

# EXPERTS MEET TO TACKLE DOCUMENT FRAUD AS KEY FACTOR IN SERIOUS AND ORGANISED CRIME AND TERRORISM

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[Press Release](#)



On 11 and 12 September 2017, a kick-off meeting of the Horizontal Expert Working Group on Document Fraud, led by France and supported by Europol and Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, was held at Europol's headquarters in The Hague. The meeting addressed the increasing problem of document fraud as a key element for all types of criminal activity, as well as terrorism.

Europol's Executive Director Rob Wainwright said: "In the last few years document fraud has become a major criminal problem in Europe, helping to drive new shifts in the scale and impact of migrant smuggling, fraud, terrorism and other security threats. Professional criminal syndicates are now part of the large-scale production, trading and distribution of often high-quality identity and other official documents. Europol is pleased to support this new initiative between the Member States of the EU and other partners to crack down on this problem."

"Document fraud at the European Union's external borders can ultimately undermine its internal security. Frontex will do its utmost to support the Council initiative, also by providing the expertise gained in our operations. Right now, we have 74 specialised document experts deployed at Europe's borders," said Frontex Executive Director Fabrice Leggeri.

Combatting document fraud, and targeting the organised crime groups involved in producing and providing fraudulent and false documents, is one of 10 priorities for fighting organised and serious international crime between 2018 and 2021, as set by the Council of the EU. The Council decided that this would be implemented as a cross-cutting priority, following Europol's [SOCTA](#) and recommendations by COSI. According to Frontex, document fraud constitutes a serious problem on entry at the external borders of the EU.

This is the first time an EU crime priority will not be implemented through a specific 'Multi Annual Strategic Plan and Operational Action Plan', but instead through a common strategic goal in all relevant operational plans covering other criminal areas. This should make it possible to tackle the phenomenon in the comprehensive way by police, border and coast guard, and customs experts.

To streamline their work, the EU Council decided to create the Horizontal Expert Working Group on Document Fraud. The working group comprising Member States, Frontex and Europol experts, will provide support in fighting all types of document fraud, including travel and identity documents, 'breeder' documents (serving as a basis to obtain identification documents fraudulently), other types of ID fraud,

administrative and official documents of any kind that are subject to fraud by organised crime groups.

The meeting began with welcome speeches from the Executive Directors of Frontex, Europol and the French National Police, followed by presentations on the EU Policy Cycle, a situational picture of document fraud and existing initiatives. On the second day of the meeting, the work methodology was discussed among the members of the working group. Both Agencies appointed special Document Fraud Coordinators to facilitate the work of the group.

The next meeting of the Horizontal Expert Working Group on Document Fraud will be held at the Frontex Headquarters in Warsaw.

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