Like any EU agency, Europol functions according to a system of controls, checks and balances that ensure transparency and accountability.

Europol is democratically managed on the basis of a system of controls, checks and supervision of governance.

EU justice and interior ministers, MEPs, other EU bodies, a management board drawn from all EU Member States, and its directorate all play important roles in managing Europol and ensuring that it is accountable.

Europol has been an EU agency since 2010. It is ultimately accountable to the Council of Ministers for Justice and Home Affairs, which comprises the relevant ministers from all EU Member States. The Council is responsible for the main control and guidance of Europol, and appoints the agency's Executive Director and Deputy Directors.

Together with the European Parliament (EP), the Council approves Europol's budget (which is part of the EU's general budget) as well as adopts regulations related to Europol's work.

The EP plays an important role in overseeing Europol. In addition to adopting the agency's annual budget, the EP issues the discharge — the decision by which it releases the European Commission (EC) from its responsibility for managing a given budget, by indicating the end of the period in which that budget has been executed. The discharge is granted by Parliament on a recommendation from the Council. The EP is also consulted in the adoption of new Council regulations concerning Europol.

**EUROPOL MANAGEMENT BOARD**

An integral part of Europol's administrative and management structure, the Management Board is the Agency's main governance body and primary stakeholder environment. It provides a unique forum to ensure Europol's continued development as a trusted partner that successfully meets the needs and expectations of the European Union law enforcement community and, in doing so, contributes to a safer Europe.

Its main responsibilities are to provide strategic guidance to the Agency and oversee the implementation of its tasks, to adopt its annual and multi-annual work programmes and annual budget, and to exercise governance responsibilities foreseen in the Europol Regulation.

It is composed of one representative from each EU Member State taking part in the Europol Regulation and one representative from the European Commission (Management Board members). Denmark has an observer status.

The Management Board meets on average four times per year, while its two working groups on corporate matters (WGCM) and on information management (WGIM) meet regularly throughout the year. The Management Board Secretariat provides support to the Chairperson, the Board and its working groups and committees.
FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Europol abides by the same principles as other EU agencies and institutions in terms of transparency and financial accountability. A number of institutions and bodies are involved in enforcing financial accountability at the agency, including the:

- European Court of Auditors
- Internal Audit Service
- Internal Audit Capability.

External financial oversight

The monitoring of the commitment and disbursement of expenditures, as well as the establishment and collection of Europol's income, follows the general rules of the EU, such as budgetary discipline and sound financial management.

Europol's annual accounts are subject to an external audit carried out by the European Court of Auditors (ECA). The ECA is an EU institution independent of Europol, as provided for in Articles 285-287 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

The ECA provides the budgetary authority with a statement of assurance as to the reliability of the accounts and the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions. The ECA draws up an annual report after the close of each financial year. This report, together with the replies from the bodies concerned, including Europol, is published by the ECA in the Official Journal of the EU. It is the basis for the European Parliament, following a recommendation from the Council, to take the aforementioned discharge decision on Europol's implementation of the budget. The ECA may also, at any time, submit observations, particularly in the form of special reports, on specific questions, and deliver opinions at the request of another EU institution (referred to in Art. 13 of the TFEU).

Internal oversight

Oversight of Europol is also included in the remit of the Internal Audit Service (IAS), the internal auditor of the European Commission's departments and agencies. As Europol's internal auditor — it doesn't audit the agency for the Commission, but for the agency — the IAS provides a wider, independent view of the accountability procedures within the agency, offering solutions to problems that may arise.

Another level of internal supervision is provided by the Internal Audit Capability (IAC), which operates within Europol and is appointed by and solely accountable to the Management Board. 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.
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT & EUROPEAN COUNCIL

The Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group (JPSG) is tasked with the political monitoring and examination of Europol's activity. The JPSG is composed of members of both national parliaments (up to 4 members each) and Members of the European Parliament (up to 16). The Group holds meetings twice a year, prior to which Europol must submit documents related to its actions to be discussed by the JPSG. In these documents, Europol transmits information such as threat assessments, strategic analyses, multiannual programming and annual work programme of Europol and the Consolidated Europol Consolidated Annual Activity Reports (CAAR). The JPSG carries out its activities pursuant to Article 88 of the TFEU.

As part of the JHA, Europol is subject to oversight from Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation on Internal Security (COSI), which ensures that operational cooperation and internal security is promoted and strengthened in the European Union. The role of COSI is to identify possible shortcomings or failures and to adopt concrete recommendations to address them.

EUROPEAN DATA PROTECTION SUPERVISOR

The European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) provides assurance that the rights of the individual are protected by the storage, processing and use of data held by Europol. The Europol Regulation reinforces Europol's capabilities. It strengthens procedural safeguards and data protection rights and brings them in line with the changes outlined in the Treaty, ensuring, in particular, that each individual has the right to submit complaints to an independent data protection authority, whose decisions are subject to judicial review.

EUROPEAN OMBUDSMAN

The European Ombudsman provides a further layer of accountability at Europol. The Ombudsman's mission is to serve democracy by working with EU institutions, including Europol, to create a more effective, accountable, transparent and ethical administration. It investigates complaints against EU institutions and bodies.

Any member of the public that has concerns about maladministration in the activities of these institutions and bodies has the right to register a complaint on the matter with the Ombudsman.

Europol adheres to the key principles of good governance promoted by the Ombudsman's European Code of Good Administrative Behaviour:

- fairness
- proportionality
- objectivity
- lawfulness
- impartiality.

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