

# EUROPOL AND EUROPEAN COMMISSION LEAD NEW PROJECT TO TARGET ORGANISED CRIME IN EU EASTERN NEIGHBOURHOOD

16 Jul 2020

[Press Release](#)

A new Europol-led project, funded by the European Commission will focus on strengthening the capacity of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine to fight organised crime more effectively. The project will contribute to reducing crime and creating a safer living space for citizens in the region.

## TARGETING ORGANISED CRIME IN THE EU EASTERN NEIGHBOURHOOD

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine



Catherine De Bolle, Executive Director of Europol, highlighted that:

“

This initiative is an important step in developing strong operational cooperation and trust between the law enforcement authorities of the EU Member States and our Eastern partners. Our aligned efforts will bring a stronger response to the common challenges and cross-border threats we face. Working together is crucial to connect the dots between criminal networks in the EU and the neighbourhood region. Europol's central place in European law enforcement architecture enables us to lead this project effectively and facilitate cooperation in the region.

”

**Lawrence Meredith**, Director for Neighbourhood East, European Commission, stated:

“

Organised crime networks operate across national borders and destabilise the entire region. Tackling serious and organised crime is a shared challenge by the European Union and its partner countries. By strengthening the strategic and operational cooperation between Europol and partner countries, we are proud to contribute to joint investigation successes.

”

Located along the Black Sea and forming part of the ‘heroin route’ from the Middle East to Europe, all six Eastern Partnership countries are threatened by organised criminal groups active in the area. These groups are involved in migrant smuggling, organised property crime, trafficking in human beings, firearms and drug trafficking, money laundering, and other related crimes such as document fraud. These criminal syndicates threaten not only the safety and security of people, but also the stability of the Eastern Partnership region and of the whole EU. More cooperation between law enforcement authorities of EU Member States and the Eastern Neighbourhood countries is crucial to improving the effectiveness of the common response to organised crime across borders.

### **Eastern Partnership countries to join operations against criminal groups in the EU**

Through this four-year-long initiative, Europol will support the cooperation between involved law enforcement authorities both on a strategic and operational level. Special funding will enable the Eastern Partnership countries to participate in operational activities against some of the ten most significant threats to the EU security listed under the EU Policy Cycle. Eastern Partnership countries will potentially be able to take part in operations in the framework of the annually updated EMPACT action plans, which target criminal groups active in the ten priority crime areas for the EU. Existing networks for information sharing and operational cooperation may be further extended into joint investigations to improve the effectiveness in fighting transnational organised crime.

As part of a larger €10 million EU cooperation initiative, the EU has dedicated €2.5 million to support the project that will run for the next four years. Two other components are focused on law enforcement training and threat assessment (a project led by Cefpol with the participation of Europol) and on [criminal asset recovery](#) (managed by the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute - UNICRI).

As described in the European Union’s Communication on the [Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020](#), the fight against organised crime is an important priority for the EU and its partner countries going forward. A Partnership that protects will strive to create a safer environment for citizens in the EaP countries and the EU, based on the rule of law and mutual cooperation between law enforcement agencies.

# TARGETING ORGANISED CRIME IN THE EU EASTERN NEIGHBOURHOOD

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine



Funded by the  
European Union



TARGET GROUPS [General Public](#) • [Law Enforcement](#) • [Academia](#) • [Professor](#) • [Students](#) • [Researcher](#) • [Press/Journalists](#) • [Other](#)

**Source URL:** <https://www.europol.europa.eu/newsroom/news/europol-and-european-commission-lead-new-project-to-target-organised-crime-in-eu-eastern-neighbourhood>