PARTNERS & AGREEMENTS

Fostering cooperation among law enforcement and other partners around the world

Europol is designed to operate in partnership with law enforcement agencies, government departments and the private sector.

Europol’s partnerships and external agreements take various forms, depending on the relationship the agency has with the country in question.

Its closest partners are the law enforcement agencies in the Member States of the European Union (EU), each of which has a designated Europol National Unit (ENU) that serves as the liaison between the authorities in that country and Europol.

Europol also works closely with a number of EU institutions and agencies on the basis of cooperation agreements.

In general, there are two types of cooperation agreement that Europol can enter into with states and other entities outside the EU: strategic and operational agreements.

While both types of agreement are aimed at enhancing cooperation between Europol and the country concerned, there is one major difference: strategic agreements are limited to the exchange of general intelligence as well as strategic and technical information, whereas operational agreements allow for the exchange of information, including personal data.

The agency has also concluded other agreements with private companies.

LIAISON OFFICERS

The system of liaison officers at Europol ensures that the interests of law enforcement agencies in the EU Member States and non-EU partners are represented in Europol’s headquarters.

Each Member State has a designated Europol National Unit (ENU), which serves as the liaison body between that the authorities in that State and Europol. Each ENU secures at least one representative to Europol headquarters, where every Member State is provided with its own office.

The liaison officers are not under the command of Europol and its Director. In addition, they act in accordance with the law in their own Member State.

In addition, other states with which Europol has concluded cooperation agreements are represented by at least one liaison officer, as are Interpol and Eurojust. As a result, officers from 41 countries as well as Interpol and Eurojust are located in one place, thus facilitating communication among them, and between them and their respective national authorities.

The non-EU countries with liaison officers at Europol are:

- Albania
- Australia
- Canada
- Colombia
- Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
- Iceland
- Moldova
- Montenegro
- Serbia
- Norway
- Switzerland
- Turkey

Europol also hosts liaison officers from the following United States law enforcement agencies:

- Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF)
- Customs and Border Protection (CBP)
This network of Liaison Officers communicates over SIENA system, a state-of-the-art tool that enables swift, secure and user-friendly communication and exchange of operational and strategic crime-related information and intelligence between Europol, Member States and third parties that have cooperation agreements with Europol.