos MC, Outlaws MC and their support motorcycle clubs. The dedicated Europol project follows a multi-disciplinary and horizontal approach, focusing on the organised crime groups rather than just on the crime phenomena inherent to outlaw motorcycle gangs.

- To assist Member States more effectively, strategic and operational priorities have been identified including investigating the expansion of outlaw motorcycle groups into new areas of Europe, their recruitment from the right-wing hooligan scene and street gangs. Europol's support is resulting in significant successes in Member States and cooperating states. In 2013, there was a noticeable increase in members of outlaw motorcycle gangs convicted for criminal activities. This trend is likely to continue in 2014.

TERRORISM

- Terrorism continues to pose a serious threat to the European Union. Extremist and terrorist groups, such as al-Qaeda affiliates and others, are active in the EU and impact the lives of its citizens. Thus, the fight against extremism and terrorism remains a priority for the EU and Europol.

- Europol assists Member States (MS) to conduct successful investigations in fighting terrorism, extremism, and maritime piracy, by collating and analysing intelligence, preparing intelligence reports and threat assessments, coordinating and providing on-the-spot expertise, supporting other Member States' operations and producing the annual *EU terrorism situation and trend report (TE-SAT)* with facts, figures and main trends regarding terrorist attacks and arrests in the EU.

- Europol also runs a secure web-based Experts Platform for Countering Violent Extremism which can be accessed by EU MS and US federal, state and local law enforcement officials for online collaboration in this area.

- Moreover, Europol supports the MS with a number of specific counter terrorism projects and databases:
  - Check the Web Portal enables competent authorities of EU Member States to share information on Islamist terrorist activities on the Internet via the secure Europol network and the Europol national units. Its aim is to create synergies between the Member States in the analysis of online Islamist terrorist activities.
  - EU Bomb Data System provides a platform for the timely sharing of relevant information and intelligence on incidents involving explosives, incendiary and explosive devices as well as chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) materials. The EU Bomb Data System comprises incident databases for explosives and CBRN, as well as libraries and expert forums. Over 700 experts from almost all EU Member States, Europol, Norway and the United States are already connected and using the system.

o European Explosive Ordnance Disposal Network is designed for EU explosives and chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) specialists whose main objective is to share information about recent incidents and developments in their area. The network facilitates cooperation among involved parties coming from police, government and military units and dealing with explosives. Specialists on explosives and CBRN meet twice a year to exchange latest information and receive training. This allows the experts to compare, and check for compatibility, their respective response protocols, which is important when responding to incidents with cross-border aspects.

o Terrorist Finance Tracking Programme (TFTP) is based on the 2010 EU–US Agreement on the Terrorist Finance Tracking Programme, and ensures close cooperation with EU Member States and an integrated response between Europol, EU Member States, Eurojust and the US Treasury Department. Terrorist groups depend on regular cash flows which are used for, among others, travelling, training and recruitment of members, forging of documents, acquisition of weapons, and staging of attacks. The TFTP activities result in providing unique, highly accurate information that is of significant value in tracking terrorist support networks and identifying new methods of terrorist financing. In November 2013 the Joint Report from the Commission and the US Treasury Department regarding the value of TFTP-provided data was released. Since the entry into force of the TFTP agreement, more than 2000 leads have been disseminated by Europol to aid competent European authorities' fight against terrorism.

MONEY LAUNDERING AND ASSET TRACING

- Europol financial intelligence experts detect international criminal flows, support the tracing, seizure and confiscation of criminal proceeds, and track criminals and terrorists through the analysis of financial information.

- Europol has a broad mandate in the area of combating money laundering and supports Member States in preventing and combating international money laundering activities. The main aim behind tracing illegal assets and money laundering is to find the crime perpetrators, disrupt their associates and enable the potential confiscation of the crime proceeds. Europol also hosts the secretariat of the Anti-Money Laundering Operational Informal Network (AMON) set up in 2012 as a network for anti-money laundering investigators.

- The Europol Criminal Assets Bureau (ECAB) assists Member States' financial investigators to trace the proceeds of crime worldwide, when assets have been concealed outside their jurisdictional boundaries.

    o The Europol Criminal Assets Bureau runs a project to link Member States' Asset Recovery Offices (AROs) to a secure, reliable and fast communication channel (SIENA). The main purpose of this project is to increase the efficiency of the asset tracing process within the EU. Currently, 21 AROs are linked to SIENA. As a result, in 2013 there was a very significant increase in information exchange – more than 2000 requests were exchanged to trace and identify criminal proceeds.

    o Europol also hosts the permanent secretariat of the Camden Assets Recovery Inter-Agency Network (CARIN), which is an informal network of judicial and law enforcement asset recovery experts. CARIN currently has 65 registered member jurisdictions, including all 28 EU Member States. Delegated law enforcement and judicial experts assist with general questions about asset recovery in their own jurisdictions, and also provide operational support via available legal channels.