

# HOW TO CATCH BAD GUYS WITH THE HELP OF DATA – THE RIGHT WAY.

28 Jan 2020

[News Article](#)

By Europol Executive Director Catherine De Bolle



During my career, data and data protection has always been an important part of police work, however, since I was assigned as the Executive Director of Europol, data protection started to play an even more important role in my job. At Europol data is at the core of our work and we are using data to dismantle serious and organised crime groups every day. I believe that data protection regulations and efficient investigative policing do not exclude each other. Both are possible at the same time. Let me quote Benjamin Franklin: “They who can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety.”

Having, as a law graduate, a legal background is useful to put data protection law into a broader societal perspective. I am convinced that it takes a positive data protection culture in order to be successful in the digital age. I am convinced this also holds true for law enforcement. And I am convinced that our lives are more and more influenced by breath-taking technological developments. Artificial Intelligence and Big Data are the hot buzzwords not only in the data protection community but also in the wider society. The rise of Artificial Intelligence technologies and Big Data require a new dialogue and awareness of the related cybersecurity as well as data protection challenges. In order to address these challenges, cooperation across different stakeholders is key, as law enforcement needs to be prepared to combat the criminal abuse of such technologies.

At Europol our understanding is that there is no need to compromise on individual privacy for the sake of public security. Our mission is to increase the synergies between these two fundamental rights and foster innovation in implementing privacy by design. This is only possible via a continued discussion between law enforcement, the private sector, the academic world and regulators and legislators. We already do a lot to invest in this kind of culture. This includes data protection awareness training sessions to meet the high expectations of EU Member States, cooperation partners, the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European Data Protection Service, the Europol Cooperation Board and, most importantly, the citizens of the European Union.

Another important initiative in this regard is the [Europol Data Protection Experts Network \(EDEN\)](#). EDEN is a channel to present projects, best practice and events linked to data protection in a law enforcement context. In 2019, this network hosted the third EDEN conference in Copenhagen, Denmark. The event saw more than 165 participants from various sectors. The next EDEN conference will take place at Europol's headquarters and I would like to invite all of you to join us in debating data protection in a law enforcement context.

For the future, one of the main challenges will be to align security and privacy demands in the design of all data processing operations. In this regard, Europol will continue its work by reinforcing meaningful and effective safeguards for individuals affected by personal data processing, while promoting de-bureaucratized and efficient processes. We have already achieved a lot. However, certain challenges can only be tackled by a joint effort. Of course, our task in law enforcement is to catch bad guys with the help of data but we want to do it the right way and keep the trust of the European citizens that we are doing it in full compliance with fundamental rights – and this is way we, at Europol, are celebrating Data Protection Day.

# Data Protection Day

2020

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