

Europol Programming Document

2026 – 2028

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List of Acronyms

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

Mission Statement

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

Executive summary

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

The strategic programming of Europol, including resources programming, is provided in Section II - Multi-annual programming 2026-2028. Special focus is placed on six main strategic priorities which have been identified as part of the Europol Strategy "Delivering security in partnership", endorsed by Europol's Management Board in June 2023. These priorities will guide the work of the Agency in the years 2026-2028 to:

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

In Section III, Europol's Work Programme provides a comprehensive overview of the full work portfolio of the agency, including its regular (recurrent) work and specific annual objectives and actions for 2026; the work is organised around the different areas of operation (Activities).

Europol will continue providing Member States with high quality operational support to investigations in priority areas aligned with ProtectEU – a European Internal Security Strategy and following the objectives of ongoing and upcoming new EU strategies and action plans for emerging tasks falling within its mandate.

The planned work of Europol's Operational Centres, as well as the horizontal support functions, is extensive and striving towards further evolvement of capabilities, expertise and tools, in order to offer the necessary support to MS' operations. In addition to regular tasks and responsibilities, the key highlights in Europol's planning for 2026 are summarised below:

- Driven by the results of the Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment (SOCTA) 2025, the priorities of the next cycle of the European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats (**EMPACT**) **2026-2029** will be the key driver for the operational support provided to the MS' competent authorities in 2026. Europol will contribute to the drafting and implementation of the new Operational Action Plans, and will further support the utilisation and further improvement of the new Online EMPACT tool.
- **Criminal analysis** remains at the core of Europol's business and the agency will be further reinforcing analysis coordination through enhanced attention to quality output and control, standardisation and training. In 2026, the case management system and the Joint Operational Analysis Case will be further developed to facilitate closer and more effective

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

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collaboration with MS. In addition, the agency will continue working towards the implementation of its new **Analysis Training and Coaching program** to satisfy the need for state-of-the-art analytical competence at Europol and the MS competent authorities.

- In 2026, depending on the final budget of the agency, Europol will aim to resume development work on some key **ICT systems** that were descoped in 2025, in line with Europol's and MS operational priorities and with the requirements stemming from relevant EU legislation. Focus will remain on the development of Europol's **analysis and specialised capabilities**. Europol will also continue contributing to **EU Interoperability**, in line with the European Commission planning and in close cooperation with eu-LISA, focusing particularly on ensuring readiness for the entry into operation of ETIAS and on initiating work to prepare for the entry into operation of the Screening Regulation in June 2026. The agency will also pursue further analysis and support MS with the implementation of relevant obligations stemming from the **Directive on Information Exchange** and progress with further development of the European Police Records Index System (**EPRIS**).
- With the entry into operations of **ETIAS** in 2026, Europol's **Operational and Analysis Centre** (OAC) will have to ensure the provision of 24/7 swift follow-up on hits of travel authorisation and visa applications against Europol data. Moreover, the agency will start operating Europol's direct access to **Eurodac** and will prepare to support security checks carried out on third-country nationals undergoing a screening procedure, in line with the **Screening Regulation**. Finally, it will continue strengthening its capabilities for processing biometric data in view of its involvement in the revised **Prüm II** framework. While Europol will strive to fully implement these EU large-scale systems in line with the relevant EU legislation, these new services may be subject to delays and will depend on Europol's final level of resources.
- Europol will continue providing quality support to Member States in identifying **High Value Targets** (HVT) and criminal networks representing the highest risk of organised and serious crime, and in complex investigations against HVTs through the setting up of **Operational Task Forces** (OTF). In 2026, the **European Serious and Organised Crime Centre (ESOCC)** will further focus on developing its capabilities in the areas of Open Sources Intelligence, data-driven investigations, financial investigations and the tracing of proceeds of crime.
- In anticipation of the upcoming EU Action Plan against **drug trafficking**, the focus of the centre will remain on the maritime domain and in particular the main EU harbours that are exploited by criminal networks. The ESOCC's Maritime Anti-Trafficking Coordination Hub will aim to enhance the analytical and technical support to prioritised drugs operations, improving the operational and strategic picture of maritime trafficking. Furthermore, the centre will contribute the setting up of a Supported Investigative Unit (SIU), led by one or more EU MS and using Europol's services, which should allow for real-time investigative collaboration in targeting major transnational criminal organisations. In the area of **environmental crime**, Europol will work towards establishing the agency as a partner for MS investigations on high impact wildlife related crimes and will continue the focus on waste and pollution crime, i.a. by contributing to the joint global action of law enforcement against waste trafficking.
- Following the adoption of the Regulation to strengthen police cooperation and Europol's role in the fight against migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings on 16 December 2025, Europol will transform its European Migrant Smuggling Centre into a new reinforced centre - **European Centre Against Migrant Smuggling (ECAMS)** – as endorsed by the Management Board in December 2025 (see Annex I for more information). ECAMS will remain dedicated to support MS investigations into criminal

networks involved in migrant smuggling on the main migratory routes into and through the EU and is expected to **enhance outreach** towards MS and third countries, as well as **operational deployments**.

- The **European Cybercrime Centre (EC3)** will aim to enhance the collection and processing of large datasets, contributed by MS and other Europol crime centres, by utilising the latest data science techniques for data extraction, transformation, loading, and enrichment. With the dedicated cryptocurrency team established in 2025, the centre will further reinforce its support to MS with advanced **cryptocurrency** tracing techniques and analysis and conduct research and development on cryptocurrency tracing solutions. EC3 is also committed to contribute to the implementation of the European Commission's Roadmap for **lawful and effective access to data** for law enforcement, to the extent possible, given that some of the initiatives are particularly resource intensive.
- Establishing cooperation with the **private sector** will remain a priority. Further work will be done on the EC3 Cyber Intelligence Gateway as single entry to receive intelligence contributions from non-LE parties primarily focused on operational and tactical activities. Outreach to key private partners will be pursued for the purpose of receiving crime-relevant information especially in the area of non-cash payment fraud and online fraud, child sexual exploitation and for the purpose of early disruptions of ransomware- and other cyber attacks. The centre will also promote the engagement of the private sector in cyber offender prevention activities aiming to deter and divert cybercriminal pathways.
- In preparation for the new EU Regulation laying down rules to prevent and combat **child sexual abuse (CSA) and exploitation**, Europol will continue undertaking the necessary technical and operational adjustments to ensure effective handling of the increasing data contributions and coordination and prioritisation of the anticipated growing number of investigations. EC3 will further invest resources in performing quantitative (in depth data) analysis to proactively identify and combat the most prolific facilitators and services for producing and disseminating CSA material (incl. AI generated).
- Guided by the EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report's (TE-SAT) findings and MS priorities, the **European Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC)** will place particular focus on addressing the impact of ongoing geopolitical crises, the exploitation of a widening range of emerging technologies, and the targeting of vulnerable individuals - particularly minors - by terrorists and violent extremists. The centre remains committed to supporting operations of the Terrorist Identification Task Force (TITF) and to providing support to Operational Task Forces following the adjusted concept for establishing OTFs in the CT area. Efforts to enhance cooperation with MS competent authorities and third countries to expand on ECTC's access to high quality data will be further pursued.
- In 2026, the **EU Internet Referral Unit (EU IRU)** of the ECTC will continue strengthening its expertise in open source intelligence and will aim to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of OSINT operations by providing cutting-edge capabilities. The EU IRU will also work on delivering tailored technical solutions fostering the collection, analysis, and dissemination of CT intelligence and ensuring the effective and efficient monitoring and analysis of the terrorist propaganda detected online. The unit will reinforce its adaptability-driven approach to operations in order to swiftly respond to geopolitical instability and the evolution or emergence of new threats and trends.
- The **EU platform for referrals and removal orders (PERCI)** will be further modified for the purpose of establishing an automated workflow for the intake and handling of notifications of threat to life or safety of persons stemming from illegal online content involving all crime areas covered by the Digital Services Act². In cooperation with Eurojust,

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

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the EU IRU will continue the implementation of Phase 3 of the **SIRIUS** project, which focuses on supporting cross-border access to **electronic evidence** for law enforcement and judicial authorities in third countries of strategic value for the two agencies.

- **The European Financial and Economic Crime Centre (EFECC)** is striving to increase Europol's responsiveness and operational performance in the areas of fraud, money laundering, asset recovery, corruption and counterfeiting. In particular, the centre aims at enhancing its operational support against criminal networks and professionals providing money laundering services to other criminal groups (crime as a service) with an emphasis on parallel financial systems (underground banking). Furthermore, the EFECC will contribute to the revision and implementation of the new **Anti-Fraud Architecture** in the EU and continue fostering the established cooperation with the European Public Prosecutor Office (EPPO).
- In 2026, Europol should establish a working arrangement with the new EU Authority for Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (**AMLA**). Following the agreement, work should be initiated towards the setting up of secure channels of communication. The EFECC will be ready to participate in the Financial Intelligence Units' (**FIUs**) joint analysis of cross-border suspicious financial transactions or activities, when requested.
- The EFECC will be further strengthening the partnership with the **EU Asset Recovery Offices (ARO)** in view of increasing the level of AROs' contributions. In particular, the centre will aim to support Europol's priority cases by obtaining relevant financial information, through the means established in Directive (EU) 2019/1153³. The EFECC will also build up its capacities in the area of **circumvention of sanctions** and support investigations in regards to the violation of EU restrictive measures in line with the mandate provided by the Europol Regulation (Annex I).
- Europol seeks to be at the forefront of **law enforcement innovation and research** and through its **Innovation Lab**, it facilitates innovation in the law enforcement community and addresses the risks and opportunities of emerging technologies. The Lab acts as the secretariat for the **EU Innovation Hub for Internal Security** and leads the Hub Team in collaboration with other JHA agencies. In 2026, Europol will continue supporting the European Commission in identifying key research themes, fostering uptake of research and innovation, as well as providing support to Member States in the use of emerging technologies in preventing and countering crimes. Moreover, the Lab will aim to enhance the capacity of the ODIN sandbox environment to develop, train and validate models and tools using operational data. It will also aim at further developing the foresight and horizon scanning activities of the Europol Innovation Lab's Observatory function, in cooperation with the Joint Research Centre (JRC) and other partners.
- In the realm of external relations, Europol will continue implementing its **External Relations Strategy** and will reinforce cooperation with selected high-priority third countries and organisations. In parallel, the agency will implement its plan for strengthening cooperation with the Schengen Associated Countries. Furthermore, the agency will continue the implementation of the new **Strategy on cooperation with private parties**, enhancing collaboration with new partners in line with MS operational needs.
- In 2026, work will continue to implement organisational initiatives or changes identified through the Europol Strategy, while the agency will continue making progress in

³ Directive (EU) 2019/1153 of 20 June 2019, as amended by the Directive 2024/1654, laying down rules facilitating the use of financial and other information for the prevention, detection, investigation or prosecution of certain criminal offences.

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promoting workforce diversity and inclusion, in line with Europol's **Diversity and Inclusion Strategy**. The **Strategic Housing Roadmap** will advance further to allow for the agency's growth. In 2026, Temporary Satellite Building 2 will be operational for use and work to establish the second Data Centre should also start to ensure Europol's business continuity.

Table: Overview of Europol's objectives for the year 2026

Work Programme Activity	Objective 2026
A.1. Development of information technology and information management capabilities	A.1.1 Continue enhancing Information Management.
	A.1.2 Further develop ICT capabilities for Europol's operations.
	A.1.3 Implement improvements to core MS-facing operational capabilities.
	A.1.4 Advance interoperability and connectivity with information management systems at EU level.
	A.1.5 Foster innovation and support EU Member States in addressing the risks and opportunities of emerging technologies.
	A.1.6 Further improve corporate information management and related administrative ICT capabilities.
	A.1.7 Develop and maintain reliable and secure ICT capabilities.
A.2. Operational Coordination	A.2.1 Ensure the effective functioning of the Operational Centre in managing the intake of operational information.
	A.2.2 Provide support to operations and crisis management.
	A.2.3 Build-up Europol's operational services to comply with the legal obligations stemming from the EU Interoperability framework.
	A.2.4 Ensure the provision of efficient services by Europol's SIRENE Office.
	A.2.5 Enhance Europol's biometric capabilities and services.
	A.2.6 Provide support to EU Member States investigations with travel intelligence.
	A.2.7 Provide support to Member States in the area of special tactics.
	A.2.8 Manage and support deployments, incl. Europol's Guest Officers capabilities.
A.3. Combating Serious and Organised Crime	A.3.1 Ensure the effective functioning of the ESOCC in providing strategic and operational support to EU Member States' investigations on SOC.
	A.3.2 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on drug production and trafficking.
	A.3.3 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on weapons and explosives.
	A.3.4 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on high risk OCGs and criminal networks.
	A.3.5 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on organised property crime.
	A.3.6 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on environmental crime.

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Work Programme Activity	Objective 2026
	<p>A.3.7 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on organised crime related to migrant smuggling.</p> <p>A.3.8 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on trafficking in human beings.</p>
A.4. Combating cybercrime	<p>A.4.1 Ensure the effective functioning of EC3 in providing strategic, tactical and operational support to EU Member States' investigations on cybercrime.</p> <p>A.4.2 Provide digital forensics support to EU Member States' investigations.</p> <p>A.4.3 Provide cyber intelligence support to EU Member States' investigations.</p> <p>A.4.4 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on cyber-dependent crimes.</p> <p>A.4.5 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on child sexual exploitation.</p> <p>A.4.6 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on payment fraud and online fraud schemes.</p> <p>A.4.7 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on the criminal online trade and use of online environments for criminal purposes.</p> <p>A.4.8 Provide support and operational coordination to the J-CAT operations and activities.</p> <p>A.4.9 Proactively develop expertise and solutions related to challenges in cybercriminal investigations.</p>
A.5. Counter-terrorism	<p>A.5.1 Ensure the effective functioning of the ECTC and provide strategic and operational support to EU Member States, including through outreach to relevant partners, to mitigate the risk of terrorism.</p> <p>A.5.2 Ensure the monitoring of terrorism incidents and trends and sharing CT related expertise.</p> <p>A.5.3 Provide support to EU Member States' counter-terrorism investigations and investigations on core international crimes.</p> <p>A.5.4 Provide support to EU Member States' CT internet-based investigations.</p> <p>A.5.5 Provide quality online content assessment and referral services.</p> <p>A.5.6 Provide CBRN/E support to EU Member States' investigations.</p> <p>A.5.7 Provide support to the ATLAS Network.</p> <p>A.5.8 Provide support to Member States and third countries on acquiring cross-border access to electronic evidence.</p>
A.6. Combating Financial and Economic Crime	<p>A.6.1 Ensure the effective functioning of the EFECC in providing strategic and operational support to EU Member States' investigations on financial and economic crime.</p> <p>A.6.2 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on fraud.</p> <p>A.6.3 Provide operational support to EU Member States' investigations on money laundering.</p> <p>A.6.4 Provide strategic support to EU Member States and other stakeholders regarding money laundering and terrorist financing.</p> <p>A.6.5 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations in identifying and tracing proceeds of crime.</p>

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Work Programme Activity	Objective 2026
	A.6.6 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on corruption.
	A.6.7 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on the production and distribution of counterfeit goods.
	A.6.8 Provide support to EU Member States' investigations on Euro counterfeiting.
A.7. Strategic and Analysis Coordination	A.7.1 Reinforce criminal analysis coordination and expertise at Europol to ensure provision of quality analysis support to Member States' investigations.
	A.7.2 Ensure data and analysis quality control at Europol.
	A.7.3 Reinforce analysis training capabilities at Europol.
	A.7.4 Deliver quality strategic reports.
	A.7.5 Provide support and funding opportunities to the revised EMPACT priorities and actions.
	A.7.6 Manage cooperation with EU Member States.
	A.7.7 Manage cooperation with third countries.
	A.7.8 Manage cooperation with EU institutions, agencies or bodies.
	A.7.9 Manage cooperation with international and regional organisations.
	A.7.10 Enhance Europol's cooperation with private parties.
A.8. Governance, support and administration	A.8.1 Continue optimising Europol's corporate functions.
	A.8.2 Ensure fundamental rights compliance in all internal and external operational and administrative processes.
	A.8.3 Ensure efficient internal and external communication.
	A.8.4 Ensure efficient human resources management.
	A.8.5 Ensure efficient financial and budget management.
	A.8.6 Ensure the necessary level of physical, personnel and information security at Europol.
	A.8.7 Progress towards the rationalisation and expansion of Europol's facilities services and enhanced environmental management.
	A.8.8 Steer and coordinate the implementation of the Strategic Housing Roadmap.

SECTION I – General Context

With the establishment of the new European Commission 2024-2029, and the launch of ProtectEU - a European Internal Security Strategy in 2025, Europol follows closely the elaboration and implementation of new EU strategies and action plans for emerging tasks falling within its mandate. This section presents the current and future legislative and policy context that is expected to influence Europol's work in the coming years. Through the implementation of its Annual Work Programme 2026, Europol will contribute to the implementation of several EU policies in the JHA domain, as detailed below and under each specific Activity in Section III.

1. Security Union

1.1. New European Internal Security Strategy

On 1 April 2025 Commission presented ProtectEU – a European Internal Security Strategy. The Strategy elaborates on the main initiatives and priority areas where the EU needs to invest in order to **anticipate, prevent and effectively respond to security threats** in the years to come. The initiatives proposed include an enhanced legal toolbox, deeper cooperation and increased information sharing as well as fostering a new EU security culture. The Strategy is guided by three principles: Firstly, a **whole-of-society approach**, stressing the central role that security plays in our societies, being the basis for freedom, democracy and prosperity. Secondly, the consideration of security aspects across all EU legislation, policies and programmes (**security by design**). Thirdly, the need to **increase spending** by Member States and the private sector for security, thereby enhancing EU's strategic autonomy. In addition, the Strategy considers security as an **integral part of the EU's relations with third countries**.

ProtectEU also includes the calendar for the issuance of strategic deliverables such as a new **EU Drugs Strategy** and EU Action Plan against Drug Trafficking - adopted on 4 December 2025, a new **EU Agenda on preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism** (2026) and a new **EU Strategy on combatting trafficking in human beings** (2026).

It is worth mentioning the attention paid in the Strategy to vulnerable groups, and especially **children**, in order to protect them better both in the offline and the online environments. New EU Action Plans (including on cyberbullying) are in the pipeline, adding to the current legislative work on the fight against child sexual abuse online.

The Strategy elaborates on thematic areas (key aspects are covered under each of the headings below).

A. Integrated situational awareness and threat analysis

- Member States are encouraged to **increase intelligence sharing** through the EU's Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity (SIAC).
- Preparation by Commission of a **regular EU internal security threat assessment analysis** to identify main security challenges, complementing other threat assessments prepared by Europol.
- Establishment of **secure communication channels** for the exchange of sensitive and classified information within EU institutions, agencies and Member States.

B. Strengthened EU security capabilities

- Reinforcement of the **mandate of Europol** to cover, i.a., new security threats such as sabotage, hybrid threats or information manipulation and make it a 'truly operational police agency'.
- Strengthening of **Eurojust's mandate** for more effective judicial cooperation and enhanced cooperation with Europol.
- Reinforcement of **Frontex**.

- Establishment of a new **European Critical Communication System** (EUCCS) to improve the capacity of the Union to react to crises.
- Implementation of a comprehensive set of legal and practical measures to facilitate **access to data**. The Commission will also perform an assessment of the impact of data retention rules at EU level and prepare a Technology Roadmap on encryption.
- Strengthening of the flagship EU initiative for law enforcement cooperation, the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (**EMPACT**) focussing on renewed priority crime areas for the new EMPACT cycle 2026-2029.
- Creation of a new **Research and Innovation Security Campus** at the EU Joint Research Centre.

C. Resilience against hybrid threats and other hostile actors

- **Transposition and implementation of existing EU law:** The Critical Resilience Directive (CER) to enhance physical resilience and the Network and Information Security Directive (NIS 2) to enhance the cybersecurity of critical infrastructure.
- **Revision of the Cybersecurity Act**, looking more broadly at the security and resilience of ICT supply chains and infrastructure.
- Development of a **Quantum Strategy** to position Europe as a global leader in quantum by 2030.
- Full enforcement of the **Digital Services Act (DSA)** as the main tool to address the complex and evolving landscape of online threats, incl. online disinformation and foreign interference.
- Development of an **EU Ports Strategy** building on the existing EU Ports Alliance, also supporting Member States in the purchase of equipment for key infrastructure and technology, promoting an **industrial policy for internal security**.
- Boost of preparedness and response capabilities under the umbrella of a new chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (**CBRN**) **Preparedness and Response Action Plan**.

D. Tightening the net on serious and organised crime and terrorism

- **Prevention** in order to tackle the root causes of crime and radicalisation, with special focus on young people.
- An **Action Plan on the Protection of Children against Crime**, encompassing the online and offline dimensions.
- A new **EU Action Plan against firearms trafficking**, together with rules on firearms, explosives, precursors and pyrotechnics.
- Implementation of the '**follow the money**' approach, fostering public-private cooperation and responses to parallel financial systems. It will also tackle terrorism financing.
- A new **EU Drugs Strategy** and **EU Action Plan against drug trafficking**.
- A renewed **EU Strategy on trafficking in human beings** and a relaunch of the **Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling**.
- An **European Democracy Shield** to strengthen democratic resilience in the EU and a new **EU Strategy on Victims' Rights**.

E. Combating terrorism and violent extremism

- A new **EU Agenda on preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism** to tackle prevention and the root causes of radicalisation.
- Signature by the **EU and the Western Balkans** of a **new Joint Action Plan** on preventing and countering **terrorism** and violent extremism.
- The **Terrorist Content Online Regulation (TCO)** will continue to serve to counter the spread of terrorist content online, enabling the removal of dangerous material. Voluntary cooperation of companies through the **EU Internet Forum**.
- Strengthened cooperation with key third countries to obtain biographic and biometric data on individuals that might pose a terrorist threat (**foreign terrorist fighters**) when returning or entering at the EU's external borders.

1.2. Strengthening cooperation with CSDP missions and operations

In March 2022, the Council adopted a Strategic Compass for Security and Defence followed by a new Civilian CSDP Compact⁴ reaffirming its full commitment to strengthening civilian CSDP by enhancing their effectiveness, impact, flexibility and robustness, enabling them to tackle more effectively current, emerging and future security challenges across the internal – external nexus. The implementation is taken forward by the EEAS and the Commission through a joint action plan, as well as through MS' own implementation plans. Reinforced cooperation between CSDP and JHA is an important element of the Strategic Compass.

1.3. European Preparedness Union Strategy

The joint communication of the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the European Preparedness Union Strategy⁵, of March 2025, provides a framework for an integrated all-hazards, whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to EU preparedness and crisis management, shifting away from a reactive and sectorial crisis management framework towards a proactive cross-sectoral and cross-border mechanism underpinned by civilian-military coordination.

The accompanying Action Plan lists 63 actions, some of which are expected to be carried out with the support of relevant EU Agencies from 2025 onwards. The planned legislation proposal on the European Critical Communication Systems (EUCCS) for cross-border operations of law enforcement, civil protection, public health authorities, and other public security and public safety authorities will also have an impact on Europol's work.

2. Serious and Organised Crime

2.1. EU roadmap to fight drug trafficking and organised crime

On 18 October 2023, the European Commission adopted the EU roadmap to fight drug trafficking and organised crime⁶, which aims to reinforce the EU action against the most serious security threats posed by the drugs trade and organised crime groups. It is composed of seventeen Priority Actions organised around four thematic areas: 1) The European Ports Alliance to strengthen the resilience of logistical hubs; 2) Action to dismantle high-risk criminal networks; 3) Prevention; and 4) International cooperation. Europol is mentioned extensively in the Roadmap and is actively involved in the implementation of most of its actions, in cooperation with MS and other relevant EU Agencies and bodies.

2.2. EU Drugs Strategy and EU Action Plan against drug trafficking

On 4 December, the Commission adopted the EU Drugs Strategy and EU Action Plan against Drug trafficking 2026-2030, a key deliverable under the ProtectEU – European Internal Security Strategy. **The EU Drugs Strategy** sets out a way forward to safeguard citizens' well-being, public health, and security, and strengthens the EU's preparedness and response to current and future drug-related challenges. The **EU Action Plan against drug trafficking** complements the EU Drugs Strategy with 19 key operational actions, for 10 of which Europol is recognised as a core actor. In particular, the agency is expected to participate in: disrupting trafficking routes and business models; enhancing LE/customs cooperation and stepping up the action against online trafficking; improving MS capacity to dismantle illicit drug production sites; leveraging innovation and operationalising the EU's cooperation with key third countries.

2.3. New Regulation on the import, export and transit of firearms

The revised Regulation setting out rules on the import, export and transit of firearms to prevent the risk of diversion by improving the traceability of firearms and facilitating information exchange between national authorities was adopted on 19 December 2024. The Regulation will

⁴ Council 9588/23

⁵ JOIN/2025/130 final

⁶ COM/2023/641 final

improve the traceability of weapons and ensure proper exchanges of information, enhancing security and combatting firearms trafficking. At the same time, the legal trade of firearms will be simplified. Key provisions include: the obligation for customs to share information on suspected illicit trafficking cases with competent authorities via SIENA; imposition of stricter rules and controls for deactivated weapons and alarm and signal weapons; stricter rules for the import of semi-finished firearms and essential components; development of an EU electronic licensing system for manufacturers and dealers to apply for import and export authorisation. The Regulation entered into force on 11 February 2025 and will become fully applicable on 12 February 2029.

2.4. Revised Anti-trafficking Directive

On 14 July 2025, the revised Anti-Trafficking Directive entered into force and contains stronger rules to fight trafficking in human beings. The revised Directive introduced stricter criminalisation and provided stronger tools for law enforcement and judicial authorities to investigate trafficking offences. Member States have to set up one or more national referral mechanisms, appoint a national anti-trafficking coordinator and adopt and regularly update national action plans. In this respect, coordination and data sharing with Europol and national anti-trafficking coordinators can be envisaged.

2.5. Pact on Migration and Asylum

The New Pact on Migration and Asylum⁷ was adopted 14 May 2024. Of particular relevance for Europol are the Regulation introducing a screening of third country nationals at the external borders (Screening Regulation) and the recast of the Eurodac Regulation (see section 6). On 12 June 2024, the Commission presented the Common Implementation Plan for the Pact, setting out the key milestones for all Member States to establish the legal and operational capabilities required to start applying the new legislation by mid-2026. The Plan also outlines the responsibilities of EU agencies in supporting the effective implementation of the Pact. Among others, Europol is expected to provide support for the production of the European Annual Asylum and Migration Report. The agency is already actively engaged in the above collaborative priorities through its participation in the Migration Preparedness and Crisis Blueprint Network, as well as the Situational Awareness, Early Warning and Forecasting Capacity Development Project.

2.6. Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling

On 28 November 2023, the Commission launched a Call to Action for a Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling. The Global Alliance establishes a new international cooperation framework centred on prevention, response and alternatives to irregular migration. It seeks to include global participation from countries of origin, transit, and destination, the private sector, governments, and international organisations. As an active member of the Global Alliance, Europol contributes to initiatives for sharing of knowledge, information and best practices in countering migrant smuggling through expert meetings, workshops and conferences.

2.7. European Commission's legislative initiative to prevent and fight migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings

As part of a legislative package to address migrant smuggling, on 28 November 2023 the European Commission proposed a **Regulation to strengthen police cooperation and Europol's role in the fight against migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings**. The proposal is articulated around the following main objectives: strengthening inter-agency cooperation; strengthening steering and coordination at EU level by reshaping Europol's institutional framework, capacities and resources; improving information sharing; reinforcing Member States' resources; reinforcing Europol's support through the use of Operational Task Forces (OTF) and deployments for operational support. The proposed Regulation puts forward

⁷ COM(2020)609 final

additional resources for Europol. The political agreement was reached on 25 September 2025 and the final adoption is expected by end 2025.

Also, part of the legislative package is the proposal for a revised Directive to prevent and counter the facilitation of unauthorised entry, transit and stay in the EU (Facilitation Directive). Negotiations on this proposal are still ongoing.

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

The 2021 Schengen Strategy pointed to Europol's renewed mandate as an element expected to reinforce the Schengen area internally⁸. The agency also features in the Schengen Evaluation and Monitoring Mechanism and is an important contributor to the Schengen Cycle, especially to Schengen Barometer. Europol shall, according to its mandate, provide expertise, analysis, reports, and other relevant information to support the implementation of the Schengen Cycle and Schengen evaluation activities.

The Commission published the Fourth State of Schengen Report in April 2025, including priorities for the 2025-2026 Schengen governance cycle, which will focus on consolidating the governance framework to enhance policy coordination, a structured and coherent approach to police cooperation, as well as accelerating the digitalisation of procedures and systems to increase security.

2.9. Revised Environmental Crime Directive

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

2.10. EU Action plan on cultural goods trafficking

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

In this context, on 8 June 2023, the Council adopted **Conclusions on the fight against trafficking in cultural goods**⁹, welcoming the Commission's action plan and encouraging further actions, several of which referring directly to Europol or EMPACT, such as the setting up of an EU CULTNET contact point at Europol; the creation, in cooperation with the Innovation Lab, of a search engine to detect trafficking in cultural goods; or the need to take full advantage of Europol's and Eurojust's support for cross-border law enforcement and judicial cooperation.

2.11. 10-Point Plan - For stronger European coordination on welcoming people fleeing the war from Ukraine

On 28 March 2022, the European Commission presented the 10-points action plan for closer cooperation in the area of preventing human trafficking and helping victims. The plan addressed the internal security implications of the war in Ukraine by calling on the EMPACT community and Europol to support MS cooperation, investigations and sharing of relevant security information.

⁸ COM(2021) 277 final of 2.6.2021, p. 13.

⁹ Council 10249/23

Europol is also part of the "Freeze and Seize" Task Force set up by the Commission to ensure EU-level coordination on the implementation and enforcement of sanctions against Russian and Belarussian individuals and entities.

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

On 9 March 2023, the Council approved Conclusions on the Action Plan for the European Forensic Science Area 2.0¹⁰. The Action Plan aims to shape the future of forensics by 2030, and is organised in three pillars, each addressing specific areas and outlining appropriate actions and responsible stakeholders. Europol is expected to contribute to the implementation of the action plan in the areas of biometrics, artificial intelligence, digitalisation, and emerging technologies.

2.13. High-Level Group on Access to Data for Effective Law Enforcement

On 24 June 2025, the European Commission adopted the "Roadmap for lawful and effective access to data for law enforcement"¹¹, following a mandate from the EU Justice and Home Affairs Council, which is reflected in the Council Conclusions on access to data for effective law enforcement¹² of 12 December 2024. The Roadmap lists key actions based on the work and recommendations of the High Level Group, and identifies the stakeholders, source of resources and timeframe for implementation for each of the key actions. Europol is identified as an important stakeholder for the implementation of activities in five of the six key areas of the Roadmap, notably: data retention - via SIRIUS-, lawful interception, digital forensics, decryption, standardisation and AI solutions for law enforcement. The timeline for the implementation of the activities involving Europol varies, with some starting from 2025 and others from 2030. In addition, the aforementioned Council Conclusions¹³ invite the relevant JHA agencies to i.a. raise awareness and support constructive communication efforts.

3. Cybercrime and cyber-enabled crime

3.1. European Commission's e-evidence package

The Electronic Evidence Package entered into force in August 2023 and will start applying as of 2026. The objective is to establish a consistent legal framework and avoid conflicting obligations with the law of non-EU countries, as well as to protect the fundamental rights of individuals. The SIRIUS Project, implemented by Europol and Eurojust, is mentioned as a possible platform to provide access to relevant information to authorities.

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

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

¹⁰ Council 7152/23

¹¹ COM(2025) 349 final

¹² Council 16448/24

¹³ Ibid.

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

On 6 February 2024, the European Commission published a proposal revising the 2011 European directive on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children¹⁴. The aim is to adapt EU definitions and criminal offenses to constant digital change and technological developments. The proposal also introduces details on investigative tools available to law enforcement, Member States cooperation with Europol and Eurojust, as well as cooperation with third countries to investigate and combat child sexual exploitation in travel and tourism. It creates new structures and processes in Member States, sets-up multi-stakeholder mechanism for the development and implementation of measures to prevent and combat CSA, and promotes CSA training for law enforcement and the judicial.

3.4. Digital Services Act

The rules of the Digital Services Act (DSA) became fully applicable from February 2024. It introduced measures for countering illegal content online and obligations for hosting service providers (HSP) to report suspicions of criminal offences to law enforcement or judicial authorities of the MS(s) concerned once the HSP becomes aware of a threat to the life or safety of person or persons. Should the MS concerned be unclear, the HSP must report it to the authorities of the MS in which the company is registered in the EU, or to Europol, or both. Europol continues working on fine-tuning its work processes in order to accommodate this new flow of information from HSPs. On 19 December 2024, Europol and DG CNECT signed a Contribution Agreement of €1.24M to fund the initial phase of technical developments for an automated workflow in PERCI to facilitate the intake, handling and distribution of "threat to the life or safety of persons notifications" received by Europol in line with Art. 18 DSA.

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

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

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

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

3.7. Cyber Crisis Task Force

In March 2022, the European Commission established the Cyber Crisis Task Force to ensure coordination at operational and executive levels regarding cybersecurity crisis management. The Task Force is comprised of relevant Commission Services and EU bodies and agencies, including Europol and is mandated to support operational coordination and informed political decision-

¹⁴ COM(2024) 60 final

making, improve crisis management communication flows between civilian, law enforcement, diplomatic and defence cybersecurity communities.

3.8. Cyber Resilience Act

The Cyber Resilience Act entered into force in December 2024, and will apply from 11 December 2027 (some provisions from 2026). The regulation aims to address the impact of cybercrime, in particular ransomware, and introduces mandatory cybersecurity requirements for hardware and software products and will apply to all devices and software that are connected either directly or indirectly to another device or network. It will likely have an impact on the ability of law enforcement to counter cybercrime, Europol's procurement of technology and potentially on Europol's role as technology provider for law enforcement.

3.9. European Commission Cyber Package

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

- The *creation of a Cybersecurity Skills Academy*, which seeks to help increase the number of skilled cybersecurity professionals in the EU and to increase synergies across cyber communities to fight cybercrime. The academy puts forward new ways for cooperation between Europol, CEPOL, the EU Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA) and the European Cybersecurity Competences Centre, to establish an operational trainings' need analysis to address cyberattacks. Moreover, cooperation between Europol, CEPOL, the Commission and the EEAS is foreseen for defining specific profiles and respective skills for law enforcement.
- *The EU Cyber Solidarity Act*, to strengthen solidarity at Union level to better detect, prepare for and respond to significant or large-scale cybersecurity incidents. It entered into force on 4 February 2025 and it establishes a Cybersecurity Emergency Mechanism and an EU Cybersecurity Reserve, comprised of a pool of cybersecurity services from trusted providers to support response to and immediate recovery from significant or large-scale cybersecurity incidents. As an EU agency, Europol qualifies as recipient of such support, should it suffer a significant cyber incident that goes beyond the agency's cybersecurity capabilities.

3.10. AI Act

The Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 - the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Act - sets different levels of safeguards to mitigate the risks posed by specific uses of AI systems for safety and fundamental rights. Certain uses related to law enforcement are labelled as "high-risk" and obligations are imposed on the providers and deployers of the respective AI systems, amongst other actors. Some provisions, including the one on prohibited AI practices, are already applicable since February 2025. Provisions on high-risk AI systems become applicable in August 2026. Europol established an AI governance structure via the Europol AI Alignment Committee to ensure that Europol's engagement into AI aligns with organisational priorities, while guaranteeing full compliance with the requirements of the EU AI Act.

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

The European Commission adopted in April 2024 a recommendation to foster the transition to Post-Quantum Cryptography for the protection of digital infrastructures and services for public administrations and other critical infrastructures in the Union¹⁵. In this regard, Member States are encouraged to coordinate their actions through a dedicated forum, to develop the Post-Quantum Cryptography Coordinated Implementation Roadmap. They should also engage with other relevant bodies, such as Europol and NATO, in order to avoid duplication of efforts and

¹⁵ C(2024) 2393 final

ensure a cohesive approach. The outcome of this process will likely have an impact on cybercrime in general, as well as on Europol's information systems and digital support services.

3.12. Council Conclusions on the Future of Cybersecurity

The Council Conclusions on the future of cybersecurity¹⁶, adopted in May 2025, affirms that a structured and mutually beneficial collaboration between the cybersecurity and law enforcement communities is necessary to further enhance the state of cybersecurity in Europe. In particular, Europol is encouraged to engage with all relevant private sector stakeholders, in coordination with Member States, the Commission, the High Representative, ENISA, ECCC and the CSIRTs Network, to fortify cybersecurity measures, foster collaborative initiatives, and formulate robust strategies to mitigate the risks posed by cyber threats.

The Council Conclusions also call on the Commission, Europol, Eurojust, and Member States, to leverage EMPACT, in order to strengthen collaboration and enhance processes to investigate cybercrime. The Council invites Member States and the relevant EU entities to stimulate a structured and appropriate information exchange between national CSIRTs and law enforcement, as well as at EU level between Europol, the CSIRTs Network and CERT-EU, including for victim notification purposes.

Finally, following an evaluation, the new **EU Blueprint on cybersecurity crisis management (Cyber Blueprint)** was adopted in June 2025. On 6 June 2025, the Council adopted a Recommendation which provides guidance for the EU's response to large-scale cybersecurity incidents or cyber crises. While member states have the primary responsibility in managing such incidents, EU bodies and agencies, including Europol, have a supporting role. Notably, Europol is expected to provide operational and technical support at EU level and should be in close contact with the CSIRTs network to ensure exchange of technical information, and enhance information sharing in case of a large-scale cyber incident.

3.13. European action plan on the cybersecurity of hospitals and healthcare providers

On 15 January 2025, the European Commission adopted an action plan¹⁷ to build the EU health care sector's capacity to prevent cybersecurity incidents, improve detection of cyber threats, and better respond to incidents and recover from them. At national level, Member States are encouraged to ensure that law enforcement is fully integrated into their national action plans to tackle cyber threats to the healthcare sector, in order to deter attacks, bring criminals to justice and to dismantle criminal infrastructures facilitating attacks. At EU-level, Europol is expected to support the implementation of some actions through cooperation with ENISA, notably to: contribute to situational awareness; identify the most common ransomware strains targeting healthcare organisations; expand the repository of decryption tools available through the No More Ransom initiative; and develop and promote accessible guidance to help healthcare providers avoid paying ransoms.

4. Terrorism and radicalisation

4.1. Council Conclusions on Reinforcing External-Internal Connections in the Fight Against Terrorism and Violent Extremism

On 16 December 2024, the Council adopted Conclusions on reinforcing external-internal connections in the fight against Terrorism and Violent Extremism¹⁸. Key areas include the EU candidate countries, eastern and southern neighbours, African-led initiatives and Central Asia. The Council calls on intensifying CT cooperation with third countries key to the EU's security, by more closely involving EU justice and home affairs agencies, among other means.

¹⁶ ST 10133/24

¹⁷ COM(2025) 10 final

¹⁸ Council 16175/24

4.2. Council Conclusions on future priorities for strengthening the joint counterterrorism efforts of the European Union and its Member States

On 12 December 2024, the Council adopted Conclusions on future priorities for strengthening the joint counterterrorism efforts of the European Union and its Member States¹⁹. The conclusions note that analyses of EU INTCEN and Europol should be taken into account when formulating counterterrorism policies and measures to effectively address the evolving threat landscape, invite the Commission to ensure the necessary support for internal security agencies and networks, particularly Europol's European Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC), Europol's Analysis Project Weapons and Explosives, the EU Innovation Hub and the ATLAS network. Using to the fullest extent the Schengen Information System (SIS), but also the Europol Information System (EIS) and the Europol Analysis Projects is identified as one of the key intervention areas for strengthening counterterrorism efforts. The Conclusions state that Europol should continue its efforts in countering terrorism and violent extremism online.

4.3. Council Conclusions on released prisoners and terrorism threats

In December 2023, the Council adopted Conclusions on released prisoners and terrorism threats²⁰. The Council invites Member States to share, in accordance with national law and in a timely manner before their release, information within the EU on prison inmates who are assessed as posing a terrorist threat, by entering their data into SIS, and if such inmates are monitored in a law enforcement framework, using the Europol Information System (EIS) and Analysis Projects. Europol should also support the exchange of good practices between MS.

4.4. Policy recommendations in counter-terrorism

Every semester if required by changes to the terrorist threat picture, the Terrorism Working Party (TWP) prepares conclusions and policy recommendations or adjusts the existing ones, based on INTCEN's assessments and Europol's biannual reports on the terrorism threat to the EU. On 27 November 2024²¹, COSI endorsed the following recommendations:

- Continuous monitoring by EU MS, with the support of INTCEN and Europol, of the impact of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine on terrorist activities and narratives;
- Continuous development and use of EU IRU capabilities to support MS' actions to prevent the dissemination of all types of terrorist content; the EU IRU should continue its efforts to flag violent extremist and terrorist content online;
- Activities to strengthen counterterrorism financing investigators' capacity to trace and confiscate crypto assets, in the context of the EU Network of CTF Investigators, and in close cooperation with Europol;
- The use of environmental concerns in terrorist and violent extremist discourse online to be addressed through existing instruments, such as the EU Internet Forum and the EU IRU at Europol;
- Further development of the cooperation with key third countries and international partners on access to battlefield information;
- Call for the use of innovative tools and new technologies to counter terrorist threats; funding of research, innovation and development activities at EU level, for example under the EU Innovation Hub and by Member States.

4.5. Revised coordinated approach

In February 2023, COSI endorsed a Revised coordinated approach²² - Defining a process for Evaluating information on third - country nationals suspected to be jihadist terrorists received from third parties or a Member State for possible processing in the Schengen Information

¹⁹ Council 16820/24

²⁰ Council 15404/23

²¹ Council 15513/24

²² Council 5606/23

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

4.6. EU Crisis Protocol (EUCP)

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

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

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

4.8. Digital information exchange in terrorism cases

According to the Regulation of 4 October 2023 amending the rules with regards to digital information exchange in terrorism cases ('CTR'), each MS shall take the necessary measures to ensure that at least the information concerning criminal investigations for terrorist offences which affect or may affect two or more MS, gathered by the relevant authority, is transmitted to Europol, in accordance with national law and with the Europol Regulation.

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

In accordance with the Directive of 4 October 2023 amending Council Decision 2005/671/JHA as regards its alignment with Union rules on the protection of personal data, processing of personal data transmitted to Europol is foreseen only for the purpose of the prevention, investigation, detection or prosecution of terrorist offences and other criminal offences in respect of which Europol is competent, as listed in Annex I of the Europol Regulation.

5. Financial crime

5.1. White Paper for the EU Anti-Fraud Architecture

On 15 July 2025, the European Commission launched the White Paper for the EU Anti-Fraud Architecture (AFA), which put forward some avenues to be explored for the review of the AFA and its focus areas. The Commission invited the European Parliament, Council and ECA as well as all other AFA actors, such as Europol, Eurojust, EPPO and OLAF, to contribute to the reflection focusing on the following areas: 1) prevention and detection; 2) data-sharing and analytical/forensic capacities, investigation and prosecution; 3) improve the efficiency of the recovery process; 4) governance of the anti-fraud architecture. The outcome of the AFA review will be presented in a Commission communication in 2026. It may be accompanied, as appropriate, by possible legislative proposals related to the OLAF, EPPO, Eurojust, Europol or Eurofisc Regulations and the PIF Directive.

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

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

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

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

On 30 May 2024, the Council adopted the amended Directive 2019/1153, to allow designated competent authorities responsible for the prevention, investigation, detection or prosecution of criminal offences to access and search MS' centralised bank account registers through a single access point. This would enable them to establish almost immediately whether an individual holds bank accounts in other MS and identify to which MS they should make a formal request for additional information.

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

On 30 May 2024, the Council adopted the Anti-Money Laundering and Anti-Terrorism Financing Package (AML package). The package consists of: a regulation establishing a new EU Authority for Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (AMLA); a recast of the regulation on transfers of funds which aims to make transfers of crypto-assets more transparent and fully traceable; a regulation on anti-money-laundering requirements for the private sector; a directive on anti-money-laundering mechanisms at national level. The new AMLA started operations in July 2025.

Key provisions for Europol:

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

5.5. New customs reform

On 17 May 2023, the European Commission adopted the Customs reform²³, which seeks to establish a more cost-efficient and effective cooperation framework governing the Customs Union. The Commission proposes to set up two key enablers:

- The EU Customs Authority, to pool expertise and competences that are currently scattered across the EU, to steer, coordinate, and support national customs authorities in the EU. EU Customs Authority is expected to assume its tasks on 1 January 2028.
- The EU Customs Data Hub to gradually integrate and replace the existing Customs IT infrastructure and enhance interoperability with related policy fields. It will collect, process, connect and store all relevant data, and also run EU-level risk analysis, to better protect the EU's external border for goods.

Triologue negotiations are underway. Discussions on certain aspects of the overall reform, such as in relation to the seat of the EU Customs Authority, on a simplified tariff system and the exact design of the handling fee, will take place at a later stage.

5.6. Update of the anti-corruption legislative framework

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

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

On 19 March 2024, the European Commission adopted a Recommendation to combat counterfeiting, both offline and online, and enhance the enforcement of intellectual property rights. The Recommendation, also known as the EU toolbox against counterfeiting, aims to foster collaboration between rights holders, service providers, and law enforcement, while encouraging best practices and the use of modern tools and technologies. MS are encouraged to "share intelligence and data on new counterfeiting and piracy trends, seizures, risk assessments, lists of websites that have been held by competent authorities to have carried out IP-infringing activities (infringing websites), and good practices to tackle IP-infringing activities. They should share these with EU bodies working in the area such as OLAF, Europol, the EUIPO, and the Commission, making the best use of the available legal and technical tools." It also suggests continued cooperation between EUIPO and Europol, Eurojust, Frontex and CEPOL to support and streamline the fight against IP-infringing activities.

6. Information exchange and interoperability

6.1. Regulations establishing a framework for interoperability

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

- A common identity repository (CIR) that would create an individual file for each person recorded in the EES, the VIS, the ETIAS, Eurodac or the ECRIS-TCN;

²³ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council and the European Economic and Social Committee: Customs reform: taking the Customs Union to the next level.

Europol Public Information

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

6.2. Entry-Exit System (EES)

The Regulation establishing the EES was adopted in November 2017. The EES will replace the stamping of passports and will apply to third-country nationals admitted for a short stay in the Schengen area. The objective is to improve the management of external borders, prevent irregular immigration and facilitate management of migration flows. Europol will be able to request access to the EES under specific conditions and process. The Commission has set 12 October 2025 as the launch date for the progressive start of operations of the EES.

6.3. European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS)

In September 2018, the Regulation establishing ETIAS was adopted, which will require visa-exempt third country nationals to obtain a travel authorisation prior to travelling to the Schengen Area. The data provided by applicants will be automatically cross-checked, amongst others, against Europol data. The agency is expected to provide a reasoned opinion to the ETIAS National Units on hits against Europol data and its entries in ETIAS Watchlist. Additionally, Europol will be able to request access to data stored in the ETIAS Central System. Following delays in the implementation of the interoperability agenda, ETIAS is now expected to be fully operational in Q4 2026.

6.4. ECRIS-Third Country National (TCN) system

Established in 2012, the European Criminal Records Information system (ECRIS) enables national judicial authorities to receive information on previous criminal convictions in other MS. On 17 April 2019, the Regulation establishing a centralised system for the identification of MS holding conviction information on third-country nationals (TCN) was adopted to supplement ECRIS. Europol is granted direct access to ECRIS-TCN data in order to identify the MS holding information on previous convictions of third-country nationals. Following delays in the entry into operation of other systems, ECRIS-TCN is expected to enter into operation in Q4 2025/Q1 2026.

6.5. Revised Visa Information System (VIS) Regulation

The revised VIS Regulation was adopted on 7 July 2021 and foresees the extension of the scope of the VIS to include data on long-stay visas and residence permits. The data provided by visa applicants will be automatically cross-checked against Europol data and Europol will provide a reasoned opinion on the hits that occur against its data and against its entries in the ETIAS Watchlist. According to the latest timeline, VIS entry into operation is scheduled for Q4 2027.

6.6. Recast of Eurodac Regulation

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

6.7. Screening regulation

The Screening Regulation introduces searches against the European databases for the purpose of security checks; this includes searches against Europol data, for all persons who do not fulfil the entry conditions to the EU. When a query provides a match against Europol data, an

automatic notification is sent to Europol, in order for the agency to inform, where needed, whether the person could pose a security risk. The Regulation was adopted in May 2024 and will enter into application on 12 June 2026.

6.8. Advance Passenger Information Directive

Two Regulations on Advance Passenger Information (API) were adopted in December 2024 and entered into force in January 2025. The Regulations provide for the mandatory collection of API data for the purposes of border management and for countering serious crime and terrorism. The mandatory collection of API data on intra-EU flights will strengthen the reliability and effectiveness of PNR data as a law enforcement tool. The progressive entry into application will begin two years from the date on which the API-PNR router starts operations (planned 2029).

6.9. Prüm II Regulation

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

6.10. Directive on information exchange

The Directive on information exchange entered into force on 12 June 2023. The Directive is highly relevant for Europol and will have a significant impact on Europol's resources since it intends to establish SIENA as the mandatory channel for the exchange of criminal information by default and by introducing a provision to put Europol in copy for every information exchange concerning crimes falling under its mandate. As of 12 December 2024, the Directive is fully applicable in the MS, with the exception of the provision on the secure communication channel, which has to be transposed by 12 June 2027.

7. EMPACT 2026-2029

The Council adopted in 2025 the EU's priorities for the fight against serious and organised crime for the period 2026-2029. These are:

- 1) Most threatening criminal networks and individuals: this priority will be addressed through one cross-cutting Operational Action Plan;
- 2) Fastest growing crimes in the online sphere: 2.1 Cyber-attacks; 2.2 Online child sexual exploitation; 2.3 Online fraud schemes;
- 3) Drug Trafficking: 3.1 The production, trafficking and distribution of cannabis, cocaine and heroin; 3.2 The production, trafficking and distribution of synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances;
- 4) Migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings: 4.1 Migrant smuggling; 4.2 Trafficking in human beings;
- 5) Firearms and explosives crimes;
- 6) Environmental crimes;
- 7) Economic and financial crimes: 7.1 VAT (incl. MTIC) fraud; 7.2 Excise and customs fraud; 7.3 Intellectual property (IP) crime, counterfeiting of goods and currencies.

SECTION II - Multi-annual programming 2026 – 2028

1. Multi-annual programme

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

As a result, the following strategic objectives will continue guiding the work of the agency in the years 2026-2028 to:



Be the EU criminal information hub, including for data acquisition



Deliver agile, real-time operational support



Be a platform for European policing solutions



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



Be at the forefront of law enforcement innovation and research



Be the model EU organisation for law enforcement cooperation

The areas of specific focus for the years 2026-2028 are presented below:

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

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

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

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

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

Highlights:

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

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

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

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

Highlights:

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

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

Strategic Objective 3: Be a platform for European policing solutions

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

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

Highlights:

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

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

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

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

Highlights:

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

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- Coordinating with other EU JHA Agencies, to offer an aligned set of products and services to Member States;
- Stepping up cooperation with other (non-EU) Agencies and international organisations, including operational cooperation where possible;
- Developing a dedicated strategy for cooperation with private parties, including NGOs and academia, to optimise their engagement, both for operational interests and to nurture potential innovation.

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

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

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

Highlights:

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

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

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

Highlights:

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

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

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

Key Performance Indicator	Target 2026	Indicative targets	
		2027	2028
Number of Accepted Contributions by Europol ²⁴	100,000	105,000	110,000
Number of Operations Supported by Europol	3,510	3,600	3,700
Number of Operational Task Forces supported by Europol	50	55	60
Number of Operational Analysis Reports produced by Europol	400	420	440
Number of Action Days organised/supported by Europol	443	450	455
Satisfaction with Operational Support delivered by Europol	8.5	8.5	8.5
Number of Cross Match Reports and SIENA hit notifications produced by Europol	13,500	14,000	14,500
Number of searches through EIS and QUEST	12,500,000	13,500,000	15,500,000
Number of SIENA messages exchanged	2,100,000	2,300,000	2,500,000
Number of Strategic Analysis Reports produced by Europol	30	30	30
Satisfaction with Strategic Analysis Reports produced by Europol	8.5	8.5	8.5
Satisfaction with Operational Training delivered by Europol	8.5	8.5	8.5
Implementation of Audit Recommendations ²⁵	85%	85%	85%
Vacancy Rate	2%	2%	2%
% Female staff	35%	36%	36%
Budget Commitment Rate	95%	95%	95%
Emissions (CO2) ²⁶	2,615	2,426	2,236

²⁴ The responsibility for this indicator is shared by Europol and its partners (MS, TP). As such, the target is indicative and used to monitor the trend of accepted contributions.

²⁵ % of pending critical/very important audit recommendations implemented within the timeline committed to by Europol and agreed with the auditing body.

²⁶ It should be noted that measurement of this indicator is done on a yearly basis with results for year N being available well into year N+1; despite this time lag, Europol considers it important to monitor this KPI.

2. Human and financial resource outlook for the years 2026-2028

2.1 Overview of the past and current situation

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

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

2.2 Outlook for the years 2026 - 2028

As detailed in section I – General Context of Europol's Programming Document 2026-2028, a significant number of new and expanded tasks are foreseen for Europol, stemming from Union policies and legislation. However, additional resources to perform these new tasks have not been allocated to Europol in the Legislative Financial Statements (LFS) of these initiatives – only some resources were allocated to the Agency in the Interoperability Regulations, the Prüm II Regulation and the legislative proposal to prevent and fight migrant smuggling, the latter to be adopted in Q4 2025. While a significant number of resources were provided to the Agency as part of and for the purpose of implementing the amended Europol Regulation (2022), some priority projects are expected to have a significant multi-year impact on the resources of the agency. In addition, inflation pressures affecting mainly staff costs, as communicated by the European Commission on 16 December 2024²⁷, are expected to further compress the existing budget in 2026. As a consequence, Europol will continue not to be able to absorb fully its additional tasks without an adequate reinforcement to its resources.

Consistent with the request for additional resources included in the PD 2025-2027, as endorsed by the MB in January 2024 and submitted to the budgetary authorities, and considering the limited reinforcement of resources included in the final budget 2025, Europol's MB endorsed again in January 2025 a request for additional resources as part of the EU Budget 2026 process.

The request concerns the five high-priority projects identified in 2024, i.e. Digital Services Act (DSA); Interoperability (I/O); Second Data Centre, Information Exchange Directive (IED); and Strategic Housing Roadmap (SHR). In addition, the agency requested funding to offset the impact of inflation on staff costs, as estimated in the Budget Circular for 2026.

The additional funds proposed by the European Commission for Europol in the LFS of the legislative proposal to prevent and fight migrant smuggling were provisionally included in the PD 2026-2028, in line with the Draft EU Budget 2026. In this respect, it is worth highlighting that the additional resources proposed by the Commission in the LFS were significantly lower

²⁷ Budget Circular for 2026 – Agency Instructions Ref. Ares(2024)8946927 - 13/12/2024

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than the resources estimated by Europol for the full implementation of the proposed new Regulation, especially with regard to the final number of TA posts. Therefore, Europol will be able to support the implementation of this new initiative to the extent covered by the final number of additional resources, or by de-prioritising and delaying other activities. Nonetheless, Europol acknowledges that part of the funds foreseen is intended to support the agency's work on biometrics and SIENA integrations, which can also partially serve the objectives of Interoperability and the Information Exchange Directive - as such; those funds were deducted from the final total additional budget requested. The reinforcement received through the 2025 Budget was also taken into account in the agency's request. A provisional political agreement was found on 25 September 2025, with adoption expected by the end of 2025.

As of 2028, the new MFF 2028-2034 will apply. The Commission presented its proposal for the new MFF in July 2025, including a proposal to double Europol's funding (compared to the current MFF 2021-2027), in line with the political priorities of the European Commission 2024-2029. The new MFF is currently under negotiation.

A summary of the agency's outlook for 2026-2028, as proposed in January 2025, is presented in the tables below:

Human Resources (TA, CA, SNE)²⁸	Yearly increase	
	2026	2027
Establishment plan (TA) - TOTAL	52	72
<i>Amended Europol Regulation</i>	9	5
<i>Prüm II Regulation</i>	(2)	-
<i>Proposal on a Regulation to prevent and fight migrant smuggling</i>	4	3
<i>Additional agency Request</i>	41	64
Contract Agents - TOTAL	29	6
<i>Proposal on a Regulation to prevent and fight migrant smuggling</i>	9	6
<i>Additional agency Request</i>	20	-
SNE - TOTAL	8	5
<i>Proposal on a Regulation to prevent and fight migrant smuggling</i>	6	3
<i>Additional agency Request</i>	2	2

Financial Resources (€)	Yearly increase	
	2026	2027
TOTAL	43,815,377	52,032,744
<i>Proposal on a Regulation to prevent and fight migrant smuggling</i>	19,679,000	13,456,000
<i>Additional agency Request²⁹</i>	24,136,377	38,576,744

Additional information per initiative for the period 2026-2027

²⁸ Temporary agent numbers are approved by the Budgetary Authority (establishment plan). Contract Agent and SNE numbers: approved by the MB within budget availability - numbers are included in the agency's request and COM provides recommendation. If additional budget is necessary, this is approved by the Budgetary Authority.

²⁹ For 2025, including EUR 13.1 to cover the inflation effects affecting mainly staff costs, as estimated in the COM's Budget Circular 2025.

Relevant justifications for the additional resources requested for each of the five initiatives for the period 2026-2027, as provided in January 2025, are presented in the following paragraphs.

Digital Services Act (DSA)

The Digital Services Act (DSA) entered into force on 16 November 2022 and its rules have become applicable in full since February 2024. In its Article 18 ("Notifications of suspicions of criminal offences"), the DSA stipulates a role for Europol as an authority which can be notified, if hosting service providers (HSPs) cannot identify with certainty the concerned Member States related to threats to life or safety. Given its experience with the implementation of the Terrorist Content Online Regulation, Europol has been heavily involved, since the preparatory stages, in supporting MS law enforcement and the regulator for the DSA implementation. A **DSA Focus Group** for Member States, supported by Europol, was established in December 2023 to ensure a streamlined and harmonised EU MS approach for the implementation of Article 18 DSA as far as the law enforcement domain is concerned.

Moreover, **cooperation with DG CNECT** has intensified in the past year. As a result, Europol signed, on 19 December 2024, a Contribution Agreement of €1.24 M with DG CNECT to initiate the technical developments for an automated workflow in PERCI to facilitate the intake, handling and distribution of threat to life or safety of persons notifications received by Europol.

Between August 2023 and mid-December 2024, Europol received **664 notifications** from OSPs, most of which arrived during the night or in the weekends. In line with resource availability, Europol has put forward the minimum number of additional operational resources to ensure the handling of Article 18 notifications and the 24/7 intake process. However, current manual processes and the growing support required by OSPs are increasingly resource intensive and affect OSINT/IRU capabilities.

In terms of ICT development, the requested additional resources are needed for expanding the functionality of PERCI to support referrals and removal orders; for granting direct access to PERCI by HSPs and managing their workflow on the platform; for adjusting the reporting functionality and the access requirements and for working on PERCI's infrastructure (incl. storage and processing power, interconnections, network, security, auditing, scalability and availability requirements). A phased roll-out of the functionalities over the next years will prioritise the implementation of the workflow of Article 18 DSA notifications, the identity/access management and the integration of PERCI with other Europol systems.

Since a part of these additional resource needs has been covered by the recently signed Contribution Agreement, the final total request has been adjusted accordingly.

Interoperability (I/O)

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

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

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

The Management Board specifically discussed in 2022 the resource needs of Europol related to interoperability. The figures provided are based on the 2022 estimates, revised to:

- Reflect the current EU Interoperability timeline i.e. ETIAS – 2025, ECRIS-TCN – 2025, VIS and Eurodac – 2026, Prüm II and Screening Regulation – 2026/2027;
- Take into account the resources already allocated to the new Integrated Operational Services Unit in 2024 as a result of the agreement with Frontex for the transfer of 25 posts;
- Take into account the experience gained from SIRENE.

Moreover, in line with its Biometrics Roadmap³⁰, Europol has started working on the establishment and strengthening of its capabilities related to biometrics, taking into account:

- the milestones and requirements of the EU Interoperability Programme, particularly in the framework of the revised VIS Regulation and Prüm II;
- the support required by Member States in implementation of the EU large scale IT systems;
- the possible implications of the legislative initiative to prevent and fight migrant smuggling, expected to be adopted in the course of 2025.

Additional ICT resources are requested to manage and develop the necessary systems, including update of the current AFIS, FACE and EIS solutions for scalability, functionality (i.e. access, search and processing functionalities for fingerprint, DNA and facial images) and data review and retention requirements across solutions. In the course of 2025, as the first interoperability systems will become operational, Europol will start experiencing the actual impact and will be able to assess more accurately its full effect on IM processes, ICT systems and operational resources.

Second Data Centre

A new (hot) data centre is envisaged and expected to:

- Increase resilience – the power issues in August 2020 that led to unavailability of both data centres at Europol HQ emphasised the need to position the data centres in two separate areas (geo-redundancy). This minimises unavailability due to local power grid issues / shared power infrastructure.
- Ensure compliance – in line with the Interoperability programme, Europol is requested to implement the recommendations for geo-redundancy for ETIAS and the communication equipment for SIS/VIS. Furthermore, it is expected to provide uninterrupted service (availability of 99.9% or more) for ETIAS searches via Quest. Europol's current infrastructure - that incorporates the location of the data centres - is designed for an availability of 98%.
- Increase availability – enable the implementation of near-zero downtime for solutions with this strict requirement. It should be noted that the geo-redundant data centre principle does not guarantee such requirement on its own; the entire solution should be designed and built accordingly, for instance using on-premise cloud native services. For this to work, the data centres should be close enough to minimise any communication delays, but far enough to meet the geo-redundancy requirement.

³⁰ Strategic Roadmap for Europol capabilities on the processing of biometrics, EDOC#1343065

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- Efficient use of equipment – At this moment, due to the design and distance, the Austria site is used as a backup location. It however contains equipment that potentially can be used in case of disaster (under normal conditions, this equipment is not used). Implementing the new data centre at closer vicinity gives the opportunity to implement the so-called hot/hot data centre principle where all equipment is used continuously at both sites to host Europol's ICT services. In this case, the Austria site will be further scaled down for backup purposes only, reducing the need for equipment which is not actively used.

Increased resilience, availability and compliance are considered mandatory as part of the interoperability tasks of Europol.

The project is a multi-year one with several phases and costs related to buildings, hardware and software, services and training. Discussions on the identification of an appropriate location are being finalised with the Host State and the setting up and implementation of the data centre is foreseen to start in 2026.

Information Exchange Directive

The Directive on information exchange entered into force on 12 June 2023. The Directive is highly relevant for Europol and will have a significant impact on Europol's resources, since it intends to establish SIENA as the mandatory channel for the exchange of criminal information by default. Moreover, under the IED, each Member State (MS) and Schengen Associated Country (SAC) shall establish or designate a SPOC. This central entity will coordinate and facilitate information exchanges and operate continuously, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. SPOCs are required to maintain a Case Management System interoperable with SIENA, enabling the recording and tracking of all requests and responses, and are required to keep Europol systematically informed, insofar as the exchanges concern crimes falling under the scope of Europol's mandate as specified in the Europol Regulation. As of 12 December 2024, the Directive is fully applicable in the MS, with the exception of the provision on the secure communication channel, which has to be transposed by June 2027.

It is estimated that the number of SIENA messages received by Europol will increase to reach up to 1 million messages in 2027 (by comparison, Europol received around 185,000 messages in 2024). The increase in the volume of data will have an impact on both the Operational & Analysis Centre and the crime Centres at Europol, with needs for additional duty officers, analysts and specialists for data review and data quality. Taking into account the current and expected rate of implementation in the Member States and potential efforts by Europol to optimise further the internal processes, the level of additional operational resources estimated in this area has been kept to the minimum level for the next two years. In the course of 2025, as Europol will start experiencing the actual impact of the application of the IED in the MS on its information flows, it will be able to assess more accurately the full effect on IM processes, ICT systems and operational resources. It should be noted, however, that the expectation is that Europol will face resource needs of up to 100 additional operational staff to meet the increased needs for operational support and criminal analysis.

Due to the lack of sufficient resources and given that there are projects of higher priority, as described before, it was agreed to focus in 2025/2026 mainly on the technical preparatory activities for IED, whilst its operationalisation will be postponed to 2027. As such, in the coming two years, Europol will continue prioritising the support to Member States with the design and further development of SIENA and with the relevant integrations with Member States systems.

While a small part of the ICT resource gap for 2025 has been covered with the funds included in the final budget 2025, additional resources will still be required in 2026 in terms of ICT investments to cover scalability, availability and functionality requirements, the expected impact on other Europol systems due to the increased volume of data intake (e.g. Data Analysis Portal, Case Management, Unified Search Engine, Large File Exchange tool, IAM), security and

compliance requirements and support services, such as providing a helpdesk for users and training.

Strategic Housing Roadmap (SHR)

The Strategic Housing Roadmap is a multi-year programme comprised of several projects with significant budgetary consequences for Europol. In 2026, the following work is envisaged:

- Advance with the implementation of the Mid-Term Housing Solution (MTHS) project in the HQ to increase workplace capacity, provide additional meeting rooms and other related facilities, and strengthen the building according to the applicable governmental building regulations.
- Prepare for the plank floor slabs' strengthening process at HQ.
- Temporary Satellite Building 3 (TSB 3) project: create additional workplaces, meeting rooms and other related facilities to support organisational growth and new business demands, until the delivery of HQ2. The second phase of the project is completed and the full building is operational for use.
- Long-Term Housing Measures (LTHM) project: advance with the implementation of the project to secure and deliver a second permanent headquarters (HQ2).
- Hot Data Centre (HDC) project: develop the HDC to ensure Europol's business continuity, in accordance with business requirements.
- Low-rise Toren van Oud project: finalise the project to relocate the Medical Centre and Gym & Fitness facilities, in order to create space in the HQ for the implementation of the MTHS (forecasted delivery Q1 2027).
- Alternative Temporary Housing: progress on establishing alternative temporary workplaces and meeting spaces to support organisational growth and new business demands until the delivery of HQ2.

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

2.3 Risk considerations

As outlined in the Europol Programming Document 2025-2027³¹, the identified corporate risks in terms of threats to Europol's objectives are expected to impinge on the organisation's development and performance in 2026. All five high priority development initiatives listed in this cover note are therefore assessed to be affected by Europol's identified corporate risks. While the estimates presented in this cover note for 2026 onwards have been developed in a prudent manner, these hold several elements of uncertainty³², influenced by:

- external developments, including with regard to emerging technical evolution and innovation (Artificial Intelligence (AI) data science etc.); the
- ability to acquire and availability of the needed competencies and skills, in particular with respect to externally contracted services; the
- delivery of the 2025 ICT Work Plan;
- dependencies with regard to Member States and (operational) cooperation partners, the Host State as well as collaboration with private parties; the
- development of ongoing legislative and regulatory initiatives, as well as the related scope, complexity and modalities of their translation into technical requirements for the

³¹ EDOC#1340002-Europol Programming Document 2025-2027 - Annex XIV Corporate Risks 2025, adopted by the Management Board (MB) on 10 December 2024.

³² Europol is satisfied that the resource estimates are the result of a conservative and robust assessment process across the organisation; however, a fairly high degree of uncertainty is inherent to the process.

corresponding solution design (to inform detailed project planning prior to implementation and deployment).

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

2.4 Resource programming for the years 2026 - 2028

The text in this section focuses on the resource programming for 2026, in line with the Union Budget 2026 and the Final Europol Budget 2026.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Temporary agents

Starting from the 2025 Establishment Plan of 791 posts, the net number of posts in 2026 is envisaged to increase by 18 Temporary Agent (TA) posts, including: a reduction of 2 posts foreseen in the Prüm Regulation, an increase of 9 posts stemming from the amended Europol Regulation (2022) and 11³³ posts from the new legislative proposal to prevent and fight migrant smuggling.

Contract Agents

As part of the legislative proposal to prevent and fight migrant smuggling, the number of CAs in 2026 is envisaged to rise by 2³⁴, to a total number of 262.

Seconded National Experts

The number of Seconded National Experts (SNEs) in 2026 is foreseen to increase to 138, with additional 6³⁵ from the legislative proposal to prevent and fight migrant smuggling.

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

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

For 2026 Europol will continue having a number of Contract Agents (CAs) and SNEs directly funded via grants, contributions or service legal agreements. For detailed information and numbers per agreement and staff category, see Annex XI.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Revenue (payment appropriations):

The main financial source of Europol is the regular Community contribution from the European Commission. The revenue for 2026 is envisaged at € 270.2M, to cover for Payments Appropriations, including the agency's request and the resources foreseen in the Legislative Financial Statement (LFS) related to the Anti Migrant Smuggling (AMS) proposal.

Expenditure:

³³ Following the adoption of the proposal, which foresees a total of 14 TA posts until the end of 2026 (i.e., incl. 3 TA posts in the adopted 2025 Establishment Plan).

³⁴ In addition to 5 CA positions in the adopted 2025 figures stemming from the AMS proposal, which have been moved to 2026.

³⁵ In addition to 11 SNE positions in the adopted 2025 figures stemming from the AMS proposal, which have been moved to 2026.

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The total Europol Budget 2026 comes to € 273.1M as Commitment Appropriations and € 270.2M as Payment Appropriations³⁶, which is an increase of 16% (+€ 37.6M) of Commitment Appropriations compared to the Final Budget 2025 at € 235.5M. The Budget highlights the growth in operational needs of the organisation and an increased number of tasks.

The Budget 2026 is built from three main components:

- € 241.7M as per the EU Draft Budget 2026;
- € 19.7M for the LFS AMS for 2026 (previously in reserve) and
- € 11.8M for the LFS AMS which was originally planned for 2025 and will be carried over by the European Commission to 2026³⁷.

Title 1 – Staff expenditure:

Staff expenditure in 2026 amounts to € 151.8M and represents 55.6% of the total budget. It foresees € 15M increase compared to the Final Budget 2025. The main budget in Title 1 (Chapter 11 – Staff in active employment), is reserved for the salary, allowances and other staff costs for TAs and CAs and.

The Budget 2026 takes into account the new posts allocated to Europol in the Final EU Budget 2026 and foresees the staff and salaries expenditure for 809 TAs and 262 CAs in total. The Budget 2026 is based on several assumptions which will be closely monitored during the year such as: a salary increase of 4%³⁸, weighting coefficient for the Netherlands at 113.2³⁹, a “budgetary” vacancy rate of 4.5% and expected recruitment of new posts in Q2-Q3 2026.

The Budget 2026 for Socio-medical infrastructure such as catering, medical service and social & sport activities (Chapter 13) and Training for personal development (Chapter 14) is foreseen at € 1.8M in 2026, with an increase mainly in catering costs and medical services.

The Budget 2026 for Other staff-related expenditure (Chapter 15) is envisaged to reach € 12.6M, which will be used to cover external services costs related to external security, hospitality, and consultancy services, required for the new developments of the Strategic Housing Roadmap (SHR). The budget is also envisaged to cover for interim services, internships, Paymaster’s Office management service and yearly fee for the European school.

The Budget 2026 in Chapter 16 (Entertainment and representation expenses) amounts to € 0.1M.

Title 1 remains non-differentiated and, as such, there is no change between commitment and payment appropriations.

Title 2 – Other Administrative Expenditure:

The Budget 2026 for administrative activities comes to € 13.4M and represents 4.9% of the total Europol Budget 2026. It foresees € 0.3M increase compared to the Final Budget 2025. The budget included in this Title supports the operational efficiency and effective functioning of the agency’s infrastructure and administrative processes. This budget title typically covers

³⁶ Due to the Differentiated Appropriations (DA), the presentation of the budget is split into commitment and payment appropriations. In fact: Commitment Appropriations (CA) – cover the total cost of the legal obligations entered into during the very first financial year of the call or invitation to apply; Payment Appropriations (PA) – cover the expenditure arising from commitments entered into in the current and/or earlier financial years.

³⁷ The funds will become available once the procedure of the carryover will be completed by the EC.

³⁸ As per latest Budget Circular from December 2024, to apply +0.6% as from 1 April 2026 and of +3.4% from 1 July 2026.

³⁹ The weighting coefficients refer to the level known at the time of finalising the draft Programming Document 2026-2028 (as of November 2025, 113.2 for The Netherlands).

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associated buildings costs, administrative ICT expenditure and other governance, administrative and statutory expenditure.

The Budget 2026 of € 9.6M is planned for buildings, security and associated utility costs (Chapter 20). It envisages a substantial budget for SHR developments and regular preventive and corrective maintenance of the current buildings.

The budget for administrative ICT expenses (Chapter 21) amounts to € 1.3M and is foreseen for regular ICT software renewals as well as consultancies related to ICT projects of administrative nature.

An amount of € 2.5M is foreseen for the continuation of other governance, administrative and statutory expenditure (Chapter 22 – 25). These Chapters include budget for various activities related to open source, legal and other administrative expertise, uniforms, furniture, car fleet, office supplies, postal and courier services, as well as statutory expenditure, for activities of the Management Board (MB) and its Working Groups (WG). The main increase is related to the additional acquisition of Furniture and lease of transport equipment.

Title 2 remains non-differentiated and, as such, there is no change between commitment and payment appropriations.

Title 3 – Operational activities:

The Budget 2026 for Operational activities comes to € 107.9M and represents 39.5% of the total Budget. It foresees € 22.3M increase compared to the Final Budget 2025. This budget partially consists of differentiated appropriations (DA) related to grants (€ 19.5M) included in Chapter 39.

The Budget 2026 for Operations (Chapter 30), focuses on the agency's direct operational activities and projects. It is designed to fund Europol's core operational activities, which include supporting Member States in combating various crimes by organising operational and strategic meetings, conferences and training, funding staff missions and deploying guest officers, enhancing capabilities of forensic tools and enhancing communication and public awareness as part of the operational WEB campaigns and audio-visuals services. In 2026, the Budget in this area sums up to € 17.5M, which is € 1.6M more than the 2025 budget.

Under Title 3, the budget for operational ICT services and programmes (Chapters 31 and 32) comes to a total of € 60.7M, which is an increase of € 10.2M compared to 2025. It is envisaged to continue the multi-annual delivery of numerous projects in the area of ICT and Information Management, such as Interoperability, the Biometrics Roadmap (in particular PRÜM II and the Screening Regulation), the Joint Operational Analysis Case (including the BPL infrastructure for the JOAC MVP), supporting the Member States in their SIENA integrations related to the Information Exchange Directive, maintaining and further promoting the use of the QUEST/QUEST+ service etc.

An amount of € 8.7M is foreseen under Chapter 33 (Seconded National Experts - Operational) to support the regular Seconded National Experts (SNEs) and short-term SNEs in the area of Guest Experts (GE) and Operational Task Force (OTF). The Budget 2026 included in this area for 2026 is foreseen to cover the allowances for 88 SNEs (including new posts) and 50 short-term SNEs (SNE-GE/ OTF)⁴⁰.

⁴⁰ Part of the cost of deployed SNE-OTF will be covered from the mission budget (Chapter 30).

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The budget under Chapter 34 and 35 is foreseen for high-level external stakeholder meetings and events (Heads of Europol National Units (HENUs) and the Europol Police Chiefs Convention (EPCC)). The Budget for 2026 amounts to € 0.6M.

An amount of € 1M⁴¹ is envisaged in 2026 under Chapter 38 – for the Decryption Platform, to cover for the operational running costs of the platform, mainly electricity and gas, but also some maintenance and surveillance security services.

With respect to the differentiated appropriations in Chapter 39 – Grants, the Commitment Appropriations (CA) sum up to € 19.5M while the Payment Appropriations (PA) sum up to € 16.6M. The Commitment Appropriations includes € 10M for EMPACT grants, € 0.3M for the Support Against Euro Counterfeit Grants (SA EURO CF), € 5M for the continuation to the support provided to OTF activities, € 3M for the ATLAS network, and € 1.2M to support other operations. In particular, regarding grants for EMPACT, OTF, Innovation and SA EURO CF, the Budget provides for the multi-annual calls (2 years implementation).

		Budget 2026 (CA)	Budget 2026 (PA)
B3-920	EMPACT grants	10,000,000	6,337,500
B3-930	SA Euro CF Grants	300,000	180,000
B3-940	OTF Grants	5,000,000	6,000,000
B3-950	ATLAS Grants	3,000,000	3,000,000
B3-960	Innovation Grants	0	200,000
B3-970	Grants to support other operations	1,200,000	880,000
Total		19,500,000	16,597,500

2.5 Efficiency gains and savings

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

Optimising resources allocation to align with strategic priorities by:

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

⁴¹ Provisional – subject to Steering Committee (JRC and Europol) discussions.

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- Implementing the HR Strategy 2020+, incl. digitalisation of services, work-life balance through teleworking/smart working and ensuring the right skills for Europol's workforce, utilising e-recruitment and appropriate training and development programmes.

Promoting energy efficiency and sustainability by:

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

Further streamlining activities to enhance efficiency by:

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

Leveraging technology for operational improvements by:

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

Further streamlining administrative and procurement processes by:

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

2.6 Negative priorities/decrease of existing tasks

No substantial negative priorities or decrease of existing tasks is foreseen. On the contrary, the agency's tasks are expected to increase beyond the level of the resources currently available. Consequently, the agency requested additional resources to fund adequately a number of initiatives and tasks, as detailed above, and has performed a provisional deprioritisation exercise in light of the draft EU budget 2026.

SECTION III - Work Programme 2026

Activities

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

Overview



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

In line with Europol's and MS operational priorities and with the requirements stemming from relevant EU legislation, Europol works on enhancing its analysis, data management, operational support and specialised capabilities. Furthermore, the organisation develops and improves its MS-facing core operational ICT capabilities such as for secure communication and information or knowledge exchange. The work on EU Interoperability is also a substantial part of Europol's endeavour and is delivered in line with the European Commission planning and in close cooperation with eu-LISA. Finally, a dedicated Business Stream looks into the opportunities to renovate and optimise the way the agency operates in the administration domain. As most of these initiatives are multi-year endeavours requiring significant resource investments and a high degree of technical complexity, their development is prioritised every year to ensure the delivery of specific components and regular progress on agreed milestones.

In line with the Europol Strategy, Europol seeks to be at the forefront of law enforcement innovation and research. The Innovation Lab aims to foster innovation in the wider law enforcement community and support Member States in addressing the risks and opportunities of emerging technologies. These efforts are coordinated via the European Clearing Board for Innovation (EuCB). The Lab also acts as the secretariat for the EU Innovation Hub for Internal Security and collaborates with other JHA agencies in implementing the tasks and functions assigned to it by COSI.

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

2026 Objectives

<u>Information Management</u>	
Objectives and actions	
<p>A.1.1 Continue enhancing Information Management.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coordinate and manage information management products (IM) and services in accordance with the business demand and organisational strategy. ○ Further develop and enforce information management standards and a single information management governance for Europol. ○ Continue strengthening knowledge management at Europol, including by updating the Catalogue of Products & Services and exploring new avenues, such as the IM wider landscape initiative, to provide guidance to SPOC operators in MS on available IM frameworks. Produce a first interactive version of the Catalogue of Products & Services. ○ Continue efforts to promote best practices in relation to Member States' information management capabilities and strategies, monitoring the roles and interactions of stakeholder bodies and streamlining reporting and consultations, in agreement with Member States. Further exploit the opportunities offered by the Topic Oriented Workshops format. ○ Continue aligning Information Management practices and the ICT planning with relevant changes stemming from the Europol Regulation, other EU legal instruments such as the Information Exchange Directive and the EU Interoperability framework and the Europol Strategy. ○ Continue monitoring the uptake of Europol's key operational ICT tools and applications by its stakeholders. 	
Expected results:	<p>Member States receive a reliable and secure service with minimal interruptions.</p> <p>Business needs are prioritised and met in a timely and coordinated manner, in line with legal obligations and with the priorities of Europol and MS.</p> <p>Operational users at Europol and in the Member States benefit from improved information management capabilities, for use in criminal investigations and related information exchange and analysis.</p> <p>Europol contributes to the objectives of relevant EU policies.</p>

<u>Develop Europol's ICT capabilities – Analysis Capability and Specialised Capabilities</u>	
Objectives and actions	
<p>A.1.2 Further develop ICT capabilities for Europol's operations.</p> <p>Analysis Capability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue enhancing Europol's analysis capabilities, ensuring quality and stability. ○ Ensure all activities are in line with security and accreditation rules, DPF, EDPS feedback and relevant provisions of the Europol Regulation. <p>Data Management Capability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Further enhance the Data Analysis Portal, following the outcomes from 2025. 	

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- Continue developing the Case Management and Joint Operational Analysis Case (JOAC) capabilities, based on the outcome from 2025.
- Establish the BPL infrastructure for the JOAC MVP tool.
- Develop additional functionalities in line with the needs of the investigations supported at that time.

SMART Capabilities

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

Specialised Capabilities

- Progress with the initial phase of technical developments for an automated workflow in PERCI to facilitate the intake, handling and distribution of "threat to the life or safety of persons notifications" received by Europol in line with Art. 18 DSA (in line with the Contribution Agreement with DG CNECT in 2024). Develop the statistical component of PERCI (within the limits of available resources).
- Progress with the integration of the Internet Facing Operations Environment (IFOE) capabilities within the ICT landscape, in line with business needs and the outcomes from 2025.
- Continue developing the EU Firearms Intelligence Hub.

New Forensics Environment and capabilities

- Further enhance the NFE capabilities, aiming at a full accreditation to operate and delivering better forensic extraction and reconstruction capabilities, in line with the outcomes from 2025.
- Further develop the EC3 Search Hub.

Operations support capabilities

- Provide ad-hoc support capabilities to support law enforcement operational needs during large scale investigations, incl. design, engineering and deploying of ad-hoc processing environments and software solutions (proof of concept level applications, data pre-processing, etc.).
- Continue enabling and promoting cloud experimentation to enhance operational capabilities by resource provisioning.

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

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

Objectives and actions

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

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

- Support the roll-out of SIENA to more law enforcement communities and competent authorities such as Police Customs Cooperation Centres (PCCCs).
- Connect more authorities to SIENA, including at SIENA BPL, RESTREINT UE/EU RESTRICTED and CONFIDENTIEL UE/EU CONFIDENTIAL levels via system-to-system integration (web services) or web application.

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- Ensure support to Member States for implementing relevant provisions of the Directive on Information Exchange, and assess and implement potential changes to Europol's data processing workflows.
- Maintain SIENA's high level of performance and support to the data intake and data processing operations of Europol, the SIENA training environment and continue improving the SIENA user experience.
- Finalise the development effort to establish Large File Exchange (LFE) interoperability with SIENA and continue establishing the interoperability of SIENA with other Europol capabilities (e.g. EIS).
- Continue automating immediate follow-up processes through SIENA for successful searches and hits resulting from cross-checks against Europol data and between Member States. Further mature the VCP solution in line with business needs.
- Continue operating Video Conferencing for Operational Purposes (VCOP).
- Continue supporting improvement of the Universal Message Format (UMF) standard through participation in UMF related initiatives. Increase the use of structured data by Europol and further facilitate the provision of UMF structured data by MS.

Knowledge management – EPE, ONEP

- Subject to developments in 2025, ensure that the Europol Platform for Experts (EPE) and its counterpart in the Operations Network (ONEP) develop in line with business needs as formulated by the platform managers, e.g., by adding new capabilities or enhancing existing ones.
- Ensure the EPE and ONEP solutions remain secure and relevant. Revise the EPE roadmap.
- Utilise EPE and ONEP as a gateway to (national) Law Enforcement specialist databases.

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

- Proceed with the creation of a new EIS roadmap including QUEST, taking into account business and technical aspects in line with MS national data management processes.
- Continue working on the integration of biometric functionalities within the EIS to enable contributing and querying of biometric data, particularly in support of the EU Interoperability framework.
- Continue revising and expanding automated data loading services, including support to the creation of new MS and TP data loader solutions, as required, as well as upgrading the existing dataloader technology in line with current industry standards.
- Continue improving data quality in the EIS including by implementing automated data compliance and performing manual checks and maintain the EIS training environment.
- In line with business needs, continue supporting the rollout of QUEST (BPL and RESTREINT UE/EU RESTRICTED) in all MS, including the rollout of access to Europol's Analysis Projects on a hit/no hit basis.

Information management enablers - IAM and secure lines

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

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

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

Objectives and actions

A.1.4 Advance interoperability and connectivity with information management systems at EU level⁴².

In close cooperation with the European Commission and eu-LISA and in line with the timeline set by the Justice and Home Affairs Council, in 2026 Europol will:

- Contribute to the work on interoperability and connectivity of IM systems at EU level by providing technical advice and participating in relevant advisory groups, product management fora and project boards, e.g. ECRIS-TCN, EES, EPRIS, ETIAS, EURODAC, IXIM, SIS, UMF and VIS. Support and improve business processes and technical solutions supporting Europol's tasks related to those systems.
- Ensure readiness for the entry into operation of ETIAS, enabling the systematic check of all travel applications against Europol Regulation Article 18.2(a) data. Launch into operation the solutions supporting ETIAS processes, incl. automated searches against Europol data, automated notifications of hits, manual processing of hits and providing Europol reasoned opinion, and Europol access to ETIAS data for law enforcement purposes.
- Ensure readiness for the entry into operation of Europol access to ECRIS-TCN.
- Ensure readiness for the entry into operation of entering information alerts in SIS based on Europol's proposal.
- Prepare for the entry into operation of the Revised VIS Regulation, enabling the systematic check of all short and long-stay visa applications and residence permit applications against Europol Regulation Article 18.2(a) data, including biometric data. Continue preparations for the entry into operation of the solutions supporting VIS processes, incl. automated searches against Europol data, automated notifications of hits, manual processing of hits and providing Europol opinion, and upgrade Europol access to VIS data for law enforcement purpose (within the limits of available resources).
- In line with Europol's Biometrics Roadmap, continue enhancing Europol's capabilities related to biometrics in the context of the EU Interoperability framework and Europol's core tasks.
- Finalise the implementation of Europol's access to Eurodac to replace current access via Member State's Access Point.
- Start the work in preparation for the entry into operation of the Screening Regulation on 12 June 2026, namely security checks of the applicants for international protection and irregular migrants via ESP against Europol data and against Europol entries in

⁴² Subject to final adoption of the AMS legislative proposal and the allocation of the corresponding additional resources to Europol.

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<p>ETIAS watchlist and the provision of appropriate follow up action (within the limits of available resources).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In line with the adopted Prüm II Regulation, continue further development of EPRIS in cooperation with Member States to support the searches of police records. ○ Resume the work to implement the objectives of the Prüm II Regulation to allow 1) Member States searches against biometric data (fingerprints, facial images, DNA) contributed to Europol by Third countries, 2) Europol searches against biometric data, vehicle registration data and police records hosted by Member States, 3) establishing the DNA capability at Europol. ○ Subject to delivery of the building by the Host State, initiate the implementation of the new Europol Data Centre in support of the ETIAS and VIS solutions (within the limits of available resources). ○ Support CEPOL in the work of CEPOL Knowledge Centre (CKC) on Interoperability, Information Exchange and Law Enforcement Cooperation, and eu-LISA and Frontex in EU interoperability and large-scale EU systems' related training activities.
<p>Expected results: Europol's integration as the EU Information Hub in the European security architecture is carefully prioritised and progresses in accordance with respective EU legislation, and in line with the availability of resources.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The Member States' needs in terms of efficient access to information are better met.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Interoperability and complementarity of Europol systems and tools with other EU information management systems leads to increased and more efficient exchange of information.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Enhanced Europol contribution to relevant EU policies.</p>

Innovation Lab

Objectives and actions

A.1.5 Foster innovation and support EU Member States in addressing the risks and opportunities of emerging technologies.

- Continue developing the foresight and horizon scanning activities of the Europol Innovation Lab's Observatory function, in cooperation with the Joint Research Centre (JRC) and other relevant partners. Produce regular reports on technology foresight, for law enforcement and contribute to Europol's strategic analysis reports.
- Enhance Europol's horizon scanning, (technology) foresight capabilities and security design methodologies to support operations and complex organisational change.
- Act as the secretariat of the European Clearing Board (EuCB), which channels Member States' needs and operational requirements to the Lab and coordinates efforts on agreed innovation priorities. Establish new EuCB Core Groups in order to foster co-creation of innovative tools with Member States.
- Act as the secretariat for the EU Innovation Hub for Internal Security and implement together with the other participating JHA agencies the tasks and functions annually endorsed by COSI. Lead the Hub's AI Cluster and contribute to the Hub's clusters on encryption, biometrics, unmanned aerial systems and technology foresight and key enabling technologies. Play a leading role in organising the Hub's events and producing its reports. Develop cooperation with the EU Security Campus to be established at the Joint Research Centre in line with ProtectEU.

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- Factor in fundamental rights, data protection and other compliance considerations (in particular the EU AI Act) throughout the innovation process, in cooperation with the Fundamental Rights Officer, Europol Data Protection Function and EDPS.
- Continue to feed the Europol Tool Repository (ETR) with innovative tools developed by MS, external partners and Europol and promote it as an arsenal of advanced digital investigative tools for the EU LEA community. Explore synergies with the Europol analysis toolbox.
- Consider possibilities to assist national competent authorities in maximising their use of the ETR to support their national operations, incl. OTFs.
- Increase the capacity and performance of the ODIN Sandbox (a separate, isolated and protected data processing environment within Europol for the sole purpose of carrying out and supporting research and innovation projects).
- Identify, receive and exploit datasets for the explicit purpose of pursuing research and innovation projects. Make use of the ODIN environment to accelerate the co-creation and prototyping of AI-based solutions by European Law enforcement, by providing a consistent and controlled space for all stakeholders to collaborate seamlessly.
- Develop further the Research and Innovation Pipeline so that proofs of concept and prototypes can be developed into fully-fledged solutions using the new ODIN environment, made available to Europol analysts and disseminated via the ETR to support Europol and MS investigations.
- Manage the Europol Code Repository (ECR) in support of Europol's and EuCB Core Group projects.
- Maintain the Innovation Low Value Grants scheme, in order to provide targeted financial support to Member States in their efforts to co-create innovative tools.
- Launch a pilot "innovation partnership" to explore the possibility to co-create innovative solutions to respond to emerging law enforcement needs not yet addressed on the market, facilitating the last-mile-development of innovative solutions by Member States and Europol (within the limits of available resources).
- Ensure that Europol can identify and adopt innovative and novel technologies, to improve the efficiency and added value of its services to the MS LEAs. Facilitate the rapid embedment of emerging technology solutions in Europol's information management landscape in line with architecture and compliance standards.
- Further develop networks of relevant partners in the industry and academia and organise Industry and Research Days focusing on technology gaps and operational needs identified by Europol and Member States.
- Subject to the evaluation of a pilot exercise in 2025, temporarily embed academic experts within innovation projects. Continue to explore new resourcing models, for example, the temporary insourcing of skillsets and the clarification of intellectual property rights (IPR) when co-creating new solutions.
- Assist the European Commission in identifying key research themes, drawing up and implementing the Union framework programmes for research and innovation that are relevant to Europol's objectives. Act as a liaison between EU-funded research projects, DG Home and European law enforcement community via the EuCB.
- Make available, when possible, Europol evaluators to the EU framework programmes for research and innovation; support the dissemination and uptake of projects' outcomes; establish clear rules of engagement for EU projects with the Sandbox environment.
- Maintain dedicated Innovation EPEs (Lab, Hub, EuCB, etc.).
- Facilitate the training of law enforcement in the field of innovation in close cooperation with CEPOL.

Expected results: A substantiated overview of the risks, threats and opportunities of emerging technologies.
Increased dissemination of tools via the ETR.
Coordinated efforts in research and development leading to greater realisation of technical solutions.
Alignment of EU funding for security research with the needs of law enforcement.
Europol contributes to the development of artificial intelligence and machine learning tools, and other research and innovation projects.
Europol contributes to the objectives of relevant EU policies.

Corporate information management

Objectives and actions

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

- Manage and enhance corporate IM capabilities and collaboration tools for non-operational information including end-user support and training.
- Progress in establishing IM capabilities that enable electronic workflows, electronic approval and e-Signature.
- Contribute to the activities of the AI Alignment Committee and develop AI Capabilities to support Europol's work (within the limits of available resources).
- Continue the transition to a new electronic Document, Records and Workflow management platform (EDRM).
- Progress further with the Records Management Programme, by developing a File Plan and reviewing the Retention schedule for prioritised areas. Review and improve the related governance framework.
- Progress with the Archives Management Programme: continue the work to establish the corporate archives and the historical archive⁴³; progress with the restructuring of the corporate archive facilities.
- Maintain the overall organisational structure and coordinate the implementation of organisational changes in IM capabilities to guarantee consistent information ownership and information security.
- Advance Europol's Process Landscape and ensure its alignment with the Europol strategy; facilitate the development, analysis, improvement and automation of business processes in prioritised areas of organisational development in line with the Europol Regulation. Ensure that processes and protocols for new initiatives are in place to guarantee the compliance with internal and external requirements.
- Enhance HR services (e.g., Sysper replacement, IntraComm services transition) in line with the Commission led HR Transformation Programme.
- Prepare for the Commission-driven replacement of ABAC with SUMMA, to be ready for the go-live on 15 October 2026. Roll-out EDRM to financial actors to provide them with electronic workflows and Records Management capabilities for financial files.
- Plan, design, procure and implement ICT components required for Europol's buildings in line with the Strategic Housing Roadmap.

⁴³ EU Archive Regulation 2015/496 amending Council Regulation 354/1983.

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Expected results: Reduced bureaucracy and time spent on document and records management and reporting while ensuring the availability of reliable information on decision-making, corporate performance and level of compliance.

Provide and maintain ICT capabilities

Objectives and actions

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

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

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

Indicators	Latest result (Q2 2025)	Target 2026 ⁴⁴
ICT work Plan Delivery	36%	75%
Operational Stability - Uptime of Core systems	99.4%	98%
Number of Searches through EIS and QUEST	5,424,493	12,500,000
Number of SIENA Cases initiated	92,256	175,000

⁴⁴ A number of indicators throughout the Work Programme also depend on MS demand for Europol's products and services. All indicators and their targets are reviewed annually, on the basis of actual performance data, as part of the final version of the Programming Document.

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Indicators	Latest result (Q2 2025)	Target 2026 ⁴⁴
Number of SIENA Messages exchanged	1,066,647	2,100,000
Number of R&I projects launched in the Sandbox	1	2
Number of tools available to be used by MS on the ETR	42	45
Number of requests received from MS to support their operations with ETR tools	12	20

A.2. Operational Coordination

Overview

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



For its part, the Integrated Operational Services Unit of the Operational and Analysis Centre is responsible for 1) the provision of Europol's services for the ETIAS, revised VIS and Screening operations; 2) the management of the SIRENE Office of Europol; 3) the handling and comparison of biometric data, and the management of the dedicated databases for fingerprints (ABIS), face recognition (FRS) and DNA; and 4) the handling of travel intelligence.

In parallel, the Operational Centre assists all Europol operational centres with specialist law enforcement techniques (e.g. covert surveillance, counter-kidnapping and extortion, hostage negotiation, witness protection, fugitive active search, satellite imagery, etc.) and with the organisation and management of large scale/long term deployments, as well as deployments linked to first responses or specific expertise requested by MS and partner countries, such as to migration "hotspots".

2026 Objectives

Operational Centre
Objectives and actions
<p>A.2.1 Ensure the effective functioning of the Operational Centre in managing the intake of operational information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Serve as Europol's single point of entry for all operational information provided by stakeholders by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitoring, handling and processing operational data on 24/7 basis; - deciding on the acceptance of information into Europol's databases; - processing and handling urgent messages in priority cases, in close cooperation with competent analysis projects; - handling non-priority cases and managing hits on related information including evaluation and reporting of matches; - managing operational information exchange with third parties. ○ Handle notifications received by Europol from hosting service providers, as foreseen in the Digital Services Act and in the TCO Regulation, and from private parties, in line

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<p>with Europol's strategy on cooperation with private parties and related internal guidelines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Manage EIS operational data including the insertion of data on behalf of Denmark. ○ Provide permanent monitoring and reporting of open source information about incidents related to the mandate of Europol. ○ Prepare daily situation and weekly criminal intelligence briefing reports to inform internally about main operations, trends and patterns. Host the daily briefing of operational heads of units (TOT meeting). ○ Contribute to the preparations for data intake and related operational procedures, required for the implementation of the Directive on information exchange (within the limits of available resources). ○ Contribute to the delivery of the induction training for newly recruited analysts and of the criminal analysis, SIENA and other related training modules.
<p>Expected results: Increased quality and completeness of Europol's criminal intelligence picture allows for more effective response to MS operational cases and crisis situations.</p>

Operational Centre

Objectives and actions

A.2.2 Provide support to operations and crisis management.

- Act as 24/7 contact point for urgent operational requests from MS Liaison bureaux/ Europol National Units/competent authorities and for officers' reporting during on-the-spot deployment. In case of operational emergencies / terrorist attacks:
 - initiate the emergency procedures and crisis response steps;
 - ensure the coordinated application of the crisis response mechanism and internal protocols in different crime areas;
 - liaise with Europol's partners (MS and third parties) affected/involved;
 - coordinate Europol's immediate response together with other relevant units and stakeholders;
 - provide 24/7 access to expertise and specialised operational knowledge, such as the European Tracking Solution, in cooperation with the Special Tactics team and other Centres.
- Provide remote support and coordination to on-going actions/operations/on-the-spot deployments.
- Coordinate Europol's activities supporting major international events including the establishment/ deployments to the International Coordination Centres.
- Fulfil the role of business product manager of the mobile office solution. Manage the overview of mobile offices and other related operational equipment.

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

Integrated Operational Services

Objectives and actions

A.2.3 Build-up Europol's operational services to comply with the legal obligations stemming from the EU Interoperability framework⁴⁵.

- Following the initiation of ETIAS operations in 2026, ensure the implementation and further reinforcement of Europol's services (within the limits of available resources)⁴⁶, which include:
 - 24/7 availability to process the hits of ETIAS applications against Europol data and provision of reasoned opinion within 60 hours;
 - Participation in the ETIAS Screening Board hosted by Frontex; contribution to the definition of ETIAS screening rules and security related risk indicators and management of Europol's entries in the ETIAS Watchlist;
 - Making duly justified searches in the data stored in the ETIAS Central System.
- Progress with the preparations for the entry into operation of the Screening Regulation in June 2026. Subject to the finalisation of all technical requirements, ensure sufficient service level for supporting security checks carried out on third-country nationals undergoing a screening procedure under the regulatory time limits (within the limits of available resources).
- Prepare for the entry into operation of the revised VIS in 2027, ensuring readiness to initiate the execution of Europol's tasks (within the limits of available resources), which include:
 - 24/7 availability to process the hits of long-stay visas, residence permits and visa applications against Europol data (including biometrics) and provision of reasoned opinion within 60 hours;
 - Participation in the VIS Screening Board hosted by Frontex; contribution to the definition of security related risk indicators;
 - Making duly justified searches in the data stored in VIS.
- Continue preparations for the implementation of Prüm II and any other relevant obligation stemming from the EU Interoperability framework (within the limits of available resources).
- Follow-up on hits with Europol's analysis data once MS obtain hit/no hit access to the Analysis Projects via QUEST.
- Manage EIS operational data including the insertion of data on behalf of third parties and hit management.

Expected results: Full operational implementation of Europol's ETIAS capabilities.
 Gradual operational implementation of Europol's Screening capabilities.
 Gradual progress in view of the implementation of Europol's VIS capabilities.
 Increased quality and completeness of Europol's criminal intelligence picture, including travel information and biometric data, with regards to the identification and movement of persons who constitute a high

⁴⁵ Including the EU Interoperability Regulations, the ETIAS Regulation, the Revised VIS Regulation, the Screening Regulation, the Prüm II Regulation.

⁴⁶ LFS of ETIAS Regulation, LFS for Interoperability and LFS for revised Europol Regulation (in force:2022) did not foresee additional resources for Europol for ETIAS purposes. Subsequently an agreement was reached for a temporary transfer of 25 posts from Frontex, which covers partially the estimated resource gap.

security risk and whose criminal activities fall within Europol's mandate.

Integrated Operational Services

Objectives and actions

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

- Act as the single point of contact for MS' SIRENE Bureaux and carry out the activities stemming from the SIS regulations, including:
 - processing, storing and crosschecking hits on alerts related to terrorism sent to Europol by SIRENE Bureaux;
 - conducting the data review of information sent by SIRENE Bureaux in full respect of the Europol regulation and the specific SIS data review requirements;
 - reporting through the SIRENE communications infrastructure matches triggered in SIS;
 - exchanging supplementary information and other relevant messages with SIRENE Bureaux through the SIRENE communications infrastructure.
- Subject to the finalisation of all technical requirements, execute a specific workflow for Europol to propose to MS the creation in SIS of information alerts in the interest of the EU following the new provisions of the Europol Regulation.
- Subject to the finalisation of all technical requirements, operate Europol's access to ECRIS-TCN to support MS investigations.
- Deliver training and awareness sessions on SIS/SIRENE related matters within Europol's mandate; provide advice and support to Europol's Analysis Projects.
- Maintain and further enhance the Europol SIRENE operator manual.
- Maintain fruitful, effective and efficient cooperation with SIRENE Bureaux and other external stakeholders.

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

Integrated Operational Services

Objectives and actions

A.2.5 Enhance Europol's biometric capabilities and services⁴⁷.

- Process, compare and analyse biometric data received at Europol including dactyloscopic data, facial images and DNA profiles, maintaining quality and procedural standards throughout the process.

⁴⁷ Subject to adoption of the AMS legislative proposal and the allocation of the corresponding additional resources to Europol.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Act as a single point of contact for biometric activities in the Operations Directorate, coordinating and monitoring the work of the authorised face reviewers of Analysis Projects and performing a mandatory peer review in case of positive identifications. ○ Conduct biometric comparisons derived from searches against EU information management systems, such as SIS, VIS, EES and ECRIS-TCN. ○ Cooperate with the Biometric Service of The Netherlands to make an effective and efficient use of the indirect access that Europol has to Eurodac through this service, until Europol gets direct access to the system (expected mid-2026). ○ Subject to the finalisation of all technical requirements, start operating Europol's direct access to Eurodac in cooperation with the Europol Central Access Point. ○ Compare and analyse matches triggered with biometric data in the context of searches launched in the framework of the Screening regulation and make necessary preparations for the entry into operations of the revised VIS and Prüm II regulations. ○ Maintain and review the data stored in Europol biometric databases, ensuring that it complies with Europol data processing rules and data retention policies. ○ Provide expertise, training and support on the use of biometric technologies and their application to investigations. ○ Provide operational input and feedback to internal stakeholders on the performance and further developments required of biometric identification systems. ○ Collaborate with MS, EU agencies and other relevant cooperation partners in the area of biometric data exchange and standardisation. ○ Explore and assess emerging biometric modalities to support innovation and to meet evolving operational requirements. 	<p>Expected results: Increased quality and completeness of Europol's criminal intelligence picture with biometric data.</p> <p>Enhanced support to Member States' investigations by processing and comparing biometric data and delivering biometric operational reports.</p> <p>Enhanced support to Member States in identifying persons who constitute a high security risk and whose criminal activities fall within Europol's mandate.</p>
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Integrated Operational Services

Objectives and actions

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

- Act as a single point of contact to support EU MS' Passenger Information Units (PIUs) and carry out the activities stemming from the PNR Directive and the Advance Passenger Information (API) Regulation for countering serious crime and terrorism.
- Enrich the analytical activities of Europol's Analysis Projects with relevant PNR data, API data and with travel data obtained from EES, VIS and ETIAS, developing a granular data access model to regulate the access to the different systems.
- Search against Europol data information sent by MS in the framework of travel monitoring activities or in operations to detect high risk passengers.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contribute, as required, to the creation of PNR Rule Based Targeting (RBT), as well as ETIAS screening rules. Exploit opportunities in the use of PNR and ETIAS watchlists to collect specific travel information and to flag threats and possible risks. ○ Contribute to the coordination and delivery of dedicated training for the analysis of travel related information. ○ Exercise the functions of secretariat of the Informal Working Group on PNR and support the organisation of IWG-PNR events.
<p>Expected results: Increased quality and completeness of Europol's criminal intelligence picture with regards to the identification and movement of persons.</p> <p>Member States' investigations receive the required support for the processing of travel data and the results of such processing through Europol's operational products.</p> <p>Enhanced support to Member States in identifying persons who constitute a high security risk and whose criminal activities fall within Europol's mandate.</p>

Special tactics

Objectives and actions

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

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

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Providing a central point of access for LEA to use the European Commission's Copernicus services; and, subject to the conclusion of the Working Arrangement for obtaining services from EUSATCEN acting as "Copernicus Requesting Party" on behalf of EUMS LEAs; - Supporting the informal network of experts on the use of geospatial images for law enforcement purposes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Support the work and strengthen the implementation of the newly established EU wide informal expert network on covert surveillance (European Surveillance Group - ESG). o Manage and give guidance to relevant EPE networks. o Organise strategic expert meetings, training, awareness raising and prevention activities in the area of knowledge management and in support of specialist networks.
Expected results: Member States' investigations receive quality special tactics support.

Deployment management and support

Objectives and actions

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

- o Manage and support medium to long-term deployments by Europol, as well as deployments linked to first responses requested by Member States or partners, such as deployments to "hotspots" and other EU security-related incident areas.
- o Coordinate, manage and support guest officer (GO) deployments to migration "hotspots" and other requested areas, including:
 - Maintaining a pool of GOs ready for deployment;
 - Delivering the newcomers GO training programme;
 - Providing input to the development and common training materials of the Migration Management Support Teams (MMST) together with Frontex and EUAA;
 - Further implementing the mobile team arrangements and rapid deployments upon operational needs;
 - Maintaining and updating operational plans with the host MS/partner states in areas where Europol is deploying GOs;
 - Liaising with and raising awareness amongst seconding states to ensure a sustainable level of secondments to the GO deployment pool.

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

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Indicators	Latest result (Q2 2025)	Target 2026
Speed of first-line response to MS requests	4.0	4.5
Number of Accepted SIENA contributions by OAC ⁴⁸	4,197	10,000
Number of deployments of Guest Officers	296	700
Speed of response to SIRENE requests (in days)	2.1	2
Number of Interoperability reasoned opinions issued by Europol ⁴⁹	n/a	n/a

⁴⁸ The responsibility for this indicator is shared by Europol and its partners (MS, TP). As such, the target is indicative and used to monitor the trend of accepted contributions.

⁴⁹ The responsibility for this indicator is shared by Europol and its partners. Moreover, progress will depend on the timely and smooth operations of the first EU interoperability systems, which are planned to enter into operation in the course of 2026.

A.3. Combating Serious and Organised Crime

Overview



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

The ESOCC's primary goal is to deliver effective operational support to MS priority cases and High Value Target investigations focusing on individuals and poly-criminal networks posing the highest risk of serious and organised crime to the EU. This is achieved by applying a case prioritisation mechanism and implementing proactive operational strategies and actions, guided by four fundamental principles:

- 1) **Data-driven Approach:** prioritising cases that leverage large, actionable datasets for case development and maximum operational added value to MS investigations.
- 2) **Systematic network disruption:** focusing on networks rather than individuals, developing strategies to disrupt entire criminal organisations.
- 3) **Proximity to MS investigations on the ground (in EU and beyond):** bringing Europol's services closer to the investigative activities of the EU MS in the field through increased operational deployments.
- 4) **International Collaboration:** proactively engaging with third parties, and other stakeholders bringing forward the greatest operational benefit for priority cases.

In 2026, ESOCC will continue targeting high-risk and cross-border criminal networks active in the areas of drugs, weapons and explosives, property crime and environmental crime, migrant smuggling, and trafficking in human beings for different forms of exploitation. Within each crime group the Analysis Projects (APs) are clustered and aligned to the EMPACT priorities.

Following the adoption of the Regulation to strengthen police cooperation and Europol's role in the fight against migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings on 16 December 2025, Europol will transform its European Migrant Smuggling Centre into a new reinforced centre - European Centre Against Migrant Smuggling (ECAMS) – as endorsed by the Management Board in December 2025 (see Annex I for more information).

2026 Objectives

European Serious and Organised Crime Centre (ESOCC)	
Objectives and actions	
A.3.1 Ensure the effective functioning of the ESOCC in providing strategic and operational support to EU Member States' investigations on SOC.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Serve as the EU law enforcement hub for collecting, processing, analysing and exchanging information and criminal intelligence of relevance for serious and organised 	

<p>crime. Provide MS, TP and other operational partners with operational support and coordination, as well as operational capabilities and expertise that are not available widely at national level to bring high operational added value to the investigations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support the strategic and operational implementation of the actions of the EU roadmap to fight drug trafficking and organised crime, in particular, the follow-up of the first mapping of the criminal networks that pose the biggest threats to society. ○ Ensure the provision of support to Member States in identifying High Value Targets (HVT) - individuals and criminal organisations constituting the highest risk of organised and serious crime. ○ Support Member States in establishing and operating Operational Task Forces (OTF) facilitating complex and high profile resource-intensive investigations against HVTs, taking into account, where appropriate, the regional approach and the requirements for specialised skills and expertise in multiple domains, including seizure and confiscation of criminal assets. ○ Provide management, administrative and logistical support to OTFs. Support MS participation by offering the recruitment of short-term SNEs and deployment of national investigators. Ensure the timely exchange of information within the OTF, in particular regarding the analysis of the OTF findings, and report to relevant OTF partners. ○ Manage the dedicated OTF grant to finance the application of special investigative techniques and other resource demanding activities in MS. Ensure the complementarity of the grant mechanism to the EMPACT funding provided by Europol. ○ Bring Europol's services closer to the investigative activities of the EU MS in the field through increased operational deployments. ○ Utilise new opportunities enabling joint operational analysis between Europol and Member States when conducting specific investigations (in line with corresponding technical advancement). ○ Develop ESOC's capabilities in the areas of data-driven investigations, financial investigations and Open Sources Intelligence (OSINT) on the basis of a tiered framework⁵⁰. ○ Coordinate and support investigations on criminal use of communications enabled by encryption and emerging concealment technologies. ○ Support the implementation of special tactics targeting the illicit activities of High Value Targets and other key facilitators. ○ Enhance outreach towards private parties and foster the setting-up of public-private partnerships such as with EU courier/parcel post companies, aviation and maritime authorities concerning trafficking of drugs or precursors; with chemical industries concerning suspicious orders or purchases; and with relevant other businesses in the area of weapons manufacturing, transportation and hospitality. ○ Utilise, where appropriate and subject to checking potential and actual conflicts of interest as well as checking available capacities, funding opportunities in relation to calls within Europol's remit for which the agency is eligible to apply together with MS. Depending on the call eligibility rules, this may include the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy (BMVI) and the Internal Security Fund (ISF).
<p>Expected results: Member States receive quality analytical and operational support for SOC investigations.</p>

⁵⁰ The tiered framework implies that the ESOC develops internal capabilities to meet the common business needs (called Tier 2) in a given area, while the centre holding the high-end capabilities (Tier 1) continues specialising in its domain and focuses on cases requiring the highest levels of expertise and sophistication.

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Europol's operational support is based on real time information and follows swiftly changing trends.

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

Europol contributes to the objectives of relevant EU policies.

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

Operations on Drugs

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

Objectives and actions

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

- Support MS investigations in the field of drug production and trafficking with criminal intelligence analysis, operational capabilities and expertise, including on-the-spot support. Identify HVT(s) and criminal networks and proactively support the coordination and the conduct of investigations by applying the HVT/OTF concept.
- Support the implementation of the EMPACT Operational Action Plans on cannabis, cocaine and heroin, and on synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances.
- Contribute to the implementation of the new EU Drugs Strategy and EU Action Plan against drug trafficking.
- Support MS in identifying, tracking and dismantling illicit drug producing facilities in the EU, including by targeting precursors and designer precursors, by improving and making better use of forensic investigations, criminal intelligence and by developing and expanding detection techniques (e.g., via the Europol Illicit Laboratory Comparison System). Provide a training on Illicit laboratory dismantling together with CEPOL.
- Operate the drug intelligence fusion platform within Europol that includes MS representatives, and has contact points with secured information exchange capacities in third countries and regions constituting drug trafficking hubs. Facilitate the exchange of intelligence in real time, analysis and support to live operations targeting international drug trafficking criminal networks affecting the EU.
- In cooperation with the European Union Drugs Agency (EUDA), support the EU Early Warning System on new psychoactive substances and/or other initiatives and projects concerning the EU Drugs Markets.
- Target concrete crime hubs, hotspots (such as main harbours) or key enablers, for which specific measures, addressing the specific crime-enabling factors or facilitating targeted regional coordination of interventions, can be set up in consultation with the main MS/TP concerned.
- Participate in the European Ports Alliance aiming to bring together all relevant public and private actors into a public-private partnership to identify and implement operational solutions to prevent criminal networks infiltrating EU ports and exploiting them for drug trafficking.
- Further develop the Maritime Anti-Trafficking Coordination Hub (MATCH) at Europol to enhance the analysis and technical support to prioritised drugs related operations in

<p>the maritime domain, to improve the operational and strategical picture of maritime trafficking and to provide a secure real-time communication platform.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assess the possibility to establish a Joint Maritime Counter-narcotics Action Team (J-MCAT) at Europol together with EU MS to better coordinate interdictions with investigations. ○ Enhance cooperation with the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre – Narcotics (MAOC-N) and Frontex with regards to drug trafficking investigations in the maritime domain by promoting exchange of intelligence and joint operations. ○ Prioritise cooperation with high-risk countries from a drug production and smuggling perspective in order to support MS investigations, and trace and identify drugs-related criminal proceeds. Contribute to potential EU regional intervention tackling trafficking corridors and hubs in West Africa⁵¹. ○ Contribute, through the establishment of a dedicated grant scheme⁵², to the setting up of a Supported Investigative Unit (SIU), led by one or more EU MS and using Europol's services in a targeted and efficient manner. This would allow real-time investigative collaboration in order to target and prosecute major transnational criminal organisations impacting EU internal security. ○ Enhance and support EU MS investigative efforts, operations and/or projects in Latin America by implementing so-called "network attack approach" which would require EU MS, TP and Europol to jointly target not just one segment of a criminal enterprise, but the entire criminal network, from the production and supply infrastructures in Latin America to the importation logistics in the EU (within the limits of available resources). ○ Support EU dialogues on drugs that focus on specific drug trafficking routes, involving producer, transit and consumer markets⁵³. ○ Organise and fund the annual Drug Conference. 	<p>Expected results: Member States receive quality analytical and operational support for investigations into drug production and trafficking.</p> <p>Europol's operation support is based on real time information and follows swiftly changing trends.</p> <p>Arrests of High Value Targets, identification and seizures of criminal assets, and disruption/dismantling of criminal networks.</p> <p>Enhanced law enforcement coordination and efficiency of action in the EU in the area of drug supply reduction.</p>
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Operations on Weapons & Explosives

Disrupt illicit trafficking in firearms and explosives.

Objectives and actions

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

- Support MS investigations in the field of trafficking or diversion of weapons and explosives trafficking (incl. precursors, weapon parts and pyrotechnic products) with criminal intelligence analysis, operational capabilities and expertise, including on-the-spot support. Identify HVT(s) and criminal networks and proactively support the coordination and the conduct of investigations by applying the HVT/OTF concept.

⁵¹ As put forward in the EU Roadmap to fight Drug Trafficking and Organised Crime.

⁵² A dedicated section will be added to Annex XI – Grants, once the grant scheme is defined.

⁵³ Regular EU dialogues should be conducted with the Western Balkan region and countries, Eastern Partnership countries, Central Asia region and countries, China, USA, Latin America and the Caribbean regions and countries.

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- Support the implementation of the EMPACT Operational Action Plan on Firearms trafficking.
- Further develop a Firearms Intelligence Hub at ESOCC to facilitate the cross-border exchange and processing of ballistics and weapons identification information by:
 - setting up a Ballistic Intelligence Network integrating at Europol the two main Ballistic Identification Systems in the EU and providing an interoperability solution;
 - establishing a common weapons identification system and database at Europol to support the storage and comparison of such data at EU level;
 - developing capacities for weapons and explosives tracing and utilising the access to CAR's iTRACE and Interpol's iARMS. Resume discussions with the US ATF's eTRACE in view of establishing access; and
 - engaging with the private sector and weapon manufacturing industry in order to jointly prevent and disrupt the diversion of regulated/officially manufactured firearms to the criminal market and to combat the illegal production of counterfeit weapons.
- Increase support to MS in targeting illicit distribution channels and criminal misuse of pyrotechnic products.
- Focus on the analysis of open source intelligence to identify and analyse patterns of firearms-related violence and firearms trafficking.
- Develop, in cooperation with the European Commission, common reporting on firearms seizures to create conditions towards establishing a standard EU statistical data collection procedure, and an EU-level tool to track in real-time firearms-related incidents and seizures.
- Utilise synergies with the work of Frontex to counter firearms trafficking at the EU border. Contribute to the updates and regional versions of the Frontex Firearms Handbook for Border Guard and Customs, incl. the operationalisation of the mobile app if applicable.

Expected results: Member States receive quality analytical and operational support for investigations into illicit trafficking weapons and explosives.

Europol's operational support is based on real time information and follows swiftly changing trends.

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

Operations on High Risk criminal networks

Disrupt structures of high risk criminal networks.
 Combat Organised Crime related violence (e.g., murders).
 Disrupt the capacity of Organised Crime facilitators and enablers.

Objectives and actions

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

- Support MS investigations on high risk criminal networks, especially those using extensive money laundering, extreme violence (murders, kidnap and torture) and corruption.
- Support MS in overarching investigations targeting organised criminal groups that provide facilitation services to other criminal networks or individuals, commonly referred to as "Crime as a Service."

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide criminal intelligence analysis, operational capabilities and expertise, including on-the-spot support. Identify HVT(s) and criminal networks and proactively support the coordination and the conduct of investigations by applying the HVT/OTF concept. ○ Support the implementation of the EMPACT Operational Action Plan on Most Threatening Criminal Networks and Individuals (MTCNI). ○ Contribute to the development of innovative tools in view of facilitating data processing and analysis in support of HVT and priority cases. ○ Organise and fund the Annual Plenary Meeting and other dedicated meetings, as needed. ○ Establish cooperation with relevant EU-financed projects, which seek to support MS in identifying international criminal networks through intelligence-led actions, centralised analysis and effective use of forensic tools, and promote the use of Europol's services in achieving the objectives of such projects.
<p>Expected results: Member States receive quality analytical and operational support for investigations into high risk criminal networks.</p> <p>Europol's operational support is based on real time information and follows swiftly changing trends.</p> <p>Arrests of High Value Targets, identification and seizures of criminal assets, and disruption/dismantling of criminal networks.</p>

Operations on Organised Property Crime

Combat organised property crime committed by Mobile Organised Crime Groups.

Objectives and actions

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

- Support MS investigations in the field of organised property crime, incl. cultural goods, with criminal intelligence analysis, operational capabilities and expertise, including on-the-spot support. Identify HVT(s) and criminal networks and proactively support the coordination and the conduct of investigations by applying HVT/OTF concept.
- Prioritise investigations and promote the establishment of OTFs to counter property crime featuring extreme violence, high frequency and/or extensive illicit proceeds (such as attacks on ATMs and robberies). Further pursue activities in the focus areas of organised motor vehicle crime and cargo crime.
- Support the operational action against organised property crime within the EMPACT OAP targeting the most threatening criminal networks and individuals.
- Contribute to the implementation of the EU Action Plan tackling trafficking in cultural goods by supporting investigations related to the looting of antiquities from archaeological sites, and thefts and forgeries of works of art. Enhance the collaboration with the EU CULTNET through the established contact point at Europol.
- Provide expertise to the Core Group on the trafficking of cultural goods established within the EU Clearing Board for Innovation.
- Organise and fund thematic conferences with participants of EU MS LEAs with a view to highlight features of criminal networks with high mobility/impact across multiple jurisdictions.

Expected results: Member States receive quality analytical and operational support for investigations into organised property crime.

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Europol's operational support is based on real time information and follows swiftly changing trends.

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

Operations on Environmental crime

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

Objectives and actions

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

- Support MS investigations in the field of environmental crime with criminal intelligence analysis, operational capabilities and expertise, including on-the-spot support. Identify HVT(s) and criminal networks and proactively support the coordination and the conduct of investigations by applying HVT/OTF concept.
- Support the implementation of the EMPACT Operational Action Plan on Environmental crime.
- Support MS investigations in cross border waste and pollution crime and cases of infiltration of criminal networks in the respective legal business structures. Support the joint global action of law enforcement against waste trafficking (e.g. Custos Viridis).
- Focus on trafficking of plastic waste and fluorinated greenhouse gases (F-gases) and ozone depleting substances as well as the illicit management of Electronic and Electric Equipment Waste, especially the export to third countries.
- Consolidate the reference role of Europol in high impact wildlife-related crimes such as illegal fisheries activities, illegal timber trafficking and deforestation, through the support of investigations and promotion of the information exchange with concerned stakeholders.
- Strengthen the links with the active working groups of the Interpol Committee on Environmental Crime, in particular in the field of combating illegal exports of waste imports and the smuggling of endangered species of wild fauna and flora.
- Respond to the impact of the revised Environmental Crime Directive, in particular regarding the broadened scope of offences. Support the reinforcement of or the creation of new specialised units on environmental crime in the Member States.
- Boost partnerships for the combating of environmental crime through dedicated alliances, including third parties and relevant private parties, to strengthen targeted operational cooperation, addressing intelligence gaps, sharing of expertise, innovation, capacity building and joint constraint resolution.
- Organise and fund thematic conferences on Waste & Pollution Crimes.

Expected results: Member States receive quality technical, analytical and operational support for investigations into environmental crimes.

Europol's operational support is based on real time information and follows swiftly changing trends.

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

Europol is the reference agency in the EU in terms of fighting environmental crimes.

European Migrant Smuggling Centre (EMSC)

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

Objectives and actions

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

- Support MS with the identification and disruption of the criminal networks and key actors involved in migrant smuggling, by targeting their structures, activities and enablers on all routes and in key criminal "hotspots". Proactively support the coordination and the conduct of investigations by applying the HVT/OTF concept and by using a data- and intelligence-driven approach.
- Support the implementation of the EMPACT Operational Action Plan on Migrant smuggling.
- Support relevant EU platforms, such as the EU Migration Preparedness and Crisis Blueprint Network and the EU Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR).
- Coordinate and enhance the exchange of information and provision of support via the Joint Liaison Task Force on migrant smuggling and THB within the EMSC comprising LOs from MS, relevant TP, Eurojust, Interpol and Frontex.
- Initiate the implementation of the upcoming Regulation on enhancing police cooperation and Europol's support to preventing and combating migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings, in particular by:
 - transforming the EMSC into a new European Centre Against Migrant Smuggling (ECAMS) – as endorsed by the Management Board in December 2025, and reinforcing its structure and capacities;
 - increasing outreach to MS, operational and strategic partners and third countries of interest for migrant smuggling, to incentivise operational cooperation in investigations, finetune EMSC's support according to the needs and build trust with stakeholders;
 - building up Europol deployments for operational support as a flexible and responsive mechanism to provide targeted assistance to MS (or third countries) dealing with complex and large-scale investigations; and
 - developing and enhancing OSINT capabilities to increase the monitoring, investigative and referral work in the digital environment.
- Collaborate with Frontex to utilise the synergies in the work of the two agencies with regards to migrant smuggling and THB counteraction, including operational personal data processing (once the new working arrangement is concluded and the requirements for the data exchange are met).
- Promote, with the support of the EU Commission, cooperation with Anti-Smuggling Operational Partnerships, Immigration Liaison Officers Networks, CSDP missions and relevant EU funded projects and initiatives, if operationally focused and subject to legal possibilities, in the third countries that are considered to be the source and transit countries for migrant smuggling.
- Review the solutions and tactics deployed and the partnerships with relevant counterparts at national and international level, including Frontex, MS LOs deployed in the regions concerned and relevant EEAS networks.
- Support the work of the Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling, including the DIGINEX⁵⁴ network.

⁵⁴ An informal network of MS experts established under the EU Commission's Global Alliance umbrella, aimed at combating migrant smuggling in the digital domain.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contribute to the "Situational Awareness, Early Warning and Forecasting Capacity Development Project" of the European Commission, which is building an EU wide IT Toolbox capable of providing better analytical situational overviews, timely identification and comprehensive understanding of emerging migratory trends. ○ Support different types of cooperation with relevant multi-actor platforms, acting as an intelligence collection hub, such as possible Joint Investigative Cells or any controlled centres, if established. ○ Support, through a coordinated and multi-disciplinary approach, the law enforcement response against criminal groups producing and distributing fraudulent documents to facilitate migrant smuggling. ○ Support MS in their actions to improve the use of Passenger Name Record (PNR) data and other travel information data in migrant smuggling investigations.
<p>Expected results: Member States receive quality analytical and operational support for dismantling of criminal networks active in migrant smuggling.</p> <p>Europol's operational support is based on real time information and follows swiftly changing trends.</p> <p>Arrests of High Value Targets, identification and seizures of criminal assets, and disruption/dismantling of criminal networks.</p>

European Migrant Smuggling Centre

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

Objectives and actions

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

- Support MS investigations in the field of trafficking in human beings for the purpose of any form of exploitation with criminal intelligence analysis, operational capabilities and expertise, incl. on-the-spot support. Identify HVT(s) and criminal networks and proactively support the coordination and the conduct of investigations by applying HVT/OTF concept.
- Support the implementation of the EMPACT Operational Action Plan on Trafficking in human beings.
- In cooperation with MS, enhance the collection and exchange of operational and strategic information on trafficking in human beings by increasing the quantity and improving the quality of the contributions.
- Support the implementation of the revised EU Anti-trafficking Directive and the Common Anti-trafficking Plan combatting trafficking in human beings in relation to people fleeing from Ukraine.
- Strengthen the support of Member States in online investigations, including with OSINT collection and analysis, to detect recruitment, advertisement, and exploitation of victims of trafficking and the related logistics. Enhance cooperation with the private sector for this purpose.
- Support MS in their actions to improve the use of Passenger Name Record (PNR) data and other travel information in THB investigations to identify victims and suspects and

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further develop effective targeting rules for red-flagging in transport-related trafficking situations.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen cooperation with third parties and existing projects/organisations in priority regions to increase number of joint operations through hackathons and operational sprints. 	
Expected results:	<p>Member States receive quality analytical and operational support for THB investigations.</p> <p>Europol's operational support is based on real time information and follows swiftly changing trends.</p> <p>Identification of victims of trafficking, arrests of High Value Targets, seizures of criminal assets, and disruption/dismantling of criminal networks.</p>

Indicators	Latest result (Q2 2025)	Target 2026
Number of Accepted contributions by ESOCC ⁵⁵	26,010	40,000
Number of Operations supported by ESOCC	884	1,300
Number of Operational Task Forces supported by ESOCC (where ESOCC is in the lead)	30	27
Number of Operational Reports delivered by ESOCC	2,286	4,250
Number of Action Days coordinated/supported by ESOCC	156	246
Satisfaction with Operational Support and Analysis provided by ESOCC	9.3	8.5
Number of Operational Reports delivered by EMSC	489	1,250
Number of Operations supported by EMSC	258	400
Number of Action Days coordinated/supported by EMSC	50	65
Satisfaction with Operational Support and Analysis provided by EMSC	9.4	8.5

⁵⁵ The responsibility for this indicator is shared by Europol and its partners (MS, TP). As such, the target is indicative and used to monitor the trend of accepted contributions.

A.4. Combating Cyber Crime

Overview

The European Cybercrime Centre (EC3) is devoted to combating cybercrime by delivering operational investigation support to the Member States in particular in the following main areas:



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

EC3 serves as a gateway for cyber intelligence on actors, tactics, techniques, and procedures involving diverse data types and acts as a central hub for operational support to Law Enforcement by providing tactical and analytical assistance, as well as operational coordination. Among the specialised services of EC3 is the provision of on-the-spot and in-house digital forensics such as decryption, live forensics, vehicle forensics, and counterfeit banknote analysis. EC3 also holds advanced expertise on cryptocurrency tracing and blockchain analysis. By integrating operational, intelligence, and forensic capabilities, the centre ensures comprehensive support to counter cyber threats.

Research and Development and innovation are key for the evolution of combating cybercrime and EC3 has established several multi-stakeholder forums with law enforcement, public and private sectors, organisations and academia to steer the development and utilisation of innovative technologies. Furthermore, the centre coordinates and facilitates EU MS efforts that aim to improve the access to, standardisation and retention of criminal data.

The centre supports citizens as well as public and private sector entities by strengthening their ability to protect against the wide range of cybercrime threats. In parallel, it works to deter and divert individuals who are interested in or entering low-level cybercrime, while also aiming to disrupt and degrade the activities of more committed cyber offenders. This is achieved through strategic offender prevention initiatives and operation-amplification techniques, done in close international cooperation.

2026 Objectives

European Cybercrime Centre (EC3)
Objectives and actions
A.4.1 Ensure the effective functioning of EC3 in providing strategic, tactical and operational support to EU Member States' investigations on cybercrime.

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- Serve as the EU law enforcement hub for collecting, processing, analysing and exchanging information and criminal intelligence of relevance for cybercrime and cyber-enabled investigations. Provide operational support, incl. on-the-spot service, coordination and deconfliction to MS investigations on cyber-dependent crimes, payment fraud and online fraud schemes, child sexual exploitation, Dark Web and cross-cutting crime enablers.
- Provide 24/7 support to MS for immediate reactions to urgent cyber cases and cyber crises via stand-by duty and the EU Law Enforcement Emergency Response Protocol (EU LE ERP).
- Provide management, administrative and logistical support to OTFs. Ensure the timely exchange of information within the OTF, in particular regarding the analysis of the OTF findings, and report to relevant OTF partners.
- Focus on obtaining and processing datasets such as lawfully intercepted and decrypted communications of criminal networks, as well as seized Darknet servers used for criminal trade and the dissemination of child abuse material.
- Increase the focus on collection, processing and production of cyber threat intelligence.
- Provide tactical analyses identifying and prioritising the most important cybercriminal data hubs and services (such as crime-facilitating VPNs, Hosting Services, Communication Platforms, Financial Services, Dark Markets and Sharing forums, and Counter Antivirus Services).
- Produce best practices and investigative guides, and threat intelligence and forward-looking trend reports (e.g., the IOCTA and Europol's contributions to the EU Innovation Hub on Internal Security). Support the cooperation with partners, incl. EU entities and academia, in preparing strategic analysis.
- Serve as the voice of EU law enforcement within the framework of the EU-wide Coordinated Response to Large-Scale Cybersecurity Incidents and Crises (EU Blueprint) and the EU Cyber Crisis Taskforce.
- Carry out comprehensive outreach activities to identify new cooperation opportunities, highlight investigative needs in public debates, communicate operational successes, and strengthen the positioning of Europol and EC3 as key partners in law enforcement cooperation.
- Facilitate the multi-disciplinary interaction between partners and stakeholders, including Advisory Groups, Governance network, Eurojust and the European Judicial Cybercrime Network, ENISA, EUCTF, JRC, and academia for the purposes of establishing cooperation and information-sharing.
- Develop new thematic cooperation in the EC3 Advisory groups, to foster information exchange on trends and criminal new modus operandi.
- Coordinate and support efforts to strengthen operational cooperation of law enforcement with the Computer Security Incident Response Teams (CSIRT) community and in particular with the CSIRTs Network; organise the annual EC3-ENISA workshop for LE-CSIRT cooperation.
- Chair and facilitate the work of the European Group of Heads of Lawful Interception Units (HoLI) and the European Working Group on Standardisation on Public Safety. Ensure the representation of law enforcement interests related to lawful access to data, at rest and in transit, at the EU level and beyond, including at standardisation bodies such as the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) and the 3rd Generation Partnership Project (3GPP).
- Contribute to the implementation of the recommendations proposed by the High-Level Group on access to data for effective law enforcement (within the limits of available resources).

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contribute from an operational perspective to the overall monitoring of developments of new policy/legislative initiatives and their potential impact on Europol, such as the Regulation laying down rules to prevent and combat child sexual abuse, the Digital Services Act, the Cyber Resilience Act and the Artificial Intelligence Package. ○ Promote 'operation amplification' in the operations carried out by MS and Europol (i.e. amplify the impact of operations) taking into account the entire cybercriminal ecosystem and focusing on all levels (from user to administrator), by developing a structured, data-driven, and academic method for targeting cybercrime phenomena and cyber offenders. ○ Increase involvement with the EU Cyber Diplomacy Toolbox and related cooperation frameworks (including the EEAS and CERT-EU networks) to enhance synergies and deconfliction of law enforcement with other communities in addressing current and emerging global digital threats. ○ Organise flagship events, such as the annual cybercrime conference of EC3, to promote EC3 capacities and achievements, foster synergies, and identify new cooperation opportunities. ○ Continue to use the EC3 X (former Twitter) account as a fast dissemination channel for EC3's products and services, as well as to engage with relevant external stakeholders. Promote operational results in combination with immediate public awareness and cyber offender prevention messages.
<p>Expected results: Member States receive quality analytical and operational support for investigations into cyber-crime.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Enhanced joint operational activities with public and private partners of relevance.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">More effective levels of cooperation leading to better coordination and increased operational and strategic results.</p>

Digital Support Services - Digital Forensics

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

Objectives and actions

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

- Deliver digital operational support services in house and on-the-spot, such as criminal infrastructure-oriented cyber forensics to tackle encrypted communication networks, ransomware infrastructure, cryptocurrency mixers, Darknet marketplaces, CSAM forums and other crime facilitating services.
- Provide decryption services using the Europol Decryption Platform to effectively decrypt data at rest to support prioritised investigations. Anticipate and prepare for future platform upgrades and develop a roadmap for Decryption Platform hardware replacement. Continue R&D to develop alternative decryption methods to expand the portfolio of decryption/access to data services.
- Strengthen and prioritise the support to MS on Operational Task Forces targeting High Value Targets and priority investigations.
- Monitor new trends and actively support MS in overcoming technical challenges to their cyber and cyber-facilitated investigations by identifying suitable tactics, performing agile research, developing digital forensic tools and sharing best practices. Deliver agile data extraction services using forensic tools and methods.
- Develop, in coordination with the Innovation Lab, cooperation with the future EU Security Campus to be established at the Joint Research Centre of the European

<p>Commission in line with the new European Internal Security Strategy. Further implement currently running operational research initiatives such as the development of a European Vehicle Forensic Framework under the umbrella of the newly established Campus.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Closely monitor, guide and contribute to the implementation of EU funded projects, such as IVISS, REVEAL, ULTRA XL and COW⁵⁶ with the goal to host and use the tools produced in support of MS investigations. ○ Automate forensic data extraction and indexing process using tailored automation solutions and maximise usage of automated processing of forensic images. Explore possibilities to use AI in the process. Continue to develop the Forensic Automation Framework. ○ Improve capabilities to perform in-depth hardware analysis and reverse engineering, to increase capacity to tackle encrypted communication networks, to extract data from mobile devices, portable encrypted devices, cryptocurrency wallets, as well as Internet of Things (IoT) devices. ○ Establish capacity to use custom data extraction methods from mobile devices, not supported by commercial forensic tools. ○ Further support the transition to the New Forensic Environment. Utilise the NFE to provide forensic extraction and reconstruction services. ○ Identify the requirements for developing EC3 as a centre of excellence for operational expertise in digital forensics at EU level as put forward by the Commission's Roadmap for lawful and effective access to data for law enforcement. ○ Support the Commission in preparing a technology roadmap on encryption and gap and needs analysis of research, development, deployment maintenance and uptake of common technical solutions for digital forensics (within the limits of available resources). ○ Maintain and support Forums and communities on EPE in relevant forensic areas. Organise annual meetings of the Forensic Expert Forum, Vehicle Forensic Experts and Decryption Experts Network. ○ Provide highly specialised training on decryption in cooperation with the European Cybercrime Training and Education Group (ECTEG). Support ECTEG in the development of other training courses on encryption. Support CEPOL in delivering training in the area of forensic support. 	<p>Document Forensics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support MS investigations concerning false documents, counterfeit Euro currency and printing devices. Assist in the dismantling of clandestine print shops. ○ Share the expertise and provide training in false document and currency identification. ○ Explore new areas of R&D in the domain of Document Forensics to prepare tackling emerging challenges such as criminal abuse of AI and machine learning techniques in the area of biometrics e.g., face, fingerprints and iris manipulation. <p>Expected results: Member States receive quality digital and document forensics support and enhanced access to criminal evidence.</p> <p>Increased capacity and functionalities of Europol's Decryption platform.</p> <p>The EC3 Forensic Lab is in the forefront of R&D and in tackling technical challenges.</p>
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⁵⁶ REVEAL - Secure communication criminal networks and protected mobile devices; IVISS - In-Vehicle Surveillance Systems (automotive forensics); ULTRA xL- Uniform Law enforcement response to Technology-enabled crime in the fields of Reverse engineering and machine learning Algorithms; COW - Countering Privacy-Enhancing Challenges of Cryptocurrencies, OSINT, and Wireless.

Cyber Intelligence

Objectives and actions

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

- Collect information on cybercrime and cyber-facilitated crime threats and trends from a wide array of public, private and open sources. Provide knowledge products with regard to (emerging) technology abuse and other new criminal *modi operandi* online.
- Proactively identify significant cybercriminal facilitators and other HVT involved in the most prominent cyber threats. Develop tailored tools for that purpose.
- Enhance collection, processing and storage of large datasets, contributed by MS, by utilising the latest data science techniques for data extraction, transformation, loading, and enrichment. Participate in collaborative international efforts to standardise and further develop tools and procedures for large datasets analytics.
- Contribute to the development of the EC3 Search Hub (EC3SH) for complex ingestion, normalisation, enrichment and analysis of large data sets.
- Maintain and improve the sprint toolbox as well as the technical coordination of the operational sprints with the integration of new products and services.
- Maintain and improve the Europol Malware Analysis Solution (EMAS) as a dedicated, secure and automated malware analysis platform for operational partners.
- Enhance functionalities and the operational security of the Anonymous Internet Services (AIS) project as the main environment to conduct OSINT investigations.
- Expand and improve the Europol Threat Intelligence Platform (ETIP)⁵⁷ to further strengthen the operational information exchange among EC3, law enforcement and cyber security and information security community. Maintain ETIP as a main operational knowledge base with data enrichments contributed by private parties, EUIBAs and open sources.
- Consolidate and fully establish the Cyber Intelligence Gateway (CIG) as entry interface in EC3 with multiple channels to receive intelligence contributions from non-LE parties primarily focused on operational and tactical activities.
- Evaluate the Pilot Cyber Intelligence Extension Program (CIEP) with both LE and non-LE organisations to improve knowledge exchange, threat landscape awareness, and technical deconfliction.
- Strengthen the No More Ransom (NMR) initiative by contributing additional tools and where possible, maintain a restricted catalogue of decryption tools to support responses to attacks on critical infrastructure. Improve the user experience and functionalities of the NMR website.
- Establish a network of Cyber Intelligence points of contact (PoC) and support MS in harmonising and standardising a common working model and data collection approach across the EU. Organise annual workshops (Cybercrime underground, ETIP and EMAS) and Cyber intelligence Network meeting.
- Create a specialised trusted working group on the cybercrime underground ecosystem with dedicated non-EU language capabilities and produce regular snapshots in the form of analytical reports.
- Strengthen the active contribution to the EU Joint Cyber Assessment Report (EU-JCAR) in close cooperation with ENISA and CERT-EU.

⁵⁷ The original Malware Information Sharing Platform (MISP) was extended to cover threat intelligence, financial fraud information, vulnerability information and counter-terrorism information.

- Maintain and actively support forums and communities hosted on EPE in relevant Cybercrime intelligence domains such as cyber threat intelligence, data science and projects such as EMAS and ETIP.

Cryptocurrency

- Support MS and TP investigations and operations with advanced cryptocurrency tracing techniques and analysis.
- Enhance MS knowledge and capabilities through specialised training (e.g., demixing workshop), events (e.g. annual Virtual Currency conference) and other awareness products such as guides.
- Conduct research and development on cryptocurrency tracing solutions in cooperation with stakeholders.
- Strengthen the coordination of cryptocurrency tools and services across Europol to ensure efficiency, consistency and compliance.
- Enhance the establishment of permanent contacts with cryptocurrency exchanges and services.
- Elaborate and promote the use of a best-practice cryptocurrency tracing model for streamlining and enhancing the work of MS competent authorities.
- Maintain and support cryptocurrency forums and communities, incl. those on EPE.

Expected results: Member States receive quality cyber intelligence and cryptocurrency tracing support and benefit from improved criminal intelligence picture.
Enhanced collaboration with public and private partners of relevance leading to better operational results.

Operations on Cyber-Dependent Crimes

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

Objectives and actions

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

- Support MS priority and HVT investigations into cyber-dependent crimes with criminal intelligence analysis, operational capabilities and expertise. Coordinate operational meetings, sprints and action days to strengthen joint efforts.
- Focus on investigations that target and disrupt cybercrimes linked to organised groups, high-impact cybercriminal facilitators and cybercrime-as-a-service ecosystems that result in significant harm or generate greatest illicit profits (such as attacks on critical infrastructure and network and information systems).
- Conduct in-depth quantitative analysis on large datasets to identify and prioritise multiple actionable High-Value Targets including key facilitators and enabling services.
- Contribute to the implementation of the EMPACT Operational Action Plan on Cyber Attacks.
- Promote and uphold the International Law Enforcement Ransomware Response Model (IRRM), developed jointly with the J-CAT, to guide coordinated responses across the ransomware landscape. In collaboration with MS and private sector partners, explore proactive strategies for the early disruption of ransomware campaigns and other ongoing cyber-attacks.

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- Support cyber offender prevention interventions (i.e. activities to deter and divert (potential) offenders and to degrade and disrupt profiles and services used by serious offenders). Support the integration of cyber offender prevention strategies into joint operations conducted by Member States and Europol.

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

Operations on Child Sexual Exploitation

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

Objectives and actions

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

- Support MS in tackling criminal online behaviour against children, such as grooming, self-generated indecent material, sexual extortion and coercion, and web live streaming, with criminal intelligence analysis and operational capabilities and expertise. Coordinate operational meetings, sprints and action days.
- Fight distribution of child sexual exploitation material by preventing, intercepting and stopping the sharing through peer-to-peer networks, commercial platforms, and the Dark Web. Update MS experts on online platforms being set up, maintained or abused for the purpose of child sexual exploitation.
- Tackle the phenomenon of transnational child sex offenders by supporting the EU MS in detecting and intercepting travelling child sexual offenders.
- Tackle the phenomenon of Live Distance Child Abuse by supporting the EU MS in identifying suspicious financial patterns and transactions that may signal abuse-related activity on the basis of a set of financial typologies developed in cooperation with and for the benefit of financial institutions, the Fintech sector and Financial Intelligence Units under the European Financial Intelligence Public Private Partnerships (EFIPPP) framework.
- Support the implementation of the EMPACT Operational Action Plan on Child sexual exploitation (CSE).
- Perform quantitative (in depth data) analysis to proactively identify actionable High Value Targets and crucial facilitators and services within the CSAM landscape. Set up OTFs for joint analysis of larger CSAM related datasets.
- Monitor developments on AI generated Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) and support investigations that disrupt criminal facilitators active within this area.
- Deliver expertise within initiatives dealing with victim identification undertaken by and with partners. Continue hosting Victim Identification Taskforces (VIDTF) to foster cooperation and pooling of expertise from different law enforcement agencies and Interpol. Explore options to turn VIDTF into a permanent entity at Europol.
- Assess EC3 data collection modalities and the possibilities to ensure effective handling of the ever-increasing data contributions, including as an anticipation of trends of AI-generated CSAM.
- Explore the use of new Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to more efficiently analyse and process information linked to child sexual abuse in accordance with the EU legal framework for AI. In this regard, ensure synergies within Europol (through leveraging the capabilities of EC3 and the Innovation Lab) and with partners, such as the EC3 Advisory Group on Research and Development.

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- Further develop and utilise the existing Image and Video Analysis Solution (IVAS) with AI functionalities and the internal expertise on victim identification.
- Further integrate and utilise the automated referral system European Union Child Abuse Referral Service (EU-CARES), facilitating the receiving, processing and disseminating of information on suspected child sexual exploitation online from pertinent non-law enforcement actors to the relevant MS competent authorities, and the automatic cross check against Europol's data.
- Prepare to implement effectively the EU Regulation laying down rules to prevent and combat child sexual abuse and to establish cooperation with the proposed new EU Centre to prevent and combat child sexual abuse (once adopted and subject to available resources). Support MS in coordination and prioritisation for the anticipated growing number of investigations.
- Continue providing support to the Virtual Global Taskforce, to align innovative and global strategies, ensuring the use of the most relevant tools and effective approaches to counter CSE.
- Deliver and support training courses on Victim Identification and Combating Online Sexual Exploitation of Children.
- Support cyber offender prevention interventions (i.e. activities to deter and divert (potential) offenders and to degrade and disrupt profiles and services used by serious offenders). Support the integration of cyber offender prevention strategies into joint operations conducted by Member States and Europol.
- Contribute to the establishment of the Help4U online platform providing assistance and support to victims of child sexual abuse and exploitation.

Expected results: Member States receive quality analytical and operational support for investigations into child sexual exploitation.

Operations on Payment Fraud and Online Fraud Schemes

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

Objectives and actions

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

- Support MS in tackling technical and sophisticated forms of payment fraud, such as skimming⁵⁸, banking phishing and online fraud (cyber-enabled fraud) schemes, incl. payment process compromise (business e-mail compromise) with criminal intelligence analysis and operational capabilities and expertise. Coordinate operational meetings, sprints and action days.
- Prioritise investigations into cybercriminal facilitators within the payment fraud landscape, such as phishing-as-a-service platforms, and promote the effective prioritisation of HVTs and identification of optimal follow-up response measures.
- Support the implementation of the EMPACT Operational Action Plan on Online fraud schemes.
- Promote operational actions in the area of telecom fraud, including international mobile subscriber identity (IMSI)-catcher⁵⁹ attacks, vishing, SIM swapping or smishing⁶⁰, in

⁵⁸ Duplication of a card's magnetic strip often through devices hidden within compromised ATMs and Point-Of-Sale terminals.

⁵⁹ Device used for intercepting mobile phone traffic and tracking location data of mobile phone users.

⁶⁰ Smishing is a phishing cybersecurity attack carried out over mobile text messaging, also known as SMS phishing.

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<p>collaboration with law enforcement, judiciary and relevant private partners. Contribute to the identification of solutions mitigating cross-border caller-ID spoofing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improve criminal intelligence on phishing and account takeover attacks (affecting financial institutions, payment gateways, airline, hotel and e-commerce sector) and promote and look for operational opportunities, as well as prevention initiatives in that area. ○ Participate in selected cooperation platforms within the payment fraud landscape, such as the EAST Expert Group on Payment and Transaction Fraud, in order to obtain fast awareness on new modus operandi and intervention options. ○ Facilitate cooperation among LEAs, the private sector and regulators (the European Central Bank at European level and National Banks at national level). Continue to look for opportunities for collaboration with the Computer Security Incident Response Teams (CSIRT) community in the fight against different forms of online fraud. ○ Continue exploring and investing in cooperation with key private partners on non-cash payment fraud cases and online fraud and exchange crime-relevant information, by utilising new opportunities for cooperation with private parties stemming from the Europol Regulation. ○ Deliver the annual training course on Payment Card Fraud Forensics and Investigations. ○ Promote awareness campaigns targeting the most preeminent scams.
<p>Expected results: Member States receive quality analytical and operational support for investigations into non-cash payment fraud.</p>

Operations on Criminal Online Trade and Use of Online Environments

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

Objectives and actions

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

- Support MS and Europol's crime centres in combating criminal networks involved in the administration and moderation of Dark Web activities, including the related commodity-based vendors and buyers, as well as alternative communication platforms and its users, with criminal intelligence analysis and operational capabilities and expertise.
- Provide in-depth data analysis on Dark Web data repositories to enhance the data enrichment and the identification of HVTs and crucial facilitators and services involved in crime on the Dark Web and alternative platforms. Coordinate, plan and execute joint technical, investigative and prevention actions to maximise operational impact.
- Pro-actively support seizures and takedowns of Dark web platforms and encourage MS and TP to contribute the related communications (between buyers, sellers and market administrators) and other datasets to Europol, to be used for operational and tactical analysis.
- Maintain knowledge and expertise on tools, tactics and techniques for conducting Dark Web investigations. Explore options how to de-anonymise cybercriminal identification and communication for MS.
- Support cyber offender prevention interventions (i.e. activities to deter and divert (potential) offenders and to degrade and disrupt profiles and services used by serious

<p>offenders). Support the integration of cyber offender prevention strategies into joint operations conducted by Member States and Europol.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Convene an annual expert forum to exchange insights and best practices on emerging developments and investigative approaches relating to the Dark Web.
<p>Expected results: Member States receive quality analytical and operational support for Dark Web investigations.</p>

Joint Cybercrime Action Taskforce (J-CAT)
Objectives and actions
<p>A.4.8 Provide support and operational coordination to the J-CAT operations and activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Host, support and coordinate the work of the Joint Cybercrime Action Taskforce (J-CAT) composed of Cyber Liaison Officers from closely involved Member States, EC3, non-EU law enforcement partners and the dedicated Eurojust liaison officer. Other partners from relevant law enforcement agencies are engaged on ad-hoc basis for cases affecting two or more J-CAT members. ○ Stimulate the joint prioritisation and preparation of cross-border investigations by the J-CAT partners. Further improve and fine-tune the recently developed J-CAT case prioritisation model assisting the identification of the most relevant or effective investigations. ○ Strengthen the support to MS on Operational Taskforces, the effective prioritisation of HVTs, resource allocation and identification of optimal follow-up. Promote the establishment of an OTF with a special focus on cybercrime facilitators. ○ Assess the temporary solutions for joint analysis in the context of OTFs, for implementation of further improvements. ○ Explore the modalities for establishing a tactical data analysis project to support the identification of actionable top HVT and their network while promoting data-driven investigations. ○ Uphold and update the International Law Enforcement Ransomware Response Model (IRRM), in view of supporting the operational and tactical response to ransomware and cybercrime facilitators. ○ De-conflict and identify synergies for joint operational activities with the other global cybercrime taskforces and key cyber operational centres (e.g., the CyberCrime 9 group⁶¹, NCFTA and Interpol) towards optimising resources and the effectiveness of operations. ○ Explore options to intensify collaboration between J-CAT partners and key industry partners including those of EC3 Advisory groups and the Pilot Cyber Intelligence Extension Program to enable the undertaking of joint initiatives between J-CAT, EC3 and the private sector. ○ Organise the annual J-CAT Board meeting. Organise regular chair group meetings to promote and support the strategic direction of the J-CAT activities.
<p>Expected results: J-CAT investigations and OTFs receive quality analytical and operational support.</p>

⁶¹ The CyberCrime 9 (C9) is a high-ranking cybercrime operational and strategic forum, which formally brings together the shared priorities and collective strengths of the nations and organisations that have the most impact on countering cybercrime.

Improved joint operational activities with public and private partners of relevance.

Research & Development

Objectives and actions

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

- Foster the continuous development of expertise to support pro-active and innovative approaches, incl. the latest data science approaches. Further build up competence on technological innovation such as 5G, 6G, AI, encryption and anonymisation services in coordination with the Innovation Lab, JRC or the EC3 Advisory Group on Research and Development (AGRD).
- Coordinate the demand and development of new technical solutions, including R&D, with the Forensic Experts Forum, the Cyber Innovation Forum and other relevant networks and platforms, such as the Tools4LEAs project, in collaboration with the Innovation Lab. Provide advice to R&D priorities at national and EU level and support the uptake of relevant project results, particularly in relation to EU funding programs, if and where appropriate. Organise the Cyber Innovation Forum for Law Enforcement.
- In coordination with Europol's Innovation Lab, broaden and continue to implement the technology watch function to pro-actively inform about criminal abuse of new technology while ensuring the consideration of the law enforcement angle in the process of development and innovation.
- Interact with law enforcement representatives in the EU, industry and academia to develop and present collective views in the global discussion on Internet Governance, in regional, national and international forums and in relation to the EU policy making and legislative process.
- In coordination with the SIRIUS project, develop joint capacity building activities to ease the access to data from E-governance actors, or to counter the abuses of the Domain Name System. Explore the potential benefit of the European Domain Name System (DNS4EU)⁶² for investigation needs.
- Coordinate and when relevant support the demand, development and delivery of specialised cybercrime training, including in support of the CEPOL Cybercrime Academy.
- Promote the EC3 Secure Platform for Accredited Cybercrime Experts (SPACE) as a centre of excellence where relevant experts exchange strategic information and best practices.
- Contribute to the preparation and delivery of prevention and awareness campaigns and activities in the cybercrime-mandated areas as detailed in the EC3 Cybercrime Prevention and Awareness Programme 2026. Work closely with partners who have the capacity to develop or disseminate educational material (such as ENISA, EACTDA⁶³, AGRD or ECTEG among others).
- Promote the engagement of the private sector in cyber offender prevention activities aiming to deter and divert cybercriminal pathways.
- Increase the focus on promoting and scaling up successful national prevention initiatives or best practices among Member States through Europol channels.

⁶² European Commission's initiative to develop a public European Domain Name System (DNS) resolver service, as an alternative European service for accessing the global Internet.

⁶³ European Anti-Cybercrime Technology Development Association

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Expected results:	<p>Coordinated efforts in research and development lead to greater realisation of common projects and technical solutions in the cybercrime area.</p> <p>Member States receive up-to-date technical support in the cyber domain.</p> <p>Improved public awareness and prevention campaigns.</p>
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Indicators	Latest result (Q2 2025)	Target 2026
Number of Accepted contributions by EC3 ⁶⁴	5,107	9,000
Number of Operations supported by EC3	239	500
Number of Operational Task Forces supported by EC3 (where EC3 is in the lead)	4	4
Number of Operational Reports delivered by EC3	2,169	3,900
Number of Action Days coordinated/supported by EC3	22	41
Number of Decryption platform successes	20	40
Satisfaction with Operational Support and Analysis provided by EC3	9.8	8.5

⁶⁴ The responsibility for this indicator is shared by Europol and its partners (MS, TP). As such, the target is indicative and used to monitor the trend of accepted contributions.

A.5. Counter-Terrorism

Overview



The European Counter-Terrorism Centre (ECTC) is a centre of excellence which benefits from a robust governance framework under the auspices of the Heads of European Counter Terrorism and also the Counter Terrorism Programme Board (CTPB). These governance steering mechanisms were reviewed in 2024/2025 to meet the ongoing requirements of the CT community and to guide Europol's prioritisation of tasks within the ECTC, in parallel with the evolving terrorism threat landscape.

The ECTC works towards the maximisation of operational, technical and overall information exchange capabilities in the area of counter-terrorism and aims to ensure added value for EU Member States, as well as third party cooperation partners, namely by providing a variety of services such as:

- cross-checks and analysis, processing of biometrics, digital forensics, identification and tracking of terrorist financial assets and transactions, as well as CBRN&E expertise;
- operational coordination of transnational investigations;
- on-the-spot support through deployment of ECTC officers to support live investigations from the infancy of the investigation to the termination of court procedures wherein the ECTC can provide expert evidence;
- proactive mitigation of online terrorist propaganda through the expertise of the EU Internet Referral Unit (EU IRU) by monitoring and documenting online terrorist propaganda, conducting OSINT checks and liaising with online service providers;
- establishing outreach with relevant international and private partners;
- creating awareness by providing expertise on terrorist related phenomena and strategic reporting on new terrorism modus operandi and developments, incl. in crisis regions.

In addition to counter-terrorism, the ECTC supports MS investigations on core international crimes and holds the Support Office for the ATLAS Network of Special Intervention Units. Furthermore, the EU IRU acts as a knowledge hub in the field of cross-border access to evidence (building on the SIRIUS project) and with regards to the risks and opportunities of new technologies related to online content.

2026 Objectives

Governance, Outreach and Stakeholder Management

Objectives and actions

A.5.1 Ensure the effective functioning of the ECTC and provide strategic and operational support to EU Member States, including through outreach to relevant partners, to mitigate the risk of terrorism.

Governance

- Administer and support the CT Program Board (CTPB). Ensure the implementation and coordination of the CTPB work plan.
- Evaluate opportunities to strengthen the role of the CTPB and update its Terms of Reference as needed. Aim to enhance the CT Heads' input to the ECTC, including as regards to the TE-SAT report. Further develop the link between the CT Heads and the CTPB in order to ascertain a unified strategic direction, increasing the ECTC's operational relevance.

Outreach

- Oversee the establishment of CT-related cooperation with EU institutions and agencies, international organisations, law enforcement, academia and private sector entities with a particular focus on stakeholders at policy level.
- Sustain efforts to enhance cooperation with MS, identified priority third countries, in line with the External Strategy and other relevant partners to expand on ECTC's access to high quality data in the area of counter-terrorism, including biographic and biometric data on individuals that might pose a terrorist threat.
- Further strengthen cooperation with TP to enhance security checks for suspects with a potential terrorism nexus at cross border points in the EU, making full use of Europol's capacity with regards to the Interoperability of EU systems for border management.
- Maintain effective cooperation between the intelligence community and Europol in areas of common interest, where appropriate, while fully respecting the sole responsibility of Member States for national security.
- Develop the cooperation with Frontex and Interpol, exploring areas where the respective experience, knowledge and networking might enrich the collaboration and increase the security of EU borders, including by leveraging the activities of Europol Guest Officers deployed in the "hotspots".
- In line with the External Strategy, contribute from an operational perspective to the development and increase of the strategic cooperation with the United Nations (UNCTED, UNOCT, UNODC), EU institutions and bodies (EEAS CSDP missions, CT/security experts in EU delegations, the EU Institute for Security Studies), NATO and other regional agencies active in the CT field. Actively exchange strategic outputs and products in close consultation with Member States.
- Continue enhancing cooperation with the Western Balkan countries on the basis of the operational agreements and the renewed-Western Balkans Joint CT Action Plan.
- Further enhance cooperation with the MENA countries, Türkiye and other regions where threats are identified, in line with the security interests of MS and Europol's External Strategy:
 - through CT dialogues or by supporting CT/security experts deployed by MS to EU Delegations and CSDP-missions/operations;
 - by participating in capacity building initiatives offered by CEPOL and EU-funded programmes, such as the CT JUST⁶⁵ or CEPOL INFLOW⁶⁶;
 - by participating in the Working Group on FTF and returnees of the EU-MENA Information Sharing and Analysis Network (EMISA); and
 - by identifying strategic/technical partners for the establishment of a common product or specific strategic initiative.
- Continue advancing policy level outreach and capacity building efforts related to countering the financing of terrorism, focusing on the Counter Terrorism Financial

⁶⁵ CT JUST Project: Counter Terrorism in the MENA region, West Africa & the Horn of Africa

⁶⁶ Counter-Terrorism Information Exchange and Criminal Justice Responses (CT INFLOW)

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<p>Investigators Network, which facilitates the exchange of investigation techniques and experiences on CT financial investigations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Further enhance the level of public-private partnership in relevant areas, such as core international crimes, financing of terrorism and access to e-evidence. Support the Europol Financial Intelligence Public Private Partnership (EFIPPP). ○ Strengthen outreach and strategic engagements with European and international centres of excellence and institutional actors specialised in hybrid threats, disinformation, and OSINT, to foster cooperation as well as knowledge exchange. ○ Organise/facilitate periodical and recurrent operational and strategic meetings and stakeholder events, including the ECTC Advisory Network on Terrorism and Propaganda meetings and the annual conference. Organise/participate in High Level outreach meetings to promote the work of ECTC and encourage MS contributions. ○ Contribute to and support the delivery of training by CEPOL Knowledge Centre on Counter-Terrorism (CKC CT). 	
Expected results:	<p>Effective functioning of the ECTC governance mechanisms leading to increased support to MS CT priorities.</p> <p>Enhanced cooperation with stakeholders leading to better coordination and increased operational and strategic results.</p>

Monitoring of Terrorist Trends and Creating Awareness

Objectives and actions

A.5.2 Ensure the monitoring of terrorism incidents and trends and sharing CT related expertise.

- Monitor significant incidents, arrests and propaganda activity and provide early warnings and reports, identifying threats and emerging trends impacting EU security (also in the CBRNE sphere).
- Perform proactive and structural scanning of the online environment, in prioritised crime areas of terrorism (religiously inspired and politically motivated violent extremism), and migrant smuggling or ad hoc upon Member States' specific requests, in other crime areas (racism and xenophobia).
- Deliver operational products and contribute to the preparation of strategic products related to online content in prioritised crime areas, thereby providing insights on trends and threats relevant to law enforcement's efforts to address the dissemination of terrorist content online.
- Support the gathering of information for the TE-SAT report.
- Maintain a structured and up-to-date database on terrorist related matters to support analysis, reporting and awareness. Curate and update a comprehensive knowledge base on various forms and typologies of terrorism.
- Support the development of the new Check-the-Web Portal as the e-Library to store and analyse terrorist and violent extremist content online. Organise tailored trainings for MS competent authorities.
- Organise and facilitate thematic meetings to create awareness and share knowledge on terrorism threats and trends.

Expected results:	<p>Member States receive timely updates on incidents, threats and emerging trends in the CT domain.</p> <p>Increased level of sharing of CT-related knowledge and expertise at EU level.</p>
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ECTC Operational Activities

Objectives and actions

A.5.3 Provide support to EU Member States' counter-terrorism investigations and investigations on core international crimes.

Cross-cutting actions

- Analyse criminal intelligence and support Member States with operational capabilities and expertise, including on-the-spot support.
- Implement measures to meet the exponentially growing need for de-confliction of CT-related data with national CT units. Contribute to the development of a de-confliction solution at EU level by encouraging the use of PERCI for this purpose.
- Provide management, administrative and logistical support to OTFs following the adjusted concept for establishing OTFs in the CT area. Ensure the timely exchange of information within the OTF, in particular regarding the analysis of the OTF findings, and report to relevant OTF partners.
- In cooperation with Eurojust, provide support to Joint Investigation Teams (JIT) in the areas of religiously and politically motivated terrorism and violent extremism as well as core international crimes.
- Increase involvement in the initial phase of operations, in particular by on-the-spot deployments, in order to maximise operational support, exchange of information between different parties and detection of international links.
- Prepare anonymised case studies demonstrating how operational work prevents incidents, provides added value and mitigates risks.
- In coordination with EC3, collaborate with MS and TP in order to share knowledge and best practices and tools in the field of digital forensics and to build a strong network of forensic experts among CT stakeholders.
- Support initiatives and projects for developing innovative tools or processes bringing operational benefit to investigations (in collaboration with the Innovation Lab).

Religiously and politically motivated terrorism and violent extremism

- Provide support to operational cases and perform priority actions related to politically and religiously motivated terrorism and violent extremism aiming at identifying targets (Organisations/Individuals) in high profile cases.
- Support high priority operations through the Terrorist Identification Task Force (TITF) action week, which is targeting CT suspects for whom there is not enough evidence for opening prosecutions. Organise at least four TITF sessions per year focusing on the most significant and threatening terrorist phenomena in alignment with the priorities of the CTPB. Assess the results of operations and present the assessment to Member States via all appropriate channels.
- Foster the complementarity between CT strategic work, operations and online investigations within the ECTC in view of maximising the response to politically motivated violent extremism and terrorism.
- Process operational information received from the secondary security checks on the inward flows of migrants, in order to identify suspected terrorists.
- Exploit the lists of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) received from reliable Third Parties and facilitate the creation of alerts in the SIS II by MS, based on the voluntary process (coordinated approach) established by the Terrorism Working Party (TWP).
- Ensure adequate exploitation of biometrical data of third country nationals posing a terrorist threat in order to properly reflect this information in the SIS through the creation of alerts.

- Propose and facilitate the insertion of the new SIS information alerts on third-country nationals in the interest of the Union, once this new alert category is implemented in the Schengen Information System.
- Increase the exploitation of SIS information on terrorist alerts obtained through the Europol SIRENE Office.
- Cooperate with Frontex on the update and implementation of Common Risk Indicators and identification/detection of travelling terrorists upon border crossing through tailored operational activities and by utilising SIENA communication channels on real time cases for facial recognition and other biometric tools if applicable⁶⁷.

Terrorist Financing

- Perform verification, information exchange and analysis of financial information as EU SPOC, pursuant to the implementation of the EU-US Terrorist Finance Tracking Programme Agreement (TFTP).
- Support CT investigations with all types of information and expertise relevant to financing of terrorism and extremism.
- Update and expand the mandate of the TFTP team to reflect current financial and technological advancements in line with the Europol Regulation.
- Increase accuracy, reliability and digitalisation (where possible) of CT relevant output derived from financial data exchanged, processed and analysed under the TFTP Agreement.
- Contribute to the establishment of an EU Terrorist Finance Tracking System (TFTS) complementing the TFTP by focusing on intra EU payments.
- Liaise with Europol's Financial and Economic Crime Centre (EFECC) and with the competent ESOC and EC3 units to close information gaps and receive specialised support for complex cases. Collaborate with EC3 on the use of cryptocurrency by a wide range of terrorist groups.

War Crimes, Genocide, Crimes against Humanity

- Streamline the gathering and processing of information at EU level for selected priority conflicts and cases of war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity. Perform criminal intelligence analysis and support Member States with operational capabilities and expertise, including on-the-spot support.
- Foster the collection of data from private parties, international organisations and other relevant sources (NGOs, UN, ICC/OTP⁶⁸, military, immigration authorities, etc.).
- Utilise the joint operational platform established with Eurojust aiming to provide coordinated support for operational needs in investigations (related to Ukraine) identified as priority at judicial level.
- Initiate the development of a digital central platform in cooperation with Eurojust for pro-active outreach and detection of key witnesses to atrocities in conflict areas and refugee communities worldwide. Explore the technical modalities for setting up a secure digital environment for witnesses to come forward and provide information on perpetrators and atrocity crimes.
- Develop a global overview of ongoing and past investigations into core international crimes conducted by both EU MS and Third countries associated to the ECTC through the creation of a dedicated repository.

⁶⁷ Subject to concluding a new working arrangement between Europol and Frontex, including exchange of personal data.

⁶⁸ International Criminal Court - Office of the Prosecutor (OTP)

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Expected results:	<p>Member States receive quality analytical and operational support for investigations into counter-terrorism and core international crimes.</p> <p>Effective deconfliction in online and offline CT-related activities.</p> <p>Enhanced international cooperation in order to mitigate the threat posed by Foreign Terrorist Fighters.</p> <p>Effective use of EU Interoperability Systems to protect EU borders and prevent entry of individuals representing a terrorist threat.</p> <p>Increased number, accuracy and relevance of CT leads derived from financial data and financial criminal intelligence.</p>
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EU IRU - Internet Investigations

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

Objectives and actions

A.5.4 Provide support to EU Member States' CT internet-based investigations.

- Provide operational support to CT and migrant smuggling internet-based investigations by conducting open-source searches using cutting edge OSINT techniques and tools, and facilitating coordination among stakeholders. Support Europol's centres with advanced OSINT for complex cases.
- Act as a centre of excellence in OSINT investigations, providing expertise and guidance to Member States and other Europol centres on the latest OSINT techniques and tools. Support the development of OSINT and social media monitoring capabilities within Europol.
- Conduct in-depth big data analysis on open-source information related to terrorist propaganda collected by the EU IRU to produce social network analysis, allowing the identification of key influencers in networks, and the elaboration of detailed profiles of terrorist individuals or groups.
- Deliver tailored technical solutions and expertise within the ECTC, enhancing the collection, analysis, and dissemination of CT intelligence. Support the implementation of IT solutions for the EU IRU, ensuring the effective and efficient monitoring and analysis of the terrorist propaganda detected online.
- Develop, acquire, and maintain innovative OSINT solutions that enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of OSINT operations, and provide cutting-edge capabilities to support counter-terrorism efforts.
- Expand OSINT capabilities to effectively monitor and investigate emerging threats on gaming platforms, Metaverse, and other innovative technologies including artificial intelligence, decentralised and encrypted platforms.
- Enhance investigative capacities in tracing decentralised assets such as cryptocurrencies and other digital tokens to support CT cases.
- Explore the possibilities to develop and/or implement software solutions for countering fake news and trolls-driven communication within the realm of counter terrorism.
- Collaborate with the Innovation Lab on innovative projects that leverage new technologies to address operational needs, and engage with relevant private sector stakeholders to find suitable solutions.

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Participate as expert in EU Core groups and projects related to the development and implementation of innovative tools and technologies, with a focus on AI, machine learning and big data analysis.	
Expected results:	<p>Member States receive quality analytical and operational support for CT and migrant smuggling internet-based investigations.</p> <p>Enhanced collection, analysis, and dissemination of counter-terrorism intelligence, and effective and efficient monitoring and analysis of the terrorist propaganda detected online through the adoption of innovative tools and practices.</p> <p>Enhanced dissemination of OSINT expertise and best practices across MS' CT agencies and Europol's centres, strengthening their investigative and analytical capabilities.</p>

EU IRU - Prevention and Crisis Response

Objectives and actions

A.5.5 Provide quality online content assessment and referral services.

- Coordinate and share with a network of national counterparts the assessment and referral of online content in the prioritised crime areas of terrorism (religiously inspired and politically motivated violent extremism) and migrant smuggling, or in other mandated crime areas upon Member States' specific requests (racism and xenophobia).
- Place specific focus on ongoing geopolitical crises, the exploitation of a widening range of emerging technologies, and the targeting of vulnerable individuals - particularly minors - by terrorists and violent extremists. Ensure EU IRU's swift adaptability to new crisis situations and threats/trends in order to provide timely and effective response.
- Enhance assessment and referral of channels linked to migrant smuggling, and strengthen the operational and analytical support provided to the EMSC in this area, in response to the growing operational and content moderation workload.
- Engage with relevant online service providers (OSPs) to support MS content moderation activities and facilitate the implementation of the EU Terrorist Content Online (TCO) Regulation and the Digital Services Act (DSA) (Art 18).
- Organise and coordinate joint Referral Action Days in cooperation with experts from MS/TP and OSPs.
- Play a central role in the coordination of the emergency responses in the event of a terrorist attack with a significant online component following the EU Crisis Protocol.
- Prepare the annual EU IRU Transparency Report and Europol's Annual Report on the TCO Regulation (Article 14 (6)).
- Support the activities of the EU Internet Forum's (EUIF) Action Plan, where Europol's expertise is required. Maintain a close dialogue with the internet industry in the framework of the Forum.
- Engage with the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT) and other initiatives that focus on crisis response or content moderation.
- Deliver training in the context of referrals and content moderation.

PERCI Platform

- Ensure the efficient functioning of the EU Platform for Referrals and Removal Orders (PERCI), as a communication and coordination tool for addressing the dissemination

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<p>of illegal content online under the EU Terrorist Content Online (TCO) Regulation, and for 24/7 real time crisis response following the EUCP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate the onboarding of relevant Hosting Service Providers into PERCI for the performance of their mandated tasks under the TCO Regulation. Progress with the establishment of an automated workflow in PERCI for the intake, handling and distribution of notifications of threat to life or safety of persons stemming from illegal online content involving all crime areas covered by the Digital Services Act (art. 18) ⁶⁹. Use PERCI to send referrals for illegal online content in Europol's mandated areas. Develop PERCI functionalities for the EU MS to send referrals of illegal online content in crime areas outside Europol's mandate. Expand the EU IRU capabilities to the extent possible to meet the increasing workload from managing the PERCI platform, supporting Member States in using PERCI and utilising the crime intelligence emerging from the flagged content. 	
Expected results:	<p>Provision of quality online content assessment and referral services.</p> <p>Enhanced cooperation with MS competent authorities and the private sector on online content moderation and the implementation of the TCO Regulation / DSA Art. 18.</p> <p>An efficient EU-wide mechanism for moderation of online terrorist or violent extremist content and for crisis response to viral dissemination following a terrorist event.</p> <p>Increased number of online terrorist and violent extremist content and content promoting illegal immigration services is taken down.</p>

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

Objectives and actions

A.5.6 Provide CBRN/E support to EU Member States' investigations

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide support and expertise to Member States on Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear substances and explosives (CBRN/E) security (incl. the online dimension). Assist all Europol centres with technical assessments when required. Support the exchange of information and best practices on CBRN-E cases. Contribute to capacity-building initiatives for MS. Ensure the permanent secretariat and the continuity of the activities of the European Ordnance Disposal Units Network (EEODN). Manage and administer the EPEs on EEODN and the European Bomb Data System. Support international projects on EEODN aiming to further develop technical skills of the bomb technicians and the CBRN experts from MS competent authorities. Present operational findings and threat situation to the Commission in support of its policy making initiatives. Engage with EU MS and the Commission to jointly conduct experiments on potential new CBRNE threats. Track potential developments, threats and trends in the area of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) in the area of explosives. 	
Expected results:	<p>Member States receive quality analytical and operational support in the CBRN/E area.</p>

⁶⁹ On the basis of the contribution agreement between the European Commission and Europol.

	Europol's CBRN/E work is aligned with Member States operational needs and European Commission's policy initiatives.
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ATLAS Support

Objectives and actions

A.5.7 Provide support to the ATLAS Network.

- Serve as the main interface of the ATLAS Network of Special Intervention Units for Europol's CT and SOC communities and support the establishment of links with other relevant law enforcement expert networks supported by Europol. Facilitate the exchange of strategic and operational expertise and practices.
- Act as a contact and coordination point, in consultation with the ATLAS Executive Bureau, for cross-border or special operations carried out by units of the ATLAS network.
- Provide administrative and logistical support to the implementation of the ATLAS Multi Annual Work Programme.
- Further develop and manage the ATLAS connectivity initiative (EPE, ONEP-EPE, SIENA, NEOS, Pooling & Sharing, etc.) and support the provision of relevant training.
- Continue the development of Pooling & Sharing programmes for specialised equipment as well as joint training facilities.
- Support the ATLAS Executive Bureau in organising and conducting central network meetings, such as the ATLAS Management Board Meetings, the ATLAS Commanders Fora, and the Pool of Expert Meetings.
- Enhance the information provided to law enforcement authorities and other relevant stakeholders about ATLAS activities.
- Act as a full member of the ATLAS Forum C2 (Command, Control).

Expected results:

A more efficient administration of the ATLAS Network through the use of Europol's existing structures and tools.

Links and synergies for strategic and operational expertise between ATLAS, Europol and law enforcement networks are created and maintained.

Alignment of EU standards through best practice findings, standard operational procedures, Manuals of Guidance and sharing outcomes across the ATLAS Network members.

Cross-border access to electronic evidence

Objectives and actions

A.5.8 Provide support to Member states and third countries on acquiring cross-border access to electronic evidence.

- Implement the third phase of the SIRIUS project in cooperation with Eurojust by expanding the support to third countries.
- Support law enforcement in MS and selected third countries in connecting with service providers (SPs) and analysing the digital footprint of a target in all crime areas investigations through the SIRIUS capability.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Build the capacities of law enforcement for access to e-evidence through training and awareness-raising activities, practical guidelines, sharing of best practices and lessons learnt, as well as via other resources. ○ Provide awareness and training opportunities for LEAs regarding the application of the EU Electronic Evidence Regulation (in February 2026) and the different legal frameworks applicable in the regions, which are within the geographical scope of SIRIUS. ○ Expand the geographical scope of SIRIUS, as a central hub for knowledge sharing on electronic evidence, to different regions and partners and support EU efforts in promoting EU standards and international legal instruments. ○ Upgrade the work on the in-house development of tools for investigations to be shared via the EPE. Become a reference point for co-creation of technical investigative solutions in cooperation with Europol-wide expertise (such as Europol SIRIUS Tool Repository) and with IT developers from the LEA. Organise targeted events, such as SIRIUS Codefest and SIRIUS Placement Programme. ○ Maintain and develop the SIRIUS mobile application allowing LEA to access SIRIUS resources through smartphone. ○ In order to facilitate MS lawful access requests and line with the Roadmap for lawful and effective access to data for law enforcement, develop together with Eurojust, in cooperation with the private sector, a catalogue of the data that electronic communications services legitimately process for their business purposes (within the limits of available resources). ○ Continue setting up SIRIUS as a permanent team in the EU IRU to ensure the continuation of its services to MS. 	
Expected results:	<p>Increased capacity of MS and selected third countries to prepare effective digital data requests to SPs and obtain electronic evidence.</p> <p>Enhanced mutual trust and cooperation between MS/third countries and service providers.</p>

Indicators	Latest result (Q2 2025)	Target 2026
Number of Accepted contributions by ECTC ⁷⁰	9,626	13,000
Number of Operations supported by ECTC	928	1,300
Number of Operational Task Forces supported by ECTC (where ECTC is in the lead)	7	9
Number of Operational Reports delivered by ECTC	1,313	2,400
Number of Action Days coordinated/supported by ECTC	22	50
Satisfaction with Operational Support and Analysis provided by ECTC	9.5	8.5
Volume of content assessed by EU IRU related to terrorism and violent extremism	18,652	25,000

⁷⁰ The responsibility for this indicator is shared by Europol and its partners (MS, TP). As such, the target is indicative and used to monitor the trend of accepted contributions.

A.6. Combating Financial and Economic Crime

Overview

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



The EFECC strives to achieve the following goals:

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

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

2026 Objectives

European Financial and Economic Crime Centre (EFECC)
Objectives and actions
<p>A.6.1 Ensure the effective functioning of the EFECC in providing strategic and operational support to EU Member States' investigations on financial and economic crime.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Serve as the EU law enforcement hub for collecting, processing, analysing and exchanging information and criminal intelligence of relevance for financial and economic crime. Provide operational support, incl. on-the-spot service, expertise and

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<p>stakeholder management in the field of fraud, money laundering, asset recovery, sanctions, corruption and counterfeiting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Promote the systematic use of financial investigations as an investigative technique into organised crime and forge alliances with public and private entities in order to trace, seize and confiscate criminal assets in the EU and beyond. ○ Provide management, administrative and logistical support to the OTFs. Ensure the timely exchange of information within the OTF, in particular regarding the analysis of the OTF findings, and report to relevant OTF partners. ○ Ensure support to the implementation of EMPACT 2026-2029, particularly on the Common Horizontal Strategic Goal "Follow, seize, and confiscate the proceeds of crime" and on the EU priorities on "Economic and Financial Crime", "Online fraud scheme" and "The most threatening criminal networks and individuals". ○ Enhance crypto tracing / virtual assets expertise and analysis to ensure operational support to investigations involving virtual assets. ○ Contribute to dedicated risk and threat assessments, strategic and situation reports in the areas of EFECC competence. Contribute to policy development such as drafting of guidelines or revision of standards when requested by the Commission. ○ Manage all EPEs relating to financial and economic crime. ○ Further extend the Joint Financial Intelligence Group (JFIG) at Europol to improve cooperation between Europol Liaison Bureaux and EFECC Analysis Projects in order to better align investigative priorities and improve effectiveness of pursued cases. ○ Maintain the Customs cooperation function within the EFECC including the cooperation with the Commission Service competent for customs matters. Support the Joint Customs Advisory Working Group (J-Customs) at Europol. Encourage customs authorities' participation in the relevant Analysis Projects and EMPACT OAPs. ○ Further promote the utilisation of the connection between the Customs Information System (CIS) and Europol's databases, enabling automated cross-checking. ○ Follow closely the developments related to the Customs Reform with respect to Europol's mandate. Follow the establishment of the new Customs Authority, in particular concerning its role of a central customs interlocutor for non-customs authorities (e.g., law enforcement authorities, including Europol). ○ Establish a working relationship with the Anti Money Laundering Authority (AMLA) and actively contribute to the joint analysis conducted by the FIUs in AMLA. ○ Foster the established cooperation with the European Public Prosecutor Office (EPPO) and contribute to the implementation of the new Anti-Fraud Architecture in the EU. Support an increasing number of EPPO operations. ○ Enhance operational cooperation and exchange of strategic and technical information with OLAF by making extensive use of the established SIENA connection and dedicated OLAF Liaison Officer. ○ Increase the outreach towards the most relevant third countries in the field of EU-related economic and financial crime, including China, UAE, Türkiye, Brazil and Morocco. 	<p>Expected results: Member States and the EPPO receive quality analytical and operational support for investigations into financial and economic crime.</p> <p>Improved cooperation and joint undertakings with stakeholders and financial institutions leading to an increased operational impact.</p> <p>Europol contributes to the objectives of relevant EU policies.</p>
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Operations on Fraud

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

Objectives and actions

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

- Support MS and EPPO priority and HVT investigations on serious and complex fraud, excise fraud and MTIC fraud with criminal intelligence analysis, operational capabilities and expertise, including on-the-spot support.
- Support the implementation of the EMPACT Operational Action Plans on VAT (incl. MTIC) fraud and Excise and customs fraud. Support joint operations (Week of Action, Joint Action Day, etc.). Assist and ensure coordination with EC3, in the implementation of EMPACT actions on online fraud schemes.
- Contribute to the revision and the implementation of the EU Anti-fraud architecture to protect the financial interests of the EU. Ensure support to MS and EPPO investigations and further develop cooperation particularly with EPPO in this area.
- Continue implementing the Service Level Agreement with the EUIPO on acquisition fraud targeting IP Offices and Trademarks/Registered Community Designs users by producing operational and tactical analysis, and one annual strategic report.
- Organise the Annual Plenary Meetings on serious and complex fraud, excise fraud and MTIC Fraud, and at least one event focusing on a specific fraud phenomenon affecting EU citizens and /or the financial interests of the EU.
- Support strategic activities, including policy developments, relating to serious and complex fraud.

Expected results: Member States and the EPPO receive quality analytical and operational support for fraud investigations.
Cooperation between Europol and other EU bodies and agencies is strengthened leading to better coordination and operational results.

Operations on Money Laundering

Disrupt the capacity of criminal networks involved in money laundering.

Objectives and actions

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

- Support MS priority and HVT investigations on money laundering with criminal intelligence analysis, operational capabilities and expertise, incl. on-the-spot support. Facilitate the setting up of OTFs targeting money laundering criminal syndicates.
- Provide analytical and operational support to the ESOCC, EC3 and the ECTC (with regards to terrorist financing) in joint operations. In particular, contribute to EMSC's migrant smuggling cases and to the effective implementation of the EU Roadmap to fight drug trafficking and organised crime, by encouraging and supporting the launch of financial and asset recovery investigations.
- Support Joint Investigation Teams (JITs) in cooperation with Eurojust with regards to money laundering.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Enhance operational support cooperation in the EU against criminal networks and professionals providing money laundering services to other criminal groups (crime as a service), with an emphasis on parallel financial systems (underground banking). ○ Detect novel money laundering methods, vulnerabilities, and risks that aid and support organised crime. ○ Organise the Annual Plenary Meeting on money laundering.
<p>Expected results: Member States receive quality analytical and operational support for investigations into money laundering.</p> <p>Enhanced law enforcement capacity to combat organised crime by disrupting their financial structures and dismantling the networks that fund criminal activities for others or provide money laundering services (crime as a service).</p>

<u>Operations on Money Laundering</u>
Objectives and actions
<p>A.6.4 Provide strategic support to Member States and other stakeholders regarding money laundering and terrorist financing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contribute, upon request, to the Commission's legal obligation to perform the continuous High-Risk Third Countries (HRTC) assessment and Risk Assessment at EU level on money laundering and terrorist financing. ○ Continue engaging with the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and Egmont Group in view of developing global cooperation on money laundering and terrorist financing. Support targeted FATF and EGMONT Group projects when operational needs are identified (within the limits of available resources). ○ Contribute to Working Groups under the EU FIUs' Platform together with FIUs. ○ Promote and support the Europol Financial Intelligence Public Private Partnership (EFIPPP). Explore opportunities/options for the operationalisation of EFIPPP. ○ Implement the modalities of the working arrangement between the EU Authority for Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (AMLA) and Europol (once concluded), i.a. by exchanging strategic information, contributing to the FIUs' joint analysis of cross-border suspicious transactions or activities, and attending, as observer, the AMLA General Board meetings (in the FIU composition). ○ Support the negotiation of an SLA regarding the "Europol node" when AMLA takes over the FIU.net as a channel of operational communication with EU FIUs and FIU Norway. Ensure Europol's effective use of FIU.net and facilitate the exchange with FIUs that cannot use SIENA. ○ Contribute to the setting up of secure channels of communication, i.e., an interface between SIENA and FIU.net to allow the automated import and export of data between the two systems (within the limits of available resources). ○ Continue to promote the contribution of financial intelligence to Europol (Suspicious Transactions Reports (STRs), Suspicious Activity Reports (SARs), cash seizures and cash declarations), in particular from FIUs, Customs and Tax Agencies. ○ Support and host the secretariat of the Anti-Money Laundering Operational Network (AMON). Follow the development of the Association of Law Enforcement Forensic Accountants (ALEFA) and support where appropriate.
<p>Expected results: Improved cooperation and joint undertakings with stakeholders and financial institutions leading to an increased operational impact.</p>

Improved cooperation with FIUs and increased contribution of financial intelligence to Europol via FIUs.

Asset Recovery/Target Group Sanctions

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

Objectives and actions

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

- Support MS priority and HVT investigations with regards to tracing and identifying criminal proceeds with criminal intelligence analysis, operational capabilities and expertise, including on-the-spot support. Provide analytical and operational support to joint OTFs with the other Europol crime centres.
- Obtain relevant financial information through the means established in Directive (EU) 2019/1153⁷¹, as amended by the Directive 2024/1654, in support of Europol's priority cases.
- Liaise with Asset Recovery Offices (ARO) in MS to increase visibility of the EFECC's work and strengthen the partnership with Europol resulting in an increased level of AROs' contributions. Promote SIENA enrolment to EU Asset Recovery Offices (those not connected yet) and their technical visibility/addressability in the system (those already connected). Co-chair with the European Commission the ARO platform meetings.
- Support and host the secretariat of the Camden Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network (CARIN). Organise the annual meeting of the Regional Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Networks.
- Contribute through the EFECC's Target Group on Sanctions to the work of the Task Force 'Freeze and Seize' established by the European Commission to coordinate MS enforcement of the EU restrictive measures against Russian and Belarusian individuals and companies in the context of the war of aggression against Ukraine, in coordination with other EU agencies and bodies, such as Eurojust and OLAF.
- Build up the capacities of the Target Group on Sanctions to support MS/TP investigations/efforts in regards to the violation of EU restrictive measures following the mandate provided in the Europol Regulation (Annex I).
- Organise the Annual Plenary Meeting on Operation Oscar supporting the freezing of criminal assets owned by EU-sanctioned individuals and entities.
- Follow and support the implementation of the new Directive on Asset Recovery and Confiscation.
- Organise the sprint week of Project A.S.S.E.T. (Asset Search & Seize Enforcement Taskforce).
- Provide real-time support in the cross-border tracing and interception of transactions and illicit financial flows arising from serious cases of cyber-enabled fraud and online fraud schemes within the rapid response protocol and a stop payment mechanism (if established by 2026).
- Organise the Annual Plenary Meeting on asset recovery.

⁷¹ Directive (EU) 2019/1153 of 20 June 2019 laying down rules facilitating the use of financial and other information for the prevention, detection, investigation or prosecution of certain criminal offences.

Expected results: Member States receive quality analytical and operational support for asset tracing and recovery aspects of investigations.
Improved asset recovery rate within criminal investigations.

Operations on Corruption

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

Objectives and actions

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

- Support MS priority investigations, including preventive measures, related to corruption with criminal intelligence analysis, operational capabilities and expertise, including on-the-spot support.
- Support the implementation of actions focused on preventive anti-corruption measures and anti-corruption investigations at ports in line with the EU Roadmap to fight drug trafficking and organised crime. In cases of drug seizures, support MS to undertake follow up measures targeting the corruption aspects and the recovery of assets.
- Support operationally and strategically the implementation of the Commission's Anti-Corruption package. Contribute to the work of the EU Network against Corruption.
- Promote the rolling out and use of the dedicated point-to-point (P2P) SIENA connection for anti-corruption agencies to increase the information exchange between the MS and Europol/EFECC.
- Support strategic activities and policy developments, relating to sports corruption, including relevant activities of the Council of Europe such as the MARS Network⁷².
- Implement joint actions or cooperation activities with external partners from the private sector that Europol has a MoU with, such as the International Olympic Committee (IOC), World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), Union of European Football Association (UEFA), International Tennis Integrity Agency (ITIA), Sportradar and United Lotteries for Integrity in Sports (ULIS).
- Contribute to the work of the European Anti-Corruption Network (EACN), the European Partners Against Corruption Network (EPAC) and the Internal Criminal Investigations Network (ICIN), for activities that are relevant to corruption. Continue the cooperation with the UN Anti-corruption Network for Law enforcement practitioners (GlobE).
- Further strengthen the engagement with relevant stakeholders active in combating corruption through nurturing (new) partnerships and dedicated alliances, including with private parties.
- Organise the AP Corruption Annual Plenary Meeting and one major event (conference) on corruption in Law Enforcement.

Expected results: Member States receive qualitative analytical and operational support for corruption investigations.
Strengthened cooperation with EU stakeholders and private sector representatives.

⁷² Network of Magistrates / Prosecutors dedicated to corruption in sport

Operations on Counterfeiting

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

Objectives and actions

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

- Support MS priority investigations related to counterfeiting and intellectual property crime with criminal intelligence analysis, operational capabilities and expertise, including on-the-spot support, and by focusing on cases affecting public health, consumer safety, the environment and online copyright.
- Support the implementation of the EMPACT Operational Action Plan on Intellectual Property (IP) crime, counterfeiting of goods and currencies.
- Coordinate operational actions together with MS and relevant EU Agencies, in the area of counterfeit and illicit foods and beverages, falsified medicines and anabolic substances, counterfeit clothing, toys, cosmetics, pesticides, automotive spare parts, and electronics.
- Support OLAF's participation in Europol's operations. Continue to cooperate with Interpol, especially in the areas of counterfeit food and medicines. Intensify the cooperation with Frontex with regard to smuggling of counterfeit goods at the external borders of the EU.
- Assess and potentially continue the pilot cooperation with DG SANTE and EU Agri-Food Network with regards to the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF)⁷³.
- Develop a plan for an awareness-building initiative addressing the threat of counterfeit weapons.
- Support the implementation of the EU Toolbox against counterfeiting under the lead of the European Commission.
- Support and host the secretariat of the IP Crime Network of the intellectual property crime experts from specialised LEAs.
- Maintain close cooperation with the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) and undertake work according to the SLA with EUIPO for 2024-2027, adapting the implementation to available resources incl.:
 - Gathering of information and monitoring trends in the field of counterfeiting and piracy with particular emphasis on online IP rights infringement; Preparation of reports for policy makers, LEAs and other relevant stakeholders.
 - Raising awareness on Europol and EUIPO's instruments assisting the fight against IP rights infringements; Developing and publicising crime prevention and other communication materials on IP crime.
 - Implementing the SIENA connection to EUIPO and prepare for the possible transition of data from the IP Enforcement Portal to the SIENA platform.
- Organise and financially support meetings, training, and a conference at Europol and/or in the Member States on intellectual property crime.

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

⁷³ The Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) was established to ensure the exchange of information between member countries to support swift reaction by food safety authorities in case of risks to public health resulting from the food chain.

Strengthened cooperation with EU stakeholders, in particular EUIPO, relevant third countries and private sector representatives.

Operations on Counterfeiting

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

Objectives and actions

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

- Support MS priority investigations with regards to currency counterfeiting, and in particular Euro counterfeiting, with criminal intelligence analysis, operational capabilities and expertise, including on-the-spot support.
- Support the implementation of the EMPACT priority on Intellectual property (IP) crime, counterfeiting of goods and currencies.
- Provide financial support to Member States' currency counterfeiting operations, with a focus on Euro counterfeiting.
- Provide to Member States technical-tactical training on currency counterfeiting.
- Support strategic activities, including policy developments, relating to Euro counterfeiting.
- Cooperate with the European Central Bank, the European Technical and Scientific Centre (ETSC) of the European Commission and Europol's Forensic Lab on technical matters pertaining to Euro counterfeiting.
- Explore the feasibility of establishing a SIENA connection with the European Central Bank to facilitate the sharing of strategic products and increase the provision of intelligence on (online) distribution of counterfeit banknotes and coins.
- Organise an annual meeting on currency counterfeiting.

Expected results: Member States receive quality analytical and operational support for investigations into currency counterfeiting (Euro counterfeiting in particular).
Member States' investigations in relation to currency counterfeiting (Euro counterfeiting in particular) are initiated based on Europol's analysis.

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Indicators	Latest result (Q2 2025)	Target 2026
Number of Accepted contributions by EFECC ⁷⁴	16,020	28,000
Number of Operations supported by EFECC	370	410
Number of Operational Task Forces supported by EFECC (where EFECC is in the lead)	10	10
Number of Operational Reports delivered by EFECC	1,328	2,200
Number of Action Days coordinated/supported by EFECC	58	106
Satisfaction with Operational Support and Analysis provided by EFECC	9.4	8.5

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

A.7. Strategic and Analysis Coordination

Overview



Operational data handling and criminal analysis are at the core of Europol's tasks and mandate. Criminal data and intelligence analysis serves as a vital tool for investigative support by transforming raw information into actionable insights that guide operational and investigative decision-making. Its primary purpose is to identify links, patterns, trends, and connections within complex data sets. It enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of criminal and terrorist investigations.

Europol has a considerable wealth of knowledge, capabilities and expertise in this area, which the agency strives to further strengthen through enhanced coordination and attention to quality output and control, standardisation, specialised analysis and training.

Strategic analysis in the context of law enforcement aims at informing decision makers on current and emerging trends in serious crime and terrorism landscapes and helps with the identification of critical areas for prioritisation and policy development. Based on the identified priorities and needs, the Analysis Training coordination function at Europol focuses on 1) assessing and improving the in-house skills; and 2) responding to Member States' analysis training needs in collaboration with CEPOL.

Europol support to the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) is essential for ensuring operational and strategic coordination of MS efforts to fight organised crime at EU level. In 2026, this support will be paramount in the transition period to the new EMPACT cycle 2026-2029. The EMPACT team facilitates the development, monitoring and reporting of the EMPACT operational action plans (OAP) and supports their implementation. The agency also facilitates the cooperation among all competent law enforcement authorities, including Customs and Counter-Terrorism services, by supporting the MS/TP Liaison Bureaux at Europol and by maintaining Europol liaison offices in other countries and organisations.

In view of the global challenges facing the EU, effective investigations often depend on information exchange with third countries, EU and international partners or private parties. Europol will continue working on the implementation of the different cooperation agreements and aims at enhancing cooperation with priority partners, in line with its External Relations Strategy. The implementation of the new strategy for cooperation with private parties will also remain among Europol's priorities for the coming years.

2026 Objectives

<u>Analysis coordination</u>
Objectives and actions
A.7.1 Reinforce criminal analysis coordination and expertise at Europol to ensure provision of quality analysis support to EU Member States' investigations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand the support to criminal analysis at Europol by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuously investing in the Analysis Portal (DAP), including more advanced AI solutions for improving its functionalities;

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Further developing the New Forensic Environment, including developing tools and AI solutions for the Data Refinery. - Establishing a pool of analysts specialised in technical analysis and specialised methods and tools to support all Europol's Centres with expertise. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Act as a single point of contact for new tools for data handling, processing and analysis, AI tools and data compliance. Ensure the coordination of their implementation in close cooperation with relevant internal stakeholders. o Continue the development and improvement of the case management system. o Act as the single point of contact for the Joint Operational Analysis Case tool. o Further develop and strengthen Data Science by developing tools for data minimisation and criminal analysis. Develop mechanisms, based on data science, to increase efficiency in monitoring and detecting trends in crime and terrorism data. o Provide technical analytical support to internal stakeholders. o Further invest in the development of handling and processing complex datasets. o Provide expert social network analysis support to all centres. o Review and simplify the data ontology. o Develop a roadmap and coordinate the implementation of the New Collaborative environment for the handling of data for Europol and MS in line with the Europol Strategy.
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<u>Analysis coordination</u>	
Objectives and actions	
A.7.2 Ensure data and analysis quality control at Europol.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Ensure the efficient functioning of the Data Quality Control Office and that the Deputy Executive Director Operations can fully fulfil his responsibilities as Data Controller. o Ensure the implementation of the current data review mechanism and that data processing is performed in line with Europol's legal framework. o Further implement a systematic review of all APs, including data quality reviews on biometric and travel related data. o Support initiatives to enhance Europol's Data Governance framework. Strengthen the focus on data protection by design and by default throughout all data management tools and processes by further fine-tuning the Data Review module within the DAP. o Contribute to the activities of Europol's AI alignment committee as the central point of contact for AI compliance in Operations. Contribute to the development and roll out of tools and AI solutions for data handling and analysis (within the limits of available resources). o Work in close cooperation with the DPF to ensure compliance with the data protection rules. o Report internally on regular basis on the enhanced data review activities; Provide progress reports to DPF. o Provide guidance and training to improve the quality of analytical reports.
Expected results:	<p>Compliance with the legal requirements for data processing.</p> <p>Increased quality of the data input and analysis.</p> <p>Increased efficiency of handling, processing, analysing and monitoring of data.</p>

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Increased standardisation and quality of products.
Enhanced quality of Europol's operational analysis support to Member States.

Analysis coordination

Objectives and actions

A.7.3 Reinforce analysis training capabilities at Europol.

- Maintain a centralised overview of in-house analytical competencies and knowledge.
- Provide regularly in-house analysis training. Train all relevant staff on strategic analysis and on the new features of the analysis environment for Operations, the Data Analysis Portal, the Data Refinery, NFE, AI for data handling and operational analysis, OSINT and other tools.
- Review and respond to Member States' analysis training needs in collaboration with CEPOL. Coordinate Europol's contribution to CEPOL's training activities (e.g., content development, expert presentations, moderation, etc.).
- Provide regular trainings to MS on criminal analysis and on the use of the Joint Operational Analysis Case.
- Finalise the development and initiate the roll out of a new Analysis Training and Coaching program to satisfy the need for state-of-the-art analytical competence at Europol and the national competent authorities, in line with developments in 2025.
- Manage the online Intelligence Analysis Platform CONAN.
- Organise the annual EU Crime Analysis Conference and the Europol Summer School.

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

Strategic analysis

Objectives and actions

A.7.4 Deliver quality strategic reports.

- Maintain a common, consistent and holistic approach towards strategic analysis across the Operations Directorate.
- Deliver Flagship reports on serious and organised crime, cybercrime or terrorism, such as the Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment (SOCTA) and the EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT) and the threat assessment on the EU's most threatening criminal networks.
- Deliver Threat Assessments on current or future threats in the crime areas within Europol's mandate.
- Deliver Early warning notifications giving rapid alert on new and emerging threats and *modi operandi*, where relevant in cooperation with other partners.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Deliver Intelligence notifications identifying intelligence gaps, recommendations or key areas to target, and present a basis for decision making. ○ Deliver Joint reports with EU agencies, such as Frontex, EUAA, EUIPO, and EUDA (e.g., the joint EU Drug Market Analysis). ○ Deliver Crisis response reports on crisis situations (geo-political crises or crisis events). ○ Deliver ad-hoc reports requested by COSI or in the framework of VISA and Schengen evaluations, and risk assessments requested by the Council and Commission. ○ Enhance networking with experts (e.g., SOCTA, TE-SAT, IOCTA Advisory Group) to advance methodologies, increase access to information and improve the quality of reports. ○ Support as a coordinator the implementation of the EMPACT Common Horizontal Strategic Goal on Criminal intelligence picture. ○ Support strategic analysis in the EU Southern Neighbourhood region and the Eastern Partnership (EaP) region by contributing to relevant EU funded projects, e.g., Euromed Police VI.
<p>Expected results: Provision of timely and quality strategic reports.</p> <p>Enhanced analytical capacities of the EU Neighbourhood countries to perform threat assessments and other strategic analysis.</p> <p>Strengthened strategic cooperation between national law enforcement authorities, as well as between the EU Neighbourhood countries and the EU MS and EU agencies.</p>

EMPACT support

Objectives and actions

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

- Contribute to the identification of key issues and good practices related to EMPACT and provide input to the Council's Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation on Internal Security (COSI).
- Provide methodological, administrative and logistical support to the drafting of the new Operational Action Plans (OAPs) and facilitate communication and collaboration between the crime priorities and horizontal goals.
- Support the implementation of the operational actions. Coordinate and support the planning of Joint Action Days. Monitor the implementation of the new OAPs.
- Facilitate the activation of the EMPACT community as an essential part of the actionable operational mechanism for EU MS to react to major security crises by supporting EMPACT drivers to adjust/reshape OAPs accordingly and by providing the pertinent intelligence picture.
- Manage the EMPACT Grant scheme and inform MS systematically about funding opportunities.
- Implement the findings related to Europol of the independent EMPACT evaluation, in line with the relevant Roadmap.
- Following the go-live in 2025, support the utilisation and further improvement of the Online EMPACT tool.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In cooperation with CEPOL, contribute to the delivery of EMPACT-related training seminars and webinars to MS and the Western Balkan countries within the framework of the EU funded project WB Partnership against Crime and Terrorism (WBPACT II). ○ Continue implementing the funding mechanism⁷⁵ earmarked for (Member-States-led) EMPACT-related projects for the benefit of the law enforcement authorities of the EU Eastern Neighbourhood countries.
<p>Expected results: Member States receive efficient support for the implementation of their OAPs, including the activation of EMPACT community as emergency mechanism.</p> <p>Administrative aspects of EMPACT are improved in efficiency due to digitalisation.</p> <p>Europol's support to EMPACT increasingly contributes to operational and strategic outcomes in the Member States.</p> <p>Strengthened partner countries' institutional knowledge and criminal intelligence capacity in the EMPACT priority crime areas.</p> <p>Enhanced operational and strategic cooperation of partner countries with EU Member States and agencies.</p>

Cooperation with Member States

Objectives and actions

A.7.6 Manage cooperation with EU Member States.

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

Expected results: Effective involvement of Member States' competent authorities in the consultations and decision-making on Europol matters.

Enhanced cooperation with and between LBs, their respective national authorities and related stakeholders for the additional benefit in the operational area.

⁷⁵ Funded through a grant from the European Neighbourhood East Instrument and based on an agreement with the European Commission on concrete priorities to be pursued by the programme.

Cooperation with third countries

Objectives and actions

A.7.7 Manage cooperation with third countries.

- Support the implementation of:
 - the operational agreements with Albania, Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Colombia, Georgia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland, Ukraine and the United States;
 - the international agreement on the exchange of personal data with New Zealand, Brazil⁷⁶ and Ecuador⁷⁷;
 - the working and administrative arrangement with the United Kingdom;
 - the working arrangements with Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Chile, Egypt, India, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kosovo⁷⁸, Mexico, Qatar, San Marino, Singapore and South Korea.
 - the strategic agreements with China, Türkiye and the United Arab Emirates.
- Manage Europol's Liaison Office in Washington. Support the establishment of new Partner Liaison Bureaux and their Liaison Officers at Europol.
- Progress with the implementation of the External Relations Strategy and establish or reinforce cooperation with selected third countries in line with the updated external relations priorities.
- Continue to conclude Working Arrangements with priority partners in line with the External Relations Strategy and establish MoUs with other third countries in line with operational needs.
- In line with the External Relations Strategy, continue implementing the plan for strengthening cooperation with the Schengen Associated Countries in the short, medium and long term.
- Contribute to the annual Schengen Cycle, which provides a new governance model for the Schengen area. Support activities regarding Schengen evaluations on police cooperation, such as evaluations, on-site visits to Schengen countries and training.
- Further develop Europol's relations with the Western Balkans. Contribute to the EU funded project Western Balkan Partnership against Crime and Terrorism (WBPACT II) and monitor the development of EU funding schemes to support the operational cooperation in the region.
- Further develop Europol's relations with relevant countries from the Eastern Neighbourhood region. Contribute to the EU-funded project Training and Operational Partnership Against Organised Crime (TOPCOP II) and the next phase of the Fighting organised crime in the Eastern partnership region project, if confirmed.
- Further develop Europol's relations with the countries from the MENA region building on the progress made in 2025. Continue contributing to the EU funded project Euromed VI⁷⁹.
- Contribute, as appropriate, to the EU funded project EL PAcCTO.
- Assist the European Commission, where requested, in the negotiation of international agreements between the EU and third countries, in particular the upcoming

⁷⁶ The international agreement with Brazil was signed on 6 March 2025 and is expected to enter into force in the course of 2026. Until then, cooperation continues under the existing strategic agreement.

⁷⁷ The international agreement with Ecuador was signed on 23 September 2025 and is expected to enter into force in the course of 2026. Until then, cooperation continues under the existing Working Arrangement.

⁷⁸ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/99 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

⁷⁹ The Euromed VI project covers the following countries in the EU Southern Neighbourhood region: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Palestinian Authority* (* This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue).

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<p>agreements with the Latin America countries, with regards to the exchange of personal data between Europol and the national competent authorities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Elaborate legal advice on new possibilities for case by case cooperation with any third country, in the absence of an agreement or adequacy decision. ○ Provide legal advice as regards the possibilities stemming from the Europol Regulation concerning the exchange of personal data with third countries. 	
Expected results:	<p>Increased involvement of Europol in information exchange with third countries and better access to criminal intelligence from abroad.</p> <p>Enhanced cooperation and joint undertakings with third countries leading to an increased operational impact.</p>

Cooperation with EU institutions, agencies or bodies

Objectives and actions

A.7.8 Manage cooperation with EU institutions, agencies or bodies.

- Support and monitor the implementation and fulfilment of commitments of the strategic and operational agreements, MoUs and working arrangements with CEPOL, ECB, ECDC, EIB, EEAS, EUDA, EMSA, ENISA, EPPO, EUIPO, eu-LISA, Eurojust, the European Commission, FRA, Frontex and OLAF.
- Manage Europol's Liaison Office in Brussels. Support the mutual exchange of Liaison officers with Frontex and the posting of LOs from EUIPO, Eurojust and OLAF at Europol.
- Manage and coordinate the interaction with the European Commission, the External Action Service (EEAS), including the EU Intelligence and Situation Centre (EU INTCEN) and EU CSDP missions and operations, and EU Council and Parliamentary committees, including the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group (JPSG).
- Support the implementation of ProtectEU: a European Internal Security Strategy and follow closely relevant EU policies and initiatives for emerging tasks falling within Europol's mandate⁸⁰. Provide (technical) advice and contribute to their preparation, if requested.
- Follow closely and contribute to the establishment of new EU bodies involved in crime areas covered by Europol's mandate.
- Follow closely developments in Cyber Security, such as the EU's Cyber Crisis Management Blueprint, the Cyber Diplomacy Toolbox, and the work towards the EU's transition to post-quantum cryptography.
- Follow closely the implementation of the six work streams of the Roadmap for effective access to data for law enforcement.
- Follow the implementation of Strategic Compass for Security and Defence, in particular the actions planned for strengthening the EU's security and defence policy by 2030 regarding cyber-attacks and terrorism as key threats against the EU.
- Explore possibilities to further enhance cooperation with the EPPO, in particular in the area of innovation and criminal analysis.
- Support the implementation of the operational agreement with Eurojust, in line with both agencies' new legal framework. Identify business needs and opportunities to

⁸⁰ The strategies, policies and legislative initiatives mentioned in Section I – General Context, including, notably, the next Strategy to tackle Organised Crime, the next EU Cybersecurity Strategy, the next Counter-Terrorism Agenda for the EU, the next EU Action Plan on Firearms Trafficking, the next EU Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings and the next EU Drug strategy.

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<p>enhance mutual cooperation in line with the discussions held during the joint meeting of the Europol's Management Board and the College of Eurojust in October 2024.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support the liaising of Eurojust's representatives with Europol's crime centres, exchange of information and Eurojust's participation in EMPACT. Once established, cooperate with Eurojust's single point of contact for cooperation with Europol. ○ Enhance the cooperation with Frontex based on the new working arrangement, including exchange of operational personal data (once concluded). ○ Develop cooperation with the Authority for Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (AMLA), the European Labour Authority (ELA) and European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) based on the new working arrangements (when concluded). ○ Further develop strategic cooperation with ENISA, in light of the EU cybersecurity policy developments, and with eu-LISA in light of the increased cooperation on the implementation of the EU Interoperability agenda. ○ Enhance cooperation with CEPOL and contribute to establishing a common EU law enforcement culture. ○ Contribute to the work of the JHA Agencies Network. ○ Progress with embedding the law enforcement component into CSDP missions and operations, in line with the Civilian CSDP Compact, as endorsed in May 2023. Establish structured cooperation based on operational needs with selected CSDP missions, such as Operation ATALANTA following the signature of the working arrangement in September 2025. ○ Explore the establishment of links with EU defence structures and relevant bodies including the European Defence Agency (EDA), countering hybrid threats in order to enrich the intelligence picture with strategic information from military sources, while fully respecting the mandate of INTCEN and the mandate of national security and intelligence services. 	
Expected results:	Utilisation of synergies, optimisation of information flow and alignment of actions between Europol and other EU institutions, agencies and bodies leading to better operational impact.

Cooperation with organisations

Objectives and actions

A.7.9 Manage cooperation with international and regional organisations.

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

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue to prepare for the possible conclusion of a Working Arrangement with AMERIPOL. ○ Work to enhance cooperation with NATO in line with the EU Security Architecture. ○ Engage with the Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC) contributing to developing innovative strategies and responses to organised crime. ○ Provide legal advice related to Europol's negotiation and conclusion of working arrangements with international organisations.
Expected results: Cooperation with international and regional organisations brings forward better criminal intelligence picture and operational results.

<u>Cooperation with private parties</u>
Objectives and actions
A.7.10 Enhance Europol's cooperation with private parties. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue implementing the new Strategy on cooperation with private parties in line with the agreed priority actions. ○ Maximise the benefits of Europol's cooperation with private parties, leveraging existing partnerships and enhancing collaboration with new partners in line with MS operational needs. Enhance the intake of relevant information from the private sector enriching the criminal intelligence picture. ○ Support law enforcement innovation needs by boosting collaboration with research and industry partners. ○ Step up Europol's prevention and strategic work, capacity building and outreach through a network of relevant companies, academia and NGOs.
Expected results: Cooperation with private parties improves in effectiveness and reduces information gaps.

Indicators	Latest result (Q2 2025)	Target 2026
Number of Strategic Analysis Reports	12	30
Satisfaction with Strategic Analysis Reports	8.7	8.5
Satisfaction with Operational Analysis	9.2	8.5
Satisfaction with Operational Training delivered to MS/TP	9.7	8.5
Number of SIENA messages exchanged by Third Parties ⁸¹	163,576	280,000

⁸¹ The responsibility for this indicator is shared by Europol and its partners (MS, TP). As such, the target is indicative and used to monitor the trend of accepted contributions.

A.8. Governance, support and administration

Overview

Europol strives for full compliance with principles of sound financial management, security, data protection, fundamental rights protection and internal control standards, as demonstrated by the overall positive findings resulting from the internal and external audit mechanisms. In the spirit of ensuring clear accountability towards its stakeholders, Europol also adheres to a systematic performance monitoring and reporting practice. In 2026, work will continue to implement organisational initiatives or changes identified through the Europol Strategy, to promote workforce diversity and inclusion, in line with Europol's Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, and to ensure the efficient and effective management of financial and human resources.



The Europol Internal Control Framework (ICF) represents the overall strategy on the organisational and internal control approach, as well as for Europol's ethics, compliance, corporate risk management and anti-fraud related components. The Code of Conduct, Europol's cornerstone for organisational ethics, gives an essence statement for each of the 6 Europol Values (Service, Integrity, Accountability, Initiative, Partnership and Diversity), underlining a zero tolerance to fraud and the requirement to perform duties impartially and free from any conflict of interests. The Fundamental Rights Officer (FRO) assesses all Europol activities, focusing mainly on operational tasks, the development and use of new technologies and the conclusion of Working Arrangements with third parties. Last but not least, the FRO promotes fundamental rights e.g. by training.

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

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

Objectives 2026

Corporate affairs and services
Objectives and actions
A.8.1 Continue optimising Europol's corporate functions.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coordinate and oversee the implementation of organisational initiatives and changes in line with the Europol Strategy. ○ Support the Commission in the evaluation and impact assessment to be performed under Art. 68(1) of the Europol Regulation. ○ Support and promote workforce diversity and inclusion in line with Europol's Diversity & Inclusion Strategy. ○ Provide policy, technical and expert advice, and prepare related policy documents; Identify key strategic opportunities for Europol's growth in priority areas. ○ Strengthen Europol's change management framework, to compliantly implement (internally and externally driven) change across the organisation, including regulatory developments impacting the agency, such as interoperability, the IED, the DSA, and the EU AI Act. ○ Monitor and assess the effectiveness of the internal control system. Subject to the resource availability, explore the implementation of an internal control and compliance management tool. ○ Coordinate internal and external audit activities and Europol's response to audit findings and discharge observations. ○ Monitor and manage Europol's corporate risks through an up-to-date corporate risk management framework. Enhance risk awareness and risk ownership, through training and communication measures, and user support for Europol's dedicated risk management application. ○ Contribute to the work of the EU Agencies Network, including in the context of the annual risk peer review exercise and of the activities of the relevant subnetworks. ○ Prepare Europol's multi-annual and annual business planning documents, and quarterly, bi-annual and annual corporate performance reporting. ○ Streamline the use of corporate analytics and reporting to ensure high quality and accurate corporate performance measurement and reporting. ○ Maintain and further develop the User Survey. ○ Provide legal advice on the implementation of Europol's legal framework and data protection rules. Advise on legality and compatibility of new Europol initiatives with EU law, as well as on new EU initiatives having an impact on Europol. ○ Handle Europol's mandate-related cases brought before the Court of Justice of the EU. ○ Coordinate strategic, legal and internal data protection aspects, including operational elements, in matters related to EDPS supervision. ○ Develop and maintain Europol's legal framework for finance, procurement, grants and facilities. Review the financial model, in line with the upcoming implementation of the new accounting system. ○ Provide internally legal support on contracts, service level agreements, licenses, grant agreements, etc. Handle contract related complaints and court cases. ○ Develop and maintain the HR legal framework and implementing rules to the EU Staff Regulations. Handle staff related complaints, requests and court cases. ○ Manage public access to Europol's documents. 	<p>Expected results: Europol progresses along the strategic and operational priorities and stakeholders' expectations; monitors and manages corporate risks; identifies and maximises opportunities and areas for further development.</p> <p>Transparency and accountability of the organisation's strategic planning and performance.</p>
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The implementation of the regulatory framework is up-to-date and compliant.

Fundamental Rights Officer (FRO)

Objectives and actions

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

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

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

Corporate communications

Objectives and actions

A.8.3 Ensure efficient internal and external communication.

- Promote the work of Europol towards making Europe safer, in alignment with the EU's internal security priorities.
- Maintain and further develop media, press and public relations; develop and coordinate external and internal communication networks and coordinate external publications. Coordinate communication activities, as relevant, with the European Commission and other JHA Agencies.
- Manage, maintain and continuously develop Europol's website.
- Further develop Europol's corporate approach to crime prevention campaigns, including ways to engage with MS and third parties, based on joint responsibility and taking into account budgetary impact.
- Provide corporate audio-visual productions and campaigns targeting awareness raising of Europol's products and services. Optimise internal AV production capacity, including by setting up an AV production studio.
- Provide user support and training on the use of Open Source (OS) platforms and subscriptions. Produce media intelligence briefs.
- Deliver the annual Europol Excellence Award in Innovation.
- Deliver effective media monitoring, crisis monitoring and media impact products and services.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Maintain and develop Europol's intranet as the main internal communication tool. Continue work towards the implementation of an upgraded internal communication platform.
<p>Expected results: Europol maintains effective communication, including on its products and services, to external partners and stakeholders. Europol and its brand identity are well positioned among media.</p> <p>Effective media monitoring and open sources tools are in place and broadly used.</p> <p>Europol maintains effective internal communication.</p>

Administration of Human resources

Objectives and actions

A.8.4 Ensure efficient human resource management.

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

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

Financial and budget management

Objectives and actions

A.8.5 Ensure efficient financial and budget management.

- Plan and monitor the implementation of the budget, ensuring sound financial management and an effective usage of the Europol budget.
- Further streamline existing financial and administrative processes in all financial areas and continue leveraging automation and exploring innovation in financial reporting and planning. Develop and update finance related policies, implementing rules and

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<p>processes to align with the new financial system SUMMA, and explore interoperability possibilities with other systems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Execute financial initiation of revenue and expenditure; Perform ex-ante and ex-post financial verification of all financial operations while further advancing towards the full ex-ante model as per SUMMA requirements. ○ Manage procurement planning and procedures. Further improve the sustainability aspects of procurement by integrating environmental and social consideration elements, in line with Europol's Environmental objectives and Diversity & Inclusion Strategy. ○ Maintain the current Travel Management System while exploring alternative solutions to streamline processes, increase efficiency and enhance service quality. ○ Manage the administration and coordination of grants awarded by Europol, including EMPACT, OTF, ATLAS, EaP, Euro counterfeiting and Innovation. ○ Assess and utilise, where appropriate and subject to checking potential and actual conflicts of interest as well as confirming availability of capacity, funding opportunities in relation to calls within Europol's remit for which the agency is eligible. ○ Advise and support Member States and third parties on funding opportunities.
<p>Expected results: Reliability and accuracy of Europol's budget management and full compliance with Europol's Financial Regulations.</p> <p style="padding-left: 150px;">Increased efficiency and effectiveness of financial processes and client satisfaction.</p>

Physical, personnel and information security

Objectives and actions

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

- Ensure the physical security of Europol's buildings. Execute protective security operations for the Executive Director, staff and participants at high-level meetings and events.
- Continuously strengthen operational effectiveness, improve incident response and security compliance capabilities, enhance the security posture and foster cross-departmental cooperation.
- Upgrade the security infrastructure of the agency, including the Security Control Room to cope with expanding security tasks (e.g., monitoring of the satellite buildings).
- Ensure that security requirements concerning the expansion of Europol to two new satellite buildings and the acquiring of a second permanent headquarters and a second Data Centre are fulfilled.
- Identify innovative ways to communicate security awareness to Europol users.
- Continue providing awareness and risk assessment for Europol staff deployed in mission.
- Ensure timely accreditation of information systems to ensure Information Security; assess information security risks and provide risk treatment options.
- Perform technical security assessments of Europol's ICT systems and propose appropriate actions.
- Ensure Europol's cyber resilience by reviewing and enhancing internal cybersecurity and information security policies and capabilities. Implement necessary changes in line with the requirements of the new Regulation laying down measures for a high common

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<p>level of cybersecurity, and the new Regulation on information security in the institutions, bodies, offices and agencies of the Union.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop, implement and validate the business continuity framework. ○ Coordinate Europol's overall crisis management capability and Disaster Recovery activities. Review and revise the current recovery strategies and develop alternative ones. ○ Ensure implementation of the revised Europol Anti-Fraud Strategy adopted by the MB in June 2025. ○ Implement the overall Business Continuity Strategy. ○ Implement new logbook or workflow application for physical security shift controllers, to optimise and modernise the process, following the increase of the number of buildings under Europol's responsibility.
<p>Expected results: Improved safety and security for Europol's buildings, staff and visitors. Europol fulfils its obligations in terms of confidentiality and information security.</p>

Facilities services and environmental management

Objectives and actions

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

- Develop, maintain and implement the policies, guidelines and processes related to services and products.
- Develop, maintain and implement the budget, contracts and agreements related to services and products. Provide integrated, horizontal services, with a focus on prioritising sustainability.
- Manage the non-ICT related assets and ensure compliance with the financial processes and insurance scope.
- Develop, maintain and implement digital workflows and self-service functionalities via the Facilities Management Information System (FMIS).
- Support high-level visits and organise high-level events, such as the European Police Chiefs Convention (EPCC).
- Manage and improve Europol's environmental management system and maintain the registration of the EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS).
- Undertake initiatives to improve the environmental performance of the organisation in terms of sustainable procurement, carbon footprint, paper and water consumption, and waste management and separation, in line with the Environmental Vision 2030 and the Environmental Objectives and Action Plan for the period 2026 – 2028.

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

Strategic Housing Roadmap	
Objectives and actions	
<p>A.8.8 Steer and coordinate the implementation of the Strategic Housing Roadmap.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Advance with the implementation of the Mid-Term Housing Solution (MTHS) project in the HQ to increase workplace capacity, provide additional meeting rooms and other related facilities, and strengthen the building according to the applicable governmental building regulations. Prepare for the plank floor slabs' strengthening process at HQ. ○ Temporary Satellite Building 1 (TSB 1): following the extension of the lease until end 2026, maintain TSB1 in use by Europol until operational availability of TSB 3. ○ Temporary Satellite Building 2 (TSB 2): ensure full operational availability in Q1 2026. ○ Temporary Satellite Building 3 (TSB 3) project: create additional workplaces, meeting rooms and other related facilities to support organisational growth and new business demands, until the delivery of HQ2. Partial operational availability of TSB3 (finalisation of phase 1) in foreseen in Q3 2026. ○ Temporary Satellite Building 4 (TSB4): progress with the project, subject to finalisation of discussions with the Host State and formal offer. ○ Long-Term Housing Measures (LTHM) project: advance with the implementation of the project to secure and deliver a second permanent headquarters (HQ2). ○ Second Hot Data Centre (HDC) project: in cooperation with the Host State, start developing the HDC to ensure Europol's business continuity, in accordance with business requirements. ○ Low-rise Toren van Oud project: progress with the project to relocate the Medical Centre and Gym & Fitness facilities, in order to create space in the HQ for the implementation of the MTHS (forecasted delivery Q2 2027). ○ Alternative Temporary Housing: progress on establishing alternative temporary workplaces and meeting spaces to support organisational growth and new business demands until the delivery of HQ2. 	
Expected results:	The existing and new workplaces, meeting rooms and other related facilities are used in an efficient and effective manner to support organisational growth, new business demands and establish a pleasant work environment.

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Indicators	Latest result (Q2 2025)	Target 2026
% of pending critical/very important audit recommendations implemented within the timeline committed to by Europol and agreed with the auditing body	100%	85%
Total number of News Articles mentioning Europol (high-impact web-based media)	5,610	7,500
User Satisfaction	90%	85%
Vacancy rate	6.4%	2%
% of Female Staff	33%	35%
Budget Outturn Rate	n/a	5%
Budget Commitment Rate	84%	95%
Budget Payment Rate	41.3%	90%
% of Late Payments (in value)	1.8%	5%
Emissions (tonnes CO2)	n/a	2,615

Management Board Functions

Accountancy Unit (ACCU)

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

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

Data Protection Function (DPF)

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

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

Internal Audit Capability (IAC)

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

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

Management Board Secretariat (MBS)

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

- Support the coordination of the MB's work and ensure its coherence;
- Organise activities and meetings of the MB and its Working Groups on Corporate matters (legal, financial and personnel issues) and on Information Management, as well as ad hoc meetings and working groups established by the Board;
- Provide the MB with the necessary administrative support;
- Support oversight and policy-making activities regarding matters such as the appointment of Executive Directors and Deputy Executive Directors, corporate governance, human resources and external relations.

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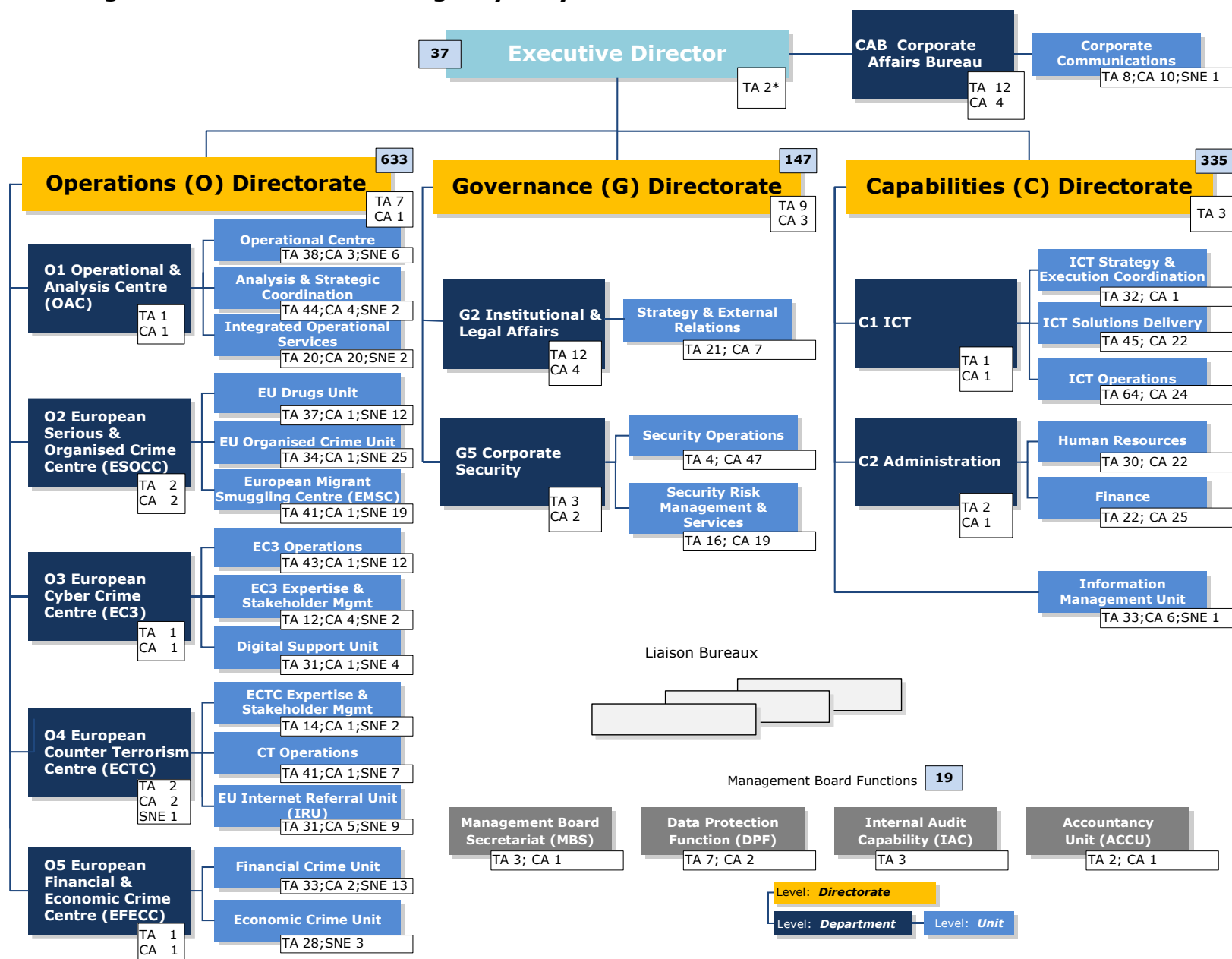
Annex XI: Grants

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

Annex XIII: Procurement Plan 2026

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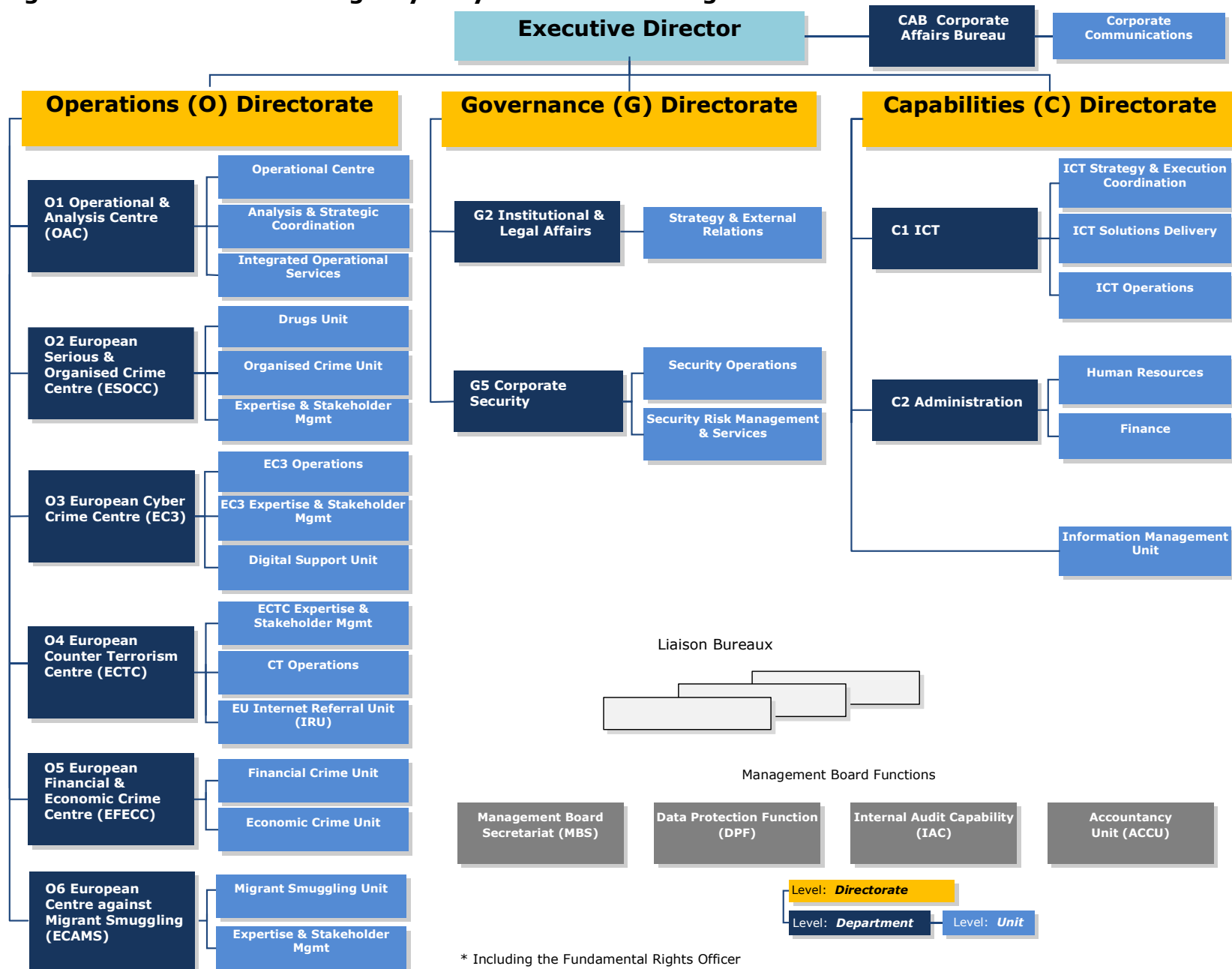
Annex I: Organisational chart of the agency for year 2026⁸²



* Including the Fundamental Rights Officer

⁸² Due to timing reasons, the resources from the AMS Regulation [COM(2023) 754] are not included as allocation is ongoing.

Organisational chart of the agency for year 2026 including the new ECAMS



Annex II: Resources allocation per activity 2026 – 2028

	Year 2025			Year 2026 Resource estimates			Year 2027 ⁸³ Resource estimates			Year 2028 ⁸⁴ Resource estimates		
	TA	CA, SNE (FTE)	Budget Allocated	TA	CA & SNE (FTE)	Budget allocated	TA	CA & SNE (FTE)	Budget allocated			
A.1. Development of operational ICT and IM capabilities	174	55	85,728,034	174	55	98,097,528	173	55	81,439,053			
A.2. Operational Coordination	74	34	19,235,743	74	34	21,640,660	76	35	19,028,978			
A.3. Combating Serious and Organised Crime	113	58	27,617,553	114	58	34,337,098	116	78	28,579,478			
A.4. Combating Cyber Crime	87	27	17,933,886	87	27	21,049,760	89	23	19,454,191			
A.5. Counter-Terrorism	87	28	18,992,181	88	28	20,796,247	91	23	25,571,880			
A.6. Combating Financial and Economic Crime	61	20	12,802,367	62	20	15,172,377	63	10	13,220,696			
A.7. Strategic and Analysis Coordination	57	10	11,113,877	57	10	11,852,207	54	9	10,780,487			
Total Operational Activities	653	232	193,423,642	656	232	222,945,877	662	233	198,074,762			
A.8. Governance, support and administration (incl. MBF)	135	144	42,125,961	139	144	46,057,426	138	143	45,026,225			
Anti-migrant smuggling regulation COM(2023) 754(AMS) ⁸⁵				14	24	4,135,000	10	40	13,456,000			
Total EU Budget⁸⁶	788	376	235,549,603	809	400	273,138,303						
INITIATIVES 2027												
Digital Services Act (DSA)							13		5,055,840			
Interoperability (I/O)							60	4	9,447,800			
Second Data Centre							2		7,878,720			
Information Exchange Directive							26		6,632,960			
Strategic Housing Roadmap (SHR)							6	20	13,381,024			
Governance/administration							13		1,468,800			
Adjustment for synergies with AMS									(4,248,000)			
Adjustment for additional 15TA from 2025							(15)		(3,121,200)			
Request for high salary increase									2,080,800			
TOTAL Additional resources							115	64	52,032,744			
Total	788	376	235,549,603	809	400	273,138,303	915	440	295,133,731			

⁸³ Figures for 2027 in Annexes II, III and IV are indicative and prepared on the basis of Europol's estimated needs 2025-2027, as elaborated in January 2025. The figures will be adjusted once the agency reviews its estimated needs 2027, as part of the draft Programming Document 2027-2029.

⁸⁴ In the absence of a new EU MFF (as of 2028), figures for 2028 are not presented.

⁸⁵ Due to timing reasons, the posts from the AMS Regulation have not yet been allocated and are thus shown separately. The budget refers solely to the salary costs of these new resources.

⁸⁶ The numbers reflect the actual availability of Budget and staff in 2025 and 2026, i.e. taking into account the effect of the AMS Regulation adoption.

Annex III: Financial Resources 2026 – 2028⁸⁷Table 1 - Revenue
General revenues

REVENUES (Payment Appropriations)	2025	2026
	Revenues estimated by the agency	Budget forecast
EU contribution	233,467,103	270,235,803
Other revenue		
TOTAL REVENUES	233,467,103	270,235,803

REVENUES	General revenues						
	Executed 2024	Estimated by the agency 2025	2026		VAR 2026/2025(%)	Envisaged 2027	Envisage d 2028
			Agency request	Budget forecast			
1 REVENUE FROM FEES AND CHARGES							
2 EU CONTRIBUTION	220,230,599	233,467,103	270,235,803		116%	293,303,731	
- Of which assigned revenues deriving from previous years' surpluses	10,314,092	6,283,397	3,450,520				
3 THIRD COUNTRIES CONTRIBUTION (incl. EEA/EFTA and candidate countries)							
- Of which EEA/EFTA (excl. Switzerland)							
- Of which candidate countries							
4 OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS							
5 ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS							
- Of which interest generated by funds paid by the Commission by way of the EU contribution (FFR Art. 58)							
6 REVENUES FROM SERVICES RENDERED AGAINST PAYMENT							
7 CORRECTION OF BUDGETARY IMBALANCES							
TOTAL	220,230,599	233,467,103	270,235,803		116%	293,303,731	

⁸⁷ Budget figures for 2025 and 2026 include the effect of adoption of the AMS Regulation, specifically the move of approx. €11.8M (previously in reserve in the adopted Budget 2025) to 2026.

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

REVENUES	2025	2026
	Revenues estimated by the agency	Budget forecast
TOTAL REVENUES	3,234,393	3,067,293

REVENUES	Additional EU funding: grant, contribution and service-level agreements						
	Executed 2024	Estimated by the agency 2025	2026		VAR 2026/2025 (%)	Envisaged 2027	Envisaged 2028
			Agency request	Budget forecast			
ADDITIONAL EU FUNDING STEMMING FROM GRANTS (FFR Art.7)	528,008	167,100		-	-	-	-
ADDITIONAL EU FUNDING STEMMING FROM CONTRIBUTION AGREEMENTS (FFR Art.7)	1,400,967	1,744,793		1,744,793	1.00	1,124,793	450,000
ADDITIONAL EU FUNDING STEMMING FROM SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS (FFR Art. 43.2)	1,616,113	1,322,500		1,322,500	1.00	1,322,500	146,250
TOTAL	3,545,089	3,234,393		3,067,293	0.95	2,447,293	596,250

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Table 2 - Expenditure

Expenditure	2025		2026	
	Commitment appropriations	Payment appropriations	Commitment appropriations	Payment appropriations
Title 1 - Staff expenditure	136,827,965	136,827,965	151,807,400	151,807,400
Title 2 - Infrastructure and operating expenditure	13,159,936	13,159,936	13,438,600	13,438,600
Title 3 - Operational expenditure	85,561,702	83,479,202	107,892,303	104,989,803
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	235,549,603	233,467,103	273,138,303	270,235,803

EXPENDITURE	Commitment appropriations						
	Executed Budget 2024 (COMMITTED)	Budget 2025	Estimate 2026		VAR 2026/2025	Envisaged 2027	Envisaged 2028
			Agency request	Budget forecast			
Title 1 Staff Expenditure	125,050,799	136,827,965	151,807,400		1.11	168,135,146	
11 Salaries & allowances	115,869,200	125,118,410	137,241,000		1.10	153,568,349	
- of which establishment plan posts	97,553,235	104,688,410	113,841,000		1.09	127,699,709	
- of which external personnel	18,315,965	20,430,000	23,400,000		1.15	25,868,640	
13 Sociomedical infrastructure	904,134	1,027,326	1,522,200		1.48	1,486,000	
14 Training	88,500	278,613	292,000		1.05	291,691	
15 Other staff-related expenditure	8,077,566	10,269,700	12,649,000		1.23	12,687,906	
16 Entertainment and representation expenses	111,400	133,916	103,200		0.77	101,200	
Title 2 Other administrative expenditure	12,849,848	13,159,936	13,438,600		1.02	19,903,293	
20 Rental of buildings and associated costs	9,173,928	9,156,636	9,614,000		1.05	16,216,764	
21 Administrative information technology	1,240,225	1,207,450	1,270,000		1.05	1,218,275	
22 Movable property and associated costs	1,037,727	524,850	872,000		1.66	1,096,518	
23 Current administrative expenditure	667,230	1,418,420	804,600		0.57	521,724	
24 Postal charges and telecommunications	51,300	57,600	72,000		1.25	72,012	
25 Statutory expenditure	679,437	794,980	806,000		1.01	778,000	
Title 3 Operational activities	82,132,415	85,561,702	107,892,303		1.26	107,095,292	
30 Operations	13,568,390	15,826,008	17,465,400		1.10	16,083,387	
31 Operational information technology	46,145,856	49,268,430	59,165,703		1.20	62,727,905	
32 Telecommunication costs for operational activities	1,346,033	1,229,198	1,523,200		1.24	1,892,800	
33 Seconded National Experts (Operational)	6,405,887	6,771,000	8,678,000		1.28	9,581,200	
34 EPCC	289,504	400,000	400,000		1.00	300,000	
35 Heads of Europol National Units	145,500	145,000	160,000		1.10	160,000	

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EXPENDITURE	Commitment appropriations						
	Executed Budget 2024 (COMMITTED)	Budget 2025	Estimate 2026		VAR 2026/2025	Envisaged 2027	Envisaged 2028
			Agency request	Budget forecast			
38 Decryption Platform	512,648	992,066	1,000,000		1.01	1,000,000	
39 Grants ⁸⁸	13,718,597	10,930,000	19,500,000		1.78	15,350,000	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	220,033,062	235,549,603	273,138,303		1.16	295,133,731	

EXPENDITURE	Payment appropriations						
	Executed Budget 2024 (PAID)	Budget 2025	Budget 2026		VAR 2026/2025	Envisaged 2027	Envisaged 2028
			Agency request	Budget forecast			
Title 1 Staff Expenditure	124,018,489	136,827,965	151,807,400		1.11	168,135,146	
11 Salaries & allowances	115,854,768	125,118,410	137,241,000		1.10	153,568,349	
- of which establishment plan posts	97,538,803	104,688,410	113,841,000		1.09	127,699,709	
- of which external personnel	18,315,965	20,430,000	23,400,000		1.15	25,868,640	
13 Sociomedical infrastructure	818,621	1,027,326	1,522,200		1.48	1,486,000	
14 Training	31,843	278,613	292,000		1.05	291,691	
15 Other staff-related expenditure	7,228,328	10,269,700	12,649,000		1.23	12,687,906	
16 Entertainment and representation expenses	84,929	133,916	103,200		0.77	101,200	
Title 2 Other administrative expenditure	8,890,128	13,159,936	13,438,600		1.02	19,903,293	
20 Rental of buildings and associated costs	6,266,326	9,156,636	9,614,000		1.05	16,216,764	
21 Administrative information technology	1,169,646	1,207,450	1,270,000		1.05	1,218,275	
22 Movable property and associated costs	469,159	524,850	872,000		1.66	1,096,518	
23 Current administrative expenditure	513,537	1,418,420	804,600		0.57	521,724	
24 Postal charges and telecommunications	38,446	57,600	72,000		1.25	72,012	
25 Statutory expenditure	433,015	794,980	806,000		1.01	778,000	
Title 3 Operational activities	61,839,310	83,479,202	104,989,803		1.26	105,265,292	
30 Operations	10,755,425	15,826,008	17,465,400		1.10	16,083,387	
31 Operational information technology	33,034,961	49,268,430	59,165,703		1.20	62,727,905	
32 Telecommunication costs for operational activities	1,181,446	1,229,198	1,523,200		1.24	1,892,800	
33 Seconded National Experts (Operational)	6,405,887	6,771,000	8,678,000		1.28	9,581,200	
34 EPCC	160,415	400,000	400,000		1.00	300,000	
35 Heads of Europol National Units	116,173	145,000	160,000		1.10	160,000	
38 Decryption Platform	512,648	992,066	1,000,000		1.01	1,000,000	
39 Grants ⁸⁹	9,672,356	8,847,500	16,597,500		1.88	13,520,000	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	194,747,927	233,467,103	270,235,803		1.16	293,303,731	

⁸⁸ Including for 2026, among others, differentiated commitment appropriations amounting to EUR 19 500 000 (EUR 10 000 000 for EMPACT, EUR 300 000 for fighting EURO counterfeiting, EUR 5 000 000 for OTF, EUR 3 000 000 for ATLAS and EUR 1 200 000 for a Supported Investigative Unit).

⁸⁹ Including for 2026, among others, differentiated payment appropriations amounting to EUR 16 597 500 (EUR 6 337 500 for EMPACT, EUR 180 000 for fighting EURO counterfeiting, EUR 6 000 000 for OTF, EUR 3 000 000 for ATLAS, EUR 200 000 for Innovation grants and EUR 880 000 for a Supported Investigative Unit).

Table 3 Budget outturn and cancellation of appropriations 2021-2024 (N-4 – N-2)

Budget outturn	2021	2022	2023	2024
Revenue actually received (+)	177,370,336	201,325,849	217,166,022	232,154,735
Payments made (-)	(148,871,757)	(165,414,326)	(191,340,681)	(206,265,223)
Carry-over of appropriations (-)	(37,028,367)	(40,478,220)	(30,754,730)	(31,921,235)
Cancellation of appropriations carried over (+)	2,926,585	3,802,497	3,737,470	1,715,169
Adjustment for carry-over of assigned revenue appropriations from previous year (+)	10,702,251	11,078,105	7,475,344	7,767,303
Exchange rate differences (+/-)	(428)	186	(28)	(228.57)
Total	5,098,619	10,314,092	6,283,397	3,450,520

**Descriptive information and justification on:
Budget outturn**

The overall preliminary draft budget result for the financial year 2024 comes to EUR 3 450 520. This includes the following:

- An amount of EUR 197 538 of not committed and lapsed commitment appropriations for non-differentiated appropriations (NDA);
- An amount of EUR 1 538 041 of not used payment appropriations (DA)
- An amount of EUR 1 715 169 of not used payment appropriations (NDA) carried forward from 2023 to 2024;
- An amount of EUR -228.57 the loss of the exchange rate difference in 2024.

Cancellation of payment appropriations carried forward

The carry forward of payment appropriations to 2024 came to a total of EUR 22 987 428 to cover existing commitments. The final implementation rate of the carry forward was 92.5% at the end of the year. A total of EUR 1 715 169 was not used and is thus incorporated in the final budget outturn.

- EUR 154 260 relates to Title 1, which is 13.3% of the carried forward amount under Title 1 (EUR 1 161 642);
- EUR 105 223 relates to Title 2, which is 2.3% of the carried forward amount under Title 2 (EUR 4 629 539); and
- EUR 1 455 686 relates to Title 3, which is 8.5% of the carried forward amount under Title 3 (EUR 17 196 247).

Annex IV: Human resources quantitative

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

A. Statutory staff and SNE

Staff	Year 2024			Year 2025	Year 2026	Year 2027 ⁹⁰	Year 2028 ⁹¹
ESTABLISHMENT PLAN POSTS	Authorised Budget	Actually filled as of 31/12/2024	Occupancy rate %	Authorised staff	Envisaged staff	Envisaged staff	Envisaged staff
Administrators (AD)	731	722	98.8%	768	786	892	
Assistants (AST)	23	23	100.0%	23	23	23	
Assistants/Secretaries (AST/SC)							
TOTAL ESTABLISHMENT PLAN POSTS	754	745	98.8%	791⁹²	809	915	
EXTERNAL STAFF	FTE corresponding to the authorised budget	Executed FTE as of 31/12/2024 ⁹³	Execution rate %	Headcount as of 31/12/2024	Envisaged FTE	Envisaged FTE	Envisaged FTE
Contract Agents (CA)	255	214.9	84.3%	217	262	295	
Seconded National Experts (SNE)	121	93.8	77.5%	90	138	145	
TOTAL EXTERNAL STAFF	376	308.7	82.1%	307	400	440	
TOTAL STAFF	1130	1053.1	93.2%				

⁹⁰ Figures for 2027 in Annexes II, III and IV are indicative and prepared on the basis of Europol's estimated needs 2025-2027, as elaborated in January 2025. The figures will be adjusted once the agency reviews its estimated needs 2027, as part of the draft Programming Document 2027-2029.

⁹¹ In the absence of a new EU MFF (as of 2028), figures for 2028 are not presented.

⁹² Including 3 posts from the AMS proposal that were included in the adopted 2025 Establishment Plan but then transferred to 2026 in line with the final EU Budget 2026. Similarly, 5 CA posts and 11 SNEs were also included in the adopted 2025 figures but then transferred to 2026.

⁹³ CA financed from the EU contribution: 217 Headcount (214.9 Annual average FTE); CA financed from other sources: 16 Headcount (16.29 Annual average FTE). SNE financed from the EU contribution at 31/12/2024: 52 Headcount (53.39 Annual average FTE) and Short-term costed SNE: 38 Headcount (40.42 Annual average FTE). SNE financed from other sources: 7 Headcount (7.67 Annual average FTE). Cost free SNE: 33 Headcount (29.7 Annual average FTE); SNE Guest Officers: 50 Headcount (58.1 Annual average FTE).

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

Human Resources	Year 2025	Year 2026	Year 2027	Year 2028
		Envisaged FTE	Envisaged FTE	Envisaged FTE
Contract Agents (CA)	15	12	12	5
Seconded National Experts (SNE)	8	8	8	0
TOTAL	23	20	20	

C. Other Human Resources

Structural service providers⁹⁴

	Actually in place as at 31/12/2024
IT	163
Facilities	53
Security	26
Other	3
TOTAL	245

Interim workers

	Total FTEs in year 2024
Number	6

⁹⁴ Service providers are contracted by a private company and carry out specialised outsourced tasks of a horizontal/support nature. At the European Commission, following general criteria should be fulfilled: 1) no individual contract with the Commission 2) on the Commission premises, usually with a PC and desk 3) administratively followed by the Commission (badge, etc.) and 4) contributing to the added value of the Commission. Similarly, Europol reports on the number of contractors with IT access.

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Table 2 – Multi-annual staff policy plan 2026 - 2028

Function group and grade	Year 2024				Year 2025 ⁹⁵		Year 2026		Year 2027		Year 2028	
	Authorised budget		Actually filled as of 31/12		Authorised budget		Envisaged		Envisaged		Envisaged	
	Permanent posts	Temporary posts	Permanent posts	Temporary posts	Perm. posts	Temp. posts	Perm. posts	Temp. posts	Perm. Posts	Temp. posts	Perm. posts	Temp. posts
AD 16		1		1		1		1				
AD 15		1		1		2		3		4		
AD 14		2		2		1		1				
AD 13		3		1		4		2		4		
AD 12		11		13		11		11		12		
AD 11		11		6		15		16		19		
AD 10		24		22		29		35		41		
AD 9		51		47		62		72		86		
AD 8		105		92		133		148		168		
AD 7		239		235		246		259		269		
AD 6		276		293		242		231		283		
AD 5		7		9		22		7		6		
AD TOTAL		731		722		768		786		892		
AST 11												
AST 10												
AST 9												
AST 8		1		1		1		2		1		
AST 7		3		1		3		3		3		
AST 6		5		8		6		5		6		
AST 5		3		1		2		3		2		
AST 4		3		3		3		3		3		
AST 3		3		3		4		3		4		
AST 2		5		6		4		4		4		
AST 1												
AST TOTAL		23		23		23		23		23		

⁹⁵ In accordance with Article 38, paragraph 1, of the Decision of the Europol Management Board on the adoption of the Financial Regulation applicable to Europol (EDOC#1032027v6), the Management Board hereby agrees with a modification of the establishment plan, should the interest of the service so require (e.g. in the context of the reclassification exercise), by up to 10% of posts authorised subject to the following conditions:

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

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Function group and grade	Year 2024				Year 2025 ⁹⁵		Year 2026		Year 2027		Year 2028	
	Authorised budget		Actually filled as of 31/12		Authorised budget		Envisaged		Envisaged		Envisaged	
	Permanent posts	Temporary posts	Permanent posts	Temporary posts	Perm. posts	Temp. posts	Perm. posts	Temp. posts	Perm. Posts	Temp. posts	Perm. posts	Temp. posts
AST/SC 6												
AST/SC 5												
AST/SC 4												
AST/SC 3												
AST/SC 2												
AST/SC 1												
AST/SC TOTAL												
TOTAL		754		745		791		809		915		
GRAND TOTAL	754		745		791		809		915			

External personnel

Contract Agents

Contract agents	FTE corresponding to the authorised budget 2024	Executed FTE as of 31/12/2024	Headcount as of 31/12/2024	FTE corresponding to the authorised budget 2025	FTE envisaged 2026	FTE envisaged 2027	FTE envisaged 2028
Function Group IV	79	55.3	65	84	86	104	
Function Group III	118	108.2	104	118	118	122	
Function Group II	58	51.4	48	58	58	69	
Function Group I							
TOTAL	255	214.9	217	260	262	295	

Seconded National Experts

Seconded National Experts	FTE corresponding to the authorised budget 2024	Executed FTE as of 31/12/2024	Headcount as of 31/12/2024	FTE corresponding to the authorised budget 2025	FTE envisaged 2026	FTE envisaged 2027	FTE envisaged 2028
TOTAL	121	93.8	90.0	132	138	145	

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Table 3 - Recruitment forecasts 2026 following retirement/mobility or new requested posts

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

Job title in the Agency	Type of contract (Official, TA or CA)		TA/Official Function group/grade of recruitment internal (brackets) and external (single grade) foreseen for publication		CA Recruitment Function Group (I, II, III or IV)
	Due to foreseen retirement/mobility	New posts requested due to additional tasks	Internal (brackets)	External (brackets)	
Allocation of new posts / replacement of staff members due to resignation / contract expiry and definition of profiles will be done in line with Europol's mandate and business priorities and on the basis of the MASPP.	<p>Number of anticipated compulsory retirements: 5 (4 TAs and 1 CA)</p> <p>End of 2nd contracts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TA contracts: 43 (restricted) + 48 potentially (non-restricted – pending outcome of different indefinite contract procedures) - CA contracts: 16 (2 FGII, 8 FGIII and 6 FGIV) 	<p>18 TA posts. This includes 9 posts stemming from the amended Europol Regulation (2022), a reduction of 2 posts from the Prüm Regulation and 11 new posts from the legislative proposal to prevent and fight migrant smuggling COM (2023) 754 final⁹⁶.</p> <p>2 CA positions⁹⁷ stemming from the legislative proposal to prevent and fight migrant smuggling COM(2023) 754 final.</p>	Most internal recruitments will be in the brackets AD5-AD12 and AD7-AD12	Most recruitments will be AD6/Specialist or AD7/Senior Specialist	No significant change expected vis-à-vis current CAs.

Number of inter-agency mobility Year 2025 from and to the agency (to be included in final PD)⁹⁸:

To Europol (in)		To other Agencies (out)	
TA	CA	TA	CA
4	1	7	3

⁹⁶ Following the adoption of the proposal, which foresees a total of 14 TA posts until the end of 2026 (i.e., incl. 3 TA posts in the adopted 2025 Establishment Plan)

⁹⁷ In addition to 5 CA positions in the adopted 2025 figures stemming from the AMS proposal.

⁹⁸ The figures are provided by end of November 2025; final figures at year-end 2025 will be provided at the next review of the Annexes.

Annex V: Human resources qualitative

A. Recruitment policy

Implementing rules in place:

		Yes	No	If no, which other implementing rules are in place
Engagement of CA	Model Decision C(2019)3016	x		
Engagement of TA	Model Decision C(2015)1509		x	Decision of the Management Board of Europol of 28 February 2019 laying down general implementing provisions on the procedures governing the engagement and use of temporary staff under Article 2(f) of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union
Middle management	Model decision C(2018)2542		x	Decision of the Management Board of Europol of 4 October 2019 on middle management staff
Type of posts	Model Decision C(2018)8800	x		
Function of Adviser	Model Decision C(2018) 2209	x		
Others				Decision of the Management Board of Europol of 13 September 2024 defining the Europol posts that can be filled only by staff engaged from the competent authorities of the Member States ("restricted posts") Decision of the Management Board of Europol of 8 October 2024 laying down rules on the secondment of national experts to Europol Decision of the Management Board of Europol of 1 May 2017 on the rules for the selection, extension of the term of office and removal from office of the Executive Director and Deputy Executive Directors

B. Appraisal and reclassification/promotions

Implementing rules in place:

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

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

Table 1 - Reclassification of TA/promotion of officials

Grades	Average seniority in the grade among reclassified staff						
	Year 2021	Year 2022	Year 2023	Year 2024	Year 2025	Actual average over 5 years	Average over 5 years (According to Decision C(2015)9560)
AD05			5.3		11.9		2.8
AD06	4.8	5.3	5.0	5.6	4.84		2.8
AD07	5.2	5.3	5.0	4.6	4.91		2.8
AD08	7.1	5.8	7.3	5.6	8.06		3
AD09	8.2	3.9	3.9	6.8	5.96		4
AD10	6.8	7	10	6.0	5		4
AD11		5.5	6.8				4
AD12				6.3	5.67		6.7
AD13							6.7
AST1							3
AST2			6.8		3.87		3
AST3			4.4				3
AST4	3.4		9.0				3
AST5		5.71	3.25	4.7			4
AST6							4
AST7	8.0						4
AST8							4
AST9							N/A
AST10 (Senior assistant)							5
AST/SC1							4
AST/SC2							5
AST/SC3							5.9
AST/SC4							6.7
AST/SC5							8.3

Table 2 - Reclassification of contract staff

Function Group	Grade	Staff in activity at 1.01.2023	How many staff members were reclassified in Year 2024	Average number of years in grade of reclassified staff members	Average number of years in grade of reclassified staff members according to decision C(2015)9561
CA IV	17	5			Between 6 and 10 years
	16	14	1	5.76	Between 5 and 7 years
	15	12	1	5	Between 4 and 6 years
	14	35	6	3.87	Between 3 and 5 years
	13	9			Between 3 and 5 years
CA III	12	25			N.A
	11	21	2	6	Between 6 and 10 years
	10	23	5	4.46	Between 5 and 7 years
	9	34	3	6.34	Between 4 and 6 years
	8	5	3	3.59	Between 3 and 5 years
CA II	7	6			N.A
	6	15	2	4.5	Between 6 and 10 years
	5	25	4	4.88	Between 5 and 7 years
	4	4	1	2.75	Between 3 and 5 years
CA I	2				Between 6 and 10 years
	1				Between 3 and 5 years

C. Gender representation

Table 1 - Data on 31/12/2024 - statutory staff (only officials, TA and CA)

		Official		Temporary		Contract Agents		Grand Total	
		Staff	%	Staff	%	Staff	%	Staff	%
Female	Administrator level			197	92%				
	Assistant level (AST & AST/SC)			18	8%				
	Total			215	30%	116	50%	331	35%
Male	Administrator level			488	99%				
	Assistant level (AST & AST/SC)			5	1%				
	Total			493	70%	117	50%	610	65%
Grand Total				708	100%	233	100%	941	100%

Table 2 - Data regarding gender evolution over 5 years of Middle and Senior management⁹⁹

	2020		2024	
	Number	%	Number	%
Female Managers	7	21%	8	21%
Male Managers	26	79%	31	79%

⁹⁹ Staff defined as middle manager by the applicable General Implementing provisions on middle management.

D. Geographical Balance

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

Table 1 - Table on 31/12/2024 - statutory staff only (officials, AD and CA)

Nationality	AD + CA FG IV		AST/SC- AST + CA FGI/CA FGII/CA FGIII		TOTAL	
	Number	% of total staff members in AD and FG IV categories	Number	% of total staff members in AST SC/AST and FG I, II and III categories	Number	% of total staff
Austria	11	1%	0	0%	11	1.2%
Belgium	39	5%	3	2%	42	4.5%
Bulgaria	23	3%	7	4%	30	3.2%
Croatia	18	2%	2	1%	20	2.1%
Cyprus	9	1%	0	0%	9	1.0%
Czech Republic	5	1%	2	1%	7	0.7%
Denmark	1	0%	0	0%	1	0.1%
Estonia	5	1%	0	0%	5	0.5%
Finland	14	2%	1	1%	15	1.6%
France	55	7%	4	2%	59	6.3%
Germany	46	6%	3	2%	49	5.2%
Greece	73	10%	14	8%	87	9.2%
Hungary	17	2%	7	4%	24	2.6%
Ireland	11	1%	2	1%	13	1.4%
Italy	73	10%	12	7%	85	9.0%
Latvia	3	0%	1	1%	4	0.4%
Lithuania	14	2%	7	4%	21	2.2%
Luxembourg	0	0%	1	1%	1	0.1%
Malta	1	0%	1	1%	2	0.2%
Netherlands	70	9%	58	32%	128	13.6%
Poland	33	4%	3	2%	36	3.8%
Portugal	33	4%	6	3%	39	4.1%
Romania	88	12%	25	14%	113	12.0%
Slovakia	7	1%	3	2%	10	1.1%
Slovenia	10	1%	2	1%	12	1.3%
Spain	86	11%	15	8%	101	10.7%
Sweden	13	2%	1	1%	14	1.5%
<i>United Kingdom</i>	3	0%	0	0%	3	0.3%
TOTAL	761	100%	180	100%	941	100%

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

Most represented nationality	2020		2024	
	Number	%	Number	%
The Netherlands	102	13%	128	14%

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

E. Schooling

Agreement in place with the European School(s) of The Hague				
Contribution agreements signed with the EC on type I European schools	Yes		No	X
Contribution agreements ¹⁰⁰ signed with the EC on type II European schools	Yes	X	No	
Number of service contracts in place with international schools:	N/A			
Description of any other solutions or actions in place: N/A				

¹⁰⁰ A *Contribution Agreement* was concluded between the European Commission and Stichting Het Rijnlands Lyceum to define the conditions for payment of the *EU Contribution* for pupils of Europol staff enrolled in the European School in The Hague. A *Mandate and Service Agreement* was concluded between Europol and the European Commission to define the collaboration with respect to the implementation of the aforementioned *EU Contribution*.

Annex VI: Environment management

1. Context of the agency and its environmental management strategy

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



2. Overview of the agency's Environmental Management System

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

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

3. Environmental areas, indicators and targets

Europol's activities, products and services have both direct and indirect impact on the environment. In particular, the **environmental areas** defined in the EMS and implemented at Europol, are the following:

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

Europol's **Environmental Vision 2030** establishes the organisational long-term ambition and objectives.

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

The Environmental Vision 2030 is intended to contribute to the goals of the EU Green Deal and to guide Europol's development with respect to the environment by taking into account the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) due to the climate change.

The main pillars of the strategy are:

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

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

In 2025, Europol published its fourth updated environmental statement demonstrating the implementation of EMAS and the agency's environmental performance for 2023. Additionally, the environmental performance data for 2024 was collected and the environmental performance evaluation was finalised.

Furthermore, the following activities and products have been completed:

- EMAS/ISO14001 External Audit was successfully concluded resulting in the re-certification for the EMAS and ISO14001 standards until 2027;
- Monthly Travel Emissions reports continued to be delivered to management to support the monitoring of the carbon emissions generated by business travel;
- Mid-Year Performance evaluation: An interim performance evaluation is currently (Q4 2025) underway to present the business travel performance for the first half of 2025 (January-June) and progress towards meeting the agreed carbon reduction target;
- The new, improved Environmental Statement 2024 was published on Europol's website in Q1 2025. The 2025 Environmental Statement will be presented during the external audit for verification and is expected to be published in Q1 2026.

4. Actions to improve and communicate environmental performance

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

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

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

- **Carbon Emissions Management Policy and Policy Implementation Guidance:** The policy provides a framework for the management and reduction of Europol's carbon emissions supporting the decarbonisation pathway and the 2030 target of a 55% reduction. Amongst other measures it introduces carbon budgeting to integrate carbon footprint considerations into the financial business travel planning and management. The Implementation Guidance provides supplementary guidelines for decision-making on business travel and events involving travel of both Europol staff and externals¹⁰¹.
- **Monthly Business Travel Reporting:** In line with the Carbon Emissions Management Policy, monthly reports track emissions from business travel across all Directorates. Reporting is based on tools and templates¹⁰² developed to meet the policy requirements and provide information on Europol's progress toward achieving the adopted Environmental Vision 2030.
- **Mid-Year Evaluation of Travel Carbon Emissions:** Travel data and related emissions are analysed and evaluated against the reduction target set for 2030. These Mid-year Evaluations play a crucial role in enabling the Agency to closely monitor progress, identify trends, and consider taking timely corrective measures when needed to ensure the successful implementation of the Environmental Vision 2030.

¹⁰¹ The policy is pending approval.

¹⁰² It is noted that these tools are an interim solution until Europol launches a tender procedure for a new Events and Travel Services Provider.

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- **Revision of the current decarbonisation absolute target:** Performance evaluations of environmental data for 2023–2025 indicate that Europol is deviating from its 2030 trajectory and interim targets, primarily due to a substantial increase in the Agency's operational scale and higher than anticipated (in 2018) staff growth. At the same time, emissions per employee decreased by around 36% when compared to 2018, highlighting improvements in business travel management. An in-depth analysis was conducted to evaluate the possibility of transitioning from the current absolute target to an intensity target (emission per employee). The EMAS Steering Committee endorsed this approach, which is expected to be presented during the Q4 2025 Management Review.
- **Offsetting surplus CO2 emissions:** As per Europol's Environmental Vision, Europol may additionally use carbon offsets to neutralise emissions that prove difficult or impossible to reduce during the implementation of the vision. The EMAS Steering Committee decided during the Q4 2024 Management Review to offset GHG emissions surplus using high quality, certified initiatives. In 2025, the offset project was launched, including a comprehensive study and evaluation of potential projects, and the identified carbon surplus has now been successfully neutralised.
- **Revision of the Environmental Management System (EMS) Scope:** The potential extension of Europol's EMS was evaluated in line with the Strategic Housing Roadmap (SHR). The assessment supported EMAS compliance while addressing Europol's evolving operational and spatial needs. It concluded that four buildings—Temporary Satellite Buildings 1, 2, and 3, and the Low-rise Toren van Oud—should be incorporated into the EMS scope starting with the 2026–2028 EMAS perspective.
- **New 2026–2028 EMAS perspective:** With the current 2023–2025 Perspective concluding at the end of 2025, a new EMAS Perspective is being developed to guide Europol's environmental efforts and advance the Environmental Vision 2030.

Europol's intended actions can be summarised as follows:

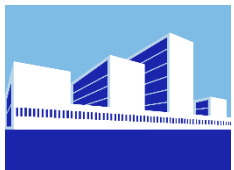
- Maintaining of EMAS and ISO 14001 certification:
 - Implement the annual Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle (PDCA);
 - Conduct annual internal and external audits (surveillance and re-certification);
 - Conduct legal compliance audits every two years and update the legal register annually;
 - Prepare and publish annually the Environmental Statements demonstrating the implementation of EMAS at Europol and the agency's environmental performance for the previous year.
 - Implement the *Environmental Vision 2030*, particularly by implementing the supporting actions of its short to mid-term action plan (2023-2025), and developing the next EMAS perspective 2026- 2028.
- In cooperation with the Central Government Real Estate Agency (CGREA) of the Host State, implement various actions significantly improving environmental aspects pertaining to the operation of Europol's buildings such as energy and gas efficiency, water and waste management.
- Continue to include and consider EMAS and organisation's environmental requirements in the development process of Strategic Housing Roadmap (referred to in Annex VII).

Annex VII: Buildings – year 2026

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

Building projects in planning phase:

Strategic Housing Roadmap (SHR)



In 2011, the Host State delivered the Headquarters (HQ1) with 850 workplaces and 750 conference and training seats. Since then, the capacity of the HQ1 was optimised into 1,025 workplaces to cover the organisational growth and new business demands. In 2016, the Host State and Europol established a Strategic Housing Roadmap (SHR) Programme¹⁰³ to be implemented during the period 2016 – 2031. The main objective of the SHR is to proactively align Europol's growth and new business demands with the housing needs of the organisation, enabling timely planning and development of the necessary housing solutions. The SHR enables the necessary updating and planning of real estate developments covering a larger time span until 2045.

¹⁰³ In line with the recommendations of the ECA report "Office accommodation of EU institutions – Some good management practices but also various weaknesses" of 2018, the Host State and Europol will maintain a strong SHR Programme governance structure, including a formalised cost demarcation.

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The provision of sufficient temporary workplaces, additional meeting rooms and other related facilities is of high importance until the implementation of the Long-Term Housing Measures, which is the delivery of a second headquarters. This provision is essential for supporting organisational growth and new business demands.

An overall minimum capacity of 2,800 permanent workplaces (WP) is essential, for up to 3,500 users until 2045, taking into account the flex ratio of 0.8 (1 FTE: 0.8 WP). In 2023, Europol implemented this flex ratio of 0.8 in the office environment by applying a flexible office concept in combination with hybrid working.

Additionally, the Housing Analysis identified the required temporary workplaces to bridge the operational occupation of a HQ2. A delivery of HQ2 in 2035, requires 800 additional temporary workplaces, on top of the 500 temporary workplaces already identified in 2022, which are currently under development, including an applied flex ratio of 0.8, bringing the total additional temporary workplaces needed to bridge the gap until the delivery of a HQ2 to 1,300. This is an increase of 160% from the 500 workplaces which were established in 2022.

These figures will be analysed regularly against the organisational growth and new business demands.

Mid-Term Housing Solution (HQ1)

Via the Mid-Term Housing Solution - MTHS (HQ1), the spaces (m^2/m^3) in the building will be further optimised to increase workplace capacity, meeting spaces and other supporting spatial functions. This will help accommodate organisational growth, support new working arrangements, as well as provide agile and hybrid workplace solutions (physical workplaces in combination with teleworking solutions).

The planning on the implementation (construction) process of the MTHS/Plank Floor Slabs (PFS) in the HQ will be aligned with the full operational availability of Temporary Satellite Building 3 (TSB3) forecasted for 2027 and executed during the period 2027-2029.

Temporary Satellite Building 1

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

Due to the delayed delivery of Temporary Satellite Building 3 (TSB3), discussions on further prolongation of the Lease Agreement of TSB1 is in progress, foreseen to be extended until 31 December 2026.

Temporary Satellite Building 2

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

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

The delivery of the building is scheduled for January 2026.

Temporary Satellite Building 3

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

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

Phase 1 and 2 are forecasted to be completed in July 2026 and July 2027, respectively.

Temporary Satellite Building 4

The Definition Phase of a Temporary Satellite Building 4 (TSB4) is in progress. It is foreseen that the building will be developed with 90 workplaces and spatial supporting functions as e.g., meeting, training and recruitment rooms. By following this concept, meeting rooms in the HQ will become available for operational purposes.

The Host State offer for TSB4 will be presented to the MB for endorsement.

Long-Term Housing Measures (HQ2)

The Host State and Europol are exploring together alternatives for the establishment of a HQ2. The "Initiation Phase" for the establishment of a development project of a building with the characteristics of 65,000 m² / 1750 workplaces / spatial supporting functions and suitable building plot within the Municipality of The Hague is in progress. Alignment on the settlement of the Programme of Requirements is ongoing as well as the involved project governance. This is an iterative process and a new development project of significant magnitude. The Host State parties e.g., Ministry of Justice and Security, Central Government Real Estate Agency, Municipality of The Hague and Europol are actively involved in the process.

Toren van Oud, Low-rise building

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

In 2023, the Host State was able to establish a lease for utilising the low-rise building. These spaces will be used to relocate some supporting services from Europol's HQ1. Via this solution, more space will become available in HQ2 for workplaces, and the security and safety concerns regarding the Toren van Oud will be mitigated.

The project is in progress and the forecast to deliver the low-rise building is Q2/2027.

Second (Hot) Data Centre (HDC)

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

In Q4 2024 the Host State and Europol visited a governmental Data Centre in the Netherlands. Europol informed the Host State about the suitability of the location to host Europol's HDC. The Host State is aligning internally on the possibilities to bring this further

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and will provide an update in Q4 2025. Subject to final confirmation, initial preparatory activities will start in 2026.

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

Satellite Locations in Member States

Data Recovery Site Austria

Europol's Data Recovery Site is hosted at a location owned by the Republic of Austria. The lease agreement has been renewed in 2021 by an Addendum, for a period of 5 years, starting as of 1 August 2021 until 31 July 2026. Currently, the Republic of Austria and Europol are in the process of agreeing on a new addendum to the Lease Agreement to prolong the usage for a period of 5 years.

The Data Recovery Site is used to continuously store a backup of Europol's data and is therefore important for Europol's ICT business continuity.

Brussels Office

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

Europol Decryption Platform

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

Satellite Locations in Strategic Partners

Interpol Office

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

Washington D.C. Office

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

Annex VIII: Privileges and immunities

Agency privileges	Privileges granted to staff	
	Protocol of privileges and immunities / diplomatic status	Education / day care
According to Article 63(1) Europol Regulation the Protocol on Privileges and Immunities of the European Union ("Protocol No. 7" ¹⁰⁴ to the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union) applies to Europol. The Protocol is supplemented by the Agreement of 15 October 1998 between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Europol concerning the Headquarters of Europol (see Art. 70 <i>Europol Regulation</i>).	<p>According to Article 63(1) Europol Regulation the following legal acts apply to Europol's staff (including the Executive Director and the Deputy Executive Directors):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protocol on Privileges and Immunities of the European Union ("Protocol No. 7" to the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU) - Regulation (Euratom, ECSC, EEC) No. 549/69 of 25 March 1969 determining the categories of officials and other servants of the European Communities to whom the provisions of Article 12, the second paragraph of Article 13 and Article 14 of the Protocol on the Privileges and Immunities of the Communities apply (as last amended by Regulation (EC) No. 371/2009 of 27 November 2008) <p>Protocol and Regulation are supplemented by the Agreement of 15 October 1998 between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Europol concerning the Headquarters of Europol (see Art. 70 <i>Europol Regulation</i>), which is itself supplemented regarding staff privileges and immunities by a number of <i>Notes Verbales</i> some specific to Europol and others directed towards all international and EU organisations in The Netherlands. The most significant of these is an exchange of <i>Notes Verbales</i> of 25 October 2007.</p>	Europol staff members are eligible to receive national childcare and education allowances provided that they satisfy the criteria imposed by the applicable Dutch laws and regulations.

¹⁰⁴ Please note: Protocol No. 7 has been renumbered, compared to the Protocol on Privileges and Immunities of the European Communities. Its Article 15 empowers the European Parliament and the Council to determine acting by means of regulations the categories of officials and other servants of the Union to whom the provisions of Article 11, the second paragraph of Article 12, and Article 13 of this Protocol shall apply, in whole or in part. -Regulation No. 549/69 (see above) has not been amended following the entry into force of the new Protocol No. 7 (1 Dec. 2009), thus still contains the references to the old numbering.

Annex IX: Evaluations

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

Internal monitoring & evaluation

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

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

Internal Audit Capability (IAC)

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

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

Data Protection Function (DPF)

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

The protection of personal data remains a key factor that enables Europol to successfully fulfil its mission. Europol's tailor-made data protection framework is widely recognised as adhering to the highest standards of data protection in law enforcement. It is designed to serve the needs of the operational units in preventing and combating serious and organised crime and terrorism, while simultaneously protecting the personal data processed in Europol's systems. In addition to law enforcement data, the DPO also ensures the protection of Europol staff data as determined by Regulation (EC) No 2018/1725¹⁰⁵.

¹⁰⁵ Regulation (EC) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data.

External monitoring & evaluation

The **Internal Audit Service (IAS)**, supported by the IAC and Europol, regularly performs a risk assessment on Europol's governance, administrative and support process areas, with a view to identifying the overall risk profile of these processes outside the core business area. On the basis of the IAS risk assessment concerning Europol's governance, administrative and support processes, the IAS issues a multi-annual IAS Strategic Internal Audit Plan (SIAP) for Europol, which is presented to the Europol Management Board and subsequently implemented by corresponding IAS audit engagements at Europol. The IAS risk assessment was initiated in 2025 with a view to identifying audit topics for the SIAP 2026-2028 for Europol.

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

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

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

The **European Commission** initiated in 2025 the evaluation exercises under Article 68 of the Europol Regulation which will provide key input to the process for considering further changes to Europol's legal basis (envisaged for 2026). Europol provides its contribution at the request of the European Commission.

Ad-hoc evaluations

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

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

The renewed Europol Strategy sets out the strategic direction for Europol and the six strategic priorities. Europol's **Internal Control System (ICS)** is a key component to help deliver the renewed Europol Strategy and achieve the corresponding objectives for Europol.

Organisational management

The Executive Director is responsible for the implementation of the tasks assigned to Europol and puts in place the necessary organisational structure and the ICS. The Executive Director is supported in the design and implementation of internal controls by the Deputy Executive Director in charge of the Governance Directorate, as the directorate member in charge of risk management and internal control, senior management, the Internal Control Coordinator (ICC), (IT) security, financial actors and the planning and performance and process management functions. The Management Board and independent functions have a distinct role in Europol's administrative and management structure.

Organisational management is designed in line with the applicable regulatory framework and integrates the Three Lines of Defence model with specialised (support) functions, a dedicated risk management and compliance function, a Fundamental Rights Officer (FRO), an Internal Audit Capability (IAC), an Accounting Officer (ACCO), and a Data Protection Officer (DPO).

Internal Control System (ICS)

The **ICS** translates the **Europol Internal Control Framework (ICF)**, adopted by the Management Board, and which was developed in line with the COSO Integrated Internal Control Framework and the ICF of the European Commission. Europol's ICS represents the system of controls including the regulatory instruments, delegations, processes, resources (technical and human) and organisational structure to enable Europol to achieve its strategy and objectives.

The ICS aims at providing reasonable assurance regarding the achievement of the elements of internal control, as set out in the FR applicable to Europol, with regard to the implementation of the budget, namely:

- a. effectiveness, efficiency and economy of operations;
- b. reliability of reporting;
- c. safeguarding of assets and information;
- d. prevention, detection, correction and follow-up of fraud and irregularities;
- e. adequate management of the risks relating to the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions, taking into account the (multi-) annual character of programmes as well as the nature of the payments concerned.

The Europol ICF consists of five components¹⁰⁶ and seventeen principles - underpinned by fifty-eight so-called 'Points of Focus'¹⁰⁷ - to achieve the operational, reporting and compliance objectives.

Europol continuously monitors, using both quantitative and qualitative measurements including a set of internal control indicators and an annual assessment, the functioning of the ICS to determine whether each of the five components of internal control, including the underlying principles, is present and functioning and whether the components operate in an integrated manner and effectively reduce, to an acceptable level, the risk of not achieving the (multi-) annual objectives - relating to the operations, reporting, and compliance. Europol

¹⁰⁶ (1) Control environment, (2) Risk assessment, (3) Control activities, (4) Information and communication, (5) Monitoring activities

¹⁰⁷ Important characteristics of the internal control principles

also assesses the costs and benefits of control. Improvements identified in the annual assessment of the ICS set the strategy for the further development of the existing internal controls on an annual basis.

Further to the control environment, control activities, management of information and communication as well as monitoring activities, a **corporate risk management** process aggregates and assesses risks (including the related responses) at organisational level. Risk management is expanded from a vertical (e.g. in departments or programmes/projects) to a horizontal perspective (corporate, organisational wide view) in line with the four principles and related points of focus of the risk assessment component, and Europol's risk management policy and process, whereby corporate risks are considered internally by Europol at regular intervals throughout the year and on an immediate ad hoc basis in the event of the identification of corporate risks which are of a time-critical or high impact nature.

Measures to prevent cases of conflict of interest, irregularities and fraud include a robust ethics framework and dedicated rules and guidance, including mechanisms to report issues, management supervision and delegations - observing the segregation of duties and sound financial management principles, monitoring and regular reporting, ex-ante and ex-post controls and anti-fraud risk assessment and specific actions. Europol has an Internal Investigations Service (IIS) to investigate suspected breaches of professional obligations.

Anti-Fraud Strategy

The revised Anti-Fraud Strategy, based on a fraud risk assessment, was adopted by the Management Board in June 2025. The Anti-Fraud Strategy outlines three objectives and corresponding measures to prevent and detect potentially fraudulent activities.

Europol Public Information

Annex XI: Grants

A. Grant, Contribution and Service-level Agreements resulting in revenue and additional budget

	General information						Financial and HR impacts							
	Date of signature	Total amount	Duration	Counterpart	Short description		N-1 (2025)		N (2026)		N+1 (2027)		N+2 (2028)	
Grant agreements														
1. H2020 - STARLIGHT 101021797 - part of consortium coordinated by CEA, FR	05/05/2021 (starting date 1/10/2021)	17,000,000 for the consortium of which 891,200 for Europol	48 months	European Commission Research Executive Agency	Sustainable Autonomy and Resilience for LEAs using AI against High priority Threats	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA
							167,100	167,100	-	-	-	-	-	-
						Number of CAs	3		0		0		0	
						Number of SNEs	0		0		0		0	
Total grant agreements						Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA
							167,100	167,100	-	-	-	-	-	-
						Number of CAs	3		0		0		0	
						Number of SNEs	0		0		0		0	
Contribution agreements														
1. EaP EMPACT Contribution Agreement number 700002208	5/12/2024 (starting date 1/1/2025)	1,800,000	48 months	European Commission DG Near	Fighting against organised crime in the Eastern Partnership region II	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA
							450,000	450,000	450,000	450,000	450,000	450,000	450,000	450,000
						Number of CAs	2		2		2		2	
						Number of SNEs	0		0		0		0	
2. SIRIUS phase 3 New Agreement number 700002618	6/12/2024 (starting date 1/1/2025)	3,500,000 (2,024,377.60 Europol, 1,475,622.40 Eurojust)	36 months	European Commission Service for Foreign Policy Instruments	International Digital Cooperation - Cross border access to electronic evidence	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA
							674,793	674,793	674,793	674,793	674,793	674,793	-	-
						Number of CAs	5		5		5		0	
						Number of SNEs	0		0		0		0	
3. Perci workflow Article 18 DSA LC-03708278	19/12/2024 (starting date 1/1/2025)	1,240,000	24 months	European Commission DG CONNECT	Initiation of the development of a “Threat-to-life notifications” workflow in PERCI	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA
							620,000	620,000	620,000	620,000	-	-	-	-
						Number of CAs	0		0		0		0	
						Number of SNEs	0		0		0		0	
Total contribution agreements						Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA
							1,744,793	1,744,793	1,744,793	1,744,793	1,124,793	1,124,793	450,000	450,000
						Number of CAs	7		7		7		2	
						Number of SNEs	0		0		0		0	

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	General information						Financial and HR impacts							
	Date of signature	Total amount	Duration	Counterpart	Short description		N-1 (2025)		N (2026)		N+1 (2027)		N+2 (2028)	
Service-level agreements														
1. EUIPO - IP Crime and Fraud	26/07/2023 (starting date 1/1/2024)	maximum 4,120,000 (1,030,000 per year)	48 months	The European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO)	To support law enforcement authorities preventing crime and fraud related to Intellectual Property Rights	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA
							1,030,000	1,030,000	1,030,000	1,030,000	1,030,000	1,030,000		
						Number of CAs	2		2		2		0	
						Number of SNEs	8		8		8		0	
2. The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (funded via Contribution Agreement with DG Near)	01/04/2024	390,000	48 months	The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training	Western Balkans Partnership Against Crime and Terrorism - WB	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA
							97,500	97,500	97,500	97,500	97,500	97,500	24,375	24,375
						Number of CAs	1		1		1		1	
						Number of SNEs	0		0		0		0	
3. The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (funded via Contribution Agreement with DG Near)	01/07/2024	390,000	48 months	The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training	Training and Operational Partnership against Organised Crime (TOPCOP) II (Contract No. 700001970)	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA
							97,500	97,500	97,500	97,500	97,500	97,500	48,750	48,750
						Number of CAs	1		1		1		1	
						Number of SNEs	0		0		0		0	
4. The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (funded via Contribution Agreement with DG Near)	01/10/2024	390,000	48 months	The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training	EUROMED Police VI (Contract No. 700002160)	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA
							97,500	97,500	97,500	97,500	97,500	97,500	73,125	73,125
						Number of CAs	1		1		1		1	
						Number of SNEs	0		0		0		0	
Total service-level agreements						Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA
							1,322,500	1,322,500	1,322,500	1,322,500	1,322,500	1,322,500	146,250	146,250
						Number of CAs	5		5		5		3	
						Number of SNEs	8		8		8		0	
TOTAL AGREEMENTS						Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA
							3,234,393	3,234,393	3,067,293	3,067,293	2,447,293	2,447,293	596,250	596,250
						Number of CAs	15		12		12		5	
						Number of SNEs	8		8		8		0	

B. Grants to be awarded

In 2026, Europol plans to establish a number of grant funding instruments to support EU MS in the fight against organised crime. Following COSI guidance it is foreseen that the full budget of € 8,000,000 dedicated for the support of EMPACT in 2026 and 2027 will be only used for Low Value Grants in support of operational activities as described below. This means that there will not be a restricted call for proposals for EMPACT High Value Grants in support of strategic activities anymore. Such activities are from 2026 onwards planned to be supported via a separate funding instrument from DG Home (ISF Union Action for EMPACT). While Europol integrated differentiated appropriations into its financial management system in 2023 to enable the publication of calls or invitations spanning multiple years, budget constraints limit the implementation of such multi-annual schemes across all areas.

1. Ad-hoc low-value grants invitation in support of operational activities as laid down in the Operational Action Plans implementing the EMPACT Priorities.

Legal basis

Article 4 and Article 61(2) of the REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) and replacing and repealing Council Decisions 2009/371/JHA, 2009/934/JHA, 2009/935/JHA, 2009/936/JHA and 2009/968/JHA.

Council conclusions on setting the EU's Priorities for the fight against organised and serious international crime between 2026 and 2029.

Article 198(f) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 in relation to applications by at least two Member States to include third countries within a specific crime priority grant action linked to the administrative powers of the proposed law enforcement authorities of third countries and their relevance for a particular EMPACT priority action.

Budget line

3920 EMPACT Grants

Priorities of the years, objectives pursued and expected results

Enhancing the fight against serious and organised international crime within the new EMPACT Cycle 2026-2029. These grants are focussed on supporting Member States' cross-border operations and investigations as well as joint investigation teams as per Europol's tasks under Article 4(1)(h) of the Europol Regulation. Applications from eligible applicants can be submitted throughout the period indicated below rather than on any fixed deadline(s).

The objective of the low-value grants is to provide support tailored to operational activities integrated in the Operational Action Plans (OAPs) adopted by the Council. They target activities that are developed on an ad-hoc basis rather than as a result of a long-term planning, due to their investigative nature or other quickly changing aspects of crime phenomena and crime-countermeasures. EMPACT 2026-2029 addresses the following crime areas:

EMPACT Priority 1. MTCN-I (1 OAP); EMPACT Priority 2. Fastest Growing Crimes in the Online Sphere (3 OAPs): 2.1. Cyber-attacks, 2.2. Online Child Sexual Exploitation, 2.3. Online Fraud Schemes; EMPACT Priority 3. Drug trafficking (2 OAPs): 3.1. Cannabis, Cocaine and Heroin, 3.2. Synthetic drugs and New Psychoactive Substances; EMPACT Priority 4. Migrant smuggling and THB (2 OAPs): 4.1. Migrant smuggling, 4.2. Trafficking in human beings; EMPACT Priority 5. Firearms & Explosives (1 OAP); EMPACT priority 6. Environmental Crime (1 OAP); EMPACT Priority 7. Economic and Financial Crimes (3 OAPs): 7.1. VAT (MTIC) Fraud, 7.2. Excise & Customs Fraud, 7.3. Intellectual Property Crime.

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It is expected that the support will provide for effective cooperation between Member States law enforcement agencies, EU Institutions, EU Agencies and relevant third parties while delivering coherent operational actions targeting the most pressing criminal threats facing the EU. The funded measures should achieve concrete, quantifiable / measurable operational results. This scheme shall take due consideration of the existence of a separate grant scheme supporting actions against euro-counterfeiting.

Description of the activities to be funded through low-value grants

Transnational short-term operational and/or investigative activities within the EMPACT Priorities, with a budget not exceeding EUR 60,000 (in line with the threshold defined for low-value grants in the EU Financial Regulation), aiming to enhance operational cross-border cooperation, establish joint investigations, joint operations or joint action days.

Grants awarded under this Article have a maximum duration of 9 months with the possibility of an extension at Europol's discretion for an additional period of 3 months, if operationally justified. The overall grant duration shall not exceed 12 months.

Europol may award using simplified costs or unit costs options, provided that a decision has been adopted by the Responsible Authorising Officer.

In addition, where duly justified for operational purposes, financial support may in accordance with Article 61(4) of the Europol Regulation cover the full investment costs of equipment and infrastructure, subject to the following conditions:

- the equipment is required to ensure cross border cooperation and absence of tools would jeopardise the international investigation involving more than one Member State;
- renting or leasing the equipment would not be possible as it could jeopardise the operation;
- applicants provide assurance that the equipment will be fully dedicated to the action.

Essential eligibility, selection and award criteria

Eligibility criteria:

I. In order to be eligible the Applicant must be a public body established in an EU Member state participating in the OAP in question (i.e. the particular EMPACT crime priority) and in the law-enforcement cooperation under the Europol Regulation.

No differentiation is made in Europol's constituent act between different Member States. However, the opt-in structure used for JHA under the TFEU creates a varying degree of participation of Member States. Europol pays due regard to the status of EU Member States with regard to the Europol Regulation and/or Justice and Home Affairs matters as regards eligibility to be a (lead) Applicant.

II. The Co-Applicants must be:

- An entity explicitly mentioned as a participant in the OAP;
- If the entity is not explicitly mentioned in the OAP, any of the following entities may be Co-Applicants, provided their participation is justified by the nature of the action:
 - A public body established in an EU Member State or in a third country, OR
 - A Member State organisation as defined by Article 2.44 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509, OR
 - A profit or non-profit-oriented organisation established in an EU Member State or in a third country, OR
 - An International Organisation.

As regards co-applicants even non-opting-in Member States could be eligible as co-applicants on the same basis as third countries and third parties provided that their participation is justified by the nature of the action. Their meaningful participation has to be possible having due regard to Europol's legal obligations on exchange of information with third countries.

III. Applications must involve at least two (2) public bodies established in two (2) different EU Member States.

IV. The proposed activities must be mentioned in the respective OAPs as approved by COSI Council decisions.

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V. The requested grant cannot be higher than 60,000 EUR, or in line with the current threshold for low-value grants established by the EU Financial Regulation.

Selection criteria:

In accordance with Article 201 of the Financial Regulation, proposals for action shall be evaluated on the basis of the following selection criteria:

- Financial capacity - Applicants and co-applicants must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain their activity throughout the period during which the activity is being carried out and to participate in its funding.
- Operational capacity - Applicants and co-applicants must have the professional resources, competences and qualifications required to complete the proposed action.
- The verification of the financial and operational capacity shall not apply to public bodies, Member State organisations and international organisations in accordance with Article 198(5) & (6) of the Financial Regulation.

To ensure that the operational needs are met, a pool of evaluators shall be duly appointed by the responsible authorising officer. In each evaluation at least 2 evaluators from that list (with complementary expertise in law enforcement and finance) shall perform the evaluation (without a separate ad hoc appointment).

To allow for fast processing, with target deadline to award of 14 days, applicants must use the correct and complete application package to apply and must reply within maximum 24 hours to any questions raised during evaluation. Delays in response may result in an extension of the process timeline.

Award criteria:

In accordance with Article 202 of the Financial Regulation, proposals for an action shall be evaluated on the basis of the quality and expected results and cost-effectiveness of the proposed action. Applications will also be assessed with regard to their impact on the implementation of the OAPs concerned, European added value and involvement of Europol.

Ex-post publicity for award of grants (in particular their publication in accordance with Article 192 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509) and the financial verification of the payment requests, including the required supporting documentation, shall take into account the confidentiality and security of the operational and classified information.

Indicative timetable and indicative amount

Date	Amount ¹⁰⁸
Publication: Q4 2025 or Q1 2026 Award of grants: Q1 2026-Q4 2027	EUR 8,000,000 (equally divided over two years) + internal assigned revenue + EUR 2,000,000 (from the 2025 budget) + EUR 2,000,000 in 2026 from the legislative proposal to prevent and fight migrant smuggling

Maximum possible rate of co-financing of the total eligible costs

95%

Information for Applicants

The Invitation to submit applications and the relevant application documents are published on the Europol Platform for Experts (EPE)/Europol grants.

Europol intends to cooperate closely with DG HOME to mitigate any risk of double funding, considering the creation by DG Home of a separate funding instrument (ISF Union Action for EMPACT). In this regard Europol will state clearly in the documentation that it is entitled to give information to DG HOME for the purpose of aligning to avoid breaching the prohibition on double funding provided that no operationally sensitive information is shared without consent.

¹⁰⁸ If operationally justified, the authorising officer may decide to amend the maximum amount for this scheme, subject to Europol budget availability.

2. Support against Euro-counterfeiting

Legal basis

Article 4(4) and Article 61(2) of the REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) and replacing and repealing Council Decisions 2009/371/JHA, 2009/934/JHA, 2009/935/JHA, 2009/936/JHA and 2009/968/JHA.

Article 198(f) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509.

Budget line

3930 Support against Euro Counterfeiting Grants

Priorities of the year, objectives pursued and expected results

Operational actions and support for coordination activities within the guidelines approved by the Europol Management Board with the objective of protecting the euro currency from counterfeiting activities.

Description of the activities to be funded through low-value grants

Applications from eligible applicants can be submitted throughout the period indicated below rather than on any fixed deadline(s). Applications submitted must involve at least one of the following activities, all designed with the objective of protecting the integrity of the Euro currency:

- Investigations into or related to euro counterfeiting. This means inquiries related to counterfeit euro banknotes and counterfeit euro coins, as well as the production and the distribution of them;
- Technical investigations using forensic and/or scientific analysis to identify, sites, raw materials and technical equipment used for the production of counterfeit euro notes and coins as well as measures to locate technical equipment used;
- Investigative measures carried out in compliance with the applicable national law and in accordance with these guidelines;
- Operational or technical investigations into euro counterfeiting involving cooperation with third countries.

In addition, the applicant must commit to a degree of involvement of Europol:

- as a minimum to ensure the role of Europol as the Central Office, the law enforcement information, including samples of any counterfeit currency recovered, must be shared with Europol via the appropriate channels;
- on the spot support where an application involves a production site(s).

Grants awarded under this Article have a maximum duration of 9 months with the possibility of an extension at Europol's discretion for an additional period of 3 months, if operationally justified. The overall grant duration shall not exceed 12 months.

Europol may award using simplified costs or unit costs options, provided that a decision has been adopted by the Responsible Authorising Officer.

Essential eligibility, selection and award criteria

This is not a general advertised call due to the restricted pool of potential beneficiaries. The possibility and funds available shall be made known to the entities foreseen under the Europol Management Board approved rules. Any ex-post publicity will also take this into account excluding operational, strategic and classified information.

Eligible applicants:

- a) A law enforcement public body established in an EU Member State;
- b) A law enforcement public body in a third country, where foreseen by Europol legal framework.

To ensure that the operational needs are met, a pool of evaluators shall be duly appointed by the responsible authorising officer. In accordance with article 203.8 of the EU Financial Regulation, a single evaluator shall evaluate based on objective award criteria. These criteria

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include: anticipated Quality of the Counterfeits, impact of proposed operational measure, involvement of Europol, value for money and involvement of National Central Office. To allow for fast processing, applicants must use the correct and complete application package to apply and must reply within maximum 24 hours to any questions raised during evaluation. Delays in response may result in an extension of the process timeline.

In addition, where duly justified for operational purposes, financial support may, in accordance with article 61(4) of the Europol Regulation, cover the full investment costs of equipment and infrastructure, subject to the following conditions:

- the equipment is required to ensure cross border cooperation and absence of tools would jeopardise the international investigation involving more than one Member State;
- renting or leasing the equipment would not be possible as it could jeopardise the operation;
- applicants provide assurance that the equipment will be fully dedicated to the action.

Indicative amount available

Date	Amount ¹⁰⁹
Q1 2026-Q4 2027	EUR 300,000 + internal assigned revenue

Maximum possible rate of co-financing of the total eligible costs

100% maximum¹¹⁰

Information for Applicants

The Invitation to submit applications and the relevant application documents are published on the Europol Platform for Experts (EPE)/Europol grants.

4. ATLAS Network grant

Legal basis

Article 4(1)(h), (ha) and (i) and Article 61(3) of the REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) and replacing and repealing Council Decisions 2009/371/JHA, 2009/934/JHA, 2009/935/JHA, 2009/936/JHA and 2009/968/JHA. Terms of Reference signed between Europol, ATLAS Chair and Austrian Ministry of Interior, entering into force on 10 October 2018.

Budget line

3950 ATLAS Grants

Priorities of the year, objectives pursued and expected results

The ATLAS Network is a cooperation structure between 38 Special Intervention Units that includes and supports different training platforms and sharing of best practices in terms of proficiency and tactics.

The main priority for the year 2026 is the execution of cross border operations and the implementation of trainings, workshops and exercises. These priorities as well as the overall ATLAS strategy are influenced amongst others by the tailor-made strategic document of the European Counter Terrorism Centre - "ECTC Outlook for ATLAS Commanders". The identified challenges need special attention and preparation on all levels and areas of competence: intervention in urban, rural and maritime areas; transport means and buildings are focal points as well as drone handling/robotics, sniper, communication, negotiation skills and others. In

¹⁰⁹ If operationally justified, the authorising officer may decide to amend the maximum amount for this scheme, subject to Europol budget availability.

¹¹⁰ The eligible cost of the action may cover the total cost of the action in accordance with Article 91 of the Europol FR.

addition, the capability to render medical first aid during field operations needs to be trained, developed and improved.

Joint trainings, workshops, courses and project groups are the systematic approach to increase the readiness of involved units to handle possible terrorist attacks and/or incidents.

Another priority is the development of Common Training Centres, acting as "Centres of Excellence" (CoE). These structures serve as dedicated facilities to provide standardised training and knowledge transfer to the ATLAS member units. Thus, the quality of the delivered training can be kept consistently on the highest level. At the same time, the amount of the target groups/participants can be increased. Along with this structure, a dedicated programme for "Pooling and Sharing" of special equipment will be further developed.

Description of the activities to be funded

The allocation of funds will cover numerous activities which allow the different specialised groups to increase its operational proficiency and to aid in carrying out various training/tactical response building exercises and workshops.

The activities, dependent on budget availability, are:

- fostering communication and coordination amongst SIUs;
- delivery and/or design of training on:
 - o entry techniques
 - o silent techniques
 - o rural mountain operations
 - o buildings (assault tactics and knowledge)
 - o Rigid Hulled Inflatable Boats
 - o naval targets
 - o Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs)
 - o sniper techniques
 - o urban rappelling
 - o first aid (intervening in cases of most serious crimes with a high risk of life threatening and/or mass injuries)
 - o specialised parachute use: "Silent Approach Tactics"
 - o K9 techniques: interventions with specialised dogs' assistance
- sharing of experiences and best practices between EU MS and third countries;
- further development of the secure information exchange tools;
- maintenance of the mock-ups set up as part of the Common Training Centre "Centres of Excellence" Aircraft;
- establishing support frameworks to implement operational activities;
- enhancing cross-border/transnational operational cooperation between EU Member States in the areas of competence of SIUs;
- establishing joint training and preparation for challenges impacting on several activities focussed on evaluation of training and cooperation results;
- exploring further development of secure communication tools;
- fostering cooperation with third countries: Police Special Intervention Units Conference (POLSPEC).

Where duly justified for operational purposes, financial support may cover the full investment costs of equipment and infrastructure, subject to the following conditions:

- the equipment is required to ensure cross border cooperation and training provided to the Special Intervention Units composing the Network involving more than one Member State;
- renting or leasing the equipment would not be possible as it could jeopardise the operation;
- applicants provide assurance that the equipment will be fully dedicated to the action.

Justification Direct Grant

Under Article 61(3) of the Europol Regulation, the grant may be awarded without a call for proposals where the grant action is supporting specific tasks referred to in points (h), (ha) and (i) of Article 4(1) of the Europol Regulation. This grant provides support to the ATLAS Network

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that represents the Member States' special intervention units (via the legal entity of the country chairing ATLAS on behalf of the Network).

Europol may award using simplified costs or unit costs options, provided that a decision has been adopted by the Responsible Authorising Officer.

Indicative timetable and indicative amount of the grant

Date	Amount
Q1 2026	EUR 3,000,000
Expected implementing period: Q1 2026- Q1 2027	

Maximum possible rate of co-financing of the total eligible costs

95%

5. OTF grants

Legal basis

Article 4(1) and Article 61(2) of the REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) and replacing and repealing Council Decisions 2009/371/JHA, 2009/934/JHA, 2009/935/JHA, 2009/936/JHA and 2009/968/JHA.

Article 198(f) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 in relation to applications by at least two Member States to include third countries linked to the administrative powers of the proposed law enforcement authorities of such third country(ies) and their relevance for a particular OTF action.

Budget line

3940 OTF Grants

Priorities of the year, objectives pursued and expected results

Priority: Europol will focus on the identification of High-Value Targets and the establishment of Operational Task Forces addressing the individuals and organised crime groups posing the highest serious and organised crime risk for the MS.

Objective: Creation and support of an environment for multi-disciplinary teams and transnational investigations aiming at having a stronger impact in destabilising activities of high risk organised crime groups and disrupting criminal markets.

Expected results: deliver qualitative operational support to OTFs, which are focusing on poly-criminal networks and their leaders posing the highest risk of serious and organised crime.

Description of the activities to be funded

Operational and/or investigative activities (e.g. travel and accommodation for operational meetings outside Europol HQ, direct operational costs such as informant rewards, buying/renting operational technical and forensic equipment, interpretation or deployments, etc.) implemented by the Operational Task Forces, established in accordance with the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)¹¹¹ with a budget not exceeding 60,000 EUR (in line with the threshold defined in the EU Financial Regulation), aiming to support MS investigations against individuals and criminal organisations constituting highest serious and organised crime risks to more than one MS and to intensify asset tracing and increase the rate of confiscation of criminal proceeds.

¹¹¹ Standard Operating Procedure on the Selection of High Value Targets and Establishment of Operational Task Forces within O2-ESOC, EDOC #901933v21A

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Each application, within the limit of 60,000 EUR, could cover a particular stage of the ongoing investigation. The operational stages will be pre-defined within the Operational Plan of an established OTF in accordance with the SOP in place. If operationally justified, several subsequent applications could be submitted, enabling Member States to apply for funding throughout the lifetime of the operation.

Grants awarded under this Article have a maximum duration of 9 months with the possibility of an extension at Europol's discretion for an additional period of 3 months, if operationally justified. The overall grant duration shall not exceed 12 months.

Europol may award using simplified costs or unit costs options, provided that a decision has been adopted by the Responsible Authorising Officer.

In addition, where duly justified for operational purposes, financial support may, in accordance with Article 61(4) of the Europol Regulation, cover the full investment costs of equipment and infrastructure, subject to the following conditions:

- the equipment is required to ensure cross border cooperation and absence of tools would jeopardise the international investigation involving more than one Member State;
- renting or leasing the equipment would not be possible as it could jeopardise the operation;
- applicants provide assurance that the equipment will be fully dedicated to the action.

Essential eligibility, selection and award criteria

Eligibility criteria:

I. In order to be eligible the Applicant must be a public body established in an EU Member State and must have opted-in to JHA law-enforcement cooperation under Europol Regulation. In addition, the Applicant must be a member of an established Operational Task Force as a result of Europol applying the Standard Operating Procedure on the Selection of High Value Targets and Establishment of Operational Task Forces.

No differentiation is made in Europol's constituent act between different Member States. However, the opt-in structure used for JHA under the TFEU creates a varying degree of participation of Member States. Europol pays due regard to the status of EU Member States with regard to the Europol Regulation and/or Justice and Home Affairs matters as regards eligibility to be a (lead) Applicant.

II. The Co-Applicants must be members of established Operational Task Force:

- a public body established in an EU Member State or in a third country OR
- a Member State organisation as defined by Article 2.44 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509, OR
- an International Organisation.

As regards co-applicants, even non-opting-in Member States could be eligible as co-applicants on the same basis as third countries and third parties provided that their participation is justified by the nature of the action. Their meaningful participation has to be possible having due regard to Europol's legal obligations on exchange of information with third countries.

III. Applications must involve at least two (2) public bodies established in two (2) different EU Member States.

IV. The proposed actions must be related to activities of established Operational Task Force, which carry out intelligence and investigative activities against selected HVT as defined within the Standard Operating Procedure on Selection of High Value Targets and Establishment of Operational Task Forces.

V. The requested grant cannot be higher than 60,000 EUR, or in line with the current threshold for low-value grants established by the EU Financial Regulation.

Selection criteria:

In accordance with Article 201 of the EU Financial Regulation, proposals for action shall be evaluated on the basis of the following selection criteria:

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- Financial capacity - Applicants and co-applicants must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain their activity throughout the period during which the activity is being carried out and to participate in its funding.
- Operational capacity - Applicants and co-applicants must have the professional resources, competences and qualifications required to complete the proposed action.
- The verification of the financial and operational capacity shall not apply to public bodies and international organisations in accordance with Article 201 of the EU Financial Regulation.

To ensure that the operational needs are met, a pool of evaluators shall be duly appointed by the responsible authorising officer. In each evaluation at least 2 evaluators from that list (with complementary expertise in law enforcement and finance) shall perform the evaluation (without a separate ad hoc appointment).

To allow for fast processing, with target deadline to award of 14 days, applicants must use the correct and complete application package to apply and must reply within maximum 24 hours to any questions raised during evaluation. Delays in response may result in an extension of the process timeline.

Award criteria:

In accordance with Article 202 of the EU Financial Regulation proposals for an action shall be evaluated on the basis of the relevance, quality, cost-effectiveness and European added value of the proposed action.

Ex-post publicity for award of grants (in particular their annual publication in accordance with Article 192 of EU Financial Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509) and the financial verification of the payment requests, including the required supporting documentation, shall take into account the confidentiality and security of the operational and classified information.

Information for Applicants

The Invitation to submit applications and the relevant application documents are published on Europol Platform for Experts (EPE)/Europol grants.

Indicative timetable for the direct award and indicative amount of the grant

Date	Amount ¹¹²
Publication Q4 2025 or Q1 2026 Award of Grants: Q1 2026-Q4 2027	EUR 2,000,000, + internal assigned revenue + EUR 2,000,000 (from the 2025 budget) + EUR 3,000,000 in 2026 from the legislative proposal to prevent and fight migrant smuggling ¹¹³

Maximum possible rate of co-financing of the total eligible costs

95%

6. Ad-hoc low-value grants in support of Innovation

Legal basis

Article 4(1)(h) and (i) and Article 61(2) of the REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) and replacing and repealing Council Decisions 2009/371/JHA, 2009/934/JHA, 2009/935/JHA, 2009/936/JHA and 2009/968/JHA.

¹¹² If operationally justified, the authorising officer may decide to amend the maximum amount for this scheme, subject to Europol budget availability.

¹¹³ COM(2023) 754 final.

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Article 198(f) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 in relation to support to Schengen Associated Third Countries linked to the administrative powers of the proposed law enforcement authorities of third countries and their relevance for a particular innovation action.

Budget line

3960 Innovation Grants

Priorities of the year, objectives pursued and expected results

The objective of this scheme will be to support the cooperation in combating serious crime affecting two or more MS, by facilitating the delivery of innovative solutions addressing common security challenges.

Description of the activities to be funded

Operational and/or innovative activities (e.g., direct operational costs pertaining to Innovation such as the acquisition of Software licenses, equipment and materials and hiring of consultants).

Each application, within the limit of EUR 60,000, could cover a particular stage of an innovation project, as defined by the European Clearing Board (EuCB).

Grants awarded under this Article have a maximum duration of 9 months with the possibility of an extension at Europol's discretion for an additional period of 3 months, if operationally justified. The overall grant duration shall not exceed 12 months. Europol may award using simplified costs or unit costs options, provided that a decision has been adopted by the Responsible Authorising Officer.

In addition, where duly justified for operational purposes, financial support may cover the full investment costs of equipment and infrastructure, subject to the following conditions:

- the equipment is required to ensure cross border cooperation and solves specific operational needs involving more than one Member State;
- renting or leasing the equipment would not be possible thus complying with the principle of sound financial management;
- applicants provide assurance that the equipment will be fully dedicated to the action.

Essential Criteria

The Scheme should not only acknowledge, but also strengthen the central role of the European Clearing Board (EuCB) for all matters related to research and innovation for law enforcement.

The EuCB is composed of at least one representative per EU MS and per Schengen-associated countries (larger countries have a larger delegation, the decision being taken at national level). These representatives are named "Single Points of Contact" (SPoCs) and are responsible, at national level, for disseminating and raising awareness about opportunities and benefits of cooperation with other European LEAs and with Europol in the field of research and innovation.

In principle, a grant application should be considered to be within scope if:

- The related project is taking place as part of an EuCB Core or Strategic Group;
- It has a clear innovation focus and a well-defined scope;
- The related result has a cross-border relevance, for example it addresses a need identified by more than one MS.

The Scheme should deliver low-value grants only to Law Enforcement Authorities of EU Member States and Schengen-associated countries.

The grants should be presented by a partnership of LEAs, composed of at least two LEAs from two different MS.

Indicative timetable and indicative amount

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Europol initiated a multi-annual invitation to apply for the Innovation Grant scheme from 2025 onwards.

Date	Amount
Publication: Q1 2025 Award of grants: Q1 2025-Q4 2026	EUR 350,000 (from the 2025 budget) ¹¹⁴

Maximum possible rate of co-financing of the total eligible costs

95%

Information for Applicants

The Invitation to submit applications and the relevant application documents are published on the Europol Platform for Experts (EPE)/Europol grants.

7. Second year of Ad-hoc low-value grants invitation for cooperation with Eastern Partnership countries

Legal basis

Article 4(1)(h) and (i) and Article 61(2) of the REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) and replacing and repealing Council Decisions 2009/371/JHA, 2009/934/JHA, 2009/935/JHA, 2009/936/JHA and 2009/968/JHA.

Contribution Agreement between the European Commission and the EU Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation 700002208, Fighting against organised crime in the Eastern Partnership region II".

Article 198(f) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 in relation to support to third countries linked to the administrative powers of the proposed law enforcement authorities of third countries and their relevance for a particular action.

Budget line

B-3600

Priorities, objectives pursued and expected results

Supporting the cooperation of the six Eastern Partnership countries with EU Member States and Europol for the fight against serious and organised international crime, including through their participation in EMPACT.

The Invitation to submit applications is directed to EU Member States and the Eastern Partnership countries collaborating in the framework of a specific action. In accordance with Europol legal basis, the Europol National Unit (ENU) shall be the liaison body between Europol and the competent authorities of the Member States. Thus, the applications must always be submitted via the ENU of the Lead Applicant.

It is expected that the support will provide for improved cooperation between Member States' and Eastern Partnership countries' law enforcement agencies, EU Institutions, EU Agencies while delivering coherent actions targeting the most pressing criminal threats facing the EU.

Description of the activities to be funded

Activities addressing at least one of the following objectives: (i) strengthening Eastern Partnership countries' institutional knowledge and capacity on EMPACT crime areas and increasing cooperation within EMPACT; (ii) enhancing criminal intelligence in the countries of the Eastern Neighbourhood region as well as the exchange of intelligence and information

¹¹⁴ If operationally justified, the authorising officer may decide to amend the maximum amount for this scheme, subject to Europol budget availability.

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between EaP countries, EU MS and Europol; (iii) enhancing operational cooperation with of the EaP countries with the EU Member States and Agencies, including through EMPACT.

The activities to be funded include operational and/or investigative activities (e.g., travel and accommodation for operational meetings, direct operational costs such as informant rewards, buying/renting operational technical and forensic equipment, interpretation or deployments, etc.) as well as activities related to strategic or operational intelligence exchange (e.g. meetings and workshops) implemented by the targeted law enforcement agencies.

Furthermore, activities and equipment related to identification and setting of legal and technical requirements for the exchange of intelligence.

In case of larger investigations, if operationally justified, subsequently submitted applications, each within the limit of 60,000 EUR (in line with the threshold defined for low-value grants in the EU Financial Regulation), could cover a particular stage of the ongoing investigation enabling the participating countries to apply for funding throughout the lifetime of the operation.

Grants may not be awarded for activities that are funded under another EU programme or from Europol's budget, including through EMPACT grants. In this respect, it is noted that Europol is active in an environment which has undergone a proliferation of EU funding sources. A statement to ensure respect for the principle of no double funding from EU sources must be made by applicant(s) in the Application form. Europol is entitled to perform checks in this respect, including by liaising with external partners (e.g., DG HOME, Eurojust).

Europol may award using simplified cost options provided that a decision by the Executive Director has been adopted.

Grants awarded under this Article have a maximum duration of 9 months with the possibility of an extension at Europol's discretion for an additional period of 3 months, if operationally justified. The overall grant duration shall not exceed 12 months.

Europol may award using simplified costs or unit costs options, provided that a decision has been adopted by the Responsible Authorising Officer.

In addition, where duly justified for operational purposes, financial support may cover the full investment costs of equipment and infrastructure, subject to the following conditions:

- the equipment is required to ensure cross border cooperation and absence of tools would jeopardise the international investigation involving more than one Member State;
- renting or leasing the equipment would not be possible as it could jeopardise the operation;
- applicants provide assurance that the equipment will be fully dedicated to the action.

Essential eligibility, selection and award criteria

Eligibility criteria:

I. In order to be eligible the Lead Applicant must be a law enforcement or judiciary public body established in an EU Member State participating in EU law enforcement cooperation under Europol Regulation (EU) 2016/794 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2016 on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol).

II. The Co-Applicants must be:

- a public body established in an EU Member State OR
- a Member State organisation as defined by Article 2.44 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509, OR
- a public body established in one of the six Eastern Partnership countries⁹⁹ or, if relevant for the action, in a third country OR
- a profit or non-profit-oriented organisation established in an EU Member State or in one of the six Eastern Partnership countries or, if relevant for the action, in a third country, OR

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- an International Organisation.

The meaningful participation of co-applicants based in third countries, has to be possible having due regard to Europol's legal obligations on exchange of information with third countries.

III. Applications must involve at least two (2) public bodies established in two (2) different EU Member States and at least one (1) public body of one of the six Eastern Partnership countries, which have a status of a law enforcement authority or judiciary.

IV. The requested grant cannot be higher than EUR 60,000, or in line with the current threshold for low-value grants established by the EU Financial Regulation.

Selection criteria:

In accordance with Article 198 of the EU Financial Regulation, proposals for action shall be evaluated on the basis of the following selection criteria:

- Financial capacity - Applicants and co-applicants must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain their activity throughout the period during which the activity is being carried out and to participate in its funding.

- Operational capacity - Applicants and co-applicants must have the professional resources, competences and qualifications required to complete the proposed action.

- The verification of the financial and operational capacity shall not apply to public bodies, Member State organisations and international organisations in accordance with Article 198 of the EU Financial Regulation.

To ensure that the operational needs are met, a pool of evaluators shall be duly appointed by the responsible authorising officer. In each evaluation at least 2 evaluators from that list (with complementary expertise in law enforcement and finance) shall perform the evaluation (without a separate ad hoc appointment).

Award criteria:

In accordance with Article 202 of the EU Financial Regulation proposals for an action shall be evaluated on the basis of the relevance, quality, cost-effectiveness and European added value of the proposed action.

Ex-post publicity for award of grants (in particular their publication in accordance with Article 192 of EU Financial Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509) and the financial verification of the payment requests, including the required supporting documentation shall take into account the confidentiality and security of the operational and classified information.

Information for Applicants

The Invitation to submit applications and the relevant application documents are published on the Europol Platform for Experts (EPE)/Europol grants.

Indicative timetable and indicative amount

Date	Amount
Publication: Q1 2025 Award of grants: Q1 2025-Q3 2028	EUR 960,000 (4 years period) divided over invitations for 2 years of EUR 480,000 subject to the overall implementation of the Contribution Agreement and possible changes to it.

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

External Relations Strategy 2025+

1. INTRODUCTION



Europol has a **well-developed network of external partners** which has been steadily growing since the first cooperation agreements were signed with Iceland and Norway in June 2001. Europol has now concluded agreements with 37 third countries and five international organisations, guided by successive External Relations Strategies and decisions of Europol's Management Board.

Under the current strategy, Europol made considerable progress by signing new working arrangements with countries such as Ecuador, India and UK and international organisations such as the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the European Investment Bank (EIB). Significant investment in fostering cooperation with MENA countries was also made, and meaningful progress was achieved at bilateral and multilateral levels.

Despite challenges such as pandemics, shifting crime patterns and an unstable geopolitical landscape, Europol continues to invest in a balanced way in its external relations programme at both strategic and operational level to support the Member States' Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs). This **investment has paid dividends**, notably in the rising number of international investigations involving third parties, such as SKY ECC, Encrochat and Operation Greenlight/Trojan Shield; coordinated takedowns and seizures in cyber and drug domains; and the detection and prevention of terrorism.

The latest Europol Strategy¹¹⁵ "Delivering Security in Partnership" reflects the changes in the criminal landscape over the past few years and outlines how the Agency will increase its capacity to support complex, cross-border investigations in line with the needs of the Member States. The Europol Strategy puts a greater focus on external relations introducing an additional priority '**bringing relevant partners together for cross-border operational cooperation**'. This acknowledges the **need for a more collective and complementary approach** from law enforcement agencies in light of the evolving nature of serious organised crime which has become more transnational and more sophisticated, exploiting differences in legal systems and enforcement capabilities among countries.

In line with the Europol Strategy and the new strategic priority, this document presents a blueprint for Europol's external relations for the coming years. It is consistent with and draws upon the experiences of the former external relations strategies, including the assessment of the cooperation with third parties with which cooperation agreements have been signed; on the input of Member States and the European Commission collected during regular meetings, focus discussions and via the recent questionnaire and follow-up interviews; and on Europol's operational insights. The findings and lessons learned from the past years, as well as the current and foreseen policy and operational developments, shape the new **External Relations Strategy 2025+**.

1.1 Goal

The goal of Europol's external relations is to **enhance cooperation with external partners to support the Member States in preventing and combating serious organised crime**

¹¹⁵ Adopted by the Management Board in June 2023.

and terrorism. This support often involves cooperation with non-EU countries, INTERPOL and other international organisations, and increasingly with private parties. In the interest of coordination at EU level, the engagement with EU Institutions, Bodies and Agencies and CSDP missions is also indispensable. Europol will continue to support the Commission, the Council and the European External Action Service (EEAS) in advancing EU external priorities, particularly in the conclusion of International Agreements with key third countries.

Europol continues to analyse and respond to the changing criminal landscape and shifting geopolitical trends that impact the operational context of policing, such as war, instability, climate change, pandemics or natural disasters. To anticipate emerging threats, Europol is dedicated to building an **agile and flexible external relations framework** that enables law enforcement to cooperate with the global stakeholders involved in a **targeted, tailored** way, focussing on operational needs.

1.2 Priorities

In line with the Europol Strategy, the **External Relations Strategy 2025+ priorities** will be:

1. **To intensify the cooperation with existing key partners;**
2. To establish cooperation with other **third countries of operational interest** and **other (non-EU) Agencies and international organisations;**
3. To develop **practical solutions for a more targeted operational cooperation** with strategic third parties within the applicable legal framework.

1.3 Guiding principles

The Europol External Relations Strategy 2025+ builds on achievements from the past years and explores more agile ways of working, following relevant guiding principles:

- **Novel approach:** it ushers new tools and approaches to Europol's engagement with third parties in terms of prioritisation, focussing on operational aspects, innovation and agility.
- **Operationally-oriented:** it intends to be a support tool to Europol's operational work and to Member States' external relations, also based on Europol's extensive catalogue of products and services.
- **Flexible and targeted:** it explores flexible tools and formats for dedicated tailored-made engagement with some future or existing key partners.
- **Deepening Europol's engagement:** it puts emphasis on deepening Europol's existing network, while not excluding the possibility of selectively identifying additional partners.
- **Complementarity and added value:** it assesses roles and competences between Europol and other organisations, in particular INTERPOL, to further enhance complementarity. It takes into account the expected operational return for a proportional engagement with partners in order to add value to and to complement Member States' own network.
- **Fundamental rights:** it considers Europol Fundamental Rights Officer's opinions in the procedures for engaging with partners and it pursues compliance with fundamental rights, including data protection, in strategic and operational exchanges.

2. Priority 1: INTENSIFIED COOPERATION WITH EXISTING KEY PARTNERS

Europol will continue to **maintain and improve relations with its entire current network of partners**, which includes European Neighbourhood, Western Balkan Region, Middle East and North African countries, Eastern Partnership countries, Transatlantic and transpacific cooperation, Asia, Latin America and International Organisations and Regional Policing Bodies.

Beyond ongoing cooperation there are **some regions, countries and international organisations**¹¹⁶ which require **particular consideration** in light of their strategic and operational importance to the Member States. **Europol will explore avenues to deepen existing relations and develop new areas of engagement.** At the same time, the entire Europol network remains relevant to prevent and counter serious cross border crime. Special attention goes to countries and regions neighbouring the EU, to jointly address criminal and security threats, including in the context of accession processes. Europol will continue to support **Ukraine and Moldova**, where information exchange and operational support remain crucial for the security of the EU. Developments in criminal trends and cooperation will be monitored and improvements will take place where needed.

2.1 Schengen Associated Countries (SACs)

Being part of the Schengen area, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland are of exceptional importance in securing the integrity of the EU's borders and in the fight against organised crime and terrorism in Europe. These countries have a long-standing relationship with Europol, participate in joint investigations and actions, and share strategic and operational information. Their own willingness to **deepen the cooperation further** is well established and expressed at the highest level.

The Europol Strategy commits to intensifying the cooperation with the Schengen Associated Countries as essential partners of the EU Internal Security Architecture. Europol encourages the countries to **make full use of the instruments and capabilities already available** to them at Europol. Europol endeavours to **eliminate any obstacles to efficient information exchange**, and invites Member States to do the same.

With Europol's increasing role in the Schengen-related instruments, such as SIS, ETIAS, EES and VIS, and the collective dependency on each other's ability to uphold security, cooperation with the SACs will only increase. Europol welcomes this development. A **deeper inclusion of these countries in the Europol framework**, and for the Agency and the Member States to be able to draw on the SACs' expertise, capabilities and information will benefit the Member States and the SACs alike. During the implementation of this strategy, Europol will explore possibilities to facilitate the access to operational information, to improve information sharing, to enhance the SACs' role in EMPACT and their participation in meetings, innovation and other matters.

Key action:

- **To prepare and implement a comprehensive plan for strengthening cooperation with the SACs in the short, medium and long term**

2.2 Western Balkans

The Western Balkans **remains a top priority area** for Europol's external relations. The region continues to function as an external hub for criminal activities affecting the EU being for example an important transit point for migrant smuggling and illicit commodities entering and leaving the EU via various corridors of the Balkan routes.

All Western Balkan partners recognise the importance of further enhancing cooperation within the EU, also with the support of Europol. Enhancing cooperation with the Western Balkan region has been a priority of the EU, striving to make tangible progress in the EU enlargement negotiations and integration in the Union. In line with that and within its area of competence,

¹¹⁶ Mention of partners in this section is based on this order.

Europol has supported and will **continue supporting the EU political dialogue with the Western Balkan partners.**

While the cooperation with the region continues to develop and expand, **enhanced engagement in some areas** could be foreseen, as for example cybercrime (internet related fraud, investment fraud) and financial and economic crime (asset recovery, money laundering, corruption) and better use of SIENA could be made including further rollout to additional competent authorities. Europol could also consider taking a more regional approach particularly in **targeted operations**¹¹⁷, where such a regional approach brings added value. In line with increased operational activities, possibilities to expand the network of already existing partners should be further explored.

Consideration should also be given to increasing Europol's involvement in **EU funded projects in the region** primarily those 1) providing adequate budgetary and human resources; 2) whose scope are fully aligned with the agency priorities; 3) with a strong operational component; with a view to building up Europol's visibility and enhancing the operational, analytical and technical capacities of law enforcement in the region.

Key actions:

- **To consider additional areas for cooperation, such as cybercrime and financial and economic crime**
- **To take a more regional approach regarding targeted operations, where such a regional approach brings added value**
- **To engage in EU funded projects of operational interest in the region subject to available resources**
- **To encourage the WB to make optimal use of SIENA and extend its use to more competent authorities**

2.3 United Kingdom

The UK is a unique partner of Europol given its former status as Member State. The objective remains to **retain and increase the high level of operational cooperation enjoyed before Brexit**, given the important contribution the UK makes to Europol's work and vice versa. **Reciprocity** is a key element for the cooperation, especially regarding operational data and information sharing. While the Adequacy decision¹¹⁸ together with the Trade and Cooperation Agreement¹¹⁹ allow for the continuation of pre-Brexit operational cooperation, the UK is no longer a member of the internal governance bodies and is unable to contribute to the more strategic aspects of Europol's work as a result. Therefore, in addition to the regular ongoing operational cooperation, Europol and the UK could **consider options for a more structured engagement on strategic aspects** of law enforcement cooperation. UK expressed a specific interest for a closer cooperation with Europol in the fight against irregular migration.

Areas where further engagement might be explored include:

- Maintaining a regular structured dialogue at senior level on strategic and operational matters;

¹¹⁷ Similar to what has been done in the context of the Joint Action Days "South East Europe", targeting firearms trafficking, migrant smuggling, drugs trafficking in the wider Balkan region or as in the case of the Referral Action Days (RAD) Western Balkans of 2020 targeting jihadi terrorist groups operating from/in the WB region.

¹¹⁸ Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2021/1773 of 28 June 2021 pursuant to Directive (EU) 2016/680 on the adequate protection of personal data by the United Kingdom (OJ L 360, 11.10.2021)

¹¹⁹ Trade and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community, of the one part, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, of the other part.

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- Collaborating on Innovation and technical tools;
- Enhancing operational cooperation with other UK agencies dealing with security and terrorism in coordination with the NCA as appropriate.

Key actions:

- **To retain and increase the pre-Brexit high level of operational cooperation**
- **To explore further cooperation in specific crime areas (e.g. financial crime, terrorism, irregular migration)**
- **To explore options for regular structured strategic cooperation**

2.4 United States

The US remains a critically important partner of Europol and the **cooperation continues to grow at both strategic and operational level**. Through the representation of key law enforcement agencies at Europol HQ and the building up of cooperation at agency and national level, Europol and the Member States have benefited from a wealth of expertise, enhanced information sharing and joint efforts to target and disrupt OCGs, cyberthreats and terrorism. The posting of Europol liaison officers (LOs) in Washington continues to promote the agency in the US and has allowed for significant information sharing, outreach and networking opportunities.

Going forward, the main objective is to maintain the excellent cooperation while **exploring new opportunities for enhancing this cooperation** further in line with operational needs. This collaboration could include:

- Continuing to develop pilot projects with US agencies to ensure cooperation and joint action where needed;
- Continuing to develop the framework and model for information sharing to ensure the best use of battlefield data provided by the US;
- Enhancing cooperation in targeted crime areas such as Environmental Crime and Financial Crime;
- Increasing collaboration on technical tools and innovation;
- Work with other US partners such as the International Association of the Chiefs of Police (IACP) to further achieve strategic objectives.

Key actions:

- **To explore new opportunities for enhanced information exchange in key crime areas**
- **To increase strategic collaboration, for instance on technical tools and innovation**
- **To continue the successful use of pilot projects for information exchange in specific crime areas**

2.5 Türkiye

There is an operational need at Europol for increased cooperation with Türkiye across a wide range of crime areas, such as drug trafficking, migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings, terrorism, money laundering, and environmental crimes. In the absence of a full operational agreement the cooperation remains limited.

Europol will continue to support the European Commission in its negotiations for an international agreement between the EU and Türkiye on the exchange of personal data

between Europol and the Turkish competent authorities for fighting serious crime and terrorism. In the interim, additional actions may be required to optimise the cooperation within the limits of the current legal framework, including:

- Promoting EMPACT and encouraging Türkiye's continued collaboration;
- Involvement of Türkiye in OTFs and other actions in coordination with the Member States¹²⁰;
- Greater participation in strategic and capacity building measures to support Turkish law enforcement;
- Encouraging Turkish competent authorities to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the legal framework in place including making full use of SIENA.
- Exploring practical solutions for a more targeted co-operation as outlined under point 4.

Key actions:

- **To continue the support to the European Commission in its negotiations for an international agreement between the EU and Türkiye**
- **To promote participation in EMPACT, OTFs and in strategic activities**

2.6 INTERPOL

Europol and INTERPOL have a close and strong partnership via an operational agreement in place since 5 November 2001, as well as under additional agreements on specific crime areas¹²¹. For many years INTERPOL has been a **key partner at both operational and strategic level**, with actionable Joint Key Operational Priorities (JKOPs) agreed biennially. Cooperation is based on the respective agencies' mandate and geographical scope and the desire to fulfil common objectives.

Europol and INTERPOL actively cooperate in the framework of Europol's Analysis Projects, OAPs under EMPACT, as well as in Joint Action Days (JADs) and Large-Scale Joint Action Days (LS-JADs) and **large-scale operations**. Both INTERPOL and Europol have posted Liaison Officers to each other's Headquarters to enhance **cooperation on a day-to-day basis**. Information is shared through the secure communication channels in each organisation, which unfortunately are not interoperable yet. **Strategic conferences and meetings** take place regularly at top management, senior official and working levels and **strategic reports** are contributed to and shared. In addition, cooperation regarding **innovation, knowledge-sharing and staff** exchanges is also part of Europol-INTERPOL engagement.

The existing legal framework that forms the basis of cooperation between Europol and INTERPOL is currently being revised, as part of the process of negotiating a cooperation agreement between the EU and INTERPOL. This reflects the need for a modern and tailored regime that caters for the specificities of each EU JHA agency and INTERPOL, while ensuring effective safeguards for the processing of information. Europol supports the overall goals of the envisaged EU-INTERPOL agreement and remains invested in ensuring **better complementarity and interoperability**, and fostering the operational dimension of this partnership even further.

To achieve further operational cooperation, the **challenging legal, technical and administrative issues** raising from the different legal frameworks and policies on issues such as Information Management need first to be solved. Europol relies on the **Member**

¹²⁰ Exchange of operational personal data within the OTF framework will depend on the possibilities enabled by the Europol Regulation.

¹²¹ ICSE, i-ARMS.

States and the European Commission to resolve these current obstacles to making enhanced cooperation possible. Nonetheless, until Europol can make full use of the provisions of the future EU-INTERPOL cooperation agreement, it will continue to explore possibilities to enhance cooperation with INTERPOL under the existing legal framework.

Consideration could be given to:

- Developing best practices leading to enhanced operational cooperation such as building upon successful experiences (JKOPs, EMPACT);
- Fostering top level engagement in view of the future legal framework in order to jointly tackle implementation challenges;
- Exploring additional access to INTERPOL's databases in line with operational interest;
- Considering the establishment of an interface between i24/7 and SIENA;
- Exploring the complementary use of INTERPOL's services and global outreach;
- Enhancing strategic cooperation under the INTERPOL-led *"Dialogue on effective multilateral policing architecture against global threats"*¹²²;
- Seeking synergies between the EU Innovation Lab and INTERPOL's Global Complex for Innovation in Singapore.

Key actions:

- **To explore new opportunities for enhanced information exchange**
- **To design targeted JKOPs, which allow for expanded operational cooperation**
- **To explore access to additional INTERPOL's databases of operational interest**
- **To increase strategic collaboration, for instance on technical tools and innovation**

3. Priority 2: COOPERATION WITH OTHER THIRD COUNTRIES, (NON-EU) AGENCIES AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

In a rapidly changing criminal landscape which is increasingly transnational and evolving, Europol needs to keep its external relations network under review. Europol shall continue in its efforts to establish cooperation with **countries and agencies already prioritised by the Member States**¹²³ in the framework of the Europol External Relations Strategy 2021-2024. The existing priority list serves as a baseline in order to assure continuity. The Member States operational needs and the **Management Board decisions will continue to guide and determine the new key partners for Europol.**

In order to remain agile and operationally focussed, Europol will continue to monitor the criminal landscape to **identify new and emerging threats** through SOCTA, IOCTA, TE-SAT, EFACTA and other analytical products. The results of these assessments together with operational work may lead to the identification of new priority partners. When there is a necessity to establish formal relations with a new partner, Europol will prepare a **business case for the Management Board's approval**. The need for an agile and targeted

¹²² The Dialogue includes high-level delegates from the following organisations: AFRIPOL, AMERIPOL, ASEANAPOL, the Arab Interior Ministers Council (AIMC), CARICOM IMPACS, the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO), EUROPOL, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency – Frontex, and the Gulf Cooperation Council-POL (GCCPOL), as well as INTERPOL. There are two observer organisations: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

¹²³ EDOC #1262066: Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia, Jordan, Lebanon, Algeria, Singapore, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, Iraq, Argentina, Peru, Bolivia, NATO, UNCTED, UNOCT, UNITAD, UN IIIM, EUGENDFOR, AFRIPOL, AMERIPOL, ASEANAPOL, OSCE, OPCW, Intra-European Organisation of Tax Administrations, EUBAM Libya, EUNAVFOR Somalia, EUAA, EBA, EU SatCen, EUCAP SAHEL Niger, ELA.

cooperation could result in **different tailored-made possibilities with different partners**, based on operational needs.

3.1 Middle East, North Africa and other African countries

Europol considers in line with the feedback received by the EU MS and the EU COM the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) as a priority. The region has featured in Europol's external relations for more than a decade. The findings of the European Union Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment and other analytical reports produced by Europol, show an intertwined security nexus of criminal threats and common challenges between the EU and Middle East and North African (MENA) countries.

The identification of mutual interests reinforces the need to build stronger cooperative relationships between MENA countries and Europol. While Europol experienced some **success in establishing partnerships in the Middle East** and the Gulf, having established structured cooperation through means of Strategic Agreement and Working Arrangements with the United Arab Emirates, Israel, and more recently with Qatar, engagement with North African countries could further improve.

Conscious of the diversity comprising the MENA region, Europol has focused on enhancing and/or establishing relations with its partners at both multilateral and bilateral levels through the support of a resource-neutral tool: the **Policing Partnership concept**. This project is a tool that develops tailored-made strategies to enhance cooperation with each country in the region while maximising EU resources and inter-agency cooperation. The project has already generated successes in the dialogue with Egypt, Morocco and Jordan.

Europol will continue to actively progress formalising bilateral cooperation with other MENA and African **countries previously prioritised by the Management Board including Morocco, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Nigeria**. Europol will also support the European Commission in any future negotiations on International Agreements with mandated partners in this region.

Seeking direct cooperation at regional level, Europol actively participates in several regional fora, such as AIMC and MENA-focused INTERPOL and UN initiatives, and has built up engagement with GCCPOL and AFRIPOL. While pursuing enhanced cooperation with North African countries, Europol could assess on a **case-by-case** basis whether to extend its outreach to **other African countries** where targeted cooperation could be justifiable due to emerging criminal trends, for instance regarding migrant smuggling, drug trafficking and cybercrime.

Going forward, the targeted approach could include:

- Expanding the Policing Partnerships;
- Engaging in relevant regional initiatives in the fight against serious and organised crime on the basis of operational interest e.g., migrant smuggling; and subject to available resources.
- Making better use of Member States Liaison Officers in the Region and engaging with INTERPOL for strategic purposes;
- Creating more opportunities to cooperate with AIMC, AFRIPOL and GCCPOL.

Key actions:

- **To further improve engagement with North African countries**
- **To enhance the Policing Partnership concept**
- **To explore a targeted approach to the region**

3.2 Latin America

Engagement with Latin American partners should be **sustained at both bilateral and multilateral level**. Latin American countries represent a priority geographical area for Europol to tackle many areas of transnational crimes. Europol has already concluded several bilateral agreements with countries in the region and will continue to support the Commission in International Agreements negotiations in order to support efforts to tackle issues, such as drug trafficking, trafficking in human beings, cyber threats, or financial and environmental crimes.

At regional level Europol will continue to seek **engagement via AMERIPOL**, Europol's natural counterpart in the region once legal personality is acquired. In a similar vein, Europol will continue to develop relations with CLASI (Latin America Internal Security Committee) and support the work of EL PAcCTO (Europe Latin America Programme of Assistance against Transnational Organised Crime). Besides, **multilateral cooperation** with relevant operational partners such as MAOC-N will be explored.

Other possibilities for cooperation could be considered such as:

- Enhancing Europol's visibility in the region;
- Making use of Member States and third country's networks in the region for strategic cooperation;
- Establishing ties with CARICOM IMPACs if the crime patterns continue to shift.

Key actions:

- **To sustain and enhance bilateral engagement with key operational partners in the region**
- **To engage with AMERIPOL in order to facilitate a more efficient regional outreach**

3.3 Regional Policing Bodies and International Organisations

In addition to AMERIPOL, AFRIPOL and AIMC, Europol should continue to **foster closer ties with other regional policing bodies** such as ASEANAPOL, SCO-RATS, and CARICOM IMPACs, particularly in the context of the INTERPOL-led Dialogue on effective multilateral policing. This offers the possibility to engage at regional level with law enforcement agencies and to build a network of partners. It could be explored if Europol's partner networks could be a way to engage with countries where there is no structured cooperation established. Europol should continue to explore **targeted cooperation** with relevant UN bodies, NATO, the Council of Europe, OECD and ICC in line with the operational and strategic needs of the Member States, respecting the legal requirements for the exchange of personal data.

Key actions:

- **To foster closer ties with other regional policing bodies**
- **To explore targeted cooperation with other international bodies**

4. Priority 3: PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS FOR A MORE TARGETED COOPERATION

The provisions for Europol's relations with partners are laid down in **Chapter V of the Europol Regulation** which governs Europol's cooperation with Union bodies, third countries, international organisations and private parties¹²⁴.

¹²⁴ A separate strategy is being developed on Europol's cooperation with private parties.

Although the current possibilities for the exchange of non-personal data have been fruitful so far, some limitations and difficulties have taken place with regards to operational information-exchange. While the practice of **law enforcement requires a quick and flexible response to the threats of organised crime and terrorism**, the exchange of personal data is subject to numerous limitations, which in turn can prolong the process.

4.1 Operational cooperation

Europol will continue to rely, as necessary, on **the legal options set out in Article 25** of the Europol Regulation and will **support the European Commission in its negotiations of International Agreements and Adequacy decisions** with relevant third countries and bodies.

In addition, Europol could also **seek to utilise** the existing possibilities provided by the **Europol Regulation**, such as **Article 25(4a), Article 25(6), while increasing the exceptional transfer procedure under Article 25(5) where required.**

Article 25(4a) – Transfers based on appropriate safeguards

Article 25(4a) is the novelty of the amended Europol Regulation offering a new and additional legal basis to transfer personal data to third countries and international organisations, namely “transfers based on appropriate safeguards”, a possibility which is also available to other Union bodies and Member States’ law enforcement authorities. This is a new legal basis which can be considered for establishing **structured and regular cooperation with countries which do have certain level of data protection in their national law**, but not sufficient to pass the strict requirements for an Adequacy Decision.

Article 25(5) – Exceptional transfer with authorisation of Europol’s Executive Director

Article 25(5), the exceptional transfer decided by the Executive Director, requires a careful and detailed assessment of operational, legal and data protection related considerations. This procedure has broader application and should be considered in other situations for instance for several transfers in the same case or in other types of cases.

Article 25(6) - Exceptional transfer based on a decision of the MB and the EDPS

Article 25(6) provides that, in the absence of dedicated international cooperation arrangements under Article 25(1), the MB may, in agreement with the EDPS, authorise for a period not exceeding one year, which shall be renewable, a set of transfers in accordance with the safeguards set out in Article 25(5).

Key actions:

- **To further assess the possibilities of Article 25(4a) and Article 25(6) – particularly for countries with a proven high level of data protection in other sectors**
- **To make better use of the exceptional clause provided for by Article 25(5)**

4.2 Strategic cooperation

With regards to **cooperation limited to the exchange of non-personal data**, the conclusion of a standard **Working Arrangement** is reflected in the Europol Regulation. The Working Arrangements are concluded where the Parties are expected to engage in a

structured and regular cooperation. The added-value of using a standardised model for all partners is to ensure uniformity in the applicable rules.

Given the need for a more flexible approach, **alternative and lighter means and frameworks of cooperation could be considered for those third countries and international organisations with which the envisaged strategic cooperation will not be structured or systematic, but rather occasional** (for example, in the context of cooperation for a particular sport event or for a specific case only).

In case of a clearly identified need to formalise the engagement with a third party, Europol could consider for example the conclusion of a **Memorandum of Understanding** or other instruments outlining the basic principles of cooperation and providing sufficient guarantees in terms of data protection. Such an instrument would be approved by the Executive Director while the Management Board would be subsequently informed. This option would also not entail formal negotiations and hence provide for much quicker finalisation and adoption for those **partners with which cooperation is needed for specific purposes**.

Key action:

- **To explore more flexible and lighter frameworks for strategic cooperation**

4.3 Cooperation through EU Member States' networks

While Europol will continue to develop and enhance its strategic relationships with external partners, there is an opportunity to make better use of the Member States established networks to optimise existing resources and avoid duplication and inefficiencies.

New possibilities for strategic cooperation could be explored taking into account **useful instruments or mechanisms at Member State level**, for instance Member States' bilateral agreements with third countries and their Liaison Officers network¹²⁵. Some Member States have long standing cooperation with third countries of particular operational interest with which Europol does not have any cooperation agreement in place. While this approach would not allow for the exchange of personal data, optimising these existing frameworks could greatly assist with the common goal of combatting cross-border crime and terrorism from a strategic perspective. These networks could also help facilitate contacts with relevant law enforcement agencies in third countries. **Decisions** on whether these mechanisms could be used **will rest with the Member State(s) concerned**, who will also determine the nature, criteria and extent of the use of these networks.

Besides, sharing common resources responds to the scarcity of staff and financial or technical resources that law enforcement agencies are confronted with, and follows the **principle of solidarity**. While respecting the autonomy of Member States to manage their own resources, there is a collective responsibility to work together at EU level to deal with common challenges.

Key action:

- **To explore strategic cooperation through EU Member States' networks**

4.4 Cooperation through EU Mechanisms

The European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) is a key tool for strengthening and establishing cooperation with third countries in the fight against

¹²⁵ Some Member States have experiences with this, for instance the Nordic Cooperation and the Benelux shared pool of Liaison Officers.

serious organised crime and terrorism. EMPACT could be used for strengthening and establishing cooperation with third countries both within and outside of Europol's network, in consultation with EMPACT drivers and EU Member States. The EMPACT network can provide, on demand, valuable operational feedback on the level of EMPACT involvement of third parties and **information on their readiness and preferred way to cooperate** with the EU. The level of involvement could be a basis, among others, for evaluating the operational need for closer cooperation with the respective third partners.

Another possibility is offered by EEAS – Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) Missions. Improving links and cooperation between CSDP missions/operations and JHA agencies has been considered a component in achieving cooperation in both EU defence and security matters. Several priorities for actions have been identified over the years, from countering migrant smuggling to counterterrorism, among others. Europol has been working on setting a structured dialogue with CSDP missions, adjusting, with a coherent plan, to the implementation of the Compact CSDP. Given the **interest of the EU Member States in monitoring neighbouring countries and creating synergies between CSDP missions and JHA agencies**, from both a strategic and operational perspective, Europol will continue to develop **relations with the most relevant missions**, particularly those covering countries with which Europol does not have an agreement.

Europol should **continue to engage in EU-funded initiatives and projects** covering key regions in line with operational need and strategic value and subject to the available resources. Greater participation in capacity building can promote and increase trust in the Agency and deepen relations with third countries and regions. Upskilling and supporting law enforcement in third countries can build capacity and lead to better operational outcomes.

Key action:

- **To support the Commission in its role for structured operational cooperation and continue the strategic engagement through EU avenues**

4.5 Other types of cooperation

Europol should continue to make use of **targeted action days and events** involving third countries and organisations. These events not only lead to operational results, but can serve to increase resilience of third country partners against terrorism, online radicalisation and other forms of crimes.

4.6 Technical enablers

The Information Exchange Directive¹²⁶ introduces SIENA as the “default channel” of communication for cross border cooperation between law enforcement of Member States and the Schengen Associated Countries. As such, **SIENA remains the “preferred channel” for communication when it comes to third parties** where it is already available and for future strategic partners where a long term and permanent relationship is envisaged.

When, however, SIENA is not available for a third party and there is an **exceptional and urgent need** to cooperate, **Large File Exchange (LFE)** could be the solution. LFE is a well-established solution (complementing SIENA whose attachments are limited to 55 MB) allowing to transfer large volume data sets (e.g. video files) between Member States, third parties and Europol. LFE is currently undergoing a significant change. A specific change, Internet facing,

¹²⁶ Directive (EU) 2023/977 on the exchange of information between the law enforcement authorities of Member States.

could be considered for exchanges with third parties when SIENA is not available and there is an urgent operational need.

Key action:

- **To elaborate a policy for the use of LFE with third parties.**

5. ASSESSMENT OF NEW COUNTRIES FOR COOPERATION - METHODOLOGY

Europol continuously monitors the criminal landscape to identify new and emerging threats. This provides an **overview of the most relevant third countries for different crime areas**. For some of these countries, operational or strategic cooperation possibly already exists bilaterally or multilaterally; for some others, new ways of cooperation might be needed **to assure the security of Europe or to support EU Law Enforcement Agencies at national level**.

The main principle for proposing new countries or partners with which Europol can conclude a Working Arrangement is the **operational need** identified by the Member States and Europol.

More specifically the criteria to be used for assessment includes:

- References to the third countries in analytical products such as SOCTA, IOCTA, TE-SAT and EFFECTA;
- Presence of the third countries in ongoing investigations;
- Assessment of the third countries situation regarding organised crime
- An 'Operational Input' by the Operations Directorate outlining the operational prioritisation it attaches to the proposed candidate;
- Potential 'EMPACT Actions' which the candidate could be associated with (subject to the approval of the other participants);
- Real possibilities of operational return;
- Policy-related and fundamental rights considerations;
- Experiences related to flexible cooperation.

The need for cooperation with a new partner will be presented to the Management Board as a **business case**.

6. REPORTING

Europol's External Relations Strategy 2025+ explicitly sets an open timeline because of evolving operational needs and developments. Europol will report **annually on cooperation** with third countries and international organisations, outlining the level of engagement with each partner and region and highlighting trends and evolution, including feedback from the third parties.

The annual report will include quantitative and qualitative elements to allow the Management Board to assess and discuss from Member States' perspective the current and future level of engagement with each partner via Europol. The Management Board will reflect on the cooperation and decide together on reprioritisation of third countries and international organisations according to the Member States' needs.

Annex XIII: Procurement Plan 2026

1. Introduction (Legal basis and financing decision):

Procurement initiatives are implemented in line with the Financial Regulations as follows:

- Article 89 of the Europol Financial Regulation¹²⁷ states that: *"as regards procurement, Title VII of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046¹²⁸ and Annex 1 thereof shall apply, subject to Article 90 (procurement procedures)"*
- Article 110(1) (financing decision) of the EU Financial Regulation¹²⁹ states that: *"A budgetary commitment shall be preceded by a financing decision adopted by the Union institution or by the authority to which powers have been delegated by the Union institution. The financing decisions shall be annual or multiannual."*

The first subparagraph of this paragraph shall not apply in the case of appropriations for the operations of each Union institution under its administrative autonomy that can be implemented without a basic act in accordance with Article 58(2), point (e), of administrative support expenditure and of contributions to the Union bodies referred to in Articles 70 and 71"

- Article 110(2) and (3) of the EU Financial Regulation states that

"(2) [...]

The financing decision shall indicate the total amount it covers and shall contain a description of the actions to be financed. It shall specify:

(a) the basic act and the budget line;

(b) the objectives pursued and the expected results;

(c) the methods of implementation;

(d) any additional information required by the basic act for the work programme.

(3) In addition, [...] the financing decision shall set out the following:

(b) for procurement: the global budgetary envelope reserved for procurements;

[...]".

2. Rules for participation in Europol tender procedures:

Eligibility and exclusion criteria

- The tenderers must be established in an EU Member State. This implies that tenderers established in third countries (non-EU countries) do not have the right to participate in Europol tendering procedures, unless other bilateral or special international agreements in the field of public procurement grant them the right to do so. In case there is no such agreement, or the agreement does not apply to the kind of contracts put out to tender,

¹²⁷ Decision of the Europol Management Board on the adoption of the Financial Regulation applicable to Europol (EDOC#1032027v6 4 October 2019)

¹²⁸ Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, was repealed by Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (recast) - OJ L, 2024/2509, 26.9.2024. The recast Financial Regulation applies from 30 September 2024.

¹²⁹ Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (recast) - OJ L, 2024/2509, 26.9.2024.

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tenderers of third countries are not entitled to participate, unless otherwise explicitly allowed in the given calls published by Europol;

- The tenderers shall not be, at the time of a contract award procedure, in one of the exclusion situations referred to in Article 138 (Exclusion criteria and decisions on exclusions) of the EU Financial Regulation.

Selection and award criteria

- The eligible requests to participate/ tenders will be evaluated against the selection criteria indicated in each call for tenders. In general, there are three sets of selection criteria to be assessed which are specified on a case-by-case basis in each procurement procedure:
 - Legal and regulatory capacity;
 - Economic and financial capacity;
 - Technical and professional capacity.
- The tenders which meet the selection criteria are evaluated against the award criteria indicated in each call for tenders. In general, the award criteria require the assessment of quality and price.

3. Green procurement:

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

- In November 2021, Europol was awarded the ISO 14001:2015 certificate for its own Environmental Management System (EMS) by the accredited certification body, followed by EMAS¹³⁰ registration on 23 February 2022. Europol has become the first Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) Agency to do so and joining a selective group of EU Institutions and bodies being EMAS registered. The Europol Environmental Policy and Europol annual Environmental Statement¹³¹ are available for consultation online on the Europol's website.
- In line with EMAS Regulation (EC) No 1221/2009, Annex I 2b, suppliers and contractors must comply with Europol's Environmental Policy within the remit of the activities carried out for the contract and should consider their environmental performance and practices. Contractors are encouraged to prefer electronic communication and take measures to reduce the overall carbon footprint through green procurement, waste management, energy efficiency and to promote to their staff climate neutrality sustainable environmental behaviours.
- Europol takes into consideration suppliers and contractors' environmental performance and practices when awarding tenders. Europol has introduced, where applicable with the scope of the contract, green public procurement (GPP) or environmental considerations in its own procedures, either at the selection criteria stage, technical specifications, award criteria and/or as part of the contract performance clauses, where relevant.

¹³⁰ Eco- Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS), EMAS is a premium management instrument developed by the European Commission for companies and other organisations to evaluate, report, and improve their environmental performance.

¹³¹ To consult the latest online version at the time of preparation of this document, follow this link: <https://www.europol.europa.eu/publications-events/publications/europol-environmental-statement-2024>.

4. Europol diversity and inclusion strategy:

Europol is an equal opportunities employer and encourages diversity (national origin, race, colour, disability, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation etc) and inclusion among Contractors' personnel in accordance with the Europol contractual terms.

5. Overview of the main procurement initiatives for year 2026:

Procurement initiatives are implemented either via existing (framework) contracts or via tender procedures on the basis of the following outsourcing financing scheme:

- I. Implementation of existing framework contracts through order forms (including specific contracts) or of direct contracts;
- II. Other Procurements (mainly through call for tenders under open/restricted and negotiated procedures).

A summary of the main procurement initiatives is outlined in Table 1 below. It includes generic information about the procurement initiatives performed in the previous year of the current work programme as well as the initiatives planned for the following year.

A detailed overview of the procurement initiatives for **YEAR 2026** is provided in Table 2 below. The table indicates the **number of the main contracts** (i.e. above EUR 15,000) in force in 2025 and divided into two parts:

- Part A includes administration and general services-related procurement initiatives.
- Part B includes IT-related procurement initiatives.

The table also includes the **indicative list of procurement procedures** to be initiated in 2026¹³². The list of tender procedures will be further detailed once more details on calls timing will be available.

The table does not include the following data/information:

- procurement procedures below EUR 15,000;
- exceptional negotiated procurement procedures without prior publication of a contract notice under point 11, Annex I of the EU Financial Regulation;
- restricted procurement procedures to be launched under existing (published) calls for expression of interest;
- inter-institutional procurement procedures or procurement procedures launched by the EU institutions, bodies and/or agencies;
- joint procurement procedures launched by EU Member States, in particular the Host State (the Kingdom of the Netherlands);
- reopening of competitions under multiple framework contracts or restricted procurement procedures under a Dynamic Purchasing System, unless otherwise justified.

In addition, Europol will award specific contracts/ orders for supplies, services, including IT consultancy services either under Europol framework contracts or under framework contracts resulting from inter-institutional procurement procedures. These specific contracts/ orders are not reflected in the table below.

¹³² Where relevant the list includes procedures already mentioned in the previous plan but to be initiated in Q4 of the preceding year.

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Due to the high volume of procurement procedures, the timely implementation of the procurement initiatives depends on the commitment of all the stakeholders involved and the resources available for the handling of the procurement procedures.

Interested economic operators are invited to consult regularly the relevant advertisement platforms (the F&T Portal and/ or the Europol website) for low value and middle value procedures (between EUR 15,000 and below the EU thresholds¹³³) and the Official Journal of the European Union for all tender procedures from the applicable EU thresholds.

Where necessary and duly justified, Article 136 of the EU Financial Regulation may apply to specific award procedures that affect security or public order, in particular concerning strategic assets and interests of the Union or its Member States, including the protection of the integrity of digital infrastructure, communication and information systems, and related supply chains. Whenever this provision applies, this shall be reflected in the documents related to the award procedure.

¹³³ The EU thresholds are the thresholds referred to in Article 178 (1) of the EU Financial Regulation.

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Table 1: Summary of the main procurement initiatives

Table Code	Other initiatives and services							
		Total Initially budget value	Total review value	Total Initially budget value	Total review value	Total Initially budget value ¹³⁴	Indicative number of contracts / SLA / etc ¹³⁵	Expected number of procurement procedures
		2024	2024	2025	2025	2026	2026	2026
Part A	Total Procurement (non-ICT)	36,873,458	34,568,850	26,687,721	32,958,025	36,251,200	103	18
Part B	Total ICT Procurement	48,987,569	48,943,669	56,700,398	51,705,078	61,958,903	66	5
Total Parts A & B	Total all procured budget value	85,861,027	83,512,519	83,388,119	84,663,103	98,210,103	169	23
% of the Europol budget for procurement initiatives		39%	38.3%	33.7%	35.9%	36.0%		

¹³⁴ Estimated value, subject to change. The total review value (procured) for 2026 will be available only by mid-January.

¹³⁵ Some contracts cover more than one category. However, the main scope of the contract is taken into account for counting the contracts. Each contract is counted only once. In case of multiple framework contracts, each multiple framework contract is counted only once.

Table 2: Overview of the main procurement initiatives for 2026**TABLE PART A - Main procurement initiatives 2026 (Non ICT-related activities)**

List of running contracts in 2026 (Framework Contracts (FWC), Direct Contracts or Other, such as Service Level Agreements (SLA), Memorandum of Understanding)					
Category	Main procurement initiatives (services, supplies/goods and other initiatives) (categorised per budget headings)	Value (in Euro)	Contracts		Tenders
			Indicative number of main contracts valid in 2026	Type of contracts	Number of tenders to be initiated by EUROPOL
Category A1	Staff-related expenditure, excluding salaries or allowances (medical services, training, etc.)	5,348,000	38	FWC Direct SLA Other	3
Category A2	Building-related expenditure (e.g. rent, energy, cleaning, maintenance, furniture, security, etc.)	14,898,500	15	FWC Direct SLA Other	6
Category A3	Administrative –related expenditure (e.g. postal services, stationary, open source, library, catering, insurance, publication, uniform, legal, promotional items, etc.)	3,453,200	45	FWC Direct	9
Category A4	Meeting-related expenditure (e.g. travel, hotels, interpretations, hospitality)	12,551,500	5	FWC SLA Other	0
Sub-Total Category A		36,251,200	103		18

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Part A - Main procurement initiatives 2026 (NON-ICT-related activities)						
No	Type of Procurement initiatives (as divided in accordance with table above)	Subject	Estimated budget in Euro ¹³⁶	Indicative timeframe		Comments
				Indicative time frame for tender initiation	Indicative time frame for tender completion	
01	Category A1	Medical laboratory tests and related services <i>(from 2025 list of procurement initiatives)</i>	Above EU threshold (around 411,000 EUR for 4 years)	Q4 2025/ Q1 2026	Q2 2026	Recurrent needs: Contract expiry date: 06/03/2026
02	Category A1	Safety training courses	Above EU threshold (around 250,000 EUR for 4 years)	Q3 2026	Q1 2027	Recurrent needs: Contract expiry date: 22/03/2027
03	Category A1	Temporary workers	Above EU threshold (around 10,500,000 EUR for 4 years)	Q1 2026	Q1 2027	Recurrent needs: Existing Contract expiry date: 15/01/2027 <i>(Tentative - Joint procedure with another EU agency envisaged)</i>
04	Category A2	Purchase of bicycles, including maintenance <i>(from 2025 list of procurement initiatives)</i>	Below EU threshold (No estimation available yet)	Q2 2026	Q4 2026	New needs due to the distance between different satellite buildings and HQ.
05	Category A2	Gym equipment and corrective and preventive maintenance <i>(from 2025 list of procurement initiatives)</i>	Above EU threshold (around 220,000 EUR for 4 years)	Q2 2026	Q4 2026	New needs
06	Category A2	Move. Logistics and storage services	Above EU threshold (around 1,700,000 EUR for 4 years)	Q1 2026	Q4 2026	Recurrent needs: Contract expiry date: 29/11/2026

¹³⁶ Estimated amounts provided for information only where available. The estimations are just indicative, based mainly on the value of previous contracts. The final estimation will be done at the moment of launch of the procurement procedure.

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07	Category A2	Cleaning and related services and supplies	Above EU threshold (around 4,900,000 EUR for 4 years)	Q1 2026	Q4 2026	Recurrent needs: Contract expiry date: 11/12/2026
08	Category A2	Crisis management exercising and consulting	Below EU threshold (around 140,000 EUR for 4 years)	Q4 2026/ Q1 2027	Q2 2027	Recurrent needs: Contract expiry date: 07/05/2027
09	Category A2	Security equipment – training – protective gear	Below EU threshold (around 140,000 EUR for 4 years)	Q2 2026	Q3 2026	New needs
10	Category A3	Personalised promotional items coins and medals <i>(from 2025 list of procurement initiatives)</i>	Below EU threshold (around 80,000 out of 4 years)	Q1 2026	Q2 2026	New needs
11	Category A3	Gift and conference personalised items <i>(from 2025 list of procurement initiatives)</i>	Above EU threshold (around 300,000 out of 4 years)	Q3/04 2026	Q2 2027	Recurrent needs: Existing Contract expiry date: 26/05/2027 <i>(Tentative - Joint procedure with another EU agency envisaged)</i>
12	Category A3	Communication services: support for prevention and awareness campaigns <i>(from 2025 list of procurement initiatives)</i>	Below EU threshold (around 60,000 EUR / 120,000 EUR for 4 years)	Q1 2026	Q2 2026	New needs
13	Category A3	Imagery satellite services <i>(from 2025 list of procurement initiatives)</i>	Above EU threshold (no estimation available yet)	Q1 2026	Q4 2026	New needs <i>(Tentative – cooperation agreement with another EU body envisaged)</i>
14	Category A3	Actuarial services for defined benefit obligation	Below EU threshold (around 120,000 EUR for 4 years)	Q4 2026	Q3 2027	New needs

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15	Category A3	Insurance brokerage services	Above EU threshold (around 450,000 EUR for 4 years)	Q1 2026	Q3 2026	Recurrent needs: Existing Contract expiry date: 19/10/2026 <i>(Tentative - Joint procedure with another EU agency envisaged)</i>
16	Category A3	Web services including campaigns, hosting, design and development	Above EU threshold (around 660,000 EUR for 4 years)	Q3 2026	Q2 2027	Recurrent needs: Existing Contract expiry date: 28/05/2027
17	Category A3	Legal services (various areas of law)	Below EU threshold / contract (for 4 years)	Q1 2026	Q3 2026	Recurrent needs Existing contracts expiring in June 2026. <i>(Tentative - as alternative to other procurement channels)</i> Procurement may be divided into lots or several procedures.
18	Category A3	Audio-visual production and support services	Above EU threshold (around 450,000 EUR for 4 years)	Q2 2026	Q3 2026	New needs

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TABLE PART B - Main procurement initiatives 2026 (ICT-related activities)

Part B - Main procurement initiatives 2026 (ICT-related activities)					
Category	Main procurement initiatives (services, supplies/goods and other initiatives) (categorised per budget headings)	Value (in Euro)	Contracts		Tenders
			Indicative number of main contracts valid in 2026	Type of contracts	Nr of tenders to be initiated by EUROPOL
Category B1	Administrative and operational purchase and maintenance of Hardware and Software	37,706,303	36	FWC	2
Category B2	Administrative and operational ICT External Service Provision including development and maintenance of solutions and strategic consultancy services	22,729,400	25	FWC	2
Category B3	Administrative and operational Telecommunications costs	1,523,200	5	FWC	1
Sub-Total Category B		61,958,903	66		5

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Tentative detailed overview of ICT-related procurement procedures to be initiated in 2026:						
No	Category	Subject	Estimated budget	Indicative timeframe		Comments
				Indicative time frame for tender initiation	Indicative time frame for tender completion	
19	Category B2	Service Desk services <i>(from 2025 list of procurement initiatives)</i>	Above EU threshold (around 4,000,000 EUR for 4 years)	Q1 2026	Q3 2026	Recurrent needs: Existing Contract expiry date: 17/07/2026
20	Category B3	Mobile communication carrier services	Above EU threshold (around 4,000,000 EUR for 4 years)	Q3 2026	Q1 2027	Recurrent needs: Existing Contract expiry date: 09/03/2027 <i>This may be organised as joint procurement procedure with other EU Agencies. In this case the estimated budget ceiling of other EU Agencies will be added to the total value of the contract.</i>
21	Category B1	ICT Security Systems	Above EU threshold (around 25,000,000 EUR for 4 years)	Q3 2026	Q2 2027	Recurrent needs: Existing Contract expiry date: 11/04/2027
22	Category B1	ICT Racks, Cabling and Infrastructure	Above EU threshold (around 10,000,000 EUR for 4 years)	Q4 2026/ Q1 2027	Q4 2027	Recurrent needs: Existing Contract expiry date: 01/12/2027
23	Category B2	ICT Professional Services (tentative)	Above EU threshold (no estimation available yet)	Q2 2026	Q4 2026	New needs <i>(Tentative – provided that the services cannot be addressed by other means such as a current contract/ inter-institutional procedure)</i>

Annex XIV: Corporate Risks 2026

Europol's corporate risk management process aggregates risks (including the related responses) at organisational level. In doing so, Europol expands risk management from a vertical (e.g. in departments or programmes/projects) to a horizontal perspective (corporate, organisational wide view), meeting the required elements on risk management set out in the Internal Control Framework (ICF) of Europol¹³⁷, which takes into account the COSO ICF¹³⁸ and the European Commission's ICF¹³⁹, international standards¹⁴⁰ and the European Commission's risk management guide¹⁴¹. In line with this, corporate risks are considered internally by Europol at regular intervals throughout the year and on an immediate ad hoc basis in the event of the identification of time-critical or high impact risks.

For Europol, a risk is an uncertain event or set of events that, should it occur, would have an effect on the achievement of objectives related to the annual business planning (i.e. Work Programme) and the Europol Strategy from an overall perspective. Risks are understood in two dimensions: **Threats** (expected negative effect on a business objective) or **opportunities** (expected positive effect on a business objective). Both types of risk – those identified as threats and opportunities – are listed below.

The overview shows the **most important corporate risks** with reference to 2026, in total **4 threats** and **1 opportunity**, reflecting the risk exposure in the second half of 2025, as well as the outlook for the 2026 planning¹⁴². The overview is synchronised with the **outcome** of the **Home Affairs Agencies peer review risk assessment exercise for 2026** (chaired by Europol in October 2025 for the Home Affairs Agencies¹⁴³).

¹³⁷ Internal Control Framework (ICF) of Europol, Europol file no. EDOC #951032v13

¹³⁸ Committee of Sponsoring Organisations of the Treadway Commission (COSO) Internal Control Integrated Framework, May 2013

¹³⁹ Communication to the European Commission – Revision of the Internal Control Framework, C(2017) 2373, Europol file no. EDOC #911042v1

¹⁴⁰ ISO Standard on Risk Management: ISO-31000(2018)

¹⁴¹ Risk Management in the European Commission – Implementation Guide, September 2022 Europol file no. EDOC #1032716v3

¹⁴² It should be noted that the critical risks, in terms of threats and opportunities, represent an aggregate "snapshot" at a moment in time. The corporate risks are integrated into the risk register as part of the corporate risk management process at regular intervals for assessment and decision making within Europol and subsequent monitoring. This facilitates and ensures that the risks are regularly assessed and amended where required. The Europol MB will be informed of any significant change to the risks.

¹⁴³ For the peer risk review exercise in October 2025, the guidance developed by the EU Agencies Network (EUAN) – Performance Development Network (PDN) includes risks as threats only.

List of corporate risks for 2026

No	Short risk title	Risk description	Risk response
1	Elevated security threats	Against the background of geo-political developments ¹⁴⁴ and fast evolving modi operandi by a diverse range of threat actors, Europol is exposed to elevated security threats, encompassing hybrid attack scenarios ranging from cyber incidents, sabotage as well as infiltration and disinformation ¹⁴⁵ , in particular in light of rapid technological change (including increased use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) by threat actors).	Threat – Share ¹⁴⁶ , by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • performing 2026 Work Programme Activities; • close monitoring of political and relevant geopolitical developments; • continuous scanning of all cyber, physical and other relevant security risks; • reviewing and strengthening overall security measures to ensure a comprehensive, state-of-the-art risk response in all relevant areas; • implementing enhanced information security management; • strengthening Europol's cybersecurity related staff capacity and budget allocation; • decommissioning ICT legacy systems; • elevating controls and detection capabilities against infiltration risk scenarios (such as expanding security clearance related processes); • performing business continuity and contingency measures to ensure organisational resilience; • maintaining close relationship with EU Member States, the European Commission and other stakeholders, as well as Home Agencies and partners, including third states; • taking ad-hoc response measures based on emerging trends; • providing security awareness and training for all staff (including relevant measures for sensitive mission deployments).

¹⁴⁴ Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine (as well as corresponding adversary activities towards the EU and its Member States, third countries and international organisations) and other conflicts and tensions affecting the EU.

¹⁴⁵ Including with respect to IT infrastructure (especially for internet facing systems), and physical security & critical infrastructure.

¹⁴⁶ Threat risk type responses are: Reduce (pro-active actions are undertaken to minimise the probability or impact; the responsibility for the risk effect(s) and response measure(s) stay with Europol); Remove (changing the scope of the business objective concerned); Transfer (a third party takes responsibility for the risk); Retain (conscious and deliberate decision to accept the risk and, especially, the possible effect(s) on the business objective); Share (the responsibility for the risk effect(s) and risk response measure(s) are shared between the involved parties, i.e. Europol and Member States take responsibility for certain aspects of the risk).

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No	Short risk title	Risk description	Risk response
2	Resource shortage	<p>The Agency faces a shortage of the required human, financial, and physical resources needed to fulfil its expanding mandate and to meet stakeholder expectations, due to the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • static Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) with pre-defined financial and staff contingents; • expanding mandate and tasks, as well implementation scope not being fully accounted for, either during the process for developing the respective Legislative Financial Statement (LFS) accompanying regulatory change, or in the course of subsequent implementation; • constraints in the applicable staff rules, or the impact of national legislation for employing contractors; • challenges to attract, recruit & retain staff with the necessary skills; • insufficient facilities (including for additional ICT data centres), as well office and meeting space due to the Agency's growth and structural limitations in the current Headquarters. 	<p>Threat – Share, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • performing 2026 Work Programme Activities; • liaising with national authorities and other relevant stakeholders to manage expectations; • including the Agency's actual resource needs into the Programming Document (PD) and related financial estimates; • promoting a flexible approach of allocation of resources in the annual budgetary process, for identifying the required adjustments to the pre-defined resource envelopes during the MFF period (for decision-making by the budgetary authority, in coordination with the European Commission); • conducting flexible, realistic planning and robust performance monitoring; • exercising stringent budget monitoring to ensure the early identification of savings for enabling the prioritisation (and corresponding transfers) of financial resources (regularly throughout the year); • identifying the areas with highest priority for the allocation of additional staff; • recruiting the identified right talent, as well as retaining key staff, while making use of reserve lists and internal mobility; • tailoring staff implementing provisions and procurement contracts based on Europol's needs where feasible; • promoting staff well-being and maintaining an attractive work environment; • increasing automation of tasks using AI to raise productivity, address resource scarcity and improve quality; • providing personal development and training to develop the competency and skill base; • exploring the sharing of resources, knowledge & experience across Agencies where feasible; • deploying a sourcing strategy; • negotiating with the Host State authorities on housing & office planning (Strategic Housing Roadmap).

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No	Short risk title	Risk description	Risk response
3	Insufficient capabilities	<p>The Agency is exposed to the risk of insufficient internal and external capabilities for implementing required changes and responding adequately to stakeholder expectations, given the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dependency on external capabilities (e.g., providing support from the national level including the Host State); • complexity of regulatory requirements (including national legislation); • political expectations exceeding existing capabilities of Home Agencies; • continuously evolving timelines for deliverables, resource margins and requirements ('scope creep'), next to ad hoc tasks and requests; • increase in data volume and complexity of requests from Member States and partners, driving operational demand for advanced ICT tools and automation of tasks; • highly regulated environment for researching and deploying innovative ICT solutions supported by AI; • limited internal capabilities to deliver required change of (ICT infrastructure/ tools, in order to meet the operational demand); • continuously increasing costs for running the business systems (licences, hardware and software maintenance); • overall limited capabilities to manage organisational change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threat – Share, by: • performing 2026 Work Programme Activities; • strengthening corporate change management capabilities and compliance monitoring; • applying strategic demand management; • conducting flexible, realistic planning and robust performance monitoring; • making Member States and cooperation partners regularly aware of corresponding legal as well as other obligations; • engaging into continuous dialogue with Member States, cooperation partners and EU stakeholders, including for managing expectations (by communicating clearly about Europol's capacity to deliver new tasks); • optimising ICT planning and delivery implementation (reporting); • increasing automation of tasks, via innovative AI based solutions and proactive engagement in particular with the EDPS.

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No	Short risk title	Risk description	Risk response
4	Elevated compliance demand	<p>The Agency is exposed to the risk of growing supervision and elevated compliance demands (e.g., with respect to data protection, AI Act etc.), consuming considerable resources, resulting in constraints to achieve an agile and innovative delivery of the Agency's work, given in particular the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expanding mandate & tasks (resulting from changes to the Europol Regulation, Europol's share of the EU Interoperability agenda, Digital Services Act (DSA) etc.); • increasing volume and/or complexity of demands from supervisory stakeholders (especially from a data protection perspective) which adds lead time, slows down innovation and binds significant resources; • annual cycle of audit activities performed by relevant supervision stakeholders (with an increasing number of performance audit activities) etc.; • increasing volume of public and data subject access requests which consume significant resources. 	<p>Threat – Share, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • performing 2026 Work Programme Activities; • estimating the resource investment for supervision and oversight activities; • engaging with the European Commission & supervisory authorities to identify efficiency gains; • strengthen compliance monitoring and management, including by utilising ICT tools, underpinned by process.

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No	Short risk title	Risk description	Risk response
5	Enhanced public awareness on the added value of Europol in times of crises	<p>Europol creates public awareness on the organisation's added value in times of crises, in view of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • security representing a connecting & cohesion factor for citizens in Member States; • demonstrating joint work with Home Affairs and other EU Agencies; • Europol (and other JHA Agencies) directly contributing to the expectations of citizens as regards to EU internal security; • seizing opportunities arising from the ProtectEU – the European Internal Security Strategy. 	<p>Opportunity¹⁴⁷ - Enhance, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pro-active awareness building & media outreach on successes; • promoting the work and outcome of Europol's work on social media platforms; • optimising public visibility via Europol's website and other platforms; • engaging with Member States, Home and other EU Agencies, the European Commission & other partners.

¹⁴⁷ Opportunity risk type responses are: Realise (identifying and seizing a chance to realise the concerned business objective with fewer resources or earlier than planned); Enhance (seizing and improving on an identified opportunity, thus achieving additional gains of relevance to more than one concerned business objective); Exploit (expanding the scope of business objectives by taking advantage of multiple benefits).