
BERNARD CAZENEUVE VISITS EUROPOL

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The French Minister of Interior, Mr Bernard Cazeneuve, visited Europol on Friday 12 December.

Minister Cazeneuve was welcomed by Europol Director Rob Wainwright. In the course of a wide ranging discussion on the criminal threats faced by Europe and upon which Europol was concentrating the two covered project JOT MARE, which addresses the organised crime gangs facilitating the irregular migration of thousands across the Mediterranean and which has resulted in the deaths of more than 3000 migrants in 2014. They also discussed the terrorist threats posed by ISIL and the phenomenon of foreign fighters. Minister Cazeneuve was interested in the work conducted by the counter-terrorism unit at Europol which is supporting member states in their response to this threat. The Minister also visited Europol's European Cybercrime Centre (EC3) where he was briefed on the recent Operation Onymous, one of the largest international crackdowns on online drugs trading on the darkweb. In Operation Onymous, Europol coordinated the efforts of 40 digital investigators from 17 countries.

The Minister also had the opportunity to meet several representatives of French law enforcement who are currently serving at Europol. He praised their professionalism and expertise and joined with Director Wainwright in thanking them for their efforts.

With more than 250 major operations against serious transnational organised crime groups carried out every year with the support of Europol, France is one of the top users of Europol's services. Director Wainwright and Minister Cazeneuve discussed future developments and explored the possibilities for further engagement. In addition to Mr Cazeneuve, the French delegation included Mrs Mireille Ballestrazzi, Director of the French Police Judiciaire, General Simon-Pierre Baradel, Director of the French Gendarmerie Judicial Police and Laurent Pic, French Ambassador to the Netherlands.

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