Europol is the European Union’s law enforcement agency. Our main goal is to achieve a safer Europe for the benefit of all the EU citizens.

Headquartered in The Hague, the Netherlands, we support the 27 EU Member States in their fight against terrorism, cybercrime and other serious and organised forms of crime. We also work with many non-EU partner states and international organisations.

Large-scale criminal and terrorist networks pose a significant threat to the internal security of the EU and to the safety and livelihood of its people. The biggest security threats come from:

- terrorism;
- international drug trafficking and money laundering;
- organised fraud;
- the counterfeiting of euros;
- trafficking in human beings.

The networks behind the crimes in each of these areas are quick to seize new opportunities, and they are resilient in the face of traditional law enforcement measures.
UNIQUE SERVICES

Our position at the heart of the European security architecture allows us to offer a unique range of services and to serve as a:

- support centre for law enforcement operations;
- hub for information on criminal activities;
- centre for law enforcement expertise.

EUROPOL IN NUMBERS

- More than 1000 staff
- 220 Europol Liaison Officers
- Around 100 crime analysts
- Supporting over 40,000 international investigations each year

Analysis is at the core of our activities. Our criminal analysts are among the best trained in Europe. They use state-of-the-art tools to support investigations by law enforcement in Member States on a daily basis.

To give our partners deeper insights into the crimes they are tackling, we produce regular assessments that offer comprehensive, forward-looking analyses of crime and terrorism in the EU, including the:

- EU Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment (SOCTA), which updates Europe’s law enforcement community and decision-makers on developments in serious and organised crime and the threats it poses;
- EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT), which gives a detailed account of the state of terrorism in the EU;
- Internet Organised Crime Threat Assessment (iOCTA), which reports on key findings and emerging threats and developments in cybercrime;
- Europol Review, an annual publication that details the progress that we and our partners have made in fighting crime.
International crime and terrorist groups operate worldwide and make use of the latest technology. To ensure an effective and coordinated response, Europol needs to be equally flexible and innovative, and to make sure its methods and tools are up to date.

That is why we are home to a number of specialised bodies and bespoke systems.

The bodies are:

- Europol's operational centre, the 24/7 hub for data exchange among Europol, Member States and third parties;
- the European Cybercrime Centre (EC3), which strengthens the law enforcement response to cybercrime in the EU and thus help protect European citizens, businesses and governments from online crime;
- the Joint Cybercrime Action Taskforce (J-CAT), which drives intelligence-led, coordinated action against key cybercrime threats and top targets by stimulating and facilitating the joint identification, prioritisation, preparation and initiation of investigations;
- the European Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC), an operations centre and hub of expertise that is a central part of the EU's efforts to enhance its response to terror;
- the European Migrant Smuggling Centre (EMSC), which supports Member States in targeting and dismantling the complex and sophisticated criminal networks involved in migrant smuggling;
- the Intellectual Property Crime Coordinated Coalition (IPC3), which is central to the EU's efforts to stem the tide of intellectual property crime within and outside the EU.

Europol's specialised systems, which offer fast and secure capabilities for storing, searching, visualising and linking information, thus comprise a sophisticated crime-fighting toolbox, which include:

- FIU.net, a decentralised and sophisticated computer network supporting the financial intelligence units (FIUs) in the EU in their fight against money laundering and the financing of terrorism;
- The Secure Information Exchange Network Application (SIENA), a state-of-the-art platform that meets the communication needs of EU law enforcement;
- the Europol Platform for Experts (EPE), a secure, collaborative web platform for specialists working in a variety of law enforcement areas;
- the European Information System, the reference system for offences, the individuals involved in them, and other related data.

Europol is a high-security operational centre that operates non-stop: 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Europol officers are always ready to travel at short notice and provide support through our mobile office. Our presence is also in demand in the fight against illicit drugs, and we have a fully operational team to help dismantle synthetic drugs laboratories on the spot.

Since Europol can respond flexibly, we focus on different areas of criminal and terrorist activity from one year to the next, depending on requirements. Our main priorities, however, tend to remain relatively stable, reflecting those of international criminal and terrorist groups. Over the years we have built up substantial experience in fighting drug trafficking, illicit immigration networks and trafficking in human beings, illicit vehicle trafficking, cybercrime, money laundering and currency forgery. Europol is the central European office for combating euro counterfeiting.

Europol enjoys excellent cooperative arrangements with law enforcement partners in Europe and beyond. It also values its accountability arrangements which are among the most robust and transparent in the world.

We welcome public interest in our work and trust that this website offers the reader a good illustration of our activities, the responsible way in which they are carried out, and the impact they are having on making Europe safer.
Europol is accountable at the EU level to the Council of Ministers for Justice and Home Affairs.

The Council is responsible for the main control and guidance of Europol. It appoints the Executive Director and the Deputy Directors, and approves Europol's budget (which is part of the general budget of the EU), together with the European Parliament. It also can adopt, together with the European Parliament, regulations related to Europol's work. Each year the Council forwards a special report to the European Parliament on the work of Europol.

Organisational structure
Europol is headed by an Executive Director, who is Europol's legal representative and is appointed by the Council of the European Union. Europol's current Executive Director is Catherine De Bolle, who assumed the post in May 2018.

She is assisted by three Deputy Executive Directors:

- Wil van Gemert, Operations Directorate
- Jürgen Ebner, Governance Directorate
- Luis de Eusebio Ramos, Capabilities Directorate

Europol staff members come from a wide variety of backgrounds and nations.

On 1 January 2010 Europol became a full EU agency. On 1 May 2017, Europol became officially the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation, after its new Regulation entered into force.

The new regulation was adopted on 11 May 2016, when the European Parliament voted on updated powers to enable Europol to step up efforts to fight terrorism, cybercrime and other serious and organised forms of crime. The new regulation strengthens Europol's role in supporting cooperation among law enforcement authorities in the EU.
GENERAL TERMS: Law Enforcement, Legal Regulation, Legislation, Management & Control
TARGET GROUPS: General Public, Academia, Professor, Students, Researcher, Press/Journalists

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