

Consolidated Annual Activity Report

2020

Europol Public Information

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ATLAS	Network of police tactical units of the 27 MS of the EU
CBRNE	Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
DPF	Data Protection Function
EAP	Eastern Partnership Project
ECA	European Court of Auditors
ECTC	European Counter Terrorism Centre
EDPS	European Data Protection Supervisor
EFECC	European Financial and Economic Crime Centre
EIS	Europol Information System
EMAS	Europol Malware Analysis Solution
EMPACT	European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats
EMSC	European Migrant Smuggling Centre
EPCC	European Police Chiefs Convention
EPE	Europol Platform for Experts
EPPO	European Public Prosecutor's Office
ES OCC	European Serious and Organised Crime Centre
ETIAS	EU Travel Information and Authorisation System
EUIPO	European Union Intellectual Property Office
EUIRU	EU Internet Referral Unit
EUMW	Europe's Most Wanted
FIU	Financial Intelligence Unit
FMMS	File and Metadata Management Service
GDIL	G-Directorate Innovation Lab
HENU	Head of Europol National Unit
HVT	High Value Target
IAC	Internal Audit Capability
IAM	Identity and Access Management
IAS	Internal Audit Service
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
JHA	Justice and Home Affairs
JPSG	Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group on Europol
MFF	Multi-Annual Financial Framework
NEO	New Environment for Operations
OAC	Operational and Analysis Centre
OLAF	European Anti-fraud Office
ONEP	Operations Network Expert Platform
OSP	Online Service Provider
OTF	Operational Task Force
PNR	Passenger Name Record
SIENA	Secure Information Exchange Network Application
SIRENE	Supplementary Information Request at the National Entries
SIS	Schengen Information System
TFTP	Terrorist Financing Tracking Programme
USE	Unified Search Engine

Management Board's analysis and assessment

The Management Board of Europol (MB) takes note of the Consolidated Annual Activity Report (CAAR) for the financial year 2020, submitted by the Executive Director of Europol in accordance with Article 16(5)(g) of the Europol Regulation and Article 48 of the Financial Regulation applicable to Europol.

In analysing and assessing the CAAR 2020, the MB makes the following observations:

- The report contains a comprehensive account of the activities carried out by Europol in implementing its mandate during 2020.
- The MB commends Europol for its swift and effective response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as the Agency succeeded in ensuring business continuity in its support to the Member States, notwithstanding the inevitable need to adjust initially planned work programme objectives and actions, as well as performance targets.
- In spite of such unprecedented difficulties, Europol has achieved outstanding results while taking all the necessary measures to protect the health and safety of its Staff and the Liaison Officers' community.
- Furthermore, as part of its response to the pandemic, Europol has adopted a constructive lessons-learned and future-oriented approach leading to new teleworking and e-signing modalities, which make the Agency and its working environment a model for other EU and national law enforcement organisations.

With respect to the overall implementation of the work programme 2020, bearing in mind the referred exceptional difficulties, the MB notes that:

- As measured through the annual operational surveys, the users' satisfaction with Europol's products and services and with how the Agency's work contributed to achieve operational outcomes remains very high, showing the continued trust of Member States and all other operational partners in Europol's ability to support their action in preventing and combating serious organised crime and terrorism.
- While a number of deployments, in-person operational meetings, and Action Days had to be cancelled due to the COVID 19-related restrictions, Europol continued to efficiently assist the Member States by implementing remote solutions for operational support and coordination, thereby achieving successful results under each activity of the annual work programme, generally reaching or exceeding the 2020 targets.
- With a budget increase compared to 2019 - including after the € 5M reduction decided by MB due to the foreseen underspending as a consequence of the COVID-19 crisis -, Europol continued to accomplish excellent implementation levels, with a commitment rate of 99.4%, well above the yearly target and equal to the 2019 rate. Although the payment rate decreased to 85.1% compared to 2019 (86.6%) and was below the target (90%), the budget outturn was 1.98%, i.e. in line with the target (2%).
- However, 13.9% of the carry-forward commitments from 2019 had to be cancelled and the percentage of late payments rose to 32.8%, although they only represented 3% in terms of value and were well below the target (5%).
- Progress was achieved with regard to the vacancy rate (1%) and the percentage of staff turnover (10.9%), which were both lower than in 2019 and below 2020 targets.
- Regarding gender representation, while the percentage of female staff remained at 34%, thus not reaching the 40% target, the number of Head of Unit or higher positions occupied by women increased from 16% in 2019 to 21% in 2020.

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The MB, in light of the results reflected in the CAAR 2020, acknowledges that Europol's prominent role as the EU criminal information hub, the leading centre offering agile operational support to the national law enforcement authorities, and the key Agency in the EU's internal security architecture, grew further in 2020.

The MB underlines, amongst others:

- The significant amount and quality of services and products - often at an increased level compared to the previous year - provided to the national competent authorities by the Europol Operational and Analysis Centre (OAC), the Europol Serious and Organised Crime Centre (ESOCC), the European Cybercrime Centre (EC3) alongside the Joint Cybercrime Action Taskforce (J-CAT), the European Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC) with the Joint Liaison Team (JLT), and the European Migrant Smuggling Centre (EMSC).
- The important milestone marked by the creation of the European Financial and Economic Crime Centre (EFECC), which shall receive the financial and human resources needed to ensure the necessary growth of its support activities with a view to providing continued operational and strategic added value to the competent national authorities.
- The deployment of Guest Officers to the hotspots, the high number of strategic and operational reports produced, and the significant increase in the number of hits following secondary security checks compared to 2019.
- The provision of tools, such as mobile offices, to its operational staff, thus enabling them to ensure continued support to Member States while working from home.
- The continued success of the Europol High Value Targets (HVT) and Operational Task Forces (OTF) approach, as illustrated by the number of identifications and arrests.
- The increase in the number of SIENA messages exchanged and cases initiated by Member States, Third Parties and Europol, as well as the improvements made to the SIENA user infrastructure to enhance performance.
- The strong reliance on the Europol Information System (EIS), as reflected by the increase in the number of searches and Cross-Border Crime Checks, evidencing the continuous confidence across the Member States' competent authorities in the value of cross-checking and sharing information with and through Europol.
- The progress achieved in the external relations area, such as the completion of the Europol External Strategy 2021-2024 and the conclusion of working arrangements with several third countries and with key EU actors in the fight against financial crime and corruption, namely the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) and the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF).

The MB is pleased with the high number of operational contributions received by the Agency in 2020 and notes that such contributions represented an increase compared to 2019, almost reached the yearly target, and brought an increased hit rate compared to previous years.

The MB notes with satisfaction that the European Parliament granted discharge to the Executive Director with respect to the implementation of the budget for the financial years 2018 and 2019. Further, no critical or very important audit recommendations from the ECA, the Internal Audit Service (IAS), or the European Ombudsman were pending at year-end, and there was good progress concerning the follow-up to the recommendations from the Internal Audit Capability (IAC) and other assurance providers.

The MB commends Europol for its swift response to the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) decision on "Europol's Big Data Challenge", and welcomes the Agency's strong commitment to mitigating the risks potentially faced by the data subjects and to maintaining its high data protection standards through the preparation and implementation of a detailed action plan, while awaiting the recast of the Europol Regulation as the opportunity to provide Europol with a renewed legal framework to reinforce its operational support capabilities in a continuously evolving security environment while upholding appropriate data protection safeguards.

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The MB takes note of the added difficulty that the COVID-19 pandemic still represents, as well as of the efforts made by the Agency to keep up and further strengthen its high governance and management standards in all areas, and encourages Europol to continue this work, particularly with regard to:

- Maintaining the achieved outstanding financial and human resource management level, while improving the payment rate of Europol's budget, reducing the level of late payments, and further decreasing the vacancy rate.
- Taking into account the staff working conditions and well-being in order to promote a continued decrease in the turnover rate, as well as tackling the potential long-term mental and physical health consequences of COVID-19.
- Continuing to promote Europol's appearance in the media (e.g. written press, TV, radio broadcasting) with a view to further increasing public awareness about the Agency's contribution to the Union's internal security, thereby consolidating and strengthening its visibility.

The MB congratulates the Executive Director, Ms Catherine De Bolle, on the progress made, in the midst of a long-term global crisis, towards the effective implementation of the Europol Strategy 2020+. Amongst others, besides the establishment of the EFECC, Europol's achievements included the setting up of the Europol Innovation Lab, the completion of an overarching Information Strategy at the service of users' needs in the Member States, and various organisational refinements to increase performance and efficiency, such as the creation of new entities relating to drugs and firearms, top organised crime groups, analysis and strategic coordination, as well as strategy and external relations.

Looking into the future, the MB wishes to emphasise the importance of the upcoming Europol Regulation recast in order to strengthen the Agency's mandate and operational capabilities, and, in this context, calls upon the EU budgetary authority to agree to the budgetary increase proposed by the Commission for Europol during the period 2022-2027.

The MB takes note that the Europol Executive Director has no critical issues to report, which would affect the presentation of the annual accounts for the financial year 2020 to the discharge authority.

The MB attaches this assessment to the CAAR 2020 for submission to the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission, the ECA, the national parliaments and the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group, in accordance with Articles 11(1)(c) and 51(3)(d) of the Europol Regulation, and Article 48(2) of the Financial Regulation applicable to Europol.

For the Management Board,



Oliver Rüb

Chairperson

The Hague, 9 June 2021

Executive Summary

Response to COVID-19 crisis

- Europol reacted swiftly to the COVID-19 outbreak and implemented several new actions in order to manage this unprecedented crisis with as little impact on the agency's work as possible, while keeping health and safety as the number one priority. Nonetheless, the pandemic, and the related ensuing restrictions, had a direct impact on Europol's efforts towards implementing a number of actions and reaching the targets of the Work Programme 2020.
- An analysis of the consequences of COVID-19 outbreak suggests that the activities most affected were directly related to the physical presence at Europol HQ, for example operational and other meetings of investigators/analysts, and to administrative procedures that are not based on an electronic workflow.
- Considering the lessons learned and in order to be future proof, several measures will be further developed, such as: decentralised working methods, including the possibility to use secure video-calls and collaboration tools, teleworking (including with secured OpsNet laptops due to the nature of the operational information processes) and modernised electronic workflows.

An overview of the impact of COVID-19 outbreak on Europol's activities in 2020 can be found in section [2.2. Major Developments in the year.](#)

Strategy 2020+

- The Strategy Implementation Steering Committee (SISC) conducted a one-year review of its activities and continued to steer the implementation of the Europol Strategy 2020+.
- Significant progress was made in the implementation of the five Strategic Priorities defined in the Strategy 2020+ including, among others, the implementation of foreseen organisational refinements, including new Units related to Drugs and Firearms, top Organised Crime Groups, Analysis and Strategic Coordination, Finance, Strategy and External Relations; in, setting up an Innovation Lab, which was active in many innovation-related fronts; and the establishment of the new European Financial and Economic Crime Centre (EFECC).
- An Information Management Secretariat was established in May 2020 to work on the elaboration of an Information Management Strategy. Europol's Information Management Strategy outlining the overall strategic approach for Information Management at Europol, in particular with a view to strengthening Europol's position as the EU criminal information hub, was adopted by the MB in December 2020.

Operational activities

- Europol's Operational and Analysis Centre (OAC) accepted almost 86k operational contributions and replied to first line SIENA requests in 7.7 days on average. During 2020, the OAC produced 10,134 operational reports. Almost 13% of the operational contributions received by Europol contained structured data.
- The European Serious and Organised Crime Centre (ESOCC) received and processed 35,183 operational contributions and produced 4,654 operational reports, together with another 10 strategic analysis reports linked to serious and organised crime. A total of 837 operational cases were supported by ESOCC in 2020. Moreover, ESOCC organised and coordinated 11 Operational Task Forces (OTF) and identified 60 High Value Targets (HVT), 21 of which were arrested. Additionally, the ESOCC organised and financially supported 172 operational meetings and coordinated 93 Action Days during the year.

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- The European Cybercrime Centre (EC3) supported 430 operational cases and accepted 7,160 operational contributions. 2,872 operational reports were produced by staff working in the Centre, together with 3 strategic analysis reports. The EC3 organised and financially supported 40 operational meetings and coordinated 32 Action Days. In 2020, the EC3 performed 1,313 forensic jobs and the Forensic Lab was deployed on seven occasions.
- The European Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC) supported 776 operational cases and processed 5,268 operational contributions, reaching 2,074 operational reports produced by staff in the Centre. The ECTC coordinated 21 Action Days during the year. The number of SIENA messages exchanged by CT units and the number of objects in EIS related to CT decreased in 2020, to 57k and 560k respectively. Despite COVID-19, Guest Officers continued to be deployed to the hotspots. The number of hits (2,681) following secondary security checks significantly increased compared to the previous year, with 9.3% of the persons arriving being checked. The EU IRU monitored content on 370 online platforms and assessed a total of 16,763 pieces of content.
- The European Financial and Economic Crime Centre (EFECC) supported 334 operational cases and produced 1,467 operational reports, with 13,685 operational contributions received and accepted. In total, the EFECC supported financially 52 operational meetings and coordinated 55 action days, leading to highly relevant operational outcomes and seizures.
- Europol's Innovation Lab supported various initiatives: the European Clearing Board, EPE Innovation, H2020 projects, the EU Observatory for Innovation, etc.
- In terms of cross-horizontal services, Europol actively provided support in the area of Travel Intelligence. The Task Force Analysis concluded its work in 2020 with the establishment of the Analysis & Strategic Coordination Unit.

Core Operational Systems

- The uptime of core systems was well above the target and reached 99.5%.
- Regarding core operational project delivery, 76% of the (re-planned) milestones were achieved at the end of the year.
- Almost 1.3M SIENA messages were exchanged and almost 89k SIENA cases were initiated in 2020. Despite COVID-19, progress was made to improve SIENA user experience. Several infrastructural improvements were made to ensure scalability and to enhance performance.
- The total number of objects in EIS decreased to 1.3M, while the number of person objects increased to almost 250k. More than 10.2M searches were performed in EIS and QUEST and, at the end of 2020, seven EU MS were connected to QUEST.
- The number of EPE users was above 19k and three new platforms were created during the year. As for ONEP, at the end of 2020 there were five platforms and more than 900 users registered.
- Progress was recorded for New Environment for Operations (NEO) initiatives, namely the conclusion of Europol's ontology and progress in the implementation of the New Forensic Environment (NFE).
- During the year, Europol closely followed developments in the area of EU Interoperability: ETIAS, SIRENE, SIS II and Prüm.

Financial and Human resources

- Europol's budget increased in 2020 by € 15.8M compared to the previous year and came to €154.1M. Due to the impact of COVID-19, in October 2020, Europol reduced its request

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for the remaining EU subsidy instalment amount for the rest of 2020 by € 5M, leading to a final regular budget of € 149.1M.

- At the end of 2020, the implementation of commitment appropriations was 99.4% while the overall payment rate was 85.1%.
- The implementation rate of the carry forward from 2019 to 2020 (€ 17.7M) was 86.1%.
- An amount of € 21.4M was carried forward to 2021.
- A total of 37 budget transfers, for a total amount of almost € 13.8M, were made during the year.
- The percentage of late payments in 2019 came to 32.8% (3.0% in terms of value).
- The vacancy rate at year-end was 1.0% (or 6 posts from a total of 615 establishment plan posts), with a turnover rate of 10.9% (lower than the target maximum of 12%).
- The percentage of female staff slightly increased to 34% with 21% Head of Unit or higher positions occupied by women.

Audit Management and Internal Control

- In May 2020, the European Parliament granted discharge to the Executive Director for the implementation of the budget for the financial year 2018.
- In October 2020, the European Court of Auditors (ECA) issued the overall assurance statement, setting out a positive opinion in relation to the reliability of the 2019 final annual accounts, as well as the legality and regularity of the underlying financial transactions in all material aspects.
- The Internal Audit Service (IAS) completed the audit on IT Security in 2020 and conducted the preliminary work of the audit on contract management.
- Europol implemented 86% of the critical or very important recommendations planned to be implemented during 2020. No critical or very important audit recommendations issued by the ECA, the IAS or the Ombudsman were pending to be implemented.
- The Internal Audit Capability (IAC) performed several audit engagements concerning the renewal process of employment contracts, asset management, user access rights to ABAC and the annual ISO 17020:2012 audit of the Europol Forensic Laboratory. Additionally, a risk assessment of activities leading to operational products and services and a follow-up exercise on past audit recommendations issued was conducted in 2020.
- The Data Protection Function (DPF) continued working on reviewing the compliance of Europol's processing operations with the applicable legal regime and facilitated the cooperation with the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS).

Introduction

Europol's mission

Europol is the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation and its main goal is to help achieve a safer Europe for the benefit of all EU citizens by supporting law enforcement authorities through the exchange and analysis of criminal intelligence. Europol's mission is to support the Member States in preventing and combating all forms of serious international and organised crime, cybercrime and terrorism.

Europol, with its headquarters in The Hague (Netherlands), works closely with law enforcement agencies in the EU Member States and in other non-EU partner states.

The agency uses its unique information capabilities and the expertise of its staff to identify and track the most dangerous criminal and terrorist networks in Europe. Law enforcement authorities in the EU rely on this intelligence work and the services of Europol's operational coordination centre and secure information network. This has led to the disruption of many criminal and terrorist networks, to the arrest of dangerous criminals, to the recovery of millions of euro in criminal proceeds, and to the saving from harm of hundreds of victims, including children trafficked for sexual exploitation. Europol also acts as a major centre of expertise in key areas of law enforcement and as a European centre for strategic intelligence on organised crime.

Legal Basis

This report covers the period from **1 January to 31 December 2020** and presents the progress made to achieve the objectives deriving from Europol's 2020+ Strategy and, mainly, the implementation of the 2020 Annual Work Programme¹. An overview of the budget implementation and human resources, audits, risks and internal controls management activities are also included in this report.

This Consolidated Annual Activity Report (CAAR) has been prepared following the guidelines provided by the EU Commission² and it is submitted on behalf of the Executive Director of Europol to the Management Board for assessment, in accordance with article 16 (5)(g) of the **Europol Regulation** and article 48 of the **Financial Regulation** applicable to Europol.

According to article 11 (1)(c) of the Europol Regulation, this report shall be adopted by the Management Board which shall send it, with its assessment, by 1 July 2021 to the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission, the Court of Auditors and the national parliaments. Europol shall transmit the CAAR to the Joint Parliamentary Supervisory Group (JPSG) in accordance with article 51 (3)(d).

Re-planning exercise conducted in Q2 2020

In the context of this report, it is relevant to note that the severe impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Europol's activities and performance, further described under [Part II](#) of this report, led to a re-planning exercise conducted in Q2 2020. The outcome of this exercise was presented to the Management Board in October 2020 and adjusted Europol's initially planned work programme objectives and performance targets.

¹ Included in Europol's Programming Document (PD) 2020-2022.

² Communication from the Commission on the strengthening of the governance of Union Bodies under Article 70 of the Financial Regulation 2018/1046 and on the guidelines for the Single Programming Document and the Consolidated Annual Activity Report, 20 April 2020, C(2020) 2297 final, Annex 2.

Part I. Achievements of the year

1.1. Multi-Annual Strategic Priorities

In December 2018, the Management Board endorsed the **Europol Strategy 2020+**³, focusing on an improved delivery of services to EU law enforcement authorities and setting **five strategic priorities** for the coming years:

- Be the EU criminal information hub making full use of data from an extensive network of partners;
- Deliver agile operational support;
- Be a platform for European policing solutions;
- Be at the forefront of innovation and research for law enforcement;
- Be the model EU law enforcement organisation with robust performance, good governance and accountability, promoting diversity and staff engagement.

The successful achievement of these strategic priorities required adjusting Europol's organisational structure to maximise existing resources and optimise cross-departmental cooperation. These priorities have been translated in the respective programming documents and, in this particular case, in **Europol's Programming Document 2020-2022**⁴.

In order to conduct regular and systematic **monitoring of the implementation of the Strategy**, a Strategy Implementation Steering Committee (SISC) was established to support the Executive Director in overseeing the different streams of work. In 2020, the SISC conducted a **one-year review** of its activities and on-going initiatives and continued to steer the implementation of the Europol Strategy 2020+.

As agreed at the MB meeting in December 2020, Europol provides in this section a review of the **first year of implementation of the Strategy 2020+** and the progress made towards achieving the multi-annual strategic priorities.

Strategic Priority 1: Be the EU criminal Information Hub

Effective **Information Management** (IM) underpins Europol's overall effectiveness and facilitates the implementation of the five strategic priorities set in the Europol Strategy 2020+. IM plays a crucial role in law enforcement and enables Europol to fulfil its mandate and support the Member States.

In 2019, the Management Board endorsed the proposal to establish **an Information Management Programme Board** (IMPB) to define the scope of IM at Europol. The IMPB met three times from October 2019 to October 2020 to discuss the strategic requirements for Information Management at Europol. The IMPB consisted of Europol's Deputy Executive Directors, Europol's Data Protection Officer, the HENUs Information Management Portfolio Holder, Chairs of both MB Working Groups, other representatives of the Member States (EU Trio Presidencies 2019-2020) and the European Commission.

Building upon the conclusions of the first two IMPB meetings, an **Information Management Secretariat** was established in May 2020 in the Governance Directorate, with the participation of staff from all Directorates. The Secretariat's objectives were to evaluate the current situation (June 2020), prepare the Information Management Strategy and Implementation Plan, and assess the need for changes to the organisational structure. The Secretariat regularly consulted

³ https://www.europol.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/europol_strategy_2020.pdf

⁴ https://www.europol.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/europol_programming_document_2020-2022.pdf

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a core group of experts from across the organisation and reported to the Strategy Implementation Steering Committee (SISC) for overall steering and guidance.

The first deliverable of the Secretariat, namely **Europol's Information Management Strategy** outlining the overall strategic approach for Information Management at Europol, was adopted by the MB in December 2020, following consultation with the HENUs Information Management portfolio holder and the IMPB, as well as the Corporate Matters and Information Management Working Group of the MB. The work of the IM Secretariat is expected to continue in 2021.

Strategic Priority 2: Deliver agile operational support

In June 2020, the MB approved a new concept for a separate **funding scheme** to support the **High Value Targets (HVTs)** approach and related **Operational Task Forces (OTFs)**.

The implementation of organisational changes in the Operations Directorate, most prominently the establishment of the **European Financial and Economic Crime Centre (EFECC)**, was completed in Q2 2020. The EFECC will enhance the operational support provided to the EU Member States (MS) and EU bodies in the fields of financial and economic crime and promote the systematic use of financial investigations and forge alliances with public and private entities in order to trace, seize and confiscate criminal assets in the EU and beyond. Additionally, close cooperation with the EPPO is expected, including the establishment of working arrangements. Three clusters were defined within the EFECC: economic crime, financial crime and counterfeiting.

In addition, the Front Office Department was transformed into the **Operational & Analysis Centre** Department, composed of the Operational Centre Unit and the newly established Analysis & Strategic Coordination Unit.

Within the European Serious and Organised Crime Centre (ESOCC), the new **Drugs Unit** developed important and successful activity with MS and also many synergies with the **Organised Crime Unit** during 2020. A new Analysis Project on High Risk Organised Crime Groups was established during the year.

Discussions on the creation of a **Forensics Unit** within EC3 – increasingly relevant and instrumental in operations like EMMA or the latest terrorist attacks – will continue. The establishment of a fully-fledged unit was not possible in 2020, due to resource constraints.

Concerning **managerial posts in Operations Directorate**, the recruitment of the new Head of Department European Financial and Economic Crime Centre (EFECC), the Head of Department European Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC), the Head of Unit Operational Centre, The Head of Unit Expertise & Stakeholder Management and the Head of Unit Analysis and Strategic Coordination were completed in 2020. The recruitment of the Deputy Executive Director Operations, was on-going at the end of the year.

With the new organisational structure in place, the focus on the way forward is to ensure that **processes are effective and efficient** to provide future-proof specialised and agile support and services to Member States in the areas of serious organised crime (including financial and economic crimes), cybercrime and counter terrorism.

Strategic Priority 3: Be a platform for European policing solutions

The **Task Force Analysis** set up in 2019 successfully **finalised all its agreed work packages** with a view to addressing the most urgent challenges related to Europol's analytical output and enhancing the related services and products delivered to the Member States.

The Task Force reviewed the **business model for analysis** at Europol and Europol's support to Member States aiming at **improving processing and analysis processes**. The Task Force also explored **new state-of-the-art tools** for the new analysis environment in close cooperation with the Capabilities Directorate. To uphold the highest standards of analysis, the Task Force

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Analysis was also involved in enhancing the **training package** for analysts, reviewing the **recruitment process** for analysts and developing further the related **analyst profiles**.

Moreover, the Task Force continued – in cooperation with the Strategic Analysis team - to steer Europol's monitoring activities on the **impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on serious and organised crime and terrorism** in the EU by publishing various strategic reports.

Strategic Priority 4: Be at the forefront of law enforcement innovation and research

The Europol Innovation Lab continued to support the development of innovation governance structures and related activities. In this respect, a team was set up in the Governance Directorate to ensure the **implementation of the JHA Council decision** of October 2019⁵.

In cooperation with the German Presidency and BKA, the Innovation Lab organised a workshop to discuss the establishment of the **European Clearing Board (EuCB)** as a **HENUs Working Group on Innovation**. The secretariat of the EuCB will be located at Europol in the Governance Directorate Innovation Lab and it is envisaged that the benefits of the EuCB will be evaluated after a period of 1 year.

In the context of the launch of the **EU Innovation Hub**, the Innovation Lab organised in November 2020 an inter-JHA agencies meeting to discuss the main priorities of the Innovation Hub in 2021, namely the (a) mapping of ongoing projects, (b) assessing gaps and needs, (c) identifying domains for research, development and innovation that are of a cross-sectorial nature, and finally (d) mapping relevant EU and national funding sources and opportunities. During the meeting a (virtual) **Hub Team** was established. The Hub Team will meet twice a month and work on the development of the Hub's operational and financial modalities. As decided by COSI, Europol will provide **logistical support and lead the Hub Team**.

In the summer of 2020, the Europol Innovation Lab coordinated the participation in two **H2020 funding proposals**, RAISE and STARLIGHT related to AI. It also submitted a FCT-O2 proposal on terrorism propaganda (ASTRA). In the framework of the three existing H2020 projects (GRACE, AIDA and INFINITY), Europol is now part of three consortia composed of 15 EU MS and more than 20 private companies and research institutes. The three projects have an allocated budget of €2.7M to develop **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** and **machine learning**-based tools to enhance the efficiency of Europol's support to its Members. The Innovation Lab is coordinating the validation of a proof of concept for entity extraction from images of forged or stolen IDs.

Additionally, the Innovation Lab is working with a Greek research institute which provided, free of charge, **several tools for video, images and textual analytics** to support Europol's operational capabilities.

In July 2020, COSI asked the Europol Innovation Lab to coordinate the analysis of existing solutions and possible gaps and operational requirements related to **digital infrastructure for secure communication**, in particular secure and stable videoconference solutions. The need for extending secure communication solutions among law enforcement imposed itself as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. In this respect, the Innovation Lab established a **core group on Secure Communications** where the requirements for such system were discussed. A roadmap with concrete actions was drafted and submitted to the Law Enforcement Working Party (LEWP) and IXIM (Working Party on Information Exchange and Information Management).

Europol's cooperation with the **Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (JRC)** was dynamic, ranging from the decryption platform, developing automotive digital evidence extraction software or creating a benchmarking platform for facial recognition software. The

⁵ Outcome of Council Meeting, Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) Council of 7-8 October 2019, Council Secretariat reference: 12837/19 Presse 50 PR CO 50.

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Innovation Lab is exploring the possibility to strengthen and to formalise this cooperation with the JRC.

Strategic Priority 5: Be the model EU Law Enforcement organisation

Organisational developments in the Governance and Capabilities Directorates focused on the further optimisation of the relationship with external stakeholders and enhancement of Europol's ICT capabilities.

The new **Finance Unit** was completely established and a new financial model (reducing the number of financial actors involved) implemented in 2020.

A refinement exercise for the organisational set-up in the **Institutional and Legal Affairs** (previously Corporate Services) **Department** in the Governance Directorate was completed in July 2020, particularly affecting the establishment of the Strategy and External Relations Unit, responsible for the development of the **External Strategy 2021-2024** and the robust planning activities for Europol's resources under the **MFF 2021-2027**.

The **Corporate Affairs Bureau** (CAB) was separated from the Governance Directorate and assigned under the direct reporting line of the Executive Director.

Concerning **managerial posts**, the Head of Unit ICT Solution Delivery was recruited before the end of 2020. Additionally, the recruitment of the Head of the ICT Department was launched. The Head of Unit Finance was recruited and took up office in February 2020, while the new Head of Unit Strategy & External Relations took up office in June 2020 with the establishment of the new Unit.

The **Human Resources Strategy** (and related organisational developments in the area of HR) was developed to ensure further optimisation of the relevant processes, in particular with respect to recruitment, as well as the management of professional and personal development and performance. Further developments in the areas of **diversity and inclusion** are expected in 2021.

Finally, as part of the continuous response activities of Europol's COVID-19 Crisis Management Team (CMT), a Working Group (WG) for the **Future Working Environment (FWE) at Europol** was established, to identify those initiatives and measures adopted in the context of the COVID-19 that could serve as indicators or pilot-initiatives to better prepare the organisation for the future. The WG for the FEW supported the definition of the **future approach on teleworking** and **e-signing**, marking two important steps towards establishing Europol as a model EU law enforcement organisation.

More details on the final organisational structure of Europol at the end of 2020 can be found in [Europol's organisation chart](#).

Activity 1. Development of operational ICT capabilities

Europol's **core systems availability** reached an average of 99.5% during 2020, above the target of 98.0% and at a similar level as in 2019 (99.6%). In terms of **core business project delivery**, Europol managed to deliver 76% of the milestones set for the core projects and work-packages after the re-planning exercise conducted at the end of Q2 and mainly driven by the impact of COVID-19.

Messaging Capability

Regarding the use of **SIENA** in 2020, a total of 1,266,233 messages were exchanged (sent and received) while the number of SIENA cases initiated reached 88,748. The respective performance targets for these indicators were achieved, but it should be noted that the initially defined targets were reviewed in the second quarter considering the impact of COVID-19 on information exchange. At the end of the year, 2,239 SIENA mailboxes in EU MS and cooperation partners were connected to SIENA. A dedicated SIENA BPL workshop was organised for Member States (MS)/Third Parties (TP) and Security Requirements documentation was drafted for review by the MS/TP. Work on SIENA BPL Web Service was delayed due to technical issues with version 4.7 – forcing Europol to revert to a previous version - and preparatory work for Brexit scenarios. However, the Web Service was successfully deployed on the MS testing platform. Regarding the improvement of SIENA user experience, work was done for the simplification of fields, minor usability improvements and major re-styling of the landing page and header/footer validated by the users and deployed on production. Several infrastructural components of SIENA were enhanced (e.g. FMMS upgrade, improved search capability via USE engine, messages queueing mechanism upgrade, REST API performance fine-tuning etc.), to ensure scalability and performance in view of the increasing follow-up hits generated by Europol databases (EIS/QUEST and others). At the end of 2020, six countries were already using SIENA Confidential.

Data Sharing Capability

The number of objects (1,337,089) in **EIS** at the end of the year decreased by 8% compared to 2019. A peak in the number of objects was reached in the third quarter (1,551,010 objects). The overall decrease, aside from COVID-19 effects, is related to a data quality exercise performed by Europol and the deletion of objects following a stricter definition of "foreign terrorist fighter" made by the US Terrorist Screening Centre. The total number of individuals recorded in the EIS was 249,090 at the end of 2020, representing an increase of 3% compared to 2019. The number of searches performed in 2020 via EIS and **QUEST** exceeded the target of 10M (10,231,771). At the same time, the target on the number of **Cross Border Crime Checks** (CBCC) in EIS related to persons was achieved, with a total of 4,124 CBCC in 2020 compared to 2,736 in 2019. New versions of EIS were released during the year, which included several improvements (e.g. enhanced support for crypto-currencies, FMMS integration, etc.). In Q3 2020, the statistical tool for QUEST was delivered. The installation of QUEST BPL infrastructure was completed for two MS and, at the end of 2020, seven EU MS were connected to it in production (BPL or EU-RESTRICTED). At the end of 2020, 12 EIS dataloaders were installed and in use.

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Online collaboration

During 2020, the **Europol Platform for Experts (EPE)**, set up as a secure environment for specialists to share knowledge, best practices and non-personal data on crime, reached a total of 19,400 members in more than 100 countries, 44.3% of which were active users. Three new platforms were created in 2020. New functionality was enabled, allowing the EC3 to launch their BIN Checker tool.

Regarding the **Operations Network Expert Platform (ONEP)**, which is the online version of EPE accredited to EU RESTRICTED, more than 900 users had joined at the end of 2020, with five platforms – including one for ATLAS.

Real-time secure communication

Virtual Command Post (VCP) is a collaboration solution that leverages real time multi-platform communication during operations and emergency responses. The solution enables law enforcement officers in the field to communicate with each other and with Europol in a timely and secure manner.

A major technical upgrade of the back-end solution was successfully performed in 2020. It increased the performance and stability of the system and prepared the grounds for an increase of the VCP capacity by 40% (from 300 to 500 licenses). Two trainings for 30 Europol super-users were organised in December 2020.

In the context of the secure communication and collaboration initiative, Europol is reviewing VCP in order to assess the feasibility of the solution for a wider and more generic use for law enforcement purposes. A number of MS in different fora have expressed a need for such capabilities, in particular in the context of the COVID-19 situation.

New Environment for Operations (NEO)

Regarding the **NEO programme**, progress was made in the following areas:

- **Ontology:** Work on the glossary, as input for the Europol Law Enforcement Ontology, was concluded.
- **Data Lake:** Progress was made towards establishing the central data repository (Data Lake) on different streams: EIS, QUEST and iBASE. The Proof of Concept (PoC) for the integration of various tools with the Data Lake was also completed.
- **Case Management:** The initiative to design and implement this capability was negatively affected by COVID-19, although some preparatory work was performed.
- **New Forensic Environment (NFE):** Good progress was made in the implementation of the NFE, particularly on the technical support service for forensic extraction activities (GIT), mapping of the Operational Network, preparation for data migration and NFE domain build. The Cross Domain Solution was presented to the Security Committee. Nonetheless, this action was delayed to COVID-19 and the Interim Authorisation to Operate (IATO) will be postponed to 2021.

Interoperability with information management systems at EU level

Throughout 2020, progress was recorded for the following work streams:

- **ETIAS:** Europol participated in the Advisory Group meetings organised by eu-LISA. In 2020, Europol focused its work on four areas: automated searching of the Europol data, follow-up on hits on Europol data, ETIAS watch-list management and Europol's searches in the ETIAS system. During 2020, work continued in the business process re-engineering and QUEST

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requirements analysis. In November 2020, Europol organised a workshop on the "Processing of Europol Data in the Context of ETIAS".

- **SIRENE**: The infrastructure for connectivity of Europol's SIRENE office was deployed in 2020 and testing with eu-LISA took place in early January 2021, with positive results.
- **SIS II**: The prior consultation with the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) was completed in the third quarter, followed by the fine-tuning of Europol's access to Schengen Information System (SIS II) – allowing users to search on all alert types. At the end of 2020, Europol had performed 31,931 searches in SISII.
- **VIS**: the system is not active for users to search, pending completion of Art.39 notification and opinion of EDPS – expected in Q1 2021.
- **Prúm**: The feasibility study was completed and the EU Commission published the Inception Impact Assessment. Europol continued its preparatory work for the upcoming legal framework, expected to be adopted in 2021.

Other initiatives:

- **PERCI**: In 2020, progress was made with regards to the analysis of business products and services expected from PERCI. The Proof of Concept (PoC) for cloud native technologies was completed in the last quarter of 2020 and implementation is expected in 2021.
- **USE**: The procurement of the related hardware and software was initiated, following the approval of the application and infrastructure design.
- **IAM**: A new version was released in Q4 2020, delivering new end-user functionalities, including security vulnerability fixes.
- **Large File Exchange (LFE)**: an initiative for creating a LFE roadmap was undertaken and included the high-level requirements for the future evolution of the system from a business perspective.

Activity 2. Information Hub

In 2020, Europol accepted 85,746 **operational contributions**, which represents a notable increase of 6% compared to 2019, very close to the annual target set at 86,000 contributions. The number of contributions was affected, in particular, by the second and third quarters of the year, when the COVID-19 restrictions were at their peak, and regained momentum in the last quarter of the year with almost 23k contributions accepted for processing. From all SIENA messages received by Europol, almost 13% contained **structured data**.

The **speed of first line response** to SIENA requests averaged at 7.7 days during the year, negatively affected by the low performance achieved in the last quarter of the year (10.1 days on average) and linked to a re-shuffle of resources from the Operational Centre to support high-priority operational cases, e.g. OTF EMMA. In 2021, Europol will move away from measuring average reply times – highly affected by outliers - and will focus on monitoring the service level, i.e. time to reply to 80% of the first line SIENA requests. In this respect, Europol's first line service level reply time in 2020 was 6.1 days.

The quality of the contributions also improved in 2020 compared to previous years and led to 18.8% **hit rate** (or 16,098 hit notifications and cross-match reports produced for a total of 85,746 contributions accepted). In total, staff working at the Operational and Analysis Centre produced 10,134 **operational reports**, out of which 7,389 hit notifications and 2,170 cross-match reports (CMR).

At the end of 2020 and in terms of **biometric records**, ABIS contained almost 19,000 tenprints and 3,400 latents.

Europol deployed 376 **mobile offices** in 2020, compared to 353 in 2019; it should be noted that these figures are not entirely comparable as a high number of new mobile offices (more than 250) was provided to operational staff⁶ and Liaison Officers at Europol to ensure continued business delivery through remote access to the operational network in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In terms of **information exchange with cooperation partners**, more than 234k messages were exchanged, which is 33% above the number of messages exchanged in 2019. This can be mainly explained by the addition of the United Kingdom to the list of cooperation partners during the transition period in 2020.

The number of **operations supported by Europol in 2020 involving cooperation partners** was 963. Europol's participation in **operations involving private partners** was still very limited (only 25 operations) but increased compared to 2019 (19 operations).

During 2020, progress was recorded regarding Europol's **cooperation with external partners**, and the **Europol External Strategy 2021-2024** was endorsed by the MB in June 2020. In the last quarter of the year, a revision of the list of priority external partners was prepared and Peru, South Korea, Sri Lanka and Singapore were added to the list of countries with which Europol may conclude working arrangements (WA). In this respect, it is worth highlighting progress with the following partners:

- **Chile**: the WA was approved by the MB in December.
- **Brazil**: a LO was deployed to Europol in September.
- **Mexico**: the WA entered into force in July.
- **Kosovo**: the WA entered into force in July.

⁶ This meant that staff with a Mobile Office could also use it to provide on-the-spot support as necessary.

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- **Armenia:** after tensions and turmoil in the country, which prevented the negotiations, Armenia informed Europol of its readiness to continue with the negotiation of the WA. A second round of negotiations was planned for January 2021.
- **Tunisia:** A videoconference took place in December 2020 as an initial step in the negotiation process.
- **Morocco:** As a result of the EU-Morocco interactions, progress is expected in 2021.
- **Western Balkans:** Following the **evaluation of the pilot project on the deployment of Europol liaison officers (ELOs) to the Western Balkans**, the MB decided to discontinue this project in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, by 31 March 2021. The MB also decided to extend the deployment of the ELO in Albania until December 2021 due to positive evaluation and results.
- Additionally, a WA with the **Kosovo Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor's Office** (KSC-SPO) entered into force in July 2020.

Also, Europol continued its cooperation with the **EU institutions, agencies and bodies:**

- **OLAF:** The WA was signed on 8 October 2020 and entered into force the day thereafter.
- **EPPO:** After negotiation during 2020, the WA was approved by the Management Board in its meeting in December and was signed in January 2021.
- **EUNAVFOR MED IRINI:** the exchange of letters on the application of the existing WA with EUNAVFOR MED Operation SOPHIA to Operation IRINI entered into force in August 2020.
- **EU CSDP:** Europol continued to monitor the developments of the EU CSDP policy for potential future involvement of the Agency.
- **EASO:** after re-establishing contact, negotiations on a WA were on-going at the end of 2020.
- **EU SATCEN:** negotiations on a WA were ongoing at the end of 2020.

Cooperation with the UK: Europol continued to offer its support in response to concrete requests for input and explanation of its cooperation framework and practices with non-EU countries. The prospects of the Brexit scenarios were updated in accordance with the possible outcomes at the end of the Transition Period. At its meeting in December 2020, the Management Board adopted a decision authorising a set of transfers of personal data to competent authorities of the United Kingdom and the decision was adopted after agreement by the EDPS.

In 2020, progress was made regarding the set-up of the **SIRENE office within Europol**, mainly in terms of data protection issues, ICT implementation and adjustment of the SIRENE manual to integrate the workflow with Europol. The European Commission made an official proposal for a SIS regulation that would give Europol the legal mandate to create alerts in SIS. In this respect, discussions and negotiations will continue during 2021.

Finally, in connection with the **UEFA European Championship 2020** - postponed to 2021 - where Europol was responsible for hosting the Police Information and Coordination Centre (PICC), Europol established and maintained designated contact points with all relevant partners (UEFA, National Football Information Points (NFIP), Council of Europe, Interpol and all relevant WG at EU level), on a regular basis. It is expected that all activities resume in the first quarter in 2021.

Activity 3. Combating Serious and Organised Crime

A **new organisational structure** for the European Serious Organised Crime Centre (ESOCC) was implemented as of 1 June 2020. This includes, besides the already established European Migrant Smuggling Centre (EMSC), a new Unit on Drugs and Firearms and a Unit on High Risk and Cross Border Organised Crime Groups (OCGs), incorporating the work on High Risk OCGs, Organised Property crime and Environmental crime, established in order to respond to the EU Member States (MS) needs for receiving more specialised support in investigations against poly-criminal and high risk OCGs. As part of this re-organisation, a new Analytical Project (AP) on High Risks OCGs was established. Additionally, the APs related to economic and financial crimes were moved to the newly created European Financial and Economic Crime Centre (EFECC).

In 2020 and considering the new organisational structure of the Centre, the ESOCC received, accepted and processed 35,183 **operational contributions** and produced 4,654 **operational reports**, with a hit rate of 8.0 reports⁷ per 100 accepted contributions. Additionally, 10 **strategic analysis reports** were delivered by the Centre during the year.

With regards to the number of **operations supported**, the ESOCC assisted countries in 837 cases, exceeding the target set for 2020. **The satisfaction with the operational support** provided by the Centre was evaluated by 71 investigators involved in high priority cases and reached an average score of 8.9/10, measured by the annual online surveys distributed by Europol. The ESOCC's contribution to achieving operational outcomes was rated 7.8/10 by these investigators.

With regards to the **operational task forces** (OTF), a financing decision was adopted by MB in 2020 and, subsequently, several calls for proposal were launched. The most prominent example is **OTF EMMA**, established in Q2 2020, taking up a considerable amount of resources but leading to highly relevant operational outcomes: nearly € 100M cash seized, 957 suspects arrested, more than 20 tonnes of drugs seized, 193 threat-to-life events prevented, more than 40 high-profile suspects identified and 534 new investigations triggered. In 2020, the ESOCC organised 11 **Operational Task Forces** (OTF) and identified 60 **High Value Targets** (HVT), 21 of which were arrested.

In 2020, the ESOCC organised and financially supported 172 **operational meetings**. In addition, the ESOCC coordinated/supported 93 **Action Days**, leading to the arrest of almost 1,500 suspects and the seizure of assets with a total value above € 167 M. 123 **mobile offices** were deployed by the Centre.

Looking at the progress made in the different crime areas under the mandate of the ESOCC during the year 2020:

- The **EMSC** continued to monitor developments in the CSDP landscape and particularly regarding the establishment of EU NAVFORMED Operation IRINI, replacing Operation SOPHIA. In this respect, the EMSC remained remotely connected with the Crime Information Cell of Operation IRINI. The EMSC supported the ProfID project in the context of fraudulent documents, led by France and Switzerland. Other tools and software were tested regarding fraudulent documents but their use was limited due to other operational priorities (e.g. OTF EMMA); for the same reason (prioritisation of resources), it was not possible to open an Analytical Project on Document Fraud. Europol continued to support investigations where the internet is used as an enabler and where false and fraudulent documents are used. The EMSC delivered an awareness session on Europol and EMSC products and services to the Moldovan Police and prosecutors, in the framework of an initiative of the International Organization for

⁷ Cross Match Reports and SIENA hit notifications.

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Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). A total of 174 operational cases were supported by the Centre during the year and almost 15,000 operational contributions were accepted and processed. Finally, more than 2,500 instances of online content related to irregular migration were assessed by the EU IRU in 2020.

- **Drugs unit:** Supported a total of 343 operational cases in 2020. Europol advised the European Commission on the Colombian Initiative to establish a Fusion Centre at the Colombian National Police, to enhance transnational cooperation in the field of drug trafficking. Europol contributed to the development of the EU Drugs Strategy 2021-2025, which was adopted by the Council in December 2020. The 4th international drugs conference was virtually hosted by Europol in December 2020 and a meeting of the Programme Board on drug supply reduction took place in July 2020. The **Europol-EMCDDA** joint report on COVID-19's impact on the drugs markets was published in the second quarter of 2020.
- **Weapons & Explosives:** Supported 43 high-priority cases in 2020. Interpol and Europol agreed on the final amendments to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) regarding Europol's access to the iARMS tracing tool. The MoU is expected to be signed in Q1 2021. Work on extending the use of biometric technologies (facial recognition) to support surveillance activities targeting international weapon trafficking networks continued during the year.
- **OCGs:** Europol supported 113 operational cases related to this crime area in 2020. In Q3, Europol provided support to an Italian ISF project targeting mafia-type organised crime networks. Europol will further focus on national based criminal groups such as those of Vietnamese, North-African - Moroccan and Balkan origin.

Activity 4. Combating Cyber Crime

In 2020, the European Cybercrime Centre (EC3) provided **operational support** to 430 cases, exceeding the target of 350 cases set for the year. The **satisfaction with the operational support and analysis**, measured by the annual online surveys sent to lead investigators in the MS, was rated 8.9/10. In the case of investigations led by EC3, Europol collected feedback from 20 investigators who also rated EC3's contribution to achieve operational outcomes as 8.2/10.

During the year, the Centre accepted and processed 7,160 **operational contributions** and produced a total of 2,872 **operational reports**, with a hit rate of 20.2% (well above Europol's average), and three **strategic analysis reports**.

34 **Mobile Offices** were deployed in 2020 by the EC3 and 40 **operational meetings** were financially supported. Additionally, the EC3 coordinated/supported 32 **Action Days** targeting different crime areas, leading to almost 700 arrests and seizure of assets (incl. cash) amounting to more than € 7.5M.

The **Digital and Document Forensics** team, together with EC3 Operational teams, performed 1,313 **forensic jobs**, which is above the reviewed target of 1,000 – but below the initial target of 1,500. It should be noted that the number of physical forensic exhibits was negatively affected by COVID-19. Nonetheless, the EC3 provided digital and document forensic support in the context of **OTF EMMA** on 380k packages (>2.5M files) uploaded on the Large File Exchange (LFE) by different countries, 116M messages and 500M documents indexed, 2M decryption tasks and 10M lines provided for processing. Additionally, the in-house **decryption platform** was used in 33 occasions, 13 of which turned out successful and leading to the cracking of thousands of passwords. During 2020, the Europol **Forensic Lab** was deployed in only 7 occasions, negatively affected by COVID-19 travel restrictions. 676 examinations of printed materials were performed and 83 on-the-spot mobile device examination kits were deployed during the year.

Regarding the use of the Europol Malware Analysis Solution (**EMAS**), there were 1,509 users at the end of the year and close to 36,000 files were submitted by EU MS for analysis, with around 3,000 of them being malicious. The integration of the new sandbox solution was completed in October 2020.

Europol continued to provide contributions to the initiative of an **EU Child Protection Centre**. In June, the Executive Director spoke at a web conference hosted by the Commission, with Commissioner Johansson and other high level representatives, where the topic of the European Child Protection Centre was addressed and the role of law enforcement was acknowledged as central.

The **EU Law Enforcement Emergency Response Protocol (EU LE ERP)** was activated in response to COVID-19 related cyber-attacks during the first quarter of 2020 and it was closed on 30 June. Subsequently, an evaluation report of the exercise was completed and reviewed. The discussions at EU level on the Standard Operating Procedures for the EU Institutions (EUIs) within the EU Blueprint for cyber-crisis management continued and the EC3 will be part of two new EUIs working groups that will be launched in 2021.

The EC3 organised eight prevention campaigns in 2020, such as Safer Internet Day, Dark Web days, Cyber Security Month, e-Commerce, EMMA6, etc. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, EC3 launched a multi-language COVID-19 **prevention campaign** on the topic "all you need to know to stay safe". The European Money Mule Action (EMMA), in its sixth edition, was completed in November 2020 and an awareness campaign was launched in December 2020, with material available in 26 languages. The operational results of EMMA were highly relevant: 1,529 criminal investigations initiated, 227 money mule recruiters and 4,031 money mules identified, 422 arrests, 4,942 fraudulent money mule transactions identified, and € 33,5M prevented losses.

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The **EPE SPACE** had more than 7,400 users registered at the end of 2020 and the platform managers of the 31 sub-sites continued to promote content and providing training on the platform.

The **EC3's Twitter account** was very active during the year and had more than 25,500 followers at the end of 2020. Cyber awareness, prevention tips (including COVID-19 related) and events continued to be promoted by the EC3 via this channel.

Progress made by the EC3 during the year in other areas include:

- **Crypto-currencies:** several tailored training courses were delivered to staff from the Operational and Analysis Centre (OAC) related to crypto-currencies. Progress in the implementation of the "Address Watcher" functionality was limited due to limited ICT resources. Work on the development of the crypto-portal continued in 2020. Also, the interest in CRYPTOPOPOL, the cryptocurrency-tracing training game for law enforcement investigators, continued to be high, with more than 400 users enrolled.
- **Child Sexual Exploitation:** The 8th edition of the Victim Identification Task Force (VIDTF) was held online in November 2020. The participating law enforcement experts worked on analysing the series of child sexual exploitation images and videos triaged by Europol out of more than 51 million such digital files. Nine child victims were identified. More than 200 series were evaluated, with 53 series having identified the likely country of production – respective countries were informed to allow the start of national investigations. On a different note, the kick-off meeting for project **GRACE**, under the Horizon 2020 framework, took place in June 2020 and the EC3 assigned a Technical Product manager to the project. It is expected that the project will need an extension of 6 months to mitigate the delays linked to COVID-19. Additional resources from AP Twins and Europol will be required in order to ensure a successful completion of the project.
- **Dark web:** Operation DisrupTor, targeting vendors and buyers of illicit goods on the dark web, was successfully executed in September 2020 and led to the arrest of 179 vendors who engaged in tens of thousands of sales of illicit goods, the seizure of over €6.5 M, in both cash and virtual currencies, alongside some 500 Kg of drugs and medicine containing addictive substances, and 64 firearms.
- **J-CAT:** Case work continued as planned despite the COVID-19 pandemic and new cases were launched, including the most prominent (Operation Endurance) against COVID-19 malicious domains. The J-CAT Board meeting was held online in October 2020. In 2020, J-CAT supported 79 high profile cases.
- **Carding Action Week 2020:** an operation led by law enforcement agencies from Italy and Hungary and supported by the UK and Europol, targeted fraudsters selling and purchasing compromised card details. Europol facilitated the coordination and the information exchange between law enforcement authorities and partners from the private sector. During the three-month operation that was completed in November 2020, 90,000 pieces of card data were analysed and approximately € 40M in losses were prevented.
- **OSINT:** a number of OSINT reports focusing on COVID-19 related online threats were distributed to EU MS, incl. >10k COVID-19 related domains for further assessment on criminality.
- **Technological innovation:** EC3 drafted the terms of reference for the establishment of a Heads of Lawful Interception Units group which will include 5G as a main topic.
- **Encryption:** Progress was made on the publication of the second Observatory Function on Encryption. Following the EU Commission's proposed changes to the ToR, the new report is expected in Q1 2021. Staff from the EC3 developed new tools for live forensics, which will increase the capabilities of Law Enforcement in this field.

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- Cooperation with the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (**ENISA**): The 9th ENISA CSIRT (Computer Security and Incident Response Team) Workshop took place in September 2020.

Activity 5. Counter-terrorism

During 2020, Europol supported a total of 776 **operations in the area of counter-terrorism**, surpassing the target set at 670. The satisfaction with the operational support provided in this crime area was rated at 8.9/10 by 20 lead investigators involved in high-priority cases. In 2020, the ECTC coordinated a total of 21 **action days**, leading to 128 house searches and 54 arrests, among other results. The ECTC deployed 48 **mobile offices** and financially supported 17 **operational meetings** during the year.

Although the number of accepted **operational contributions** decreased compared to 2019, from 6,075 to 5,268, the number of **operational reports** produced related to CT exceeded the target of 1,850 and reached the figure of 2,074 reports. It should be noted that even if the amount of contributions have decreased, larger volumes of data were contained in these contributions, heavily affecting the workload for the analysts in CT and leading to a 22.7% hit rate. Additionally, 25 **strategic analysis reports** were produced by the ECTC in 2020.

Regarding information exchange in the area of counter-terrorism, the number of **SIENA messages exchanged by CT units** decreased from 66k in 2019 to 57.5k in 2020. Similarly, the number of **objects in EIS related to CT** significantly decreased, from 735k in 2019 to 560k in 2020. This is mainly explained by the stricter definition of "foreign terrorist fighter" made by the US Terrorist Screening Centre (US TSC) leading to the deletion of an important share of objects.

The ECTC continued to be present in the hotspots during 2020, with numerous **Guest Officers** (GOs) deployed in Italy, Greece and Cyprus - 11 Active Deployment Stations, representing 16 areas of operation across the migration hotspots. Due to COVID-19 related travel restrictions and limited access to Europol's HQ, only six training sessions for GOs were held in 2020.

The number of arrivals during the year exceeded 46,000, but represents a significant drop compared to 2019. However, the number of persons referred for checks (4,378) and hits (2,681) significantly increased compared to the previous year. In 2020, 9.3% of the persons were checked for **secondary security checks** - well above the target of 5%. The total number of requests for cross-checks increased by 61%, to a total of 110,234.

In the context of the **TFTP** agreement with the US, 174 article 10 searches were requested by the EU in 2020.

Cooperation with **Eurojust** in the context of **SIRIUS** continued throughout 2020, e.g. by agreeing on the policy for the SPOC Network and setting up a mentorship programme for small OSP to standardise their response to LE requests. New tools and guidelines (translated to various languages) were regularly uploaded and published in the SIRIUS platform. Also, via CEPOL's training platform, several webinars translated to different languages were made available. (In December 2020, Europol organised a technical session with 16 interested **Counter Terrorism Group** (CTG) services on the possible use of SIRIUS by the CT intelligence community. At the end of 2020, there were more than 5,000 members in the platform.

Despite the challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the **SIRIUS Conference** was finally transformed into a three-day virtual event that took place in December, with 1,480 participants.

In December, Europol, Eurojust and the European Judicial Network published the second annual edition of the **SIRIUS EU Digital Evidence Situation Report**. Europol and Eurojust signed a **contribution agreement** (2021 to June 2024) that will expand their partnership in supporting law enforcement and judicial authorities with cross-border access to electronic evidence.

The EU Internet Referral Unit (**EU IRU**) continued to monitor content on 370 online platforms, assessing a total of 16,763 pieces of content, which is above the (reviewed) target of 15,000. In terms of operational support, the EU IRU actively supported **OTF EMMA** by providing ad-hoc

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tools, reports and analysis and supported a total of 156 operations – including horizontal support provided to other areas. The **Annual Heads of IRUs meeting** for Strategic coordination took place in July 2020 and a total of three **referral action day** (RAD) were coordinated with EU MS and TP.

On 23 November 2020, the EU IRU hosted the **second table-top exercise** in a virtual event held under the umbrella of the European Commission-led **EU Internet Forum**. The aim of the exercise was to test a voluntary mechanism to enable a coordinated response to a cross-border massive abuse of the internet in the context of terrorism or violent extremism.

The EU IRU was in close contact with DG HOME to prepare the new actions in the **EU Internet Forum** and actively engaged with OSP to encourage their participation. Additionally, the EU IRU evaluated three **H2020 projects**.

Some progress was made regarding project **PERCI**, e.g. further refining the project planning and budget, validation of the business need and Minimum Viable Product (MVP) requirements. A presentation of the proof of concept (PoC) and desired workflow took place in the last quarter of the year. Work will continue in 2021 to gather all business requirements and discuss IRMa's gaps. It should be noted that several of the EU IRU's related initiatives in 2020 were delayed due to their dependencies with the implementation of this project.

During 2020, the exchange of strategic and operational expertise within the **ATLAS network** continued through SIENA and ATLAS ONEP-EPE. The updated ATLAS Annual Work Programme (AWP) 2021 and the draft ATLAS AWP 2022 were finalised in cooperation with LYNX Commando.

In June, Europol joined the EEAS, EUDELS, DG HOME, DG NEAR, DG DEVCO, FPI and EUCTC in a video conference at which the state of play in **WB countries regarding CT**-related matters was reviewed.

Other initiatives for which the ECTC made progress during 2020 include:

- **Counter Terrorism Joint Liaison Team (CT-JLT)**: weekly meetings were restored in September, following the COVID-19 de-escalation phase. Intelligence services increasingly requested support from the ECTC.
- **Reports**: the TE-SAT 2020 report was released in June. A special outlook report on the future impact of COVID-19 on terrorism was delivered and presented at the Terrorism Working Party (TWP) in October. Additionally, two special reports regarding right-wing extremism (RWE) were produced in 2020.
- **CT Programme Board (CTPB)**: A first meeting was held via Video Conference (VC) in June. The meeting focused on the reporting and review of the work plan activities – for many of which good progress was recorded. In July, Europol hosted an operational meeting with the participation of some EU MS. This meeting focused on the "Information exchange – FTF (Foreign Terrorist Fighter) lists from Third Parties" and led to the drafting of a coordinated approach between Europol and the MS on regards of FTFs lists. On 15 October, the Chemical Precursors working group meeting was held via VC, with a focus on sharing operational breakthroughs in the prevention and investigation related to the chemical precursors purchase and further use of these substances to manufacture explosive devices. The second CTPB plenary meeting of 2020 took place in November. The EPE platform for the CTPB kept active, with more than 80 users at the end of 2020.
- **CBRNE**: continued to horizontally support operational cases (e.g. AP Weapons and Explosives, AP Dolphin, etc.) and produced technical reports (e.g. Radioactive playing card – Iodine 125) distributed to EU MS via SIENA. Europol's CBRNE experts actively supported IAEA and CEPOL in various scenarios, e.g. conferences, seminars, webinars, exercises, etc.
- **Terrorist Identification Taskforce (TITF)**: this action week was cancelled due to COVID-19 travel restrictions.

Activity 6. Combating Financial and Economic Crime

The **European Financial and Economic Crime Centre (EFECC)** was set up in June 2020 and provided support to 334 **operational cases** during the year, including to OTF EMMA. The **satisfaction with operational support** provided was rated by 43 lead investigators involved in high-profile cases with a score of 9.0/10.

Some examples of high-profile operations supported by the EFECC in 2020 include:

- Operation "In our sites" (IOS) XI, on IP crime awareness, was launched in July 2020 with participation of 28 countries, EUIPO, INTERPOL and the private sector. More than € 2.5M worth of counterfeit and pirated items were seized. During the action day, seven servers were seized, together with eight bank accounts and three people arrested.
- Operation OPSON 2020, against trafficking of counterfeit and substandard food and beverages and leading to the dismantling of 19 organised crime groups involved in food fraud and the arrests of 406 suspects. As a result, about 12,000 tonnes of illegal and potentially harmful products worth about €28 M were seized.
- Operation Aphrodite III, which led to 123 social media accounts and 36 websites selling counterfeit products to be taken down. More than € 700k and nearly 28 million illegal and counterfeit goods were seized, with ten people arrested and 37 others reported to the judicial authorities.
- Operation Shield, a global effort to target trafficking of counterfeit and misused medicines and doping substances, involving law enforcement authorities from 27 countries, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), the Pharmaceutical Security Institute and the private sector. As a result of this operation, more than 25 million units of medicines and doping substances were seized, 667 suspects arrested, 1,282 individuals reported to judicial authorities, 95 judicial cases opened, 25 organised crime groups dismantled, and 10 clandestine laboratories seized. During the operation 4,009 websites were monitored and 453 websites were shut down. The total amount of seizures worth nearly €73 M.
- Europol's IPC3 coordinated the 5th edition of "Operation Silver Axe" targeting counterfeit and illicit trade of pesticides, with 32 countries involved. As a result, 1.4k tonnes of pesticides were seized and 260 investigations opened.

The EFECC financially supported 52 **operational meetings** and organised/coordinated 55 **action days**, which led to significant **operational outcomes** such as 960 arrests, 1,187 house searches, 505 search warrants and seizure of numerous bank accounts (178), cars (270), cash (€ 9.1M), computers (162), phones (138) with a total value of € 261M.

The newly created Centre accepted 13,685 **operational contributions** via SIENA. A total of 1,467 **operational reports** were produced with a hit rate of 8.7%. Additionally, two strategic analysis reports were produced.

In addition, the EFECC deployed 41 **mobile offices** during 2020 and supported 12 **JITs**.

Doubts raised in 2019 as to the nature of the **data exchanged by FIUs through the FIU.net**, created strong uncertainties as to the legal possibilities of embedding FIU.net into SIENA. As a result of EDPS' request to Europol to ensure the transition of the technical administration of FIU.net to another entity, the Commission announced on 7 May the taking over of FIU.net. During the transition, Europol continued to support operational coordination with FIUs and, in this respect, Europol received 53 requests from FIUs and sent 13 requests to FIUs via FIU.net. Europol conducted preparatory work for the transfer of the system and EDPS was informed on progress. Work continued in order to set up a service level agreement (SLA) between Europol and the EU Commission, ensuring that Europol can remain a node in the FIU.net network after the transfer of the system to DG FISMA.

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The EU Intellectual Propriety (IP) Crime Units Network meeting and the 2020 Europol IP Crime Conference took place (via VC) in November 2020, with the participation of IP crime experts from the MS, leading professionals from law enforcement, the private sector and academia.

EUIPO and Europol continued their fruitful cooperation during 2020. Europol, EUIPO and DG TRADE made progress towards the creation of a Watch-List (of websites, e-commerce platforms, online pharmacies, etc.). In cooperation with EUIPO, a project to fight fraud targeting IP Offices was launched. On 16 December 2020, Europol, OLAF, the EU Commission and the EUIPO Observatory jointly organised an online information event to inform law enforcement authorities about the possible counterfeiting of COVID-19 vaccines.

During the last quarters of 2020, negotiations with the **ECB** were concluded and an agreement was signed, allowing the ECB to finance specific activities of Europol in the area of euro counterfeiting.

The support for the Europol Financial Intelligence Public Private Partnership (**EFIPPP**) continued and an extraordinary meeting on COVID-19 consequences was organised at the end of May 2020, online. In parallel, a new governance model for the project was fine-tuned and presented to Europol's management.

Other initiatives under the responsibility of the EFECF for which progress was made include:

- **AP Corruption**: the opening order of AP Sports Corruption was reviewed and amended. All MS/TP were duly informed, including the change of name (now AP Corruption).
- **EPPO**: Europol closely followed the developments around EPPO in order to ensure cooperation.
- **International Olympic Committee (IOC)**: the possibilities to receive information from IOC were confirmed. In September 2020, AP Corruption contributed to a webinar organised by IOC to raise awareness of the role of the National Olympic Committees (NOCs) on the prevention of manipulation of competitions.
- Several **MoU** - with Eurocontrol, Universal Postal Union (UPU) and European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) – were being assessed for future structured cooperation.
- Support to the **Financial Action Task Force (FATF)** project (money laundering and wildlife trafficking) and **Trade Based Money Laundering (TBML)**, coordinated by ESM, continued throughout the year.
- **Euro counterfeiting**: nine applications for financial support for euro counterfeiting were granted in 2020.

Activity 7. Provision of cross-cutting operational capabilities

In 2020, the **Europol Innovation Lab** (GDIL) was set up within the Governance Directorate. Throughout the year, the GDIL worked closely with the German BKA in order to set up the **European Clearing Board** (EuCB) for Innovation. The Terms of Reference for the EuCB were prepared following HENUs guidance and a call for appointing SPOCs for Innovation in all EU MS was launched. In order to coordinate the monitoring of new technological trends within Europol, the Lab launched the **Europol TechWatch Forum** composed of representatives from all Europol units involved in strategic analysis related to technology. Also, the GDIL made progress towards the implementation of **EPE Innovation**. In cooperation with the EU IRU, the GDIL drafted an intelligence note on contact tracing apps.

Additionally, the GDIL has engaged in the coordination of three **H2020 projects** (AIDA, GRACE and INFINITY). Specifically, the objectives of the three projects are:

- **GRACE:** GRACE will empower EU MS LEAs to tackle Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and the exponential growth of CSE material referrals from the Online Service Providers (OSPs) to the competent authorities through a proactive and intelligence-led approach using systematic prioritisation methods to address the most urgent cases in a timely manner.
- **AIDA:** AIDA will provide LEAs in the EU with innovative, dedicated and sustainable digital technologies to facilitate the entire Big Data analytics cycle as part of their investigative and proactive prevention capabilities focused on cybercrime and counter-terrorism. AIDA will provide law enforcement across the EU with a modular capacity to acquire, (pre-)process, enrich, analyse and visualise multi-source Big Data in near real-time. The latter will bring about a paradigm shift in the capacity of EU MS in the fight against cybercrime and terrorism while putting in place governance processes to maintain full compliance with fundamental rights and applicable legislation including privacy and protection of personal data and ensure chain of custody.
- **INFINITY:** Infinity will innovate and deliver a pioneering mixed-reality environment that equips law enforcement agencies (LEAs) with an immersive analytical platform for cutting-edge intelligence extraction, analysis, visualisation and collaboration across teams and countries to address the challenge brought about by the exponential increase in investigative data before, during and after major criminal and terrorist attacks. Through an extensive research, design and development process, Infinity will drive forward the call for a radical rethink in how LEAs extract actionable information from raw data throughout the entirety of the intelligence cycle and work collaboratively across multiple jurisdictions in a harmonious and mutually beneficial manner.

The GDIL participated in another three calls related to Artificial Intelligence (RAISE, AI4LEA, Tailor). A core group on **Secure Communication** channels was established in September, tasked by COSI.

The set-up of the **EU Innovation Hub for Internal Security** was discussed during the first part of the year, with the aim to map existing innovation initiatives and identify quick wins. However, the implementation of this initiative was delayed because of lack of resources on both Europol and other EU JHA agencies' side.

With regards to the set-up of the **EU Observatory for Innovation**, cooperation with the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (JRC) continued and Europol's ED and the JRC Director exchanged letters in this respect.

During 2020, the GDIL and the **Interpol Innovation Centre** had several meetings in which they presented their respective activities and discussed possible joint projects and collaboration initiatives.

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Europol's **Task Force Travel Intelligence** (TFTIN) offered the EU MS the possibility to exchange PNR-relevant profiles and related information and intelligence via SIENA. However, only a few (and mainly smaller EU MS) made use of this possibility which proves the limited maturity of PIUs in terms of processing capabilities. The pilot on **Standardization of PNR Information Exchange** continued during the year, with the participating PIUs making good progress in implementing solutions which would allow automated and structured PNR responses. Several PIUs provided Europol with PNR data in standard and structured format, enabling fast and efficient processing of the information. The Operational Pilot on **Rules-Based Targeting** was successfully launched. A number of hits against Europol data have resulted from the crosschecks and a number of positive searches were performed at airports as a result of the pilot. The pilot will continue in 2021. Europol's Travel Intelligence supported 19 operational cases and made a total of 85 requests for **PNR data**, according to art. 10 PNR Directive, well above the target of 40.

The implementation of the **EMPACT High Value Grants (HVG) and Low Value Grants (LVG)** continued as planned and the number of requests increased compared to the previous year. On the other hand, due to COVID-19, applicants requested extensions of existing grants, which affected the implementation rates in 2020.

The **Task Force Analysis**, successfully finalised its work addressing the most urgent challenges related to Europol's analytical output and enhancing the related services and products delivered to the Member States.

The Task Force reviewed the **business model for analysis** at Europol and Europol's support to Member States aimed at improving processing and analysis processes. The Task Force also explored new **state-of-the-art tools** for the new analysis environment with dedicated analysts testing the tools, in close cooperation with the Capabilities Directorate. To uphold the highest standards of analysis, the Task Force Analysis was also involved in enhancing the **training** package for analysts, reviewing the recruitment process for analysts and develop the related analyst profiles further.

Moreover, the Task Force continued – in cooperation with the Strategic Analysis team - to steer Europol's monitoring activities on the **impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on serious and organised crime and terrorism** in the EU by publishing various strategic reports.

During 2020, Europol's analysts produced a total of 251 **operational analysis reports**, which is slightly below the performance in 2019 (262) but above 2018's (228).

Other initiatives under this Activity include:

- Use of **geospatial images**: cooperation with EU SATCEN and EMSA regarding the use of geospatial images continued throughout the year.
- An **EPE platform for missing persons** was set up and became operational in 2020.
- **EU Most Wanted** (EUMW): Germany joined the project and published their first fugitive profiles. In the fourth quarter, Europol launched the 5th annual media campaign on the EUMW website with a focus on sex-offenders. During the 4-weeks campaign, the EUMW website received more than 275k visitors and 451 leads were sent to the participating EU MS which led to two successful arrests. Apart from the campaign, five more fugitives published on EUMW were arrested during the year.
- The **European Tracking Solution** was fully operational after some minor changes in the contract and many EU MS were ready to sign up.
- As a result of COVID-19, all on-the-spot training activities and workshops were postponed, including the **Europol Summer School**.

In terms of **strategic analysis**, Europol produced 47 strategic analysis reports, which was above the target of 35 reports. The satisfaction with key strategic analysis reports could not be measured due to the lack of technical tools but it will be incorporated in the new User Survey as

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of 2021. 85% of the regular strategic reports were delivered within the agreed timeframe in 2020. Preparation of the SOCTA 2021 began in 2020.

In 2020, Europol signed only 15 new **JITs**, which is below the target of 30. COVID-19 had a direct and negative effect on this indicator. Also, the number of **Schengen evaluations** conducted in 2020 (Austria, Liechtenstein and Germany) was lower than expected (Belgium, Cyprus and Netherlands had to be postponed to 2021).

Activity 8. Governance, support and administration

During the year, Europol supported the European Commission in the preparations of the **Recast of the Europol Regulation** and provided estimates on the impact of the suggested policy changes. In December 2020, the Commission published a proposal for the amendment of the Europol Regulation.

Described in more detail in [section 2.3](#) of this report, Europol successfully implemented its budget in 2020 with a **commitment rate** of 99.4%, well above the target set at 95%, and a **payment rate** of 85.1%, below the target set at 90% and slightly below the previous year. All in all, the **budget outturn** rate was 1.98%, which is in line with the ambitious target of 2%.

Europol did not, however, manage to comply with the target set for **late payments** (as a % of the total invoices) and ended the year with 32% of invoices paid late, due to mainly a high number of late payments in Q1, which was followed by a positive trend in later quarters. Most importantly, despite the high number of late payments, it should be noted that late payments only represented 3% in terms of value, which is below the threshold of 5%.

Thanks to notable efforts and an organisation-wide action plan, Europol ended 2020 with a **vacancy rate** of just 1.0% against the annual target of maximum 2%. The target for the turnover rate (12%) was also achieved, with 10.9% of staff turnover at the end of the year. 34% of Europol's workforce were women (33% in 2019). In 2020, 34% of applicants to Europol's vacancies were women, with the percentage slightly reducing to 32% for selected candidates.

Europol implemented 86% of the pending **critical and very important audit recommendations** planned for implementation in 2020. Europol's **corporate risk** reporting contained a total of 128 open risks at the end of 2020 (112 threats and 16 opportunities). From these risks and after careful revision and clustering, 36 open risks were considered of strong corporate relevance. Regarding the acquisition of an **audit and corporate risk management tool**, workshops were organised in Q4 2020 to gather and define customisation needs. The implementation is envisaged to commence in 2021.

From a communications point of view, Europol appeared in 3,270 **high-impact web-based media**, well above the target of 2,500. A total of 87 corporate audio-visual materials were produced, 97 interviews carried out and 183 press releases promoted during the year.

322 **public access requests** were received in 2020, compared to 312 in 2019, with considerable strain on the responsible service.

The implementation of **administrative (ICT-related) projects** reached 74.8%, after a revision of the initial work in Q2. The **uptime of administrative systems** was 99.8%.

In the context of the COVID-19 outbreak, the **Business Continuity** and **Crisis Management** frameworks were extensively used. The results of the COVID-19 Post Incident Review (PIR) were presented to the Crisis Management Team (CMT) and the Executive Director (ED) in the fourth quarter of the year. The implementation of the recommendations included in the action plan had already started before the end of the year – with some actions already completed. A revised **decision of the Executive Director on telework**, extending the period of telework for force majeure, was discussed at the MB WG CM in September and adopted by the MB in December.

After collection of requirements and conducting market research for an **Activity Based Budgeting and Costing** (ABB/ABC) tool, a software solution was selected and the roll-out is planned for 2021.

The **Grants Administration** Team took on board the development of the new grant schemes for the Operational Task Forces (OTF)/High Value Targets (HVT) and Eastern Partnership (EaP) – following agreement with DG NEAR. Besides the ongoing grant agreements (EUIPO, Liaison

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Officers in WB and SIRIUS), several new grant agreements were concluded under the EU Commission's H2020, namely AIDA, GRACE and INFINITY. Progress was made with the agreements for SIRIUS II and with the European Central Bank (ECB).

At the end of 2020, Europol was involved in 28 on-going **EU grant-funded projects** and received 17 requests to support EU funded projects or grant applications, six of which were declined after case-by-case analysis (e.g. resources, benefit for Europol and its stakeholders, alignment with Europol's Work Programme, etc.)

Regarding the implementation of **SYSPER**, which was quite resource intensive, it was officially launched at Europol in June 2020. Extensive data preparation and corrections had to be performed prior to the launch, by means of Europol's own resources. User guides and information pages were made available to staff on IRIS. Additionally to the Time Management Module (TIM) implemented in June, the Job Description module (JIS) was tested and validated.

At the end of 2020, the **Medical Service** was staffed with two doctors and two nurses. There were some delays in the acquisition of the software to be used by the Medical Service. As a result, it was not possible to monitor the indicator on sick leave throughout the year.

During 2020, the **Internal Control System** was regularly assessed and the **financial model** was updated, taking into account the organisational changes –most of which linked to the Strategy 2020+. Progress was also made in terms of updating and reviewing **business processes** in different areas.

Other initiatives under this Activity include:

- **Learning & Development:** The implementation of the 2020 Training Plan was discussed by Management, including recommendations on the way forward. Pilots for the Job Shadowing, Knowledge Sharing and Mentoring initiatives were presented to Management.
- **Psychometric testing:** Options for a fully-fledged remote testing platform were explored and other International Organisations (ICC, EMA) consulted. Demos were organised with different service providers and, at the end of the year data protection, security and IT aspects were being explored.
- **Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS)** certification was postponed to 2021 due to the impact of COVID-19. A new planning was defined. Progress was made in the implementation progress of the Environmental Objectives and Action Plan 2020 – 2022 and in the implementation of the waste separation initiative. The Environmental Management System (EMS) was embedded in Europol's corporate landscape. Europol joined the inter-institutional tender procedure for the operation of EMAS Green Public Procurement Helpdesk.
- **Shared services:** Eurojust and Europol signed a four year contract for the leasing of company cars.
- **Electronic Document and Records Management System:** Progress was made in the planning for the migration project but, nevertheless, this initiative was delayed due to COVID-19 (external contractor could not be onsite).
- **Electronic workflows:** progress was made in the implementation of the e-Signature (live since November 2020) and e-Forms. Changes in the Document Management System (DMS), required for compatibility with the electronic signature, were designed and implemented. Three training sessions were delivered with regards to the e-Signature solution and a comprehensive documentation package was prepared.
- **EPCC 2020 could not be held due to COVID-19;** nevertheless, an EU Police Chiefs video conference was organised by Germany's Bundeskriminalamt (BKA) and Europol in December 2020, to discuss internal security challenges in the EU. EU Commissioner for Home Affairs, Ms. Ylva Johansson participated in the discussion.

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- A proposal to redesign the current **User Survey** approach was endorsed by Europol's Management. The new User Survey will be implemented in 2021, including considerable improvements compared to the previous survey.
- **Europol's website:** The prototyping for the new corporate website was completed and the development initiated. The project is expected to be completed in 2021.
- **Temporary Satellite Building II:** The Host State continued to investigate new housing options for the location of the second Temporary Satellite Building, in the vicinity of the headquarters.
- The **video project targeting mid-level criminal investigators in MS**, consisting of a series of educational videos in all EU languages on the benefit of using Europol's products and services, was completed in Q4.

Part II. Management

2.1. Management Board

The Management Board (MB) constitutes, along with the Executive Director, the administrative and management structure of Europol, in accordance with Article 9 of the Europol Regulation. It is the **Agency's primary governance instrument** and its most important stakeholder environment. It ensures strategic guidance, oversees the implementation of Europol's tasks and performs other functions as mandated by the Europol Regulation. It comprises one representative of each EU Member State and one of the European Commission. It takes decisions by simple majority, with each member having one vote and the representative of Denmark – which does not take part in the Europol Regulation – attending in an observer capacity.

During 2020, the MB met three times, in June, October and December. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, those meetings took place by videoconference, while the first meeting, planned for March, coincided with the outbreak of the pandemic and had thus to be cancelled. The items tabled for the March meeting were adopted by the MB through written procedure, or were postponed to the June session, where possible.

The **MB Working Groups on Corporate Matters** (WGCM) and **Information Management** (WGIM) held four meetings each, with the April, September and November meetings also being held by videoconference.

The **MB Complaints Committee**, established by the MB in 2017 to address the complaints lodged by Europol staff and former staff against acts of the Executive Director affecting them adversely, dealt with eight cases in total.

In the context of the scrutiny of Europol's activities by the European Parliament (EP) together with the national parliaments, the MB Chairperson provided written submissions on the activities of the MB to the May and September remote meetings of the **Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group** (JPSG), and provided written answers to questions raised by the JPSG during those sessions.

Pursuant to Article 14(4) of the Europol Regulation, a representative of the JPSG attended, in an observer capacity, specific agenda items of the 9-10 December 2020 MB meeting, relating to planning, budget and strategic matters.

The activities of the MB in 2020 are presented in [Annex X](#), which outlines the main topics tabled for MB discussion and the main decisions taken by the Board at each meeting. Furthermore, Annex X includes a list of the main decisions taken by the MB through written procedure.

2.2. Major developments in the year

This section contains references to the most relevant events and/or developments in the year having a major impact on Europol's activities.

2.2.1. Council Resolution on the Future of Europol⁸

On 21 October 2020, the EU Home Affairs Ministers agreed on a 10-point plan for Europol's future during a virtual meeting organised by the German Council Presidency.

Their joint statement set out the cornerstones for Europol's future role in the European police partnership. The EU Home Affairs Ministers took this opportunity to set out their ideas on the future of the agency, in anticipation of the EU Commission's proposal for the Europol Recast.

⁸ Council of the European Union, 30 October 2020, reference ST 12463 2020 INIT

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The EU home affairs ministers agreed that the future development of Europol must be guided first and foremost by the needs of the law enforcement authorities of EU Member States. Europol was considered “a success model that needs to be strengthened further and geared up for future challenges”.

- Europol should be the central agency and the go-to information platform for combating crime in the EU, both within the EU and externally;
- Europol should be a service provider for Member States – with strong, active input on matters of content and organisation from the Member States;
- Europol should be a place for innovation – in forensics, artificial intelligence and big data analysis.

2.2.2. Europol Recast

During 2020, Europol followed the preparations and supported the Commission’s work on the proposal for a revised Europol Regulation. A preliminary assessment of the major topics and their impact on Europol’s activities and mandate were presented to and discussed by the Management Board and its Working Groups.

On 9 December 2020, the Commission published the legislative proposal for a Regulation amending the current Europol Regulation (COM (2020)796 final, 2020/0349 (COD)).

The main implications of the Europol recast are summarized below:

- Enabling Europol to cooperate effectively with private parties;
- Enabling Europol to process large and complex datasets;
- Strengthening Europol’s role on research and innovation;
- Enabling Europol to enter data into the SIS;
- Strengthening Europol’s cooperation with third countries;
- Strengthening Europol’s cooperation with the EPPO;
- Clarifying Europol’s role in requesting the initiation of investigations into crimes affecting a common interest covered by a Union policy;
- Strengthening the data protection framework applicable to Europol.

Europol welcomed the proposal, which contains several positive elements, novelties and amendments to Europol’s legal framework, which will considerably improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Europol’s products and services and its support to the law enforcement authorities of the Union. The 10 Points of the Council Resolution on the Future of Europol and the business needs of Europol were taken into account in the proposal.

2.2.3. Multi-Annual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021-2027

Europol actively followed the MFF 2021-2027 process and prepared well in advance for different budgetary scenarios.

On 27 May 2020, the European Commission put forward a new MFF proposal, along with a new recovery instrument – Next Generation EU – and a revised Work Programme for 2020. The new MFF proposal foresees an overall amount of € 5.175 billion for security for the period 2021-2027, under the under Heading 5- Resilience, Security and Defence. Out of this, an amount of € 1.488 billion is proposed for the three security agencies: Europol, CEPOL and the EMCDDA.

The initial estimate (€ 234M for 2021) was lowered, and the revised proposal was € 184.9M, included in Europol’s revised draft Programming Document 2021-2023 which was adopted by the MB in January 2021. The level of financing for Europol was set to **172.9 million in 2021**, followed by a yearly 2 percent increase (indexation/inflation adjustment).

2.2.4. COVID-19

By the end of December 2019, China had reported a cluster of cases of pneumonia in the region of Wuhan. As the days passed, the number of cases started to grow alarmingly, mainly in Wuhan but also quickly spreading to other provinces in China and other countries. A novel coronavirus was eventually identified.

On 30 January 2020, the WHO declared this **new coronavirus (COVID-19)** a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. As of 13 March 2020, the WHO considered Europe the active centre of the pandemic. Restrictions of different magnitude (e.g. mobility, social distancing, face masks, closure of businesses, curfews, etc.), considering the situation in each country, were imposed on the majority of European countries and lasted for several months. As the situation improved, most of the restrictive measures were relaxed but a “second wave” of COVID cases followed after the summer and even more restrictive measures were imposed to limit its impact.

Particularly for Europol, the COVID-19 outbreak and the related restrictions, had a **direct and severe impact** on the implementation of a number of actions initially planned, also negatively affecting the capacity to reach certain performance targets outlined in Europol’s Work Programme 2020.

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic **spread across the whole organisation**:

- Operational and non-operational meetings were mostly cancelled or postponed. No visitors were allowed in the building and only high-priority meetings were conducted in a Video-Conference (VC) format, including high-level meetings such as HENU, MB WG and MB meetings.
- On-the-spot operational support, including the tasks performed by the Guest Officers, was very limited due to travel restrictions.
- Access to Europol’s premises was strictly limited for long periods of time during 2020 and only staff with a duly justified business need were allowed in the building.
- On the other hand, the use of teleworking enabled the vast majority of staff to continue performing their tasks remotely. Communication and interaction amongst staff was promoted by means of the Instant Messaging tool – video-calls were enabled during this period. Staff with a need to access the operational network could remotely connect via the Mobile Offices within the availability of equipment.

As indicated, several actions and initiatives planned to be implemented during 2020 had to be postponed, cancelled or reduced in scope as result of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, a **series of additional and unplanned actions and initiatives had to be taken on-board** in order to face this unprecedented situation.

The area of **Facilities was amongst the most impacted** by COVID-19. Based on the advice of the Dutch Government and the National Institute for Health and Environment (RIVM), Europol implemented measures to ensure the recommended physical distancing of 1.5m in both its buildings. Additional extraordinary measures included the development of a new seating plan with reduced number of workplaces in the offices and meeting rooms, changes to the HVAC system, new signposting and routing in the buildings, new hygienic and safety instructions and guidelines, health and safety information on screens and IRIS, etc. Service contracts were re-negotiated and adjusted to align with the new reality and a new tender was launched for the procurement of safety products.

In order to prepare and adapt to the new working conditions imposed by COVID-19, **Europol’s ICT department took a series of additional measures**, such as:

- 700+ Corporate Network (CorpNet) computers were accredited to enable teleworking;

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- More than 250 Mobile Offices were procured to grant access to the Operational Network (OpsNet);
- A new remote development capability, providing 80 Virtual Development Desktops, was set up;
- Mini-PCs were issued to contractors to ensure continuity in the ICT development capability;
- Desktop video-call capability was enabled on CorpNet and Cloud-based videoconferencing rolled out;
- Laptops were provided to the Liaison Bureaux to enable access to Europol's systems;
- ICT contractors were notified of force majeure and ICT-related contracts were closely monitored.

Throughout 2020, the **Crisis Management Team** (CMT) regularly⁹ met in order to evaluate the situation at each stage and provide guidance on steps to follow, providing staff with regular updates and advice from the Company Doctor.

In order to factor in the impact of COVID-19 on the 2020 Work Programme objectives and performance indicators, a **re-planning exercise was conducted in Q2 2020**. A thorough consultation of all departments was performed in July 2020 to capture the impact of COVID-19 in the initially planned activities and performance targets. As a result, a series of actions were identified as being affected and, therefore, Europol's ambitions towards them had to be adjusted. Actions were either delayed/postponed, changed in scope or completely cancelled. Also, some of the performance targets had to be readjusted given the constraints imposed by the pandemic.

The outcome of the re-planning exercise was **presented to the Management Board in October 2020** and affected a total of 69 actions and 8 Work Programme Indicators. The full list of work programme actions and indicators can be found in [Annex XII](#).

2.2.5. Cooperation with the UK

The Transition Period following the UK's withdrawal from the European Union ended on 31 December 2020. In anticipation for this moment, Europol conducted intensive work and preparations to ensure a smooth transition, affecting:

- Possibilities for continued operational cooperation with the UK;
- Possibilities for the exchange of personal data;
- Possibilities to conclude an administrative agreement pursuant Art. 25(1) ER and a working arrangement in accordance with Art. 23(4) ER.
- Preparation and adaptation of the different operational tools and systems, e.g. EIS, SIENA, etc., including migration of data.

2.3. Budgetary and financial management

2.3.1. Revenue

The revenue of Europol was almost fully covered by the Community subsidy (fund source IC1), amounting to € 154.1M in 2020.

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, in October 2020 Europol reduced the request for the remaining EU subsidy instalment amount for the rest of 2020 by € 5M, thus amending its budget to € 149.1M.

⁹ Europol's CMT met in 48 occasions during 2020, with a first meeting on 26 February and the last one in 2020 on 16 December 2020.

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In addition, the budget was amended by € 9.6M under fund source IR1 for the contribution from Denmark for the budget year 2020 (€ 3.0M) and for the various grants contribution agreements and Service Level Agreements (SLA's) for an additional € 6.6M, of which € 6.0M were cashed.

2.3.2. Expenditure

The final outcome of the KPIs for 2020 was as follows:

- The implementation of commitment appropriations was 99.4%, at the same level as in 2019.
- The overall payment rate was 85.1%, which was 1.5% lower than in 2019. The target was not met due to transfers within the budget that were made relatively late in the year, in order to allow for a higher implementation of the funds, followed by commitments for which the payments are expected early 2021.
- The cancelled carry-forward commitments amounted to 13.9%: a total of € 2.5M was not used and was incorporated in the final budget result. This was largely due to unused operational funds for EMPACT grants (€ 787K returned pre-financing by Member States), for meetings (€ 607K), for missions and deployments (€ 423K) and for ICT expenditure (€ 311K). Administrative unspent funds were related to building expenditure and telecommunication costs (€ 246K) and a minor part to staff expenditure (€ 84K).

Title 1 – Staff related expenditure

The final budget under Title 1 amounted to € 85.9M with an implementation rate of 99.9% for commitments and of 98.0% for payments. The amending budget, resulting from the agreement with Denmark under fund source R0 (external assigned revenue € 3.0M), was used to cover salary expenditure.

A number of transfers from Title 1 (Staff) amounting to € 5.2M were made during the year. € 1.7M savings generated from the delayed recruitments caused by the COVID-19 pandemic for both Temporary Agents and Contract Agents were re-purposed towards the European Commission. An additional € 3.5M was transferred to cover for operational ICT costs under Title 3.

An amount of € 127K remained unused and 1.9% or € 1.6M of the budget under Title 1 was carried forward to 2021, mainly for expenditure relating to facilities (e.g. catering, medical services, training of staff, hospitality services, moving expenses and security services).

Title 2 – Other administrative expenditure

The final budget under Title 2 amounted to € 10.8M with an implementation rate of 98.1% for commitments and of 61.5% for payments. The payment implementation for building-related expenditure is normally slower as it requires involvement of (sub-) contractors before the Host State can issue invoices.

During the year, transfers for a total of € 122K were made within Title 2, of which € 100K was re-purposed to the European Commission as part of the overall € 5M transfer, and the remaining amount was the result of savings realised from activities not performed anymore due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Such savings were almost entirely offset by additional costs for the set-up of a new safe working environment as well as for the purchase of cleaning and protection materials, acrylic shields and other facilities equipment related to coping with the pandemic.

An amount of € 201K remained unused, while € 3.9M was carried forward to 2021, representing 36.6% of the budget under Title 2. Commitments carried forward were related to facility costs, such as the long term replacement plan in the headquarters, preventive maintenance, the extension of video conferencing possibilities to all meeting rooms and the replacement of the luggage lockers. For all these activities, payments are expected in 2021.

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Title 3 – Operational activities

The final budget under Title 3 amounted to € 52.4M, with a 99.0% commitment rate and a 68.8% payment rate.

26.1% or € 13.5M of the budget available under Title 3 was used to support strategic operational activities (of which € 3.7M was for EMPACT grants and the same amount for Deployments, € 2.4M for ATLAS, € 1.2M for meetings, € 635K for missions and € 485K for High Value Targets/ Operational Task Force - HVT/ OTF). 66.5% or € 34.5M of the budget was implemented for ICT operational activities (e.g. Interoperability project, telecommunication and sustainment costs). Another 7.5% or € 3.9M was used for other operational activities (e.g. SNE costs, HENU meetings and Liaison Bureaux costs).

The budget under Title 3 was increased by € 3.5M transferred from Title 1 and Title 2 where the savings realised due to the COVID-19 pandemic were repurposed for operational purchase and maintenance of hardware and software and other ICT external services. Moreover, in this area, an additional € 2.3M savings in meetings, missions and the EPCC event were transferred back to the European Commission, as part of the above mentioned € 5M refund.

An amount of € 509K lapsed, while an overall amount of € 15.8M was carried forward to 2021, representing 30.3% of the budget under Title 3. Payments related to this carry forward are expected early in 2021.

2.3.3. Implementation of appropriations carried forward from 2019 to 2020 (C8)

The appropriations carried forward from 2019 to 2020 came to a total of € 17.7M. The final implementation rate of the carry forward was 86.1% which was 4.7% points lower than in 2019. The cancelled carry forward commitments amounted to 13.9%: a total of € 2.5M was not used and was incorporated in the final budget result. The unused funds were related mainly to the following:

- € 84K related to Title 1, which is 13.4% of the amount carried forward under this Title (€ 627K); the unused funds in this area were for staff expenditure (e.g. trainings, recruitment, catering, and external services (e.g. move services)).
- € 246K related to Title 2, for building related expenditure, administrative telecommunication costs and statutory expenditure in this area. This represented 4.3% of the total amount carried forward under this Title (€ 5.7M).
- € 2.1M related to Title 3, which is 18.8% of the amount carried forward under Title 3 (€ 11.4M). This was mainly coming from EMPACT grants (€ 787K), meetings (€ 607K), missions and deployments (€ 423K) and ICT expenditure (€ 311K).

2.3.4. Implementation of assigned revenue (C4, C5 and R0)

With regard to the implementation of assigned revenue, there is a distinction between funds established in 2020 and funds carried forward from 2019. Part of the funds under fund source R0 refer to grants which are usually multi-annual. The amount carried over in respect of fund source R0 includes also non-committed amounts to be used in future years.

C4 (Internal assigned revenue cashed in 2020): During the year 2020, an overall amount of € 1.3M was established and cashed. Implementation was limited (€ 1.5K) and the budget was carried over to fund source C5, in order to be implemented in 2021.

C5 (Internal assigned revenue carried over from 2019): Appropriations carried forward from 2019 amounting to € 1.1M were almost fully committed (€ 1M or 96.1%). The total unpaid amount of € 152K was carried forward (to fund source C8) and will be implemented in 2021. An amount of € 41.7 which was not committed, lapsed.

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R0 (External assigned revenue): With regard to the implementation of external assigned revenue, there is a distinction between the funds that were established in 2020 (e.g. new agreements) and the funds from before 2020 for which the implementation continued into the year.

External assigned revenue included in the budgetary accounts came to € 14.3M, of which € 4.0M was carried over from 2019 and the remaining € 10.3M was established and cashed in 2020. € 7.3M were committed during the year, of which € 4.9M was paid. The outstanding amount of € 9.4M was carried over to 2021. The external assigned revenue was implemented for the following activities:

- Following the agreement between Europol and Denmark, a contribution amounting to € 3.0M was received in 2020. The full amount was used and paid under budget item 1100 – Basic salaries.
- € 3.0M was carried forward from 2019 for the further implementation of the Europol Pension Fund surplus after the Fund's closure. € 306K was paid and the remainder, amounting to € 2.7M in total, was carried forward to 2021.
- Several agreements were implemented during the year:
 - EUIPO, SIRIUS, Western Balkans (WB), carried over from 2019.
 - H2020, EMPACT EAP and CEPOL, newly established in 2020.

2.3.5. Appropriations carried over from 2020 to 2021

With regard to the carry-over of appropriations from 2020 to 2021, there is a distinction between the funds corresponding to carry forward of payment appropriations related to the current budget, carry-over of appropriations corresponding to internal assigned revenue and carry-over of appropriations corresponding to external assigned revenue. All appropriations have been carried over in accordance with Article 12 of the Europol Financial Regulation.

An amount of € 21.4M of payment appropriations covering existing commitments was carried forward from fund source C1 to C8. This represented 14.3% of the overall budget (€ 149.1M). Out of the € 21.4M carried forward:

- € 1.6M concerned Title 1 (Staff), which was 1.9% of the total Title 1 budget (€ 85.9M).
- € 3.9M concerned Title 2 (Administrative Expenditure), which was 36.6% of the total Title 2 budget (€ 10.8M).
- € 15.8M concerned Title 3 (Operational Expenditure), which was 30.3% of the total Title 3 budget (€ 52.4M).

Appropriations arising from internal assigned revenue carried over to fund source C8 amounted, at the end of the year, to € 110K mainly for EMPACT grants (€ 109K) and the rest for meetings. These funds will be further paid in 2021. For internal assigned revenue an amount of € 1.3M under fund source C4 was carried over to 2020 as fund source C5 as available budget for the implementation in 2021. In addition, the outstanding payment appropriations of fund source C4 to cover existing commitment of € 1.5K was carried forward to C8 for further payments in 2021.

For external assigned revenue (amounting to € 9.5M), € 7M of commitment appropriations (available budget) and € 2.5M of payment appropriations (open commitments) were carried over to 2021.

- € 2.7M related to the Europol Pension Fund;
- € 2.5M related to the contribution agreement for EMPACT EaP;
- € 1.6M related to the grant agreement for Horizon 2020;
- € 1.1M related to the grant agreement for WB;
- € 865K related to the SLA with CEPOL;
- € 313K related to the SLA for EUIPO IP Crime;

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- € 353K related to the grant agreement for SIRIUS;
- € 107K related to the SLA for EUIPO Fraud.

2.3.6. Budget Transfers

Throughout the year, a total number of 37 transfers (12 more than in 2019) were made for a total amount of almost € 13.8M (or 9.2% of the budget). In total, an amount of € 5M was saved and transferred back to the European Commission via an amending budget.

In Title 1 (Staff), due to savings generated from the delays in recruiting vacancies for Temporary and Contract Agents caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, it was possible to transfer a total of € 5.2M of which € 1.7M was used for the refund to the European Commission.

In Title 2 (Other Administrative Expenditure), the savings generated by the delays in implementation of activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic were almost fully re-purposed towards the set-up of the new office environment for safe working. An amount of € 100K in this area was not possible to be re-purposed and therefore transferred back to the European Commission.

In Title 3 (Operational activities) the additional costs (€ 3.5M) incurred due to the need of mobile offices and other equipment to ensure teleworking capabilities (additional internet capacity for videoconferencing activities, additional ICT hardware and software etc.) was almost fully offset by the substantial underspending in meetings and missions (€ 2.3M), due to the travel restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Total savings of € 3.2M in the meetings and missions areas, EPCC event and Decryption Platform (go-live was also delayed to 2021 due to COVID-19) were refunded back to the European Commission as part of the total transfer of € 5M.

All transfers were approved by the Executive Director in accordance with Article 26(1) of the FR.

2.3.7. Budget Outturn

The overall budget result (surplus) for the financial year 2020 came to € 3.3M. This includes the following:

- An amount of € 836.6K of the 2020 budget that was not committed and lapsed.
- An amount of € 2.5M of appropriations carried forward from 2019 to 2020 that was not used.
- An amount of € 41.7K of internal assigned revenue (C5) carried forward from 2019 to 2020 that was not used and lapsed.
- An exchange rate difference in 2020 of € - 424.

2.3.8. Accrual rate

The accrual rate in 2020 decreased to 28% (compared to 37% in 2019), with € 6.0M accrual (amount of products/services already delivered in 2020 but not yet paid) and a total carry forward commitments of € 21.5M¹⁰. The target for the accrual was set at 60%, which has proved to be extremely challenging and was never achieved in the past years.

2.3.9. Late payments

In 2020, Europol made a total of 3,649 payments which is around 6,600 less than in 2019. The average number of days to pay moved from 22 in 2019 to 33 in 2020.

¹⁰ For the purpose of calculating accruals, fund sources C1, C4 and C5 are used.

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Late payments in terms of value represented 3.0% of the total payments made in 2020, compared to 4.6% in 2019.

The percentage of invoices paid late increased from 21.3% in 2019 to 32.8% in 2020, which is well above the set target of 10%. The percentage of late payments was particularly high in the first quarter and showed a positive trend in the following quarters. Moreover, both in the third (9.1%) and fourth (6.8%) quarters the % of late payments was below 10%.

This positive trend was mainly due to:

- Fewer payments due to a change in the travel service provider - working in batches compared to individual invoices;
- Fewer payments due to the reduced number of meetings and fewer missions linked to COVID-19 restrictions.
- Redirecting human resources from areas with low workflow volumes towards high volume workflows.

In 2020, a total of € 12.0K were paid to cover interest costs related to late payments.

2.3.10. Procurement

The table below contains an overview of the different procurement procedures run by Europol in 2020, for contracts above € 15,000¹¹ :

Type of procedure applied	Number of procedures resulting in contracts	Value	% of value
Open/ restricted	3	€ 7,320,000	95%
Low / middle value	1	€ 90,000	1%
Competitive with negotiation/ competitive dialogue	0	€ 0	0%
Negotiated without prior publication of a contract notice based on points 11.1 (a) to (f) of Annex I of the FR	2	€ 230,000	3%
Negotiated without prior publication of a contract notice based on points 11.1 (g) and (i) of Annex I of the FR	0	€ 0	0%
Negotiated without prior publication of a contract notice based on points 11.1 (h), (j), (k), (l), and (m) of Annex I of the FR	2	€ 69,300	1%
TOTAL	8	€ 7,709,300	100%

Pursuant to Article 74.10 FR, each authorising officer by delegation must draw up a list of the negotiated procedures under points 11.1 (a) to (f) of Annex I FR, i.e. negotiated procedures without publication of a contract notice and, if the trend shows an increase of this type of procedures, to report on measures taken to reverse such a trend. The report on negotiated procedures shall be annexed to the summary of the Annual Activity Report.

¹¹ This overview does not include specific contract/ orders awarded under framework contracts. This overview does not include inter-institutional contracts.

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In 2020, the total number of negotiated procedures under points 11.1 (a) to (f) of Annex I FR was lower - in terms of number and in terms of value - compared to the average of last three years 2017, 2018 and 2019¹².

In addition, point 3.2 of Annex I FR stipulates that the negotiated procedures under points (g) (building contracts) and (i) (contracts to be declared secret) of point 11.1 shall be included/annexed to the Consolidated Annual Activity Report.

The other grounds of negotiated procedures referred to in points 11.1 (h), (j), (k), (l), and (m) of Annex I FR are subject to separate publication (i.e. publication in the Annual List of Contractors on Europol's website). Therefore, these procedures are not included in this report.

In 2020, only the following contracts were concluded under points 11.1 (a) to (f) and 11.1 (g) and (i):

Point Annex I FR	Brief indication of the circumstances justifying the use of procedure	Subject of the tender	Procedure ref.	Maximum value	Contractor
point 11.1 b	Where the works, supplies or services provided only by a particular economic operator for technical reasons or for reasons connected with the protection of exclusive rights	Transfer of medical files	2015/C2/N	€ 50,000	ArboVitale BV
		Subscriptions for Europol portable radios	2016/G5/N	€ 180,000	Entropia Critical Concepts BV

Pursuant to Article 163(3) FR, publication of certain information on a contract award may be withheld where its release would impede law enforcement or otherwise by contrary to the public interest, would harm the legitimate commercial interest of economic operators or might prejudice fair competition between them. Europol did not identify any reason to withhold information based on Article 163(3) FR.

2.4. Delegation and sub-delegation of the powers of budget implementation

In accordance with the provisions of Article 59(1) of the Europol Regulation and Article 39(1) of the Europol Financial Rules, the Executive Director performs the duties as Authorising Officer (AO) for the implementation of revenue and expenditure of the budget assigned to Europol. In 2020, the Executive Director delegated the powers of budget implementation to the Deputy Executive Directors and the Secretary of the Management Board (MB), for the budget allocated to their respective areas.

Sub-delegation for the implementation of revenue and expenditure requires prior agreement by the Executive Director, in accordance with Article 41(2) of the Europol Financial Rules and the powers and the duties of the Authorising Officer (AO) including the Europol controls and checks for financial transactions that apply *mutatis mutandis* to Authorising Officers (AOs) by delegation or sub-delegation, who possess the necessary professional skills for the implementation of budget.

The implementation of the budget is performed following the principles of sound financial management, transparency and segregation of duties. Arrangements and internal controls are in place for the prevention and management of conflict of interests as well as the identification and reporting of irregular and suspected illegal activity, including instances of financial fraud,

¹² In 2017, there were 4 concluded procurement procedures under Art 134(1)(a) to (f) RAP with an aggregated value of 747,000 EUR. In 2018, there was 1 concluded procurement procedure under ex Art 134(1)(a) to (f) RAP for a value of 220,000 EUR. In 2019, there was 1 concluded procurement procedure under points 11.1 (a) to (f) of Annex I FR for a value of 24,623 EUR.

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supported by *ex-ante* and *ex-post* financial controls, next to the conservation of records underlying the financial transactions. The delegations and sub-delegations are subject to an annual validation of user access rights in the Accrual Based Accounting System (ABAC), performed by Europol's Internal Audit Capability (IAC), cross-checking whether these are in line with the delegations and corresponding responsibilities entrusted to staff.

The delegations and sub-delegations are maintained as part of Europol's Financial Model, last revised in full in December 2019, in light of the new Europol Financial Rules which became applicable in October 2019. The Financial Model delegations, summarised in the "Delegation Matrix" of Europol – approved by the Authorising Officer (AO) and available to all staff for internal transparency, are maintained and are updated on a continuous basis with a view to ensuring efficient, effective and compliant budget implementation.

Monthly, quarterly and yearly financial reporting mechanism are in place, and no information was identified which led to the initiation of an administrative inquiry by Europol's Internal Investigation Service (IIS) or an internal investigation by OLAF with respect to the performance of financial delegations regarding the implementation of revenue and expenditure at Europol.

2.5. Human Resources management

2.5.1. Staff figures and Establishment Plan

The 2020 Establishment Plan had a total number of 615 TA posts. Compared to the 2019 Establishment Plan (591 TA posts), this represents an increase of 24 TA posts in line with the adopted 2020 budget.

On 31 December 2020, the total number of staff employed by Europol was 778: 575 staff in Establishment Plan (TA posts) and 203 Contract Agents (including 12 funded by grants); the number of non-Europol staff (Seconded National Experts, Liaison Officers and staff of Liaison Bureaus, Interns and Contractors) was 545.

During 2020, 103 new staff joined Europol (76 Temporary Agents and 27 Contract Agents), while 81 staff left the Organisation (50 Temporary Agents and 31 Contract Agents).

2.5.2. Main changes in HR policies

In 2020, Europol successfully focused on carrying out selection procedures for TA roles in order to secure core staff, with a resulting vacancy rate at year-end of 1%. The **Decision of the Executive Director on Internal Selection Procedures for temporary staff under Article 2(f)** of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union was revised to allow for the simultaneous publication of internal and external vacancy notices.

Due to the implications for travel and face-to-face meetings generated by the COVID-19 situation, Europol transitioned from on-site recruitments carried out at the HQ to **online tests and video interviews** for the majority of roles as of Q1 2020 (mid-February onwards). Until further notice, all selections are carried out remotely, including Assessment Centres for management roles.

Europol is currently exploring possibilities for proctored (supervised) testing and the inclusion of psychometric assessments in selection procedures.

In addition, the previously paper-based application process for Seconded National Experts was adapted in April 2020 to allow for applications to be submitted by email, with the changes enshrined in the **Decision of the Executive Director on the selection procedure for Seconded National Experts (SNEs)** of 3 April 2020.

In 2020 the **Decision of the Executive Director on Telework** was also amended in order to remove the restriction to access operational information while teleworking and allow the use of

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teleworking via the Mobile Offices and to empower the line manager, rather than DEDC, to approve teleworking requests.

The **Europol Medical Service was established** by the Decision of the Executive Director dated 2 June 2020. The Medical Service is entrusted to perform the Medical and Occupational health services and duties as laid down by the Staff Regulations of Officials of the European Union.

2.5.3. Implementing rules adopted in 2020

In 2020, the following **implementing rules of the Staff Regulations** were adopted by the Management Board of Europol:

- Commission Decision C(2019) 6855 of 4 October 2019 on procedures for dealing with professional incompetence;
- Commission Decision C(2019)7822 of 30 October 2019 amending Commission Decision C(2004) 1318 of 7 April 2004 on the duties of Commission drivers;
- Commission Decision C(2020) 1559 of 16 March 2020 amending Decision C(2013) 9051 of 16 December 2013 on leave;
- Decision of the Management Board of Europol on the entry into force at Europol of Commission Decision C(2020) 1559 amending Decision C(2013) 9051 of 16 December 2013 on leave;
- Commission Decision C(2020) 4818 amending the Commission Decision C(2011)1278 of 3 March 2011 on the general implementing provisions for Articles 11 and 12 of Annex VIII to the Staff Regulations on the transfer of pension rights ;
- Decision of the Management Board of Europol repealing certain provisions of the Management Board Decision of 17 November 2009 on the adoption of implementing rules to the Staff Regulations;

In 2020, the following **implementing rules of the Europol Regulation** were adopted by the Management Board of Europol:

- Decision of the Management Board of Europol defining the Europol posts that can be filled only by staff engaged from the competent authorities of the Member States ("restricted posts") (amendment).

2.5.4. Vacancy rate

The vacancy rate at year-end 2020 was 1.0% (575 out of 615 posts were in post and 34 offer letters were sent), while the target was 2%. The vacancy rate in 2019 was 3.6%.

2.5.5. Gender representation

At the end of 2020, female staff represented 34% of all staff working for Europol and occupied 28% of established (TA) posts filled. This is in line with the previous year. Women occupied 17% of staff in Senior Specialist / Senior Analyst positions (i.e. 28 out of 169 staff in these posts), similarly to 2019. The percentage of female staff members in Head of Unit and equivalent or higher positions was 21% (7 staff members), compared to 16% in the previous year.

Europol is an equal opportunity employer and welcomes applications without distinction on grounds of gender, sexual orientation, national, ethnic or social origin, religion or beliefs, family situation, age, disability, or other non-merit factors. Employment decisions are based on business needs, job requirements and qualifications, experience and skills.

Europol provides a diverse and inclusive work environment to all and strives to recruit, develop and retain a diverse and talented workforce through application of equal opportunity and impartiality.

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Equal opportunity notices are included in vacancy announcements, recruitment guidelines and Europol's website.

2.5.6. Member States representation

The countries with the largest representation among staff were the Netherlands, Spain, Italy, Greece, Romania, Germany, France, Portugal and Poland.

Comparing Europol's staff nationality share to the EU MS population share, Germany, France and Poland are still underrepresented while the Netherlands, Greece, Romania, Portugal and Spain are overrepresented.

Detailed graphs can be found in [Annex V-d](#).

2.5.7. Annual Assessment and reclassification

The Annual Appraisal Exercise 2020 was launched on 15 January 2020 and closed on 20 May 2020 with a completion rate of 93%, compared to 94% by the end of the year.

The Europol Reclassification Exercise 2020 was launched through an Administrative Notice published on 28 May 2020, following the closure of the Annual Appraisal Exercise 2020.

The budgetary limit for the Reclassification Exercise 2020 was set at a maximum of 20% of eligible Temporary Agent staff and 25% of eligible Contract Agent staff, taking into account reclassification targets per grade (on average over 5 years) defined in Annex II of the MB Decision on Reclassification for Temporary Agent staff and article 6 of the MB decision on Reclassification for Contract Agent staff, the Staff Establishment Plan and the financial resources available. The exercise was completed by the end of the year and the total number of staff reclassified was 76 (42 Administrators (AD), 1 Assistant (AST) and 33 Contract Agent (CA)) which is 10% of the staff population (posts filled at year-end).

2.6. Internal audit management

2.6.1. Internal Audit Capability (IAC)

In 2020, the IAC completed the following audit engagements:

- Audit engagement on the **renewal process of employment contracts**: The purpose of this engagement was to provide reasonable assurance on the adequacy of Europol's internal control systems relating to the renewal of employment contracts for Temporary Agents (TA) and Contract Agents (CA). The engagement aimed to ascertain that relevant documented rules, processes and/or procedures under the existing framework existed, were being adequately and consistently applied and that control processes were established, communicated and implemented in an efficient and effective manner. The IAC concluded that, overall, the controls put in place for contract renewals under the present policy are adequate, observed several strengths but also areas for improvements for which it issued eight recommendations.
- Audit engagement on **asset management**: The purpose of this engagement was to provide reasonable assurance on the adequacy of Europol's internal control systems relating to the management of fixed assets, including systematically guiding the acquisition, use and disposal of assets and managing related risks and costs over all phases of the asset life cycle. The IAC identified shortcomings leading to the formulation thirty-nine recommendations and concluded that, overall, the controls put in place for managing Europol's fixed assets are marginally satisfactory.
- **Validation of user access rights granted in ABAC**: In accordance with the internal rules on the implementation of the general budget of the EU, the European Commission requested

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the ED to validate that the user access rights granted in the ABAC (Accrual Based Accounting) system are in line with the delegations entrusted to the staff under her responsibility. The purpose of this audit was to provide reasonable assurance regarding the compatibility between the ABAC authorisations granted under Europol's financial rules and the actual responsibilities entrusted to its users, as well as the adequacy of the financial roles assigned under the Guide to missions and authorised travel and the relevant authorisations in the IT system managing the mission expenses of Europol staff. The IAC concluded that the controls facilitating the business objectives in scope of the engagement are managed at a strong level and issued three recommendations.

- **ISO 17020:2012 audit of Europol's Document Forensics:** The IAC performs an audit of Europol's Document Forensics on an annual basis, in accordance with the requirements of the International Standard (ISO) 17020:2012 (Conformity assessment – Requirements for the operation of various types of bodies performing inspection). The objectives of the audit are to determine whether the activities in the Documents Forensics Laboratory are in conformity with 17020:2012, and whether the Laboratory's Quality Management System is adequately maintained. Non-conformities were not identified and three observations were noted, one of which qualifies as an opportunity for improvement.

Finally, the IAC conducted a **risk assessment of the activities leading to the operational products and services** that the Agency delivers to its stakeholders, as well as a **follow-up exercise on recommendations** stemming from audits performed by the IAC during the period 2010-2018 to determine whether effective corrective actions and, where relevant, adequate additional controls have been implemented.

An **audit on diversity, equality and inclusion** and an assessment of **Europol's ethics package** were initiated in the last quarter of 2020.

2.6.2. Data Protection Function (DPF)

The workload of the DPF was particularly high in 2020. This was mainly due to the support required regarding the proceedings related to **prior consultation cases brought to the EDPS** (Art. 39 ER). The number of consultations initiated and the technical complexity of the new types of processing operations continued to grow. The overall increase of Europol's activities paired with an increase of operational personal data processed by Europol, the continued high number of recommendations provided by the EDPS in various business areas in the context of inspections, inquiries and prior consultations as well as the increased work in relation to data subject access requests (513 requests received which represents a 40% increase compared to 2019) meant that the DPF remained in a very challenging staffing situation throughout 2020.

According to **Article 39 ER**, new types of operational processing operations that include processing of sensitive categories of personal data and/or data that present a specific risk for the fundamental rights and freedoms of data subjects, and that have been launched or substantially changed after 1 May 2017, are subject to prior consultation by the European Data Protection Supervisor. The prior consultation shall be carried out by the EDPS following receipt of a notification from the DPO. Since the entry into force of the Europol Regulation, the DPF has extensively worked on establishing the prior consultation process at Europol. This included creating the **Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)** template as well as the complete actual process of implementation of the provision. DPIA as a process is designed to describe the processing, assess its necessity and proportionality and help manage the risks to the rights and freedoms of natural persons resulting from the processing of personal data by assessing them and determining the measures to address them.

On the **administrative data processing** area, 2020 saw a very significant increase of DPF involvement and guidance. Notably, the processing of personal data with regard to the COVID-

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19 situation and advice given by the DPF with regard to the handling of the pandemic are also essential parts of the increased workload.

In addition, the DPF took charge of all **data subjects' requests** (Art. 36 requests). Article 36 ER grants the right to any citizen, at reasonable intervals, to obtain information on whether personal data relating to him/her are processed by Europol. In 2020, there were in total 513 requests. The increase of data subject requests is quite substantial compared to previous years (increase of around 40% in comparison to 2019).

In 2020, the DPF continued to foster the data protection culture within the organisation by **training** staff members as well as external stakeholders by sharing knowledge and expertise. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic most trainings had to be provided in an online setting. The newcomers' induction session reinforces the knowledge acquired with the e-learning module by focusing, among others, on data protection principles and processing purposes, data subject access rights, prior consultations, personal data breaches, transfer of personal data to third countries and international organisations, data protection supervision and COVID-19. Throughout 2020, the DPF provided the newcomers induction programme on data protection to 330 colleagues.

The Guest Officers (GOs) trainings were also affected by the COVID-19 measures and travel restrictions. Trainings took place onsite until February. They then got suspended until August as of when the provision of training took place either online or onsite depending on the pandemic development. In 2020, the DPF worked closely with the organising training unit to overcome the unforeseen situation and has been striving to provide the necessary support and awareness to the target audience.

The **Europol Data Protection Experts Network** (EDEN) within the Europol Platform for Experts (EPE) is an online collaboration platform which has been developed with the aim of involving stakeholders from various backgrounds including law enforcement as well as representatives of relevant private parties, academia and NGO. EDEN is used as a channel to present projects, best practices and events linked to data protection in a law enforcement context. EDEN is an "invitation only" network and not suitable for the exchange of operational personal data or classified information.

The main focus of EDEN related activities throughout 2020 was to prepare and host the fifth annual event. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the event was the **first digital EDEN Conference hosted by Europol** on 17 December 2020. As in previous years, the conference was co-organised with the **Academy of European Law (ERA)** which is a centre of expert knowledge and debate in European law that provides individuals with the opportunity to learn, discuss and network with top speakers about topics connected to data protection in law enforcement.

2.7. External audit management

2.7.1. Internal Audit Service of the European Commission (IAS)

The IAS Strategic Internal Audit Plan (SIAP 2018-2020), based on the risk assessment of Europol's administrative processes performed in 2017, outlined four audit topics for Europol for the period from 2018 to 2020: HR management, IT security, contract management and anti-fraud strategy including ethics, as a reserve topic. HR management and ethics related topics were audited in 2018 and the audit on IT Security was initiated in 2019.

As per the regular process, the IAS reviewed, at the end of 2019, the audit plan for Europol to assess whether the remaining audit topics, identified in the SIAP 2018-2020, were still relevant and whether new developments - including external and internal developments and from the peer review of critical risks, audit reports and follow-up engagements - required the introduction of new audit topics and to prioritise the different topics for the year 2020. Following this review,

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the IAS did not identify any new audit topics and the remaining topics of IT Security and contract management were prioritised for implementation in 2020 and 2021, respectively.

The IAS audit on **IT Security** was completed in the first semester of 2020 and, in the audit report, the IAS concluded that "... the governance, management and control processes put in place by Europol for its IT security are **adequately designed and effectively implemented**. ..." ¹³. While the audit identified several strengths across the IT security internal controls, the IAS issued three audit recommendations (graded as important) to suggest further improvements concerning Europol's IT security related documentation, technical IT controls and disaster recovery planning. Europol's action plan to the recommendations was accepted by the IAS and is being implemented in line with the envisaged planning.

The audit on **contract management** commenced at the end of 2020, with the preliminary work for the definition of the audit scope scheduled in the first quarter of 2021, including also the review of a sample of contracts.

The IAS assessment on the status of the three remaining audit recommendations (all graded as important) from the 2018 audit on **HR management and ethics** was pending at the end of 2020 ¹⁴. Two of the three recommendations were reported by Europol to the IAS as implemented in 2020. Accordingly, by the end of 2020, there was one pending recommendation from previous years, graded as important, from the audit performed on HR management and ethics. The remaining activities for this pending recommendation, which has partially been implemented, are being completed in line with the envisaged updated action planning (i.e. a review of the process description for administrative inquiry and disciplinary proceedings, once the respective model decision by the European Commission has been issued ¹⁵ and is adjusted to Europol's specific environment).

2.7.2. European Court of Auditors (ECA)

The audit activities concerning the annual accounts of Europol for the year 2019 were performed by the ECA, supported by an independent external audit as described in Article 104 of the Financial Regulation applicable to Europol, in the period between November 2019 and March 2020.

Europol received a **positive audit opinion on the financial implementation of the provisional annual accounts with respect to the financial year 2019** ¹⁶. In June 2020, the

¹³ Emphasis highlighting added in the quote from the report.

¹⁴ Europol received feedback from the IAS at the end of April 2021 that two additional actions would be needed for the IAS to consider the two recommendations on ethics training and the appraisal process as closed in full. The two additional actions suggested by the IAS concern the use of the 2021 appraisal exercise as a checkpoint for ethics training and a higher percentage rate of appraisals at the start of the annual reclassification exercise. Europol is engaging with the IAS to obtain measurable indicators when the IAS would consider the actions as completed, given that (a) the tool for the appraisal exercise is not used as a checkpoint instance for ethics training and (b) for all eligible staff members the assessment of merits reports were available in time for the decision on reclassification in 2020 (thus not relying on the completion of appraisals at the start of the reclassification exercise).

¹⁵ The IAS has suggested that the update of the process description for administrative inquiries is "significantly delayed". Europol upholds the position that the update of the process description is undertaken, in view of an efficient use of resources, once the model decision of the European Commission has been issued (which is expected by the end of 2021). The corresponding risk profile identified at the time of the audit in 2018 has not materialised to date, and a process to conduct administrative inquiries is in place.

¹⁶ Report on the annual accounts of the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) for the financial year 2019, together with the Agency's reply: "Opinion on the reliability of the accounts: In our opinion, the accounts of the Agency for the year ended 31 December 2019 present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Agency at 31 December 2019, the results of its operations, its cash flows, and the changes in net assets for the year then ended, in accordance with its Financial Regulation and with accounting rules adopted by the Commission's accounting officer. These are based on internationally accepted accounting standards for the public sector."; "Legality and regularity of the transactions underlying the accounts: Revenue - Opinion on the legality and regularity of revenue underlying the accounts: In our opinion, revenue underlying the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2019 is legal and regular in all material respects. Payments - Opinion on the legality and regularity of payments underlying the accounts: In our opinion, payments underlying the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2019 are legal and regular in all material respects."

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Europol MB adopted the opinion on the final annual accounts for 2019. This opinion, together with the final annual accounts 2019, was submitted to the ECA, the European Commission's Accounting Officer, the discharge authority (Council and the European Parliament), and national parliaments in EU Member States.

In October 2020, the ECA issued the **overall assurance statement, comprising a positive opinion in relation to the reliability of the 2019 final annual accounts**, as well as the **legality and regularity** of the underlying financial transactions in all material aspects¹⁷.

For the **financial year 2020**, the ECA carried out the **regular financial audit** in January 2021, covering the aspects of regularity and legality of the financial transactions which included the review of a sample of financial transactions and procurement measures. Additionally, the ECA conducted a **review of the measures taken by EU Agencies to maintain business continuity during the COVID-19 pandemic** and their impact on service delivery, a horizontal topic addressed by the ECA across EU Agencies.

The aspect of the **reliability of the information provided in the provisional accounts 2020** was completed **by an external auditor** in March 2021, as provided for in Article 104 of the Financial Regulation applicable to Europol.

All audit activities performed in relation to the financial year 2020 will subsequently be reviewed by the ECA, with a view to expressing a formal opinion on the closure of the financial year 2020, for the final accounts to be issued by 1 July 2021, including an opinion of the MB on the final accounts, as per the respective process set out in the Financial Regulation applicable to Europol. At the end of 2020, **no issue of a material nature had been identified in relation to the closure of the financial year 2020 by Europol**.

Further to the audit activities on the annual accounts, the ECA's special report on the "**Future of EU agencies - Potential for more flexibility and cooperation**" was published in October 2020. From an overall perspective the ECA concludes that "... agencies working in the area of Justice and Home Affairs ... are amongst the internationally most active agencies ...". In terms of creating awareness and transparency about the work of EU agencies for the benefit of EU citizens, **Europol is mentioned most prominently across all agencies in media**.

Europol also contributed to the ECA review of **EU actions to tackle plastic waste** and provided the ECA with an overview of the activities of Europol in the area of **environmental crime**, and in particular the results of Europol's operation Green Tuscany. The ECA review on plastic waste was published in October 2020 and positively highlights Europol's role in fighting illegal waste disposal.

In 2020, the ECA also conducted a **performance audit** at Europol to assess whether **Europol effectively supported Member States in combatting migrant smuggling**. The audit fieldwork was completed at the end of 2020 and the results of the audit will become available in 2021.

Furthermore, the ECA also initiated **an audit on the protection of intellectual property rights (IPR) in the Single Market**, examining the EU IPR regulatory framework and its enforcement. The audit, which involves several European Commission Directorate Generals (DGs)¹⁸, OLAF, EUIPO, Europol and a sample of Member States, is envisaged to be finalised in the course of 2021. In relation to Europol, the ECA is assessing the extent to which Europol developed sufficient initiatives to **raise public awareness** and **harmonised IPR enforcement actions** in Member States.

¹⁷ Please refer to footnote 16 for the full quote of the respective extract of the audit opinion

¹⁸ DG TAXUD, DG GROW, DG AGRI

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2.7.3. European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS)

In 2020, the cooperation with the EDPS developed further and became even more regular. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic also the meetings with the EDPS mostly had to be carried out online.

Eleven regular working level meetings held in 2020 addressed recurrent topics such as:

- EDPS demands and deadlines;
- DPF access to operational information data by provision of Mobile Offices;
- COVID-19 related measures and impact;
- Europol's Computer Forensic Network in the Forensic IT environment;
- Data subject access requests;
- Statistics according to Article 30(6) and 31(3) ER;
- Cooperation with the UK;
- The Europol Regulation Recast.

Throughout 2020, the DPF and the EDPS were constantly in touch in order to assess possibilities for the EDPS to carry out their **annual inspection** at Europol onsite. Due to the evolvement of the pandemic the EDPS ultimately decided not to go ahead with their initial plan of an onsite inspection. Joint efforts instead focussed on how the EDPS could best be placed into a position to also inspect Europol remotely in light of the security requirements of communications vis-à-vis the envisaged purpose of exchange of operational data.

Also in 2020, the EDPS launched a remote audit to EU bodies and agencies of the information provided to data subjects when they sign up to Newsletters and other subscriptions under Regulation (EU) 2018/1725.

One of the topics receiving special attention of the EDPS since 2019 was the **processing of data for forensic purposes** and the challenge of **Big Data** for an organisation such as Europol.

In September 2020 and after nearly 16 months of inquiry, the EDPS issued an admonishment decision of Europol concerning an own initiative inquiry on "**Europol's Big Data Challenge**". The EDPS decision emphasises that Europol must not process personal data beyond the categories of data subjects mentioned in Annex II of the ER (suspects, potential future criminals, contacts and associates, victims, witnesses and informants of criminal activities). At the same time, the EDPS acknowledged that it is not always possible for Europol to ascertain from the outset that all underlying information complies with the list of data subject categories. The EDPS therefore considered that imposing an order of erasure of personal data or issuing a processing ban would not be proportionate.

To summarise, the background of the EDPS admonishment is that the present legal framework requires Europol to establish which categories of data subjects are included precisely in each and every contribution the organisation receives. This applies regardless of the size of the datasets provided to the agency.

The EDPS inquiry shows that it is not always possible for Europol to meet these standards when the volume of information is too large. The EDPS expressed trust in Europol and called the attention of the legislator towards the need for legal clarity. Europol actively cooperated at the highest management level with the DPF and EDPS both before and after the decision and took action by developing an Action Plan to address the EDPS comments.

Europol is working hard on the **design of effective data protection safeguards**. Identified issues are being tackled together with the Supervisor and with the Member States.

The proposal for a **Europol Regulation recast** is the opportunity to address the underlying legal issues.

2.8. Follow up of recommendations and action plans for audits

In 2020, Europol thoroughly responded to the audit findings of the different assurance providers. **No audit findings graded as critical or very important were pending in relation to the ECA, the IAS or the European Ombudsman.** Concerning the pending IAC recommendations at the end of 2020, further follow-on actions were on-going.

The **ECA report on the annual accounts contained three comments**, not qualifying the assurance statement on the 2019 annual accounts, relating to Europol's late payment rate, Europol's 2019 tender for the provision of furniture and related aspects, and the extension of a travel service contract. Europol has responded to the comments in consultation with the ECA, explaining that the organisation exerted due diligence and applied sound financial management in the respective cases audited, with the related administrative processes being assessed by Europol as robust¹⁹.

By the end of 2020, in relation to recommendations issued by the **IAS**, there was **one pending recommendation**, graded as important, which is planned for completion in 2021 (see [section 2.7.1.](#)).

In 2020, the **IAC issued 11 new recommendations** and one opportunity for improvement. Overall during 2020, good progress was noted in relation to the follow-up of IAC audit recommendations with **86% implementation rate of critical and very important recommendations** that were foreseen for completion in 2020 in the areas of operational analysis, contract and grant management and learning, training and development. The single pending critical IAC audit recommendation is being implemented in line with the agreed action plan requiring the evaluation of the effectiveness of Europol's Learning and Development Policy, which, in line with the policy, is foreseen at the end of a period of three years following its adoption, thus by the end of 2022.

Notwithstanding the formal assessment by the IAC, the implementation rates for all the recommendations of the IAC audit reports are assessed by Europol as set out in [Annex XI](#).

Europol will continue to address the recommendations of the IAC as part of the regular business planning of the organisation and monitors the progress made for the implementation of the recommendations made by all of Europol's assurance providers. **Regular reporting is provided to the MB on the follow-up status of audit recommendations.**

Europol also completed an independent **external performance audit report on IT and Information Management (IM) capabilities** at Europol in November 2020. It covered, from an overall perspective, organisational aspects related to people, processes and technology.

The audit report came to the overall conclusion that "[...] the employees of Europol are committed to the success of the organisation which contributes to productivity and a positive working environment. We noted that Europol values quality and continuously improves their products and services. [...] The outcome of this report should be read as an opportunity for further continuous improvements and efficiency, reflecting the strategic priority to become the model EU law enforcement agency. No indications of a systemic or material shortcoming which would put into question the performance of Europol with regard to the objectives of the audit engagement were identified. [...]". The audit report outlines ten areas for further consideration and action by Europol on the way forward.²⁰

¹⁹ Please refer to [Annex XIII - Extract from the European Court of Auditors \(ECA\) report](#)

²⁰ Such as the establishment of a central Chief Information Officer (CIO) Office, a review of current Performance Indicators (PIs) related to IT/IM delivery, expansion of trend monitoring of technological and innovation related developments, with regard to best practice examples at national level in Member States and the industry alike.

2.9. Follow up of observations from the discharge authority

In May 2020, **the European Parliament granted discharge** to the Executive Director of Europol with respect to the **implementation of the budget for the financial year 2018**. The discharge proceedings in relation to the financial year 2019 were well underway at the end of 2020.

In September 2020, Europol provided an update to the European Parliament concerning the **follow-on actions taken by Europol in relation to the European Parliament's discharge decision** taken in May 2020 for the financial year 2018, in line with previous reporting to the MB.

In response to a **questionnaire** - horizontal questions addressed to all EU agencies and Europol-specific questions from the **Standing Committee on Budgetary Control (CONT) of the European Parliament** - Europol explained the response of the Agency concerning the observations of the ECA on the financial year 2019, the status of Europol's response to the resolution of the European Parliament (accompanying the discharge decision taken in May 2020), and provided further information on topics including inter-agency cooperation, staff (well-being), transparency and outreach activities.

On 16 February 2021, the **Council** adopted, in written procedure, the recommendation to the European Parliament to give discharge to Europol in respect of the implementation of the budget for the **financial year 2019**²¹. On 22 March 2021, the **Budgetary Control (CONT) Committee** adopted the draft resolution accompanying the discharge decision by the European Parliament on the **closure of the financial year 2019, including the proposal to grant discharge to Europol**²². The final version was adopted by the European Parliament Plenary on 28 April 2021, granting discharge to Europol for the implementation of the financial year 2019.

2.10. Environmental Strategy

In line with the strategic priority²³ of being the model EU law enforcement agency with strong performance, good governance and accountability, promoting diversity and staff well-being, Europol is highly committed to its **Environmental Strategy**.

Europol recognises its responsibility for making a positive contribution to sustainable development and commits itself to protect the environment by limiting the environmental impact of its activities and to continuously improve its environmental performance.

In support of that, Europol is implementing an **Environmental Management System (EMS)**, complying with **ISO 14001: 2015** requirements and the **Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS)**.

Europol's main goal is to become an **EMAS registered organisation** and to maintain its registration and an efficient EMS. It is foreseen to initiate the pre-certification process with an external verifier in the second quarter of 2021.

Europol continued making progress in order to establish an EMS in line with the requirements of EMAS and ISO 14001:2015. Due to COVID-19, the implementation of EMAS project deliverables, foreseen in 2020, were postponed and re-scheduled to 2021. Nevertheless, the implementation of Europol's response measures to the COVID-19 pandemic included several planned actions

²¹ Council recommendations on the discharge to be given to the bodies set up under the TFEU and the Euratom Treaty in respect of the implementation of the budget for the financial year 2019, Council Secretariat file no. 5793/21 FIN 84 PE-L 5 + ADD 1

²² Draft report on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) for the financial year 2019 (2020/2172(DEC)), 11 January 2021

²³ Europol Strategy 2020+, Strategic Priority 5: Be the model EU Law Enforcement organisation.

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from Europol's **Environmental Objectives and Action Plan 2020-2022**, such as improved videoconferencing solutions and remote working. It is expected that these measures will continue after the end of the pandemic and will positively influence Europol's sustainability goals, especially due to teleworking and fewer business trips.

In 2020, progress was made regarding the development of **EMAS process descriptions** and the update of **EMS documentation**. Also, the evaluation of the Environmental Performance in 2019 was performed and the collection of performance data for 2020 will be completed in 2021. Additionally, Europol reviewed and updated the register of applicable environmental legislation.

Environmental performance

Europol's activities have both direct and indirect impacts on the environment. Under EMAS, Europol monitors those activities and significant environmental aspects that influence Europol's carbon footprint and impact for environment. The following **environmental aspects** are applicable:

- Energy consumption;
- Water consumption;
- Paper consumption;
- Waste production and separation;
- CO₂ emissions.

In the first quarter of 2020, the EMS was updated with the consumption figures for 2019. The corresponding performance indicators were defined and the evaluation of Europol's sustainable performance over 2019 was completed, including Europol's carbon footprint for the year. The outcome of this exercise showed improvements in all areas, except for office paper and waste, where the planned actions still didn't fully deliver the expected positive results. These results can be found in [Annex IX](#).

Actions to improve and communicate Environmental Performance

Europol's detailed action plan, the "Environmental Objectives and Action Plan 2020 – 2022", defines three areas for sustainable and environmental improvement:

- **Structural environmental management and compliance**, related to the environmental management and communication of the organisation;
- **Sustainable operations**: the overall reduction of the carbon footprint and improved environmental performance by implementing organisational measures to reduce water, energy and paper consumption, waste generation and improved waste separation, reduce CO₂ impact of business related travel, as well as employing sustainable procurement processes and awareness raising activities e.g. on promoting virtual meetings;
- **Social responsibility**: includes initiatives to small-scale nature development possibilities in the direct surrounding of Europol's accommodation.

The aim is to implement measures to improve the environmental performance of the organisation and organise the involved processes in a sustainable manner, with the support of EMAS and implemented EMS tools.

The implementation of improved videoconferencing tools, virtual and hybrid meetings (replacing physical meetings and business travel), introduction of teleworking during the COVID-19 pandemic, waste separation initiative, etc. are expected to **significantly contribute to improve the organisation's environmental performance in 2020**.

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An **energy audit**, in line with the European Energy Directive (EED) was performed during the year at Europol's headquarters. The recommendations of this audit will be aligned with the Host State, as owner of the building, to implement sustainable improvements. Legal compliance (e.g. using of natural wells for cooling/heating of the building) was also monitored in 2020.

Furthermore, Europol systematically and consistently integrates EMAS and the organisation's environmental requirements in the development process of its **Strategic Housing Roadmap**.

In line with EMAS, Europol intends to publish, on an annual basis, its **Environmental Statement**, starting in 2021. An update on the progress made in the implementation of EMAS was presented to the Management Board in December 2020.

Lastly, several **awareness raising initiatives** for staff were organised during the year.

Part III. Assessment of the effectiveness of the internal control systems

3.1. Effectiveness of internal control systems

3.1.1. Europol Internal Control System

Europol assesses the effectiveness of the Europol Internal Control System (ICS) in line with the Internal Control Framework (ICF) of Europol, as adopted by the Europol MB in December 2018. The assessment of the Europol Internal Control System (ICS) is based on **continuous monitoring** and an annual assessment, using both quantitative and qualitative measurements, and is carried out at principle, component level and the ICS as a whole. Based on the analysis of the results at component level, Europol assesses whether the components are operating together in an integrated manner.

The **quantitative measurements** cover 61 internal control indicators and identified instances of non-compliance. A self-assessment is conducted for the selected internal control indicators by comparing actual performance against defined baselines and targets. Internal control indicators, and related baselines and targets, are set for each principle.

Qualitative measurements comprise of strengths and weaknesses reported internally, reporting on potential internal control deficiencies, including qualitative information resulting from the application of Europol's whistle-blowing arrangements, ongoing monitoring of the implementation of the Anti-Fraud Strategy, audit findings and recommendations, and identified internal control weaknesses and strengths, including the aspect of cost and benefit of controls.

The monitoring of the internal control indicators is logged in the quarterly corporate performance reporting as an integral part of the annual planning and performance reporting cycle.

3.1.1. Risk management

For the year 2020, a list of **six critical**²⁴ **threats and opportunities** was provided in Annex VIII of the Programming Document 2020-2022.

Four critical risks as **threats** to the achievement of Europol's objectives were identified, relating to (1) Europol's capability to deliver on the required operational demand in light of various risk factors, such the availability of adequate resources and information, (2) the delivery and further development of the organisational core systems and the implementation of Europol's share of the EU interoperability agenda on time, within budget margins and against enhanced compliance requirements, (3) the implementation of additional (ad hoc) requests placed upon Europol from its various key stakeholders, including the political level, and (4) a multifaceted, complex business continuity profile (ranging from aspects such as continuous change, ever-evolving technological developments, staff turnover, cybersecurity threats, uncertain effects in view of Brexit).

Two key opportunities were assessed to affect the business delivery, namely (1) the EU Security Union Strategy driven by the European Commission, enhancing coherence across the security architecture EU agencies and cooperation with respective authorities in EU Member States, a balanced approach between data protection and an efficient achievement of Europol's business, as well as elevated parliamentary oversight for the benefit of EU citizens, and (2) a profile and awareness boost for Europol as the key agency in the EU's internal security architecture, supporting overall cohesion and solidarity, given internal security being perceived as a connecting factor across Member States.

From an overall perspective, the critical risk profile projected for 2020 came to pass. **Risk management activities at Europol focused on addressing audit requirements** from

²⁴ Severe impact and high probability

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Europol's external and internal audit activities (ECA, IAS and IAC) as well as enhanced security and data protection requirements, in particular in light of the governance provisions under the Europol Regulation, the operational needs of the organisation and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2020, Europol took mitigating activities to assess and address the **impact of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis from a business continuity perspective**, pro-actively assessing the changes in the criminal activities landscape, in order to facilitate the related law enforcement response at Europol and for EU Member States.

Risk management reporting continued to be fully integrated in the regular performance reporting processes and the preparatory work for the implementation of a new corporate risk and audit management tool was initiated.

In 2020, Europol took the lead in the **risk assessment peer review among JHA Agencies** – as part of the EU Agencies peer review exercise run by the EU Agencies Network (EUAN) - for the second consecutive year, with a view to identifying, assessing and sharing cross-agencies critical risks in JHA Agencies. The risks discussed by JHA agencies closely resemble the corporate risk profile as set out in the Programming Document 2020-2022.

Mitigation activities at Europol also addressed the risks affecting the core business objectives set for the Work Programme 2020, in particular in relation to the further development and management of high quality analytical support and an evolving portfolio of cross-cutting operational capabilities.

Europol's **corporate risk profile** in 2020 was characterised by:

- **Key change endeavours and their governance**, as well as assimilability of change, in particular the implementation of the Europol Strategy 2020+ affecting the core business, with work progressing well for the timely establishment of EFEC and the overall evolution of the organisational set-up, as well as analysis processes, a new financing scheme for HVTs and OTF support in the Operations Directorate, as well as the revision and execution of the ICT work plan for 2020, given that the NEO programme was enlarged to include a new design for the Computer Forensic Network (CFN), next to the ongoing efforts to build a future-proof common data repository solution for all core business data.
- **Budget and human resources challenges**: Considering the high ICT demand and that staff allocation was prioritised to operational support activities in recent years, the workforce to support the core business in infrastructure areas was under continuous pressure in order to achieve a high-level implementation of business delivery and the assigned budget. The overall business delivery risk profile was compounded by the required re-launch of the high-value tender for ICT consultancy services and the vacancy rate throughout the year, due to the spill-over effect from 2019 in light of the adjustments needed for the implementation of the new rules on TA 2(f), high staff turnover, as well as the impact of COVID-19 on the recruitment and selection process.
- **The impact of COVID-19** – including emerging and changing trends in serious and organised crime – was monitored by Europol and affected its support and core business. As reported to the Europol MB in December 2020, Europol is satisfied with the high level of resilience and preparedness to absorb the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic throughout the organisation. Europol successfully took priority operational support activities forward, such as the dismantling of an encrypted phone network widely used by criminal networks, as well as the crackdown of a drug trafficking network smuggling cocaine from Brazil into Europe, with over 12 Million Euros in cash seized in one Member State alone.

In addition, Europol supported the initiative of Italy to convene a Working Group attended by police chiefs and senior police leaders with the aim to discuss COVID-19-related crime

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threats, share best practices and *modi operandi*. The initiative has contributed to setting the strategic direction at police chief level to respond to the continuously developing crime threats resulting from COVID-19.

On the way forward, Europol will take **further targeted risk response action**, in particular with regard to **mitigating the impact of COVID-19**, addressing current uncertainties resulting from **Brexit** with regard to operational cooperation, the further **development of its operational processes** as well as the outcome of the performance **audit on Europol's IT and IM capabilities**.

3.1.2. Anti-fraud strategy

Europol's Anti-Fraud Strategy was developed in 2017, taking into consideration the principles set in the Anti-Fraud Strategy of the European Commission as well as the priorities defined by the Commission within the framework of the Common Approach on EU Decentralised Agencies. This strategy particularly focused on strengthening anti-fraud capabilities through awareness raising, prevention, detection and ensuring the proper handling of the conflict of interests. The methodology used strongly built on a hybrid fraud-risk assessment considering key elements of an anti-fraud strategy: anti-fraud culture, anti-fraud awareness, the different stages of the anti-fraud cycle and the thirteen most common fraud risk scenarios as defined by OLAF. As a result of this, **four objectives** were developed:

- Promote Anti-Fraud Culture;
- Enhance Anti-Fraud Awareness;
- Expand Anti-Fraud Cycle Capabilities;
- Fraud Risk Scenario Process Improvements.

To achieve these objectives, **sixteen detailed actions were defined** calling for cross-departmental cooperation to provide required deliverables and meet predefined **performance indicators**. The actions referred to:

- Governance framework documentation to address whistle-blowing;
- Conflict of interest;
- Gift handling and code of conduct;
- Communication campaigns and anti-fraud awareness and training events;
- Capability building through defined roles and responsibilities;
- Use of tools for early-stage identification of potential fraudulent activities;
- Closer cooperation between OLAF and the Internal Investigations Service (IIS);
- Process improvements in the area of procurement and contract implementation.

By the end of 2020, fifteen actions were completed and the one remaining activity, referring to the refinement of sensitive functions was underway, in line with priorities set.

Europol had already received positive audit assurance from the Internal Audit Service regarding the **effective design of Europol's anti-fraud and ethics-oriented framework**, concluding that "the Agency's processes for managing HR (performance appraisal and reclassification, recruitment, planning and allocation of human resources) and anti-fraud and ethics-oriented policies and procedures are adequately designed and effective and comply with the existing regulatory and legal framework."

In 2021, a **new Europol Anti-Fraud Strategy will be developed** for the period 2021-2024, considering the principles and priorities, the action plan and the top ten external and internal fraud patterns as identified in the fraud risk assessment accompanying the Anti-Fraud Strategy of the European Commission. Similar to the first Europol Anti-Fraud-Strategy, the new strategy will be developed mainly considering qualitative elements, using empirical methods referring to

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professional judgement of senior and middle management, control and audit functions, of other services in Europol and is going to be supported by data from audits, internal investigations and other relevant sources.

The new Anti-Fraud Strategy will allow to **fine tune existing controls in line with the further development of Europol**, including major legislative changes, while at the same time permitting identifying risks emerging from new fraud patterns.

3.2. Conclusions of the assessment of internal control systems

Based on the analysis of the **five internal control components and 17 principles**, monitored in the course of 2020 using both quantitative and qualitative elements and including a set of 61 internal control indicators, it is assessed that **the components of the internal control framework were present and functioning in an integrated manner across the organisation** and that the internal control system effectively reduced, to an acceptable level, the risk of not achieving the (multi-) annual objectives – relating to operations, reporting, and compliance – of the organisation. Given the ICF and related ICS of Europol are operated in the third year, a review to identify refinement measures with a view to upholding and enhancing the ICS as a whole will be taken forward in 2021. This will include a review of the indicators to gauge the ICS.

3.3. Statement of the Deputy Director in charge of risk management and internal control.

I, the undersigned, Deputy Executive Director in charge of risk management and internal control, declare that with reference to the Europol Internal Control Framework, adopted by the Management Board of Europol at the end of 2018, my assessment - on the basis of internal management reporting available to me and my professional judgement - is that the elements of the Europol Internal Control System (ICS), seen as whole, are effective to enable Europol to achieve its objectives. On the basis of the annual assessment of the ICS on the financial year 2020, I have reported my advice and recommendations on the overall state of internal control in Europol to the Executive Director.

I hereby certify that the information provided in the present Consolidated Annual Activity Report of Europol, and in its annexes, for the financial year 2020 is, to the best of my knowledge, accurate, reliable and complete.



Jürgen Ebner

Deputy Executive Director

The Hague, 9 June 2021

Part IV. Management assurance

4.1. Review of the elements supporting assurance

Europol's building **blocks of assurance** are founded on 6 key elements:

1. A **strong financial model**, with: (a) up-to-date appointment authorisations of financial actors, (b) a charter for authorising officers which promotes transparency and informed decision-making, (c) a central financial verification function and (d) clear guidance to all staff on the expected behaviour (Code of Conduct etc.).
2. A robust **planning and performance measurement capability** at corporate level, covering all aspects of Europol's delivery, including core business performance and the related stakeholder management, with regular reporting and management supervision at Directorate level.
3. A **central contact point** for ensuring that the guidance by **external assurance providers** (in particular the ECA and the IAS) and the discharge authority are communicated and followed up within the organisation.
4. A **Data Protection Function** which upholds the highest standards of data protection, in particular in view of Europol's role as a law enforcement agency, alongside the **Europol Security Committee** in terms of information security assurance.
5. An experienced **Accounting Officer**, supported by a team of two staff members, who is functionally independent to perform the respective duties foreseen by the Financial Regulation applicable to Europol.
6. An **Internal Audit Capability**, which provides an additional element of assurance to the Authorising Officer of Europol throughout the year.

Europol's overall assessment is that **Europol's building blocks of assurance**, next to Europol's **Internal Control Framework (ICF)** and the related assessment of the **Internal Control System (ICS)** provide sufficient input for the [Executive Director's statement of assurance](#) as well as the [statement of assurance of the Deputy Executive Director in charge of risk management and internal control](#) as contained in this consolidated activity report.

4.2. Reservations

No issues requiring a reservation were identified by the end of the financial year 2020.

Part V. Declaration of Assurance

Declaration of Assurance of the Authorising Officer (AO)

I, the undersigned, Executive Director of European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol), in my capacity as Authorising Officer for Europol, as defined in the Financial Regulation applicable to Europol,

- Declare that the information contained in this report gives a true and fair view;²⁵
- State that I have reasonable assurance that the resources assigned to the activities described in this report have been used for their intended purpose and in accordance with the principles of sound financial management, and that the Europol Internal Control System (ICS), including the control procedures put in place, gives the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions;
- Confirm that I am not aware of anything not reported here which could harm the interests of Europol.

This reasonable assurance is based on my own judgement and on the information at my disposal, such as the results of the assessment of the Europol Internal Control System, performance monitoring including financial verification controls, the work of the Internal Audit Service, the Internal Audit Capability of Europol and the reporting of the European Court of Auditors, including for years prior to the year of this declaration.

I hereby certify that the information provided in the present Consolidated Annual Activity Report of Europol, and in its annexes, for the financial year 2020 is, to the best of my knowledge, and on the basis of the assurance given to me, accurate and complete.



Catherine De Bolle

Executive Director

The Hague, 9 June 2021

²⁵ True and fair in this context means a reliable, complete and correct view of the state of affairs in Europol.

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Annex I. Corporate Performance Indicators²⁶

EUROPOL ACTIVITY	CORPORATE PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	SOURCE	END 2019	END 2020	TARGET 2020
A.1. Development of operational systems	Operational Stability - Uptime of Core Systems	ICT monitoring tools	99.6%	99.5%	98.0%
	Number of SIENA messages exchanged by MS, TP and Europol (incl. PCCC)	SIENA	1,242,403	1,266,233	1,200,000 (R)
	Number of SIENA cases initiated by MS, TP and Europol	SIENA	84,697	88,748	80,000 (R)
	Number of objects (all types) in the EIS (MS+Europol)	EIS	1,453,186	1,337,089	1,500,000 (R)
	Number of searches through EIS and QUEST (MS+Europol)	EIS & QUEST	5,356,135	10,231,771	10,000,000
	Number of Cross Border Crime Checks in the EIS related to persons (MS)	EIS	2,736	4,124	2,300
	% of active users on the EPE (% of users who connected at least once per quarter)	EPE	44.0%	44.0%	47.0%
A.2. Information Hub	Speed of first-line response to MS requests (days)	SIENA	6.6	7.7	5.0
	Number of accepted contributions to be processed	SIENA	80,896	85,746	86,000
	Number of SIENA messages exchanged by third parties (Total number of SIENA messages received and sent by Third Parties)	SIENA	176,222	234,650	220,000 (R)
A.3. Combating Serious and Organised Crime	Number of operations supported related to SOC	Internal Overview	726	837	370
	Number of operational reports produced related to SOC (CMR, SIENA HN, OAR, other operational reports)	SIENA	5,322	4,654	3,000
	Satisfaction with operational support and analysis in the area of SOC	Operational Surveys	8.9	8.9	8.5
	Number of cases where High Value Targets identified	Internal Overview	24	60	10
	Number of operational task forces established	Internal Overview	-	11	5
A.4. Combating Cyber Crime	Number of operations supported related to cybercrime	Internal Overview	397	430	350
	Number of operational reports produced related to cybercrime (CMR, SIENA HN, OAR, other operational reports)	SIENA	1,084	2,872	1,000
	Satisfaction with operational support and analysis in the area of cybercrime	Operational Surveys	9.0	8.9	8.5
	Number of forensic jobs performed by EC3	Internal Overview	1,646	1,313	1,000 (R)
	Number of decryption platform successes	Internal Overview	23	13	20

²⁶ All targets market with (R) were reviewed in Q2 due to COVID. More information can be found in [Annex XII](#). For all the corporate performance indicators, the following criteria apply:

- The target is achieved or exceeded.
- The target is not met but performance is better or equal than in the previous year.
- The target is not achieved and performance is worse than in the previous year.
- Performance was not available in 2020

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EUROPOL ACTIVITY	CORPORATE PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	SOURCE	END 2019	END 2020	TARGET 2020	
A.5. Counter-Terrorism	Number of operations supported related to CT	Internal Overview	632	776	✓	670
	Number of operational reports produced related to CT (CMR, SIENA HN, OAR, other operational reports) (including EU IRU)	SIENA	1,883	2,074	✓	1,850
	Satisfaction with operational support and analysis in the area of CT	Operational Surveys	9.1	8.9	✓	8.5
	Volume of content assessed by IRU related to terrorism and violent extremism	IRMa	25,453	16,763	✓	15,000
	% of persons checked for secondary security checks in hotspots	?	-	9.3%	✓	5.0%
A.6. Combatting Financial and Economic Crime	Number of operations supported related to Financial and Economic Crime	Internal Overview	205	334	⚠	350
	Number of operational reports related to Financial and Economic Crime	SIENA	1,137	1,467	⚠	1,700
	Satisfaction with operational support and analysis in the area of Financial and Economic Crime	Operational Surveys	8.1	9.0	✓	8.5
A.7. Provision of cross-cutting operational capabilities	Number of strategic analysis reports produced by Europol	SIENA	166	47	✓	30
	Number of Europol requests for PNR data (Art. 10 PNR Directive)	SIENA / Internal Overview	203	85	✓	85
	Number of new JITs signed	Internal Overview	-	15	✗	30
	Satisfaction with key strategic analysis reports	Surveys	-	-	●	8.5
A.8. Governance, support and administration	% of female staff	Internal Overview	33.0%	34.0%	⚠	40.0%
	Commitment Rate Europol Budget	ABAC	99.4%	99.4%	✓	95.0%
	Payment Rate Europol Budget	ABAC	86.6%	85.1%	✗	90.0%
	Budget Outturn rate	ABAC	1.50%	1.98%	✓	2.00%
	% of late payments	ABAC	21.3%	32.8%	✗	10.0%
	Vacancy rate	Internal Overview	3.6%	1.0%	✓	2.0%
	Sickness rate	Medical Service	-	-	●	3.5%
	Turnover rate (Voluntary + involuntary turnover rate for Europol staff (TA+CA))	Internal Overview	11.7%	10.9%	✓	12.0%
	% of pending critical/very important audit recommendations addressed within the agreed deadline	Internal Overview	94.7%	86.0%	✓	85.0%
	% Staff Engagement	Staff Survey	63.0%	-	●	65.0%
	Number of news articles mentioning Europol (high-impact web-based media)	Media Monitoring tool	-	3,270	✓	2,500

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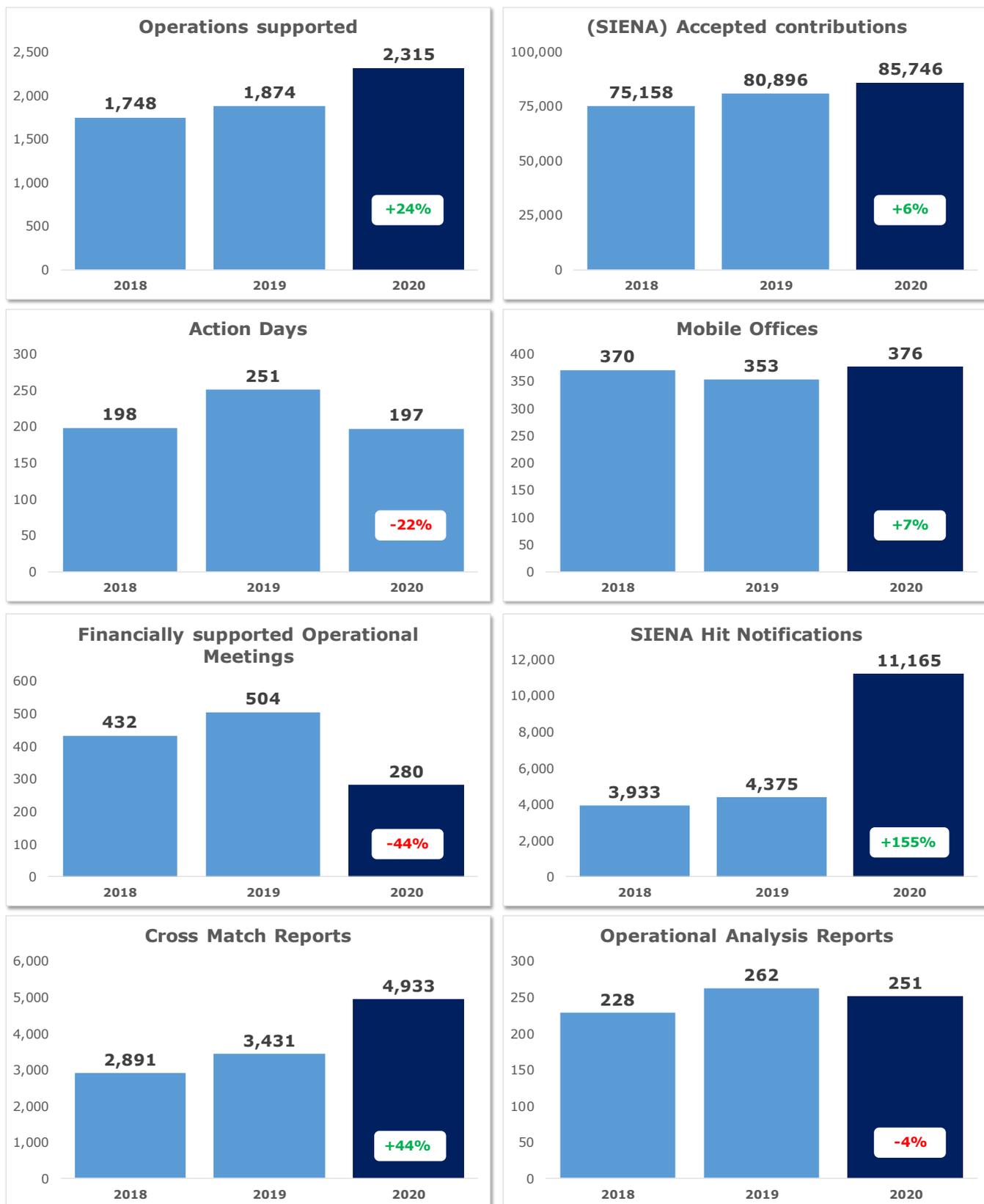
Explanatory notes on KPIs²⁷:

- **Number of EIS objects:** The number of objects in EIS saw a significant drop in Q4 2020. While a decrease was expected due to the continuing impact of COVID-19 related restrictions, limiting the access to the platform for some Member States, several additional factors contributed to this outcome. Among these, an important exercise on data quality performed by Europol and adjustments performed by the United States Terrorist Screening Centre (US TSC) to their definition of "foreign terrorist fighter" led to a decrease in the quantity of data. On a positive side, the data quality of the information in EIS increased.
- **Speed of first line response to EU MS requests:** The first line speed of response was well above the target of 5 days consistently during the year and particularly in Q4, mainly affected by the reallocation of staff to other priorities (e.g. OTF EMMA) and a significant number of old requests being closed in November – which highly affected the average time. In this respect, the definition of the indicator will be refined in 2021 to measure the service level provided, i.e. time to reply to 80% of the requests received, which is not so much affected by outliers.
- **Number of decryption platform successes:** Overheating issues with the in-house Decryption Platform severely limited its use during Q4, which prevented supporting more cases. Although the number of decryption platform successes was below the target, Europol continued to provide meaningful support to high priority cases, such as OTF EMMA.
- **Number of new JITs signed:** the low figures can be attributed to COVID-19 related restrictions on travel and meetings.
- **Satisfaction with key strategic analysis reports:** no tools or mechanisms were available during 2020 to measure this performance. In 2021, this perspective will be added to the new User Survey to continuously monitor the satisfaction with strategic reports.
- **Europol's Budget Payment rate:** Similarly to the previous year, the target was not met due to transfers within the budget that were made relatively late in the year, followed by commitments for which the payments are only expected in 2021. It should be noted however, that the commitment rate of Europol's Budget was 99.4%.
- **% of late payments:** although the % of late payments improved during the year, with a very high rate (63%) in Q1 and a rate of just 6.8% in Q4, the end of year performance was well above the target of 10%. Nonetheless, in terms of value, the % of late payments was well below the target of 5%.
- **Sickness rate:** No progress could be made to monitor this indicator, due to the lack of technical tools.
- **Staff engagement:** the Staff Survey, initially planned for 2020, was postponed to 2021 due to COVID-19.

²⁷ KPIs marked in red and grey only.

Annex II. Key operational figures

Historical evolution of some key operational figures²⁸ during the past three years.



²⁸ As a result of the work conducted by TF Analysis, the source and methodology for counting **operational reports** has changed, partly contributing to the substantial increase in 2020 compared to previous years.

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Annex III. Budget implementation 2020

Revenue 2020

Item	Source	Heading	Published budget		Established Revenue	Cashed Revenue	Outstanding amount
			Initially adopted	Amending budget			
9000	IC1	Regular subsidy from the Community	154,071,567	-5,000,000	149,071,567	149,071,567	-
9200	IC41	Other internal generated revenue carried over from previous year			382,518	382,518	-
9200	IC4	Other internal generated revenue established in the current year			1,312,253	869,598	442,655
9010	IR1	Other subsidies and grants established in the current year		6,581,950	7,369,353	7,369,353	-
9101	IR1	Contribution Denmark		2,965,556	2,965,556	2,965,556	-
9200	IR1	Other revenue established in the current year			1,526	1,526	-
Total revenue			154,071,567	4,547,506	161,102,772	160,660,117	442,655

Expenditure

Heading	Budget	Commitments	Payments	Comm Rate	Paym Rate	Carry Forward to 2021	Lapse Budget
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(b/a)	(c/a)	(a-c)	(a-b)
T1 - STAFF	85,945,867	85,819,036	84,212,567	99.9%	98.0%	1,606,470	126,831
T2 - OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENDITURE	10,765,125	10,563,884	6,623,722	98.1%	61.5%	3,940,162	201,241
T3 - OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES	52,360,575	51,852,054	36,011,085	99.0%	68.8%	15,840,969	508,521
Total Budget 2020	149,071,567	148,234,974	126,847,373	99.4%	85.1%	21,387,601	836,593

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Implementation of carry forward from 2019

Carry forward from 2019 (C8)	Carry forward (a)	Commitments (b)	Payments (c)	Lapse budget (a-c)	Pay Rate (c/a)
T1 - STAFF	627,105	548,022	542,862	84,243	86.6%
T2 - OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENDITURE	5,702,176	5,489,714	5,456,335	245,842	95.7%
T3 - OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES	11,417,238	9,804,355	9,275,765	2,141,472	81.2%
Total CF from 2018 (C8)	17,746,519	15,842,092	15,274,962	2,471,557	86.1%

Implementation of assigned revenue

Source	Heading	CF budget	Budget (a)	Comm (b)	Paym (c)	Comm Rate (b/a)	Paym Rate (c/a)
C4	Internal assigned revenue cashed in 2020	-	1,252,115	1,500	26	0.1%	0.0%
C5	Internal assigned revenue carried over from 2019	1,079,236	1,079,236	1,037,492	927,191	96.1%	85.9%
R0	Europol Pension Fund (EPOL PF)	2,955,514	2,957,039	423,718	306,066	9.0%	6.0%
R0	Denmark Contribution (DK)	-	2,965,556	2,965,556	2,965,556	100.0%	100%
Internal assigned revenue (C4, C5, R0)		4,034,749	8,253,946	4,428,266	4,198,840	54.0%	51.0%

Agreements

R0	EUIPO grant	183,299	1,213,299	1,162,851	792,054	95.8%	65.3%
R0	SIRIUS grant	293,208	744,812	648,095	392,086	87.0%	52.6%
R0	WB grant	544,883	1,423,670	704,106	376,290	49.5%	26.4%
R0	GRACE (H2020)		526,913	-	-	0.0%	0.0%
R0	INFINITY (H2020)		400,200	-	-	0.0%	0.0%
R0	AIDA (H2020)		701,849	14,900	-	2.1%	0.0%
R0	EMPACT EAP		2,500,000	643,551	14,844	25.7%	0.6%
R0	CEPOL		880,000	770,000	14,806	87.5%	1.7%
Total of Grants (R0)		1,021,389	8,390,742	3,943,503	1,590,080	47.0%	19.0%

Internal assigned revenue and Grants (C4, C5, R0)		5,056,138	16,644,688	8,371,769	5,788,920	50.3%	34.8%
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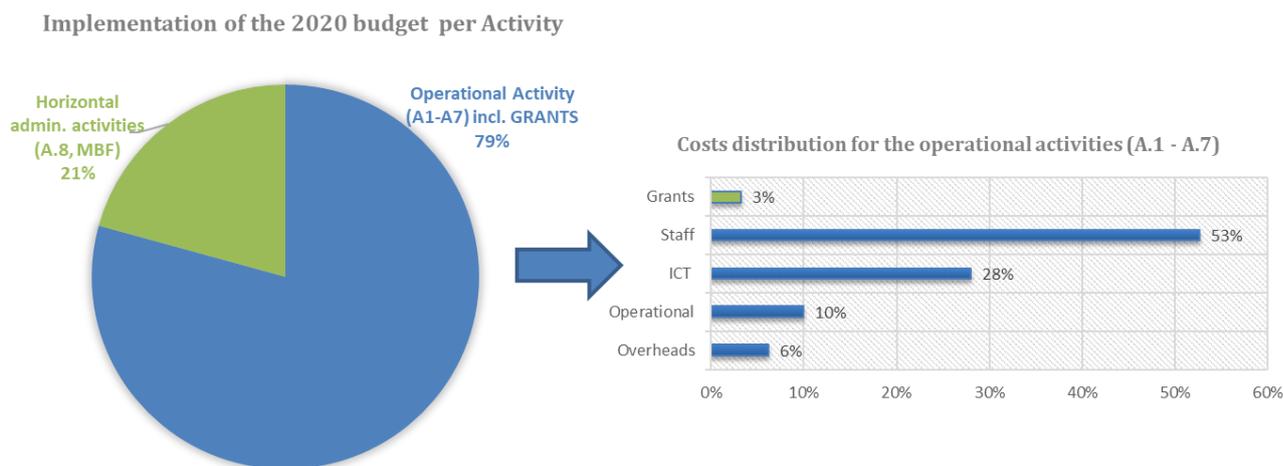
Annex IV. Activity Based Costing (ABC)

The table below reflects the final implementation of the financial and human resources (ABC²⁹) per Europol strategic activity. The activity-based costing (ABC) provides in-depth analysis on how the resources (staff and budget) are used per activity as defined in the Europol Programming Document 2020-2022.

The ABC method assigns all non-direct costs, such as staff and overhead to activities where costs were incurred. The outcome provides the implementation per activity based on a total of needed resources, regardless of the budget title as reported in the traditional way.

The final implementation of resources (budget and staff) per activity³⁰ shows that 79% of all the budget was implemented for operational activities (incl. grants) and the remaining 21% for horizontal administrative and governance activities (A.8, MB Functions and part of contribution from Denmark).

The highest cost component for the operational activities represents staff expenditure (53%) - salary and other staff expenditure for operational staff members (TA, CA, SNE). Moreover, 28% of the budget was implemented for ICT operational expenditure, 10% for other direct operational cost (such as meetings, missions, EMPACT & HVT/OTF grants, etc.), 6% for overhead costs related to facilities and 3% for external assigned funds for the implementation of various grants (WB, SIRIUS, EUIPO, H2020, CEPOL, EMPACT EAP).



²⁹ Activity Based Costing (ABC) shows the implementation of resources and indicates the amount of resources consumed in the different activities.

³⁰ The final implementation also includes the external assigned revenue (fund source R0) received from Denmark.

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Activity		In post (TA, CA, SNE) ³¹	% of staff in total	Outturn (€) ³²	% of budget in total	Staff Costs incl. DK (€)	Oper and ICT Cost (€)	Overhead costs (€)
A.1. Development of operational ICT and IM capabilities	ICT/Oper	135	16.1%	51,161,000	33.0%	14,683,000	34,437,000	2,041,000
A.2. Operational Coordination	Oper	53	6.3%	8,107,000	5.2%	5,640,000	126,000	2,341,000
A.3. Combating Serious and Organised Crime	Oper	111	13.2%	20,417,000	13.2%	12,276,000	7,252,000	889,000
A.4. Combating Cyber Crime	Oper	79	9.4%	10,307,000	6.6%	8,670,000	932,000	705,000
A.5. Counter-Terrorism	Oper	84	10.0%	13,191,000	8.5%	9,839,000	2,624,000	728,000
A.6. Combating Financial and Economic Crime	Oper	44	5.3%	6,845,000	4.4%	5,222,000	1,225,000	398,000
A.7. Strategic and Analysis Coordination	Oper	54	6.4%	6,925,000	4.5%	6,292,000	120,000	513,000
GRANTS: EUIPO / SIRIUS / WB / H2020 / CEPOL / EMP EAP	Oper	19	2.3%	3,944,00	2.5%	3,140,000	804,000	
Total Operational Activities		579	69.1%	123,011,000	79.3%	67,876,000	47,520,000	7,615,000
A.8. Governance, support and administration	Supp/Adm	242	28.9%	29,642,000	19.1%	23,776,000	3,421,000	2,445,000
Management Board Functions	MBF	17	2.0%	2,490,000	1.6%	2,247,000	113,000	130,000
Total Governance, support and adm. incl MBF		259	30.9%	32,132,000	20.7%	26,023,000	3,534,000	2,575,000
TOTAL (regular budget, grants and DK contribution)		838	100%	155,143,000	100.0%	93,899,000	51,054,000	10,190,000

³¹ It reflects staff present in post including grants (excludes vacancies for which offer letters were sent).

³² All the financial figures in the table are rounded to the nearest thousandth.

Annex V. Establishment Plan and Human Resources Management

Annex V-a. Establishment Plan

Temporary Agents

Grade	Establishment Plan 2020	Posts filled 31/12/2020 ³³	Posts vacant ³⁴	TOTAL ³⁵
AD 15	1	1		1
AD 14	3	3		3
AD 13	5			
AD 12	11	7	1	8
AD 11	14	5		5
AD 10	25	15		15
AD 09	50	34		34
AD 08	84	68		68
AD 07	148	171	7	178
AD 06	211	276	4	280
AD 05	31	9		9
AST 08	1			
AST 07	5	2		2
AST 06	6	2		2
AST 05	7	4		4
AST 04	7	7		7
AST 03	3	1		1
AST 02	3	4		4
TOTAL	615	609	12	621

Contract Agents

Grade	Authorised Budget 2020	Headcount 31/12/2020	Headcount funded by Grants/Agreements	Total Headcount 31/12/2020
FG IV	59	40	7	47
FG III	118	102	5	107
FG II	58	49		49
TOTAL	235	191	12	203

³³ Offer letters sent counted as posts filled. Includes 34 vacant posts for which selections were completed and offer letters were sent.

³⁴ Vacant posts are shown in the grade allocated to the vacancy or the grade allocated to the previous post holder in cases when a decision on recruitment has not been made yet.

³⁵ Discrepancies between the grades in the Establishment Plan and the grades actually filled result from the general approach to replace those staff members who leave in lower (entry) grades. 4 additional TA posts are presented (the Establishment Plan 2020 includes 615 TA posts) as job quota assigned in excess for a limited period to keep the number of vacant posts to a minimum. Additionally, there were 2 overlap TA posts at year-end.

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Seconded National Experts

	Authorised Budget 2020	Headcount 31/12/2020
SNE costed	71	53
SNE funded by Grants		7
SNE Guest Officers		28
SNE cost free		18
TOTAL		106

Europol Public Information

Annex V-b. Information on the entry level for each type of post

Types of post

Type of post	Function group / Grade	Post title
Director-General ³⁶	AD 15 – AD 16	Executive Director
Director ³⁷	AD 14 – AD 15	Deputy Executive Director Principal Adviser
Adviser or equivalent	AD 13 – AD 14	Adviser Senior Expert
Head of Unit or equivalent	AD 9 – AD 14	Head of Department ³⁸ Head of Unit
Administrator	AD 5 – AD 12	Senior Specialist/Senior Analyst ³⁹ Specialist/Analyst ⁴⁰
Senior Assistant	AST 10 – AST 11	Senior Assistant
Assistant	AST 1 – AST 9	Officer ⁴¹ Support Officer ⁴²
Secretary/Clerk	SC 1 – SC 6	Secretary/Clerk

Transitional types of post

Type of post	Function group / Grade	Post title
Assistant in transition	AST 1 – AST 9	Officer in transition Support Officer in transition Technical Officer in transition
Administrative Assistant in transition	AST 1 – AST 7	Administrative Assistant in transition

³⁶ This is without prejudice to a different classification of the head of the agency according to the founding regulation and/or the establishment plan.

³⁷ This is without prejudice to a different classification of the deputy head of the agency according to the founding regulation and/or the establishment plan.

³⁸ Posts of Head of Department are filled from grades AD 12 to AD 14.

³⁹ Posts of Senior Specialists/Senior Analysts are filled from grades AD 7 to AD 12.

⁴⁰ Posts of Specialists/Analysts are filled from grades AD 5 to AD 6.

⁴¹ Posts of Officer are filled from grades AST 4 to AST 9.

⁴² Posts of Support Officer are filled from grades AST 1 to AST 3.

Europol Public Information

Annex V-c. Benchmarking exercise

Europol continues to strive towards being a **more operational** EU Agency. In 2020, the results of the job screening exercise showed a slight increase in the percentage of operational jobs and decreases in the percentage of administrative/coordination jobs.

The job screening exercise was performed in December 2020, according to the guidelines defined by the EU Agencies Network and based on all personnel working at the Europol premises on 15 December 2020. This does not only include Temporary Agents, Contract Agents and Seconded National Experts but also Liaison Officers at Europol, Interns, Law Enforcement Trainees and external service providers based at Europol's premises.

Compared to 2019, the percentage of operational jobs slightly increased by 0.29%, representing 79% of the total. Neutral jobs remained at a similar level (4%), increasing by only 0.11%. On the other hand, the jobs dealing with administrative support and coordination decreased by 0.4%, to 17%.

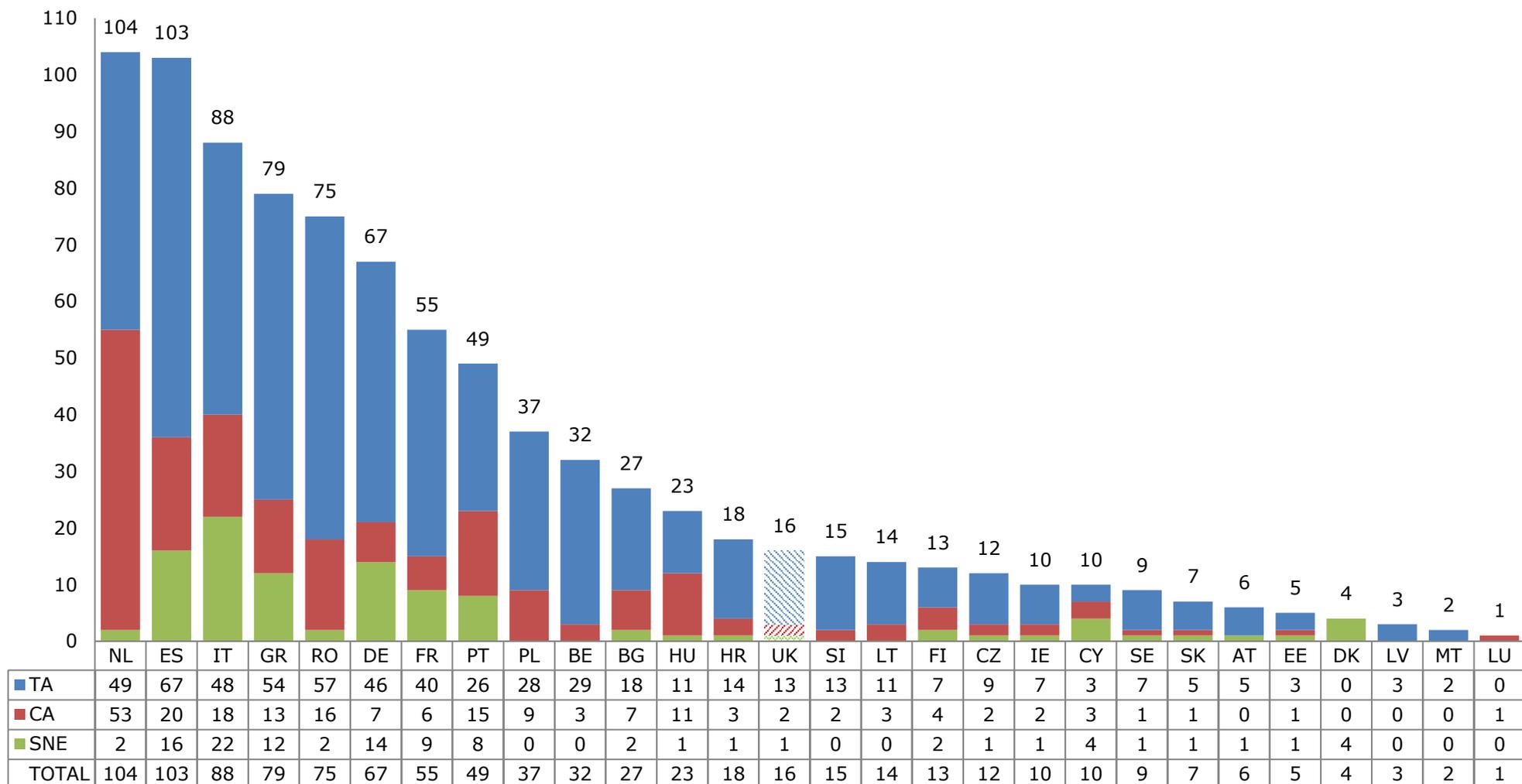
Job Type category	2019 Jobs	2019 (%)	2020 Jobs	2020 (%)	Δ 2020 ⁴³
Administrative support and Coordination	222	17%	215	17%	-0.40pp
Administrative support	168	13%	162	13%	-0.36pp
Coordination	54	4%	53	4%	-0.04pp
Operational	1,004	79%	999	79%	0.29pp
General Operational	756	59%	722	57%	-2.17pp
Programme Management	217	17%	239	19%	1.89pp
Top level Operational Coordination	31	2%	38	3%	0.57pp
Neutral	50	4%	51	4%	0.11pp
Finance	50	4%	51	4%	0.11pp
	1,276		1,265		

⁴³ Expressed in percentage points (pp)

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Annex V-d. Member States⁴⁴ representation at Europol

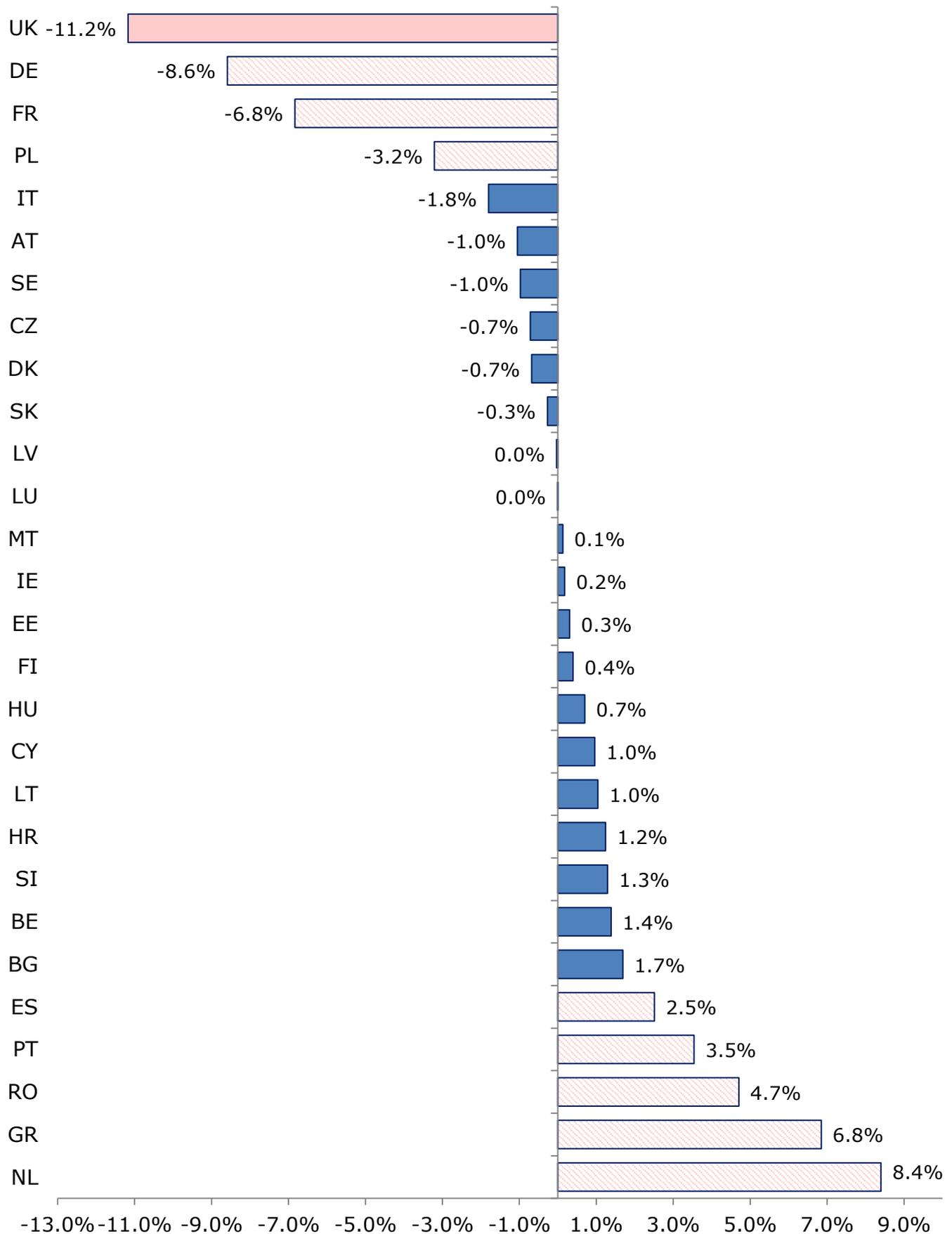
A - Europol staff (in post) per nationality and type of contract



⁴⁴ During the transition period in 2020, staff from the United Kingdom is kept in the HR overviews and charts.

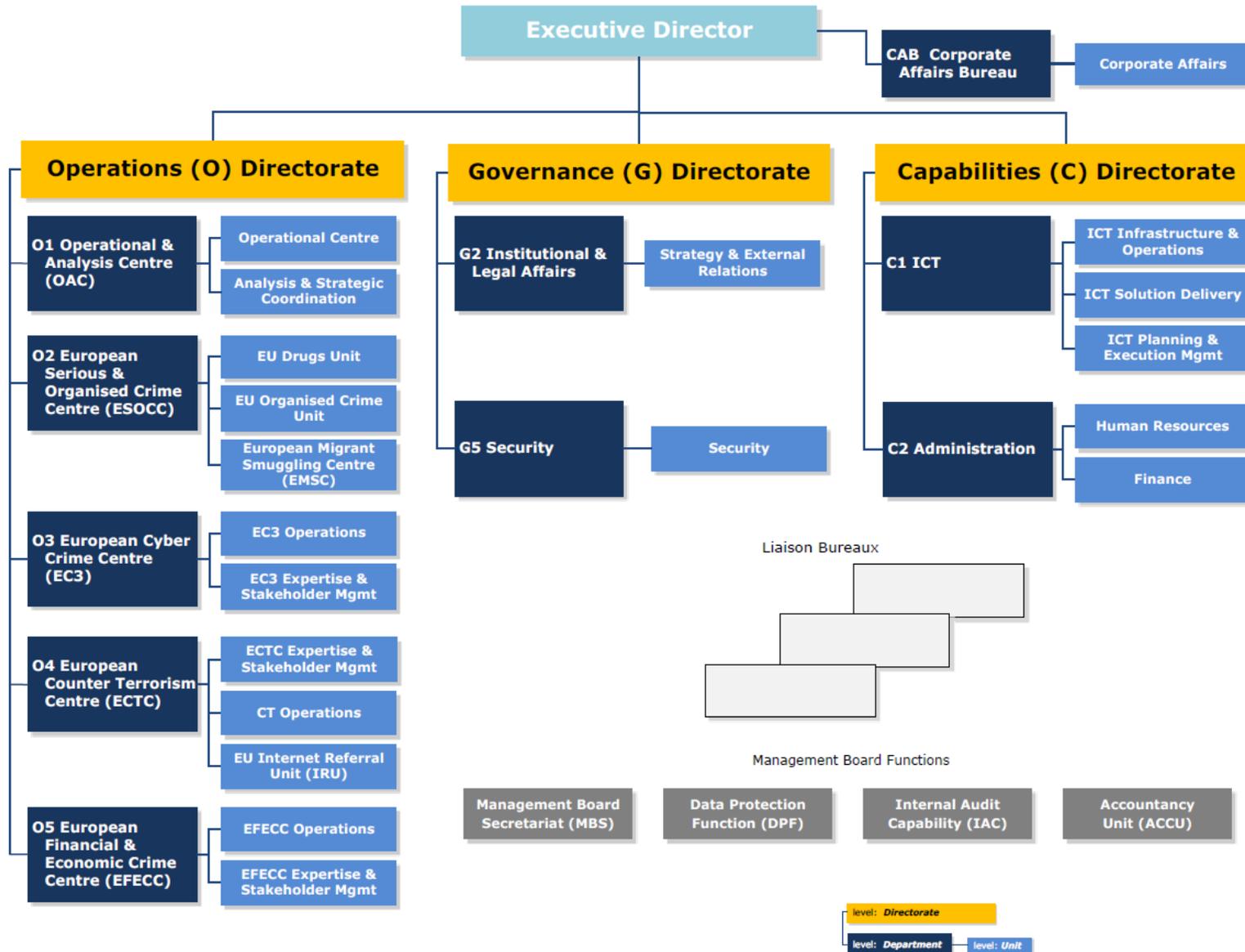
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B- Europol staff (in post) vs. EU population share per country



Europol Public Information

Annex VI. Organisational Chart (Last updated on 16/11/2020)



Europol Public Information

Annex VII. Grant and Service Level Agreements

General information						Financial and HR impacts				
Date of signature	Total amount (€)	Duration	Counterpart	Short description	2019		2020			
Grant agreements										
1. Western Balkans IPA/2018 / 395-549	05/03/2018	2,000,000	36 months and 26 days	European Commission DG Near	Pilot project to deploy Europol Liaison Officers in the Western Balkans	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
							651,204	651,204	651,204	651,204
						Number of CAs	4		4	
						Number of SNEs	0		0	
2. SIRIUS PI/2017 / 391-896	21/12/2017 (starting date 1/1/2018)	1,630,000	48 months	European Commission Sevice for Foreign Policy Instruments	International Digital Cooperation - Cross border access to electronic evidence	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
							407,500	407,500	407,500	407,500
						Number of CAs	7		7	
						Number of SNEs	0		0	
3. EUIPO	29/11/2018 (starting date 1/12/2018)	1,015,000	13 months	The European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO)	To support law enforcement authorities preventing crime related to Intellectual Property Rights and preventing fraud against the users of the EU IP Systems	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
							936,923	936,923	-	-
						Number of CAs	3		0	
						Number of SNEs	7		0	
4. H2020 - GRACE 883341 - part of consortium coordinated by Vicom, ES	18/05/2020 (starting date 1/6/2020)	6,823,512 for the consortium of which 702,550 for Europol	36 months	European Commission Research Executive Agency	Global Response Against Child Exploitation based on big-data technologies supported by advanced AI powered algorithms	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
							-	-	136,607	136,607
						Number of CAs	0		3	
						Number of SNEs	0		0	
5. H2020 - INFINITY 883293 - part of consortium coordinated by Airbus, FR	11/05/2020 (starting date 1/6/2020)	6,866,503 for the consortium of which 533,600 for Europol	36 months	European Commission Research Executive Agency	To become a flagship project that revolutionises how LEAs view, analyse and share information to combat crime and terrorism	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
							-	-	103,756	103,756
						Number of CAs	0		2	
						Number of SNEs	0		0	
5. H2020 - AIDA 883596 - part of consortium coordinated by Ingegneria Informatica, IT	20/05/2020 (starting date 1/9/2020)	7,690,272 for the consortium of which 935,800 for Europol	24 months	European Commission Research Executive Agency	Artificial Intelligence and advanced Data Analytics for Law Enforcement Agencies	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
							-	-	155,967	155,967
						Number of CAs	0		5	
						Number of SNEs	0		0	
Total grant agreements						Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
							1,995,627	1,995,627	1,455,033	1,455,033
						Number of CAs	14		21	
						Number of SNEs	7		0	

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General information						Financial and HR impacts				
Date of signature	Total amount (€)	Duration	Counterpart	Short description		2019		2020		
Contribution agreements										
1. EaP EMPACT ENI/2020 / 416-376	11/06/2020 (starting date 1/7/2020)	2,500,000	48 months	European Commission DG Near	Fighting organised crime in the EaP region	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
							-	-	312,500	312,500
						Number of CAs	0		2	
						Number of SNEs	0		0	
Total contribution agreements						Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
							-	-	312,500	312,500
						Number of CAs	0		2	
						Number of SNEs	0		0	

General information						Financial and HR impacts				
Date of signature	Total amount (€)	Duration	Counterpart	Short description		2019		2020		
Service-level agreements										
1. EUIPO - IP Crime	07/11/2019 (starting date 1/1/2020)	maximum 3,800,000	48 months	The European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO)	To support law enforcement authorities preventing crime related to Intellectual Property Rights	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
							-	-	950,000	950,000
						Number of CAs	0		3	
						Number of SNEs	0		6	
2. EUIPO - Fraud	13/08/2019 (starting date 1/1/2020)	No amount specified, 80,000 in year 1	48 months	The European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO)	Preventing fraud against users of the European Union Intellectual Property Systems	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
							-	-	80,000	80,000
						Number of CAs	0		0	
						Number of SNEs	0		1	
3. The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training	05/08/2020	880,000	Maximum duration until 1/9/2024	The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training	EUROMED POLICE V (Contract No. ENI/2020/414-940), WB PaCT (Contract No. 2019/ 413-822) and TOPCOP (Contract No. ENI/2020/415-941) projects	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
							-	-	80,000	80,000
						Number of CAs	0		3	
						Number of SNEs	0		0	
Total service-level agreements						Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
							-	-	1,110,000	1,110,000
						Number of CAs	0		6	
						Number of SNEs	0		7	

TOTAL AGREEMENTS						Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
							1,995,627	1,995,627	2,877,533	2,877,533
						Number of CAs	14		29	
						Number of SNEs	7		7	

Annex VIII. Provisional Accounts

BALANCE SHEET

ASSETS	Note	31.12.2020	31.12.2019
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		51,069,024	42,604,086
Intangible fixed assets	2.1.	24,479,329	18,723,452
Computer software		20,321,406	8,021,678
Computer software under Financial lease		178,255	297,091
Under construction		3,979,669	10,404,683
Tangible fixed assets	2.1.	26,577,763	23,873,719
Land and buildings		7,854,389	7,730,066
Plant and equipment		78,545	125,979
Computer hardware		11,138,150	6,737,799
Furniture and vehicles		2,177,050	2,022,303
Other fixtures and fittings		3,810,814	4,790,840
Assets under financial lease		1,518,815	2,466,732
Non-current receivables and recoverables	2.2.	11,931	6,915
Long-term receivables		11,931	6,915
CURRENT ASSETS		47,438,577	33,508,539
Short-term pre-financing	2.3.	4,503,252	849,634
Short-term pre-financing		5,636,003	3,293,287
Accrued charges on pre-financing		-1,132,750	-2,443,653
Short-term Receivables		9,561,319	9,251,826
Current receivables	2.4.	2,394,654	2,076,385
Sundry receivables	2.5.	411,849	481,132
Other receivables: Accrued income	2.6.	27,975	20,086
Deferred charges ⁴⁵	2.6.	6,726,123	6,672,212
Receivables with consolidated EU entities	2.7.	718	2,011
Cash and cash equivalents	2.8.	33,374,006	23,407,079
TOTAL ASSETS		98,507,601	76,112,624
LIABILITIES			
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		4,600,779	5,216,038
Pensions and other employee benefits	2.9.	3,424,453	3,371,330
Provisions for risks and charges		-	-
Other liabilities	2.10.	1,176,325	1,844,708
CURRENT LIABILITIES		19,412,568	12,113,902
Provisions for risks and charges	2.11.	12,000	10,000
Financial liabilities	2.12.	551,818	402,617
Payables		18,848,750	11,701,284
Current payables	2.13.	435	55,190
Sundry payables	2.14.	3,386,164	802,775
Other payables: Accrued charges	2.15.	6,948,828	7,021,982
Deferred income	2.15.	1,257	10,338
Accrued charges with consolidated EU entities	2.15.	23,101	206,879
Accounts payable with consolidated EU entities	2.16.	8,488,964	3,604,120
NET ASSETS		74,494,254	58,782,685
Accumulated surplus/deficit		58,782,685	54,168,990
Re-measurements of employee benefits		-723,950	-
Adjustment to accumulated result previous years		364,761	-
Economic result of the year		16,070,758	4,613,695
TOTAL LIABILITIES		98,507,601	76,112,624

⁴⁵ Includes deferred charges with consolidated EU entities.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

	Note	31.12.2020	31.12.2019
REVENUE	3.1.	150,886,694	140,748,754
Non-exchange revenue		145,722,098	135,942,602
Recovery of expenses	-	-	691
European Union Contribution		145,722,098	135,941,910
Exchange revenue		5,164,596	4,806,152
Interest income on late payment	-	-	8,079
Revenue from consolidated EU entities		1,837,840	1,701,599
Exchange rate gains		1,108	678
Fixed asset-related income	-	-	-
Sales revenue	-450 ⁴⁶	-450	-7,177
Contribution from Denmark		2,965,556	2,684,998
Other exchange revenue		360,542	417,976
EXPENDITURE	3.2.	134,815,936	136,135,059
Operational expenditure		26,428,627	25,539,339
Administrative expenditure		108,387,309	110,595,718
Staff expenses		79,262,124	76,387,531
Finance expenses		82,979	166,194
Fixed asset-related		11,259,759	9,765,459
Expenses with consolidated EU entities		2,914,743	9,068,577
Other: Administrative and IT expenses		7,913,772	8,903,140
External service provider (non-IT)		2,075,801	2,291,581
Rent		248,452	248,452
Building – maintenance, insurance and security		4,628,147	3,761,970
Exchange rate losses		1,532	2,814
SURPLUS/DEFICIT FROM ORDINARY ACTIVITIES		16,070,758	4,613,695
Extraordinary gains	-	-	-
Extraordinary losses	-	-	-
SURPLUS/DEFICIT FROM EXTRAORDINARY ITEMS		-	-
ECONOMIC RESULT OF THE YEAR		16,070,758	4,613,695

⁴⁶ Accrual reversal from year 2019 larger than income booked in 2020.

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CASH FLOW STATEMENT

	Note	31.12.2020	31.12.2019
Economic result of the year		16,070,758	4,613,695
Operational activities			
Amortisation (intangible fixed assets)		3,095,396	1,727,388
Depreciation (tangible fixed assets)		8,163,521	8,014,356
Increase (-)/Decrease in provisions for risks and charges		2,000	-7,000
Increase (-)/Decrease in short-term pre-financing		-3,653,619	2,818,374
Increase (-)/Decrease in long-term receivables		-5,016	-
Increase (-)/Decrease in short-term receivables		-310,786	-1,808,240
Increase (-)/Decrease in receivables related to consolidated EU entities		1,293	30,197
Increase(-)/Decrease in other long-term liabilities		-668,382	-752,470
Increase (-)/Decrease in accounts payable		2,262,621	2,204,871
Increase (-)/Decrease in liabilities related to consolidated EU entities		4,884,844	-3,276,603
Other non-cash movements		149,201	-229,463
Net cash-flow from operational activities	4.1	29,991,831	13,335,104
Investing activities			
Increase (-) of tangible and intangible fixed assets		-19,719,680	-15,799,910
Proceeds from tangible and intangible fixed assets		842	23,715
Net cash-flow from investing activities	4.2	-19,718,838	-15,776,195
Increase/decrease (-) in pension and employee benefits liability	4.3	-306,066	171,746
Net increase/decrease (-) in cash and cash equivalents		9,966,927	-2,269,346
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		23,407,079	25,676,425
Cash and cash equivalents at year-end		33,374,006	23,407,079

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STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS

	Accumulated Surplus/ Deficit	Economic result of the year	Net Assets (Total)
Balance as at 31 December 2019	54,168,990	4,613,695	58,782,685
Changes in accounting policies	-	-	-
Balance as at 1 January 2020	54,168,990	4,613,695	58,782,685
Remeasurements of employee benefit liabilities ⁴⁷	-359,189	-	-359,189
Allocation of the economic result of previous year	4,613,695	-4,613,695	-
Economic result of the year 2020	-	16,070,758	16,070,758
Balance as at 31 December 2020	58,423,496	16,070,758	74,494,254

⁴⁷ This is the net result of changes to actuarial demographic and financial assumptions from 2018 to 2020, in accordance with EU Accounting Rule 12 (Employee benefits).

**RECONCILIATION BETWEEN STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL
PERFORMANCE AND BUDGET RESULT**

Description	Amount
Economic result (Statement of Financial Performance) 2020	16,070,758
Accruals/deferrals 2020	-1,086,461
Accruals/deferrals reversed from 2019	-1,347,555
Adjustment for 2019 carry forward appropriations assigned revenue	5,056,138
Adjustment to employee benefit liability	-306,066
Cancellation of unused payment appropriations from 2019	2,471,557
Cashed balance sheet recovery orders issued in 2020	868,757
Cashed recovery orders issued before 2020	42,189
Depreciation and amortisation of fixed assets	11,258,917
Fixed asset acquisitions (excluding unpaid amounts at 31.12.2020)	-10,350,043
Fixed asset corrections	-5,781
Internally-generated fixed assets ⁴⁸	-8,851,274
Invoices 2019, re-opened in 2020	-9,589
Negative payment requests	6,001
Open pre-financing paid in 2020	-5,782,617
Open pre-financing received in 2020	10,718,822
Other general ledger corrections	-9,390
Payment appropriations carried forward to 2021	-32,201,626
Payments 2020 in Statement of Financial Performance different year	-5,081
Payments made from carry forward 2019	15,274,962
Payments made in 2020 from 2021 budget	78,879
Pre-financing given in previous year(s) and cleared in 2020	2,495,067
Pre-financing received in previous year(s) and cleared in 2020	-1,015,000
Provisions (impact of the year)	2,000
Uncashed recovery orders issued in 2020	-24,936
Value reductions (impact of the year)	842
Total = Budget result 2020	3,349,469

⁴⁸ This is the total amount capitalised in 2020 and considered under construction.

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BUDGET RESULT 2020

Description	2020	2019
REVENUE		
Union contribution, cashed	149,071,567	138,305,458
Other revenue, cashed	11,588,550	4,788,604
TOTAL REVENUE (a)	160,660,117	143,094,062
EXPENDITURE		
Budget Title 1: Staff		
Payments current year	87,497,641	84,299,365
Appropriations carried over to next year	4,259,456	3,596,071
Budget Title 2: Administrative		
Payments current year	6,722,601	7,077,975
Appropriations carried over to next year	4,087,619	5,835,877
Budget Title 3: Operational		
Payments current year	38,416,050	37,214,565
Appropriations carried over to next year	23,854,551	13,370,709
TOTAL EXPENDITURE (b)	164,837,919	151,394,562
RESULT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR BEFORE SPECIAL ITEMS (a-b)	-4,177,802	-8,300,500
Cancellation of unused payment appropriations carried over from the previous year	2,471,557	1,557,227
Adjustment for carry-over from the previous year – assigned revenue	5,056,138	9,108,957
Exchange rate differences	-424	-2,137
BALANCE OF THE OUTTURN ACCOUNT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR	3,349,469	2,363,548

Annex IX. Environmental indicators

The yearly collection of performance data for 2020 will be completed in 2021. It is, however, expected that the impact of COVID-19 will significantly and positively impact the environmental performance of Europol in 2020, e.g. due to reduced business travel, less printing, reduced usage of water or production of waste, etc.

The table below shows Europol's environmental indicators for the year 2018 and 2019, the performance variation (expressed in %) from 2018 to 2019 and the performance target to be achieved in 2022. It should be noted that for some of the indicators, the performance target was already met in 2019 while for some others it can be expected that the target will be achieved in 2020 for the reason stated above.

Performance indicator (description, unit)	2018	2019	Performance trend %	Improvement target 2022	
				%	Value
Total Carbon Footprint (Tonnes CO²e)	4,128.75	3,709.18	-10.16%	-4.5%	3,942.96
CO2 buildings (Tonnes/p)	0.049	0.008	-83.83%	-4.5%	0.047
CO2 vehicles (g/km)	213.17	213.00	-0.08%	-4.5%	203.57
CO2 Air travel (Tonnes/p)	2.90	2.60	-10.33%	-4.5%	2,75
Energy (MWh/p)	6.71	6.55	-2.38%	-4.5%	6.41
Energy (kWh/m²)	281.45	277.56	-1.38%	-4.5%	268.78
Water (m³/p)	10.46	8.86	-15.22%	-10%	9.41
Office paper (sheets/p/day)	8.15	8.36	+2.52%	-5.0%	7.74
Waste (Tonnes/p)	0.067	0.080	+19.49%	-5.0%	0.063

Annex X. Main issues discussed and decisions taken by the MB

114th MB meeting | 10-11 March 2020

Due to the increased risks posed by the rapid and worldwide spread of COVID-19, the Chairperson of the Management Board (MB) decided to cancel the 114th MB meeting. Following this cancellation, the Chairperson decided to initiate written procedures in order to address the items that, due to their nature and/or expected impact, could not be adjourned until the next MB meeting. Additionally, the Chairperson asked the MB members to share any comment they may have on items that were tabled for discussion in the original agenda, such as:

- The implementation of the Information Management priorities endorsed by the Member States for 2020;
- The Guest Officers concept;
- The status of the Europol Liaison Officers deployment to the Western Balkans;
- Preparations for the transfer of the FIU.net.

Main decisions (taken via written procedure):

- **Europol Strategy 2020+**: the MB endorsed the new developments pertaining to the implementation of the Strategy 2020+.
- **Europol Programming documents**: the MB adopted the updated Programming Document 2020-2022 and the Draft Programming Document 2021-2023, including the final draft estimate of revenue and expenditure for 2021.
- **ATLAS network**: the MB adopted specific budgetary arrangements for the ATLAS network and invited the Commission to earmark the budget and resources for ATLAS in its Budget 2021 proposal.
- **External relations**: the MB approved a working arrangement between Europol and OLAF.
- **Data protection**: the MB approved the revised model arrangement between law enforcement authorities and Europol on the exchange and protection of classified information.
- **Personnel matters**: the MB adopted the updated version of the MB decision on the designation of the reporting officers of the Executive Director.

115th MB meeting | 9-10 June 2020

At its first-ever online meeting, the MB elected its Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson for the period 1 July 2020 to 31 December 2021 and appointed the Chairpersons of the MB Working Groups on Corporate Matters and on Information Management for the same period. The MB commended Europol for its dynamic response to the COVID-19 pandemic in order to ensure business continuity in its support to the Member States. In this context, the Board welcomed the launch of the European Financial and Economic Crime Centre and took positive note of the increasing activities of the European Serious and Organised Crime Centre, as well as of latest progress with the implementation of the Europol Roadmap on EU Interoperability. Further, the MB discussed Europol's 2021-2027 multi-annual financial perspectives and was informed about ongoing preparations for the Commission's legislative proposal on the strengthening of Europol's mandate through the recast of the Europol Regulation. The Board took note of the annual reports 2019 presented by the Internal Audit Function and the Data Protection Officer and of the positive outcome of latest auditing and discharge activities and Europol's response thereof. Finally, the Board was presented with the priorities of the incoming German Presidency of the Council of the EU.

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Main decisions:

- **Consolidated Annual Activity Report (CAAR):** the MB adopted the CAAR 2019 and its own assessment thereof.
- **Operational matters:** the MB adopted a new grant scheme aimed at enhancing national investigations of High Value Targets and supporting Operational Task Forces in priority cases.
- **External relations:** the MB adopted the new Europol External Strategy 2021-2024, approved working arrangements with third parties and launched an evaluation of Europol Liaison Officers' deployments to Western Balkans.

116th MB meeting | 6-7 October 2020

The MB discussed the following topics:

- Europol's multiannual 2021-2027 financial outlook;
- Preparations pertaining to the Europol Regulation recast;
- The latest developments in the implementation of the Europol Strategy 2020+, including with regard to the Europol Innovation Lab and the EU Innovation Hub.

The Board endorsed the Member States' Information Management priorities for 2021 and received a report on the results achieved by the European Counter-Terrorism Centre, and on the ONNET Project. Further, the MB was updated on the activities carried out by Europol to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, including by successfully developing a new digital working environment for its Staff and the Liaison Officers community; and took note of the positive outcome of latest auditing and discharge activities, and of Europol's response to resulting recommendations. Finally, the Board was updated on the preparations for the upcoming ministerial conference on the "Future of Europol", called at the initiative of the German EU Presidency.

Main decisions:

- **Videoconference arrangements for MB meetings:** the MB adopted related amendments to the MB Decision on internal language arrangements at Europol and to the MB Rules of Procedure.
- **Personnel matters:** the MB adopted decisions on leave and telework.

117th MB meeting | 9-10 December 2020

At the last meeting of the year, the MB initiated the new Europol programming cycle by discussing the preliminary draft Programming Document 2022-2024. The Board was informed that the Commission proposal for the Europol Regulation recast had been issued and welcomed the resulting multiannual budgetary increase proposed for the Agency starting from 2022. The MB also discussed the implementation state of the Strategy 2020+; the implementation outlook for the Member States' Information Management priorities 2021; the cooperation with the ATLAS Network; and the outcome of the evaluation of the deployment of Europol liaison officers in the Western Balkans. Further, the MB discussed the steps pertaining to the cooperation between Europol and the UK with a view to the end of the transition period and the state of play of the EU-UK partnership negotiations. The Board also took note of the positive outcome of latest auditing activities pertaining to Europol and of the priorities of the incoming Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the EU.

Main decisions:

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- **Strategy:** the MB endorsed the new Europol Information Management Strategy.
- **Personnel:** the MB adopted a reasoned opinion on the appointment of the Deputy Executive Director for Operations, for submission to the Council.
- **External relations:** the MB updated the yearly list of Europol's priority partners and approved working arrangements with third parties.
- **Security:** the MB adopted the revised Europol Security Rules.
- **Audit:** the MB approved the Internal Audit Capability Work Programme for 2021.

Written procedures

January – March 2020

- The MB adopted an amending budget reflecting the financial contribution to be received by Europol based on a new Service Level Agreement with EUIPO.
- The MB adopted the revised MB Guidelines on financial support against euro counterfeiting.

April – June 2020

- The MB adopted an amending budget 2020 reflecting the yearly financial contribution from Denmark.

July – September 2020

- The MB approved the vacancy notice and estimated timeline for the recruitment of a Deputy Executive Director of Operations.
- The MB adopted the revised MB Decision defining the Europol posts that can be filled only by staff engaged from the competent authorities of the Member States ("restricted posts").

October – December 2020

- The MB adopted an amending budget 2020 including financial contributions to Europol deriving from a contribution agreement with the Commission (DG NEAR), a Service Level Agreement with CEPOL, and a Horizon 2020 grant agreement.
- In accordance with Article 58(8) of the Europol Regulation, following the final adoption of the Union general budget, the MB adopted the final Europol budget for 2021.

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Annex XI. Overview of audit recommendations⁴⁹ issued by the IAC

Year	Audit report	Audit recommendations																	
		Issued						Implemented up to end 2020						To be implemented in 2021 and beyond					
		Total	C	VI	I	D	O	Total	C	VI	I	D	O	Total	C	VI	I	D	O
2015	Consultancy engagement on review of systems laid down by the Authorising Officer 2015 – 1st Report Accountancy: 2014 consolidation process	4		2	2			4		2	2			0					
	Consultancy engagement on review of the systems laid down by the Authorising Officer 2015 – 2nd Report Validation of authorisations granted in ABAC	2				2		2				2		0					
	Report of internal audit of Europol Forensic Laboratory	6					6 ⁵⁰	6					6	0					
2015	Total	12	0	2	2	2	6	12	0	2	2	2	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
		100%						100%	-	100%	100%	100%	100%						
2016	Review of the implementation of recommendations issued by the IAF in the period 2010-2014	24 ⁵¹		13	11			19		9	10			2 ⁵²		2			

⁴⁹ Grading of recommendations, as per the table, follows these codes: C=Critical, VI=Very Important, I=Important, D=Desirable, O=Other, either “non-conformity” or “opportunity for improvement”.

⁵⁰ Defined as “non-conformities” (4) and “opportunities for improvement” (2) in line with the terminology applicable to ISO 17020:2012.

⁵¹ Of the 24 recommendations, 3 recommendations were assessed by Europol as “not intended for implementation”.

⁵² One recommendation relates to the overview of sensitive functions and is considered “partly implemented” (IAC/2019/4).

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Year	Audit report	Audit recommendations																	
		Issued						Implemented up to end 2020						To be implemented in 2021 and beyond					
		Total	C	VI	I	D	O	Total	C	VI	I	D	O	Total	C	VI	I	D	O
	Report on the review and assessment of the implementation of (ICS) at Europol	40 ⁵³	1	21	15	3		38	1	20	15	2		1		1			
	Review and assessment of the operational support provided by EC3	18		5	8	5		17		5	7	5		1			1		
	Audit on Europol Sports and Social Association (ESSA) regarding its accounts for the years 2012 to 2015	13 ⁵⁴		3	9	1		10		3	6	1		0					
	Validation of user access rights granted in ABAC	15 ⁵⁵		4	8	3		14		4	8	2		0					
	Report of internal audit of Europol Forensic Laboratory	2					2	2					2	0					
2016	Total	112	1	46	51	12	2	100	1	41	46	10	2	4 ⁵⁶		3	1		
								89% ⁵⁷	100%	89%	90%	83%	100%						
2017	New operational support capabilities EU Internet Referral Unit (EU IRU)	9	1		6	2		8	1		5	2		1 ⁵⁸			1		
	Strategic analysis products and their alignment with the EU policy cycle	9	1	2	5	1		9	1	2	5	1		0					

⁵³ Of the 40 recommendations, 1 recommendation was assessed by Europol as “not intended for implementation”.

⁵⁴ Of the 13 recommendations, 3 recommendations were assessed as “no longer applicable” (IAC/2017/6).

⁵⁵ Of the 15 recommendations, 1 recommendation was assessed as “no longer applicable” (IAC/2017/3).

⁵⁶ The remaining 4 recommendations are related to the review of sensitive functions and establishment of a stakeholder management tool.

⁵⁷ When considering the 8 recommendations assessed as “not intended for implementation” (4) and “no longer applicable” (4) the implementation rate is 96%.

⁵⁸ The recommendation has been assessed as “partly implemented” (IAC/2019/4).

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Year	Audit report	Audit recommendations																		
		Issued						Implemented up to end 2020						To be implemented in 2021 and beyond						
		Total	C	VI	I	D	O	Total	C	VI	I	D	O	Total	C	VI	I	D	O	
	Missions' administration process audit	14 ⁵⁹		10	4			12		9	3			0						
	Validation of user access rights granted in ABAC	5 ⁶⁰			4	1		4			4			0						
	Report on the ISO 17020:2012 Internal audit of the Europol Forensic Laboratory	1					1 ⁶¹	1					1	0						
2017	Total	38	2	12	19	4	1	34	2	11	17	3	1	1 ⁶²			1			
								89% ⁶³	100%	92%	89%	75%	100%							
2018	Information Communication Technology (ICT) project planning, management and change	12		4	7	1		8		3	4	1		4			1	3		
	Assessment of the implementation of the Europol Regulation	14			10	4		13			9	4		1				1		
	Audit Report Learning, Training and Development	34 ⁶⁴	4	19	11			26	3	16	7			7	1 ⁶⁵	3 ⁶⁶	3 ⁶⁷			

⁵⁹ Of the 14 recommendations, 2 recommendations were assessed as "no longer applicable" (IAC/2019/4).

⁶⁰ Of the 5 recommendations, 1 recommendation was assessed as "no longer applicable" (IAC/2018/3).

⁶¹ Defined as "opportunities for improvement" in line with the terminology applicable to ISO 17020:2012.

⁶² This recommendation relates to the establishment of an efficient stakeholder management database, which is considered partly implemented.

⁶³ When considering the 3 recommendations assessed as "no longer applicable" the implementation rate is 97%.

⁶⁴ Of the 34 recommendations, one recommendation was assessed as "no longer applicable" (IAC/2019/4).

⁶⁵ This recommendation relates to the evaluation of the implementation of the LTD framework, a full assessment of which is planned following 3 years of implementation (i.e. in 2022) and has been assessed as "partly implemented" (IAC/2019/4).

⁶⁶ Two of the recommendations have been assessed as "partly implemented" (IAC/2019/4).

⁶⁷ The three recommendations have been assessed as "partly implemented" (IAC/2019/4).

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Year	Audit report	Audit recommendations																	
		Issued						Implemented up to end 2020						To be implemented in 2021 and beyond					
		Total	C	VI	I	D	O	Total	C	VI	I	D	O	Total	C	VI	I	D	O
	Audit Report Operational support on-the-spot	15 ⁶⁸		1	12	2		7			6	1		7		1	5	1	
	Validation of user access rights granted in ABAC	5 ⁶⁹		2	3			4		1	3			0					
	Report on the ISO 17020:2012 Internal audit of the Europol Forensic Laboratory	2					2 ⁷⁰	2					2	0					
2018	Total	82	4	26	43	7	2	60	3	20	29	6	2	19 ⁷¹	1	5	12	1	0
								73% ⁷²	75%	77%	67%	86%	100%						
2019	Audit report on operational analysis	25	2	12	10	1		14	2	8	4			11		4	6	1	
	Audit Report Grants Management Process	15		7	7	1		11		5	5	1		4		2	2		
	Validation of user access rights granted in ABAC	1			1			1			1			0					
	Report on the ISO 17020:2012 Internal audit of the Europol Forensic Laboratory	1					1 ⁷³	1					1	0					

⁶⁸ Of the 15 recommendations, one recommendation was assessed as "no longer applicable" (IAC/2019/4).

⁶⁹ Of the 5 recommendations, one was assessed as "no longer applicable" (IAC/2019/3).

⁷⁰ Defined as "opportunities for improvement" in line with the terminology applicable to ISO 17020:2012.

⁷¹ The remaining open recommendations relate to the implementation of the Learning, Training and Development framework, operational support on-the-spot, the implementation of the Europol Regulation, and ICT project planning, management and change. These recommendations will be addressed as part of the Europol Work Plan 2021 and in the context of the implementation of the Europol Strategy 2020+.

⁷² When considering the 3 recommendations assessed as "no longer applicable" the implementation rate is 76%.

⁷³ Defined as "opportunities for improvement" in line with the terminology applicable to ISO 17020:2012.

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Year	Audit report	Audit recommendations																	
		Issued						Implemented up to end 2020						To be implemented in 2021 and beyond					
		Total	C	VI	I	D	O	Total	C	VI	I	D	O	Total	C	VI	I	D	O
2019	Total	42	2	19	18	2	1	27	2	13	10	1	1	15		6	8	1	
								64%	100%	68%	56%	50%	100%						
2020	Validation of user access rights granted in ABAC and MobileXpense	3			3			3			3			0					
	Audit Report Contract renewal process	8		1	3	4		0						8		1	3	4	
	Report on the ISO 17020:2012 Internal audit of the Europol Forensic Laboratory	1					1	0						1					1
2020	Total	12	0	1	6	4	1	3	0	0	3	0	0	9	0	1	3	4	1
								25%	-	-	100%	-	-						
	Total 2015-2020	298	9	106	139	31	13	236	8	87	107	22	12	48⁷⁴	1	15	25	6	1
								79%⁷⁵	89%	82%	77%	71%	92%						

⁷⁴ Excluding the 11 recommendations assessed as 'no longer applicable' (7) or 'not intended for implementation' (4).

⁷⁵ When considering the 14 recommendations assessed as 'no longer applicable' (10) or 'not intended for implementation' (4) the implementation rate is 83%.

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Annex XII. Work programme actions and indicators impacted by COVID-19

Work Programme Actions

Europol Activity	Action	Impact of COVID
A.1. Development of operational ICT capabilities	Complete the first phase of the New Forensic Environment, aiming for Interim Authorisation to Operate (IATO) by end of 2020, merging the use cases for the current Computer Forensics Network (CFN) into the Operational Network (OpsNet), in order to maximise the value of available data (currently in separate networks), and consolidate and rationalise toolsets. SMART Capabilities	Delayed due to COVID-19
	Progress with the introduction of innovative solutions that are crucial for automating and pseudonymising cross-checking, pattern search, effective processing of large and diverse data volumes. Support the evolution of face recognition, step up the creation of the Data Science capability in ICT to support techniques such as Image and video analysis, speech processing, Natural Language Processing, Biometrics, Sensor generated data, etc.).	Delayed due to COVID-19
	Design and realise in line with the NEO Overarching Architecture and its implementation approach a Case management capability.	Delayed due to COVID-19
	Continue the preparatory work to set up the required processes and enable the future systematic check of all travel applications stemming from the EU Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) against Europol Regulation Article 18.2(a) data (i.e. data for cross-checking).	Delayed due to COVID-19
	Continue the preparatory work for establishing Europol's access to Entry-Exit System (EES).	Delayed due to COVID-19
A.2. Information Exchange and Cooperation	Provided that there is a positive outcome of discussions with MS on Europol's role in SIS II, explore with the Commission opportunities for acquiring the legal mandate to evolve the SIRENE office into a fully-fledged 'EU SIRENE Bureau' having the possibility to insert in SISII high-profile individuals or important objects on behalf of Third Parties.	Delayed due to COVID-19
	Provide the necessary infrastructure and logistics for the setting up of a command post for the overall information exchange and 24/7 security emergency situations during the EURO 2020 championship.	Delayed due to COVID-19
	Assist in the deployments of National Football Information Points (NFIP) delegates to Europol, who will be responsible for the information exchange with the competent police services in the hosting, visiting and transit countries.	Postponed to 2021 due to COVID-19
	Support the Police Information and Coordination Centre (PICC) by providing the relevant Europol operational products and services, as requested by MS/TP.	Postponed to 2021 due to COVID-19
A.3. Combating Serious and Organised Crime	Further strengthen the operational cooperation with Antwerp and Rotterdam maritime ports which are the most vulnerable and targeted ports of the EU for drugs trafficking. Extend the outreach to other ports, e.g. Le Havre, Gent, Hamburg, Algeciras, etc.	Delayed due to COVID-19
	Define the requirements – in collaboration with Interpol - for setting up a Europol ballistic comparison system (ambition limited by resources availability).	Delayed due to COVID-19
	Organise and fund a high level conference to engage Police and Customs agencies of MS in wildlife trafficking.	Delayed due to COVID-19

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Europol Activity	Action	Impact of COVID
	Set up modalities for cooperation with relevant multi-actor platforms, acting as an intelligence collection hub, such as possible future Regional Joint Operational Platforms (similar to the Joint Operational Office Vienna) or any controlled centres, if established.	Delayed due to COVID-19
	Support the Joint Operational Office Vienna with operational data, investigative findings and strategic analysis as well as with financial means via EMPACT funding.	Delayed due to COVID-19
	Strengthen the focus on Document fraud being a priority under the EU Policy Cycle and given the increasing amount of criminal intelligence in respect to falsified and counterfeited documents. Support specific Cyber Actions Days and Joint Action Days addressing the issue.	Delayed due to COVID-19
	Organise major stakeholder events and conferences; coordinate partnerships and stakeholder networks.	Delayed due to COVID-19
	Support the activities of the Programme Board on drug supply reduction, the drug-related EMPACT projects and the implementation of the EU Drugs Strategy and Action Plan on Drugs while ensuring their coherence.	Delayed due to COVID-19
A.4. Combating cybercrime	Strengthen the support to MS on Operational Taskforces, the effective prioritisation of HVTs and identification of optimal follow-up response measures (ambition limited by resources availability).	Delayed due to COVID-19
	Maximise the usage of the newly acquired processing power of the Decryption platform in order to improve the speed and efficiency of the recovery of encrypted data from devices seized during the course of a criminal investigation.	Delayed due to COVID-19
	Enhance the Victim Identification efforts, including the development and extension of the Image and Video Analysis Solution (IVAS) to MS and hosting of the Victim Identification Taskforce to foster cooperation and pooling of expertise from different police agencies and Interpol (development limited by availability of resources to only some urgent capabilities and updates).	Delayed due to COVID-19
	Coordinate and support the demand, development and delivery of comprehensive cybercrime training under the umbrella of a Training Governance Model at EU level.	Postponed to 2021 due to COVID-19
	Deliver the annual Digital Forensic Investigator training course in cooperation with CEPOL.	Changed scope due to COVID-19
	Organise a European NCMEC Roundtable on tackling of online child sexual exploitation.	Postponed to 2021 due to COVID-19
	Organise a Cyber Law Enforcement & Big Data Conference to exchange best practices in combating cybercrime and cyber-enabled crime by employing innovative tools, tactics and techniques.	Postponed to 2021 due to COVID-19
	Deliver the annual training course on Payment Card Fraud Forensics and Investigations.	Postponed to 2021 due to COVID-19
	Coordinate, plan and execute joint technical, investigative and prevention actions to maximise impact and reduce crime on the Dark Web.	Delayed due to COVID-19
	Maintain the support to MS on Operational Taskforces, the effective prioritisation of HVTs, de-confliction and identification of optimal follow-up response measures.	Delayed due to COVID-19

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Europol Activity	Action	Impact of COVID
	Support MS and Europol's Analysis Projects in the coordination and development of EMPACT Operational Actions relevant to Dark Web, within the framework of available resources.	Delayed due to COVID-19
A.5. Counter-terrorism	Utilise opportunities for embedding ECTC staff members on a temporary basis based on operational cases into the Crime Information Cells (within CSPD missions/operations) or other organisations and platforms dealing with particular CT related phenomena/subjects, with the aim to increase information gathering and sharing on the spot and enhance coordination.	Delayed due to COVID-19
	Increase cooperation between the Counter Terrorism Group (CTG) members and Europol in areas of common interest, while fully respecting the sole responsibility of Member States for national security.	Delayed due to COVID-19
	Oversee the establishment of cooperation with EU institutions and agencies, international organisations, law enforcement, academia and private sector entities with a particular focus on stakeholders at policy level.	Changed scope due to COVID-19
	Enhance Europol's facial recognition capabilities, including in the context of the secondary security checks (ambition limited by resources availability). Increase the number of staff trained in the usage of face recognition tools.	Delayed due to COVID-19
	Support the operations of the Terrorist Identification Taskforce targeting CT suspects for which there is not enough evidence for opening prosecutions.	Delayed due to COVID-19
	Within the framework of available resources, prepare for the expansion of the workload of AP Core International Crimes, including the collection of data from new sources (NGOs, UN, ICC, military, private, etc.) and the specific requirements linked to the shift of focus from analysis on persons to analysis on events.	Delayed due to COVID-19
	Build the capacities of MS law enforcement and judiciary authorities to produce quality information requests to OSPs via face-to-face events and trainings organised within the framework of the SIRIUS project.	Changed scope due to COVID-19
	Facilitate the co-development of ICT-based tools by establishing short placement programmes at Europol for developers from EU LEAs.	Delayed due to COVID-19
	Manage the Counter Terrorism Joint Liaison Team (CT-JLT) operational platform and the First Response Network. Further optimise the CT-JLT concept as a mature mechanism for proactive and intelligence-led coordinated action accelerating exchange of information and operational results in particular with focus on returning foreign terrorist fighters.	Delayed due to COVID-19
	Administer and support the CT Program Board (CTPB) as the MS steering governance tool to the ECTC. Ensure the coordination of and the ECTC involvement in the work plan driven by the MS represented in the CTPB.	Changed scope due to COVID-19
	Organise stakeholder events, including the ECTC Advisory Network on Terrorism and Propaganda meetings and the annual conference.	Postponed to 2021 due to COVID-19
Continue enhancing cooperation with the Western Balkan countries on the basis of the operational agreements and the Western Balkan CT Action Plan.	Delayed due to COVID-19	

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Europol Activity	Action	Impact of COVID
	Continue enhancing cooperation with the MENA countries and Turkey while expecting the international agreements to be concluded by the Commission, following a threefold approach: 1) through the CT dialogues and by supporting CT/security experts deployed by MS to the EU Delegations and CSDP-missions/operations; 2) by participating in capacity building initiatives offered by CEPOL and EU-funded programmes; and 3) by identifying strategic/technical partners for the establishment of a common product or specific strategic initiative.	Delayed due to COVID-19
	Ensure the permanent secretariat and the continuity of the activities of EODN.	Changed scope due to COVID-19
	Deliver capacity-building initiatives, in particular trainings, for MS on CBRN and Explosives.	Changed scope due to COVID-19
A.6. Combating Financial and Economic Crime	Centralise the support for, develop a strategy and build up further expertise in the area of market manipulation and insider trading under AP Apaté following the new mandate stemming from the Europol Regulation. Organise a conference on Insider Trading and Market Manipulation (actions will be done within the limits of current resources).	Delayed due to COVID-19
	Support the BeCaNet project creating a network of counter-terrorism financing experts and improving cooperation with private sector on CT matters.	Delayed due to COVID-19
	Organise a joint conference Europol-UEFA on sport corruption ahead of UEFA 2020 (co-financed by Europol and UEFA).	Postponed to 2021 due to COVID-19
	Support the triparty Working Group on digital currencies (co-host secretariat jointly with Interpol and the Basel Institute).	Delayed due to COVID-19
	Organise and fund the Annual Plenary Meetings.	Delayed due to COVID-19
A.7. Provision of cross-cutting operational capabilities	Increase the provision of operational support to Member States' operations.	Changed scope due to COVID-19
	Further extend the dedicated liaison network with direct connection with relevant travel intelligence entities in the MS and other partnering countries.	Delayed due to COVID-19
	Coordinate the planning of Joint Action Days.	Changed scope due to COVID-19
A.8. Governance, support and administration	Conduct a 360 degree exercise in the framework of Leadership and Management Development Program.	Postponed to 2021 due to COVID-19
	Close the liability of the pension fund for local staff.	Delayed due to COVID-19
	Consider additional features including mobile-ready technology.	Delayed due to COVID-19
	Fully implement the insourcing of the medical service covering both Europol and Eurojust.	Postponed to 2021 due to COVID-19
	Conduct the biennial Staff Survey.	Postponed to 2021 due to COVID-19
	Continue expanding the remote access capabilities of teleworking.	Changed scope due to COVID-19

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Europol Activity	Action	Impact of COVID
	Complete the setting up of Europol's environmental management system and obtain registration with the EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS).	Postponed to 2021 due to COVID-19
	Undertake initiatives to improve the environmental performance of the organisation in terms of sustainable procurement, carbon footprint, paper and water consumption, and waste management and separation.	Delayed due to COVID-19
	Initiate the implementation of the audit management tool.	Delayed due to COVID-19
	Initiate the implementation of the corporate risk management tool.	Delayed due to COVID-19
	Implement the video project targeting mid-level criminal investigators in MS, consisting of series of educational videos in all EU languages on the benefit of using Europol's products and services.	Delayed due to COVID-19
	Progress with aligning Europol's archiving of official documents with EU Archive Regulation 2015/496 amending Council Regulation 354/1983. Continue the archive restructuring project to improve quality of archiving and archival storage.	Delayed due to COVID-19
	Initiate the transition to a new Electronic Document and Records Management system.	Delayed due to COVID-19
	Advance with the analysis and review of documents- and records management practice with the objective to improve efficiency and compliance.	Delayed due to COVID-19
	Ensure that all business processes and protocols for areas of strategic organisational development are in place to guarantee a structured and consistent approach to work.	Delayed due to COVID-19
	Explore possible ways to translate other promotional material in all EU languages, taking into account budgetary impact.	Postponed to 2021 due to COVID-19
	Organise the Europol Open Sources Intelligence Conference.	Postponed to 2021 due to COVID-19
	Prepare Europol's multi-annual and annual business planning documents, and quarterly and annual corporate performance reporting.	Changed scope due to COVID-19

Work Programme Indicators

Europol Activity	Indicator	(INITIAL) TARGET 2020	(REVIEWED) TARGET 2020
A.1.	Number of SIENA messages exchanged by MS, TP and Europol (incl. PCCC)	1,300,000	1,200,000
A.1.	Number of SIENA cases initiated by MS, TP and Europol	90,000	80,000
A.1.	Number of objects (all types) in the EIS (MS+Europol)	1,600,000	1,500,000
A.2.	Number of SIENA messages exchanged by third parties (Total number of SIENA messages received and sent by Third Parties)	250,000	220,000
A.4.	Number of forensic jobs performed by EC3	1,500	1,000
A.5.	Volume of content assessed by the EU IRU related to terrorism and violent extremism	20,000	15,000
A.7.	Number of strategic analysis reports produced by Europol	40	30
A.8.	Number of news articles mentioning Europol (high-impact web-based media)	4,000	2,500

Annex XIII. Extract from the European Court of Auditors (ECA) report

Observations on the legality and regularity of transactions⁷⁶

As reported in the Annual Report for the 2018 financial year (see the follow-up table), the Agency prolonged the duration of one framework contract, for the provision of business travel services, by signing an amendment to it after it had expired in 2018. This was irregular. The Agency also signed a further amendment to that same contract on 29 March 2019, with effect from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020. The 2019 payments associated with these amendments, which amount to 32,531.50 euros, are therefore irregular. This demonstrates weaknesses in contract management and ex ante controls, which should be improved accordingly.

The Agency's reply

Europol acknowledges the ECA's comment concerning the immaterial payment amount of € 32,531.50 in 2019 for the audited travel service contract. As outlined already in Europol's reply to the 2018 ECA annual report, the framework contract extension was launched well in advance of its initial expiry at the end of March 2018. Europol is of the opinion that it exerted due diligence and that the delay for the extension of the contract was caused by the fact that Europol applied the principle of sound financial management. Although, a new framework contract for business travel services entered in force in April 2019, Europol decided to extend the old contract for business continuity reasons. Europol ascertains that the prolongation in 2019 was the result of a conscious business decision and does not constitute a weakness in ex-ante control. An internal audit will commence at Europol in Q4 2020, with a view to obtaining additional assurance on Europol's contract management approach.

Observations on budgetary management

The Financial Regulation states that EU bodies must make payments within prescribed terms. In 2019, the Agency frequently failed to do so. We found that it had paid late in 20 % of cases. We observed similar or even higher levels of delays in 2018 and 2017. This recurrent weakness exposes the Agency to reputational risk.

The Agency's reply

In 2019, Europol was faced with an understaffing situation, which affected so-called infrastructure areas, in particular financial administration. Europol is conscious of the risk profile regarding payments delays and carefully monitors the payment amounts on a monthly basis, taking mitigation actions to adhere to the principle of sound financial management, in particular by prioritising high-value payments and exploiting process improvements. Against this due diligence exerted by Europol, in 2019 an overall immaterial interest amount of € 1,624.53 was paid. The overall value of invoices paid late accounted for € 6.6 M (rounded), representing 4.6% of the payments made across the fund sources.

Observations on sound financial management

For the procurement of furniture, accessories and related services with a maximum value of € 2.04 M, the Agency had concluded a framework contract with a single operator resulting based on an open tendering procedure. Only one tender was received. However, the terms used in the documents to the call for tender were not specific enough; this undermined the competitive nature of the tendering procedure. Also, no minimum threshold had been set for the technical award criterion which was most relevant to quality (e.g.: quality of the proposed new standard furniture). The Agency should ensure that tender specifications are sufficiently well thought out to allow fair and effective competition.

⁷⁶ Report on the annual accounts of the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) for the financial year 2019, together with the Agency's reply.

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Moreover, the Agency did not sufficiently check the accuracy of underlying prices and the calculation of discounts applied for the non-standard items before submitting the order form to the contractor. The Agency should integrate such checks in its ex-ante controls, before signing the order forms.

The Agency's reply

Europol holds the view that the tender complied with the applicable requirements set out in Annex I of the Financial Regulation. The tender documentation included the subject matter of the procurement and the applicable exclusion, selection and award criteria, thus allowing for competitiveness. The formula chosen to calculate the final score reflected the best price-quality ratio concept. On the way forward, in the interest of competitiveness, the Agency will refine the minimum threshold points for the most relevant criteria where required. Concerning the discount given by the contractor in the specific order form audited, the contractor had finally offered a higher discount than the standard rate included in the contract. Europol thus applied sound financial management in line with the provisions of the contract, and will nonetheless review its ex-ante checks, as part of regular continuous improvement efforts.

Follow-up of previous years' observations

Year	Court's observations	Action taken to respond to Court's observations (Completed / Ongoing / Outstanding / N/A)
2017	The Agency publishes vacancy notices on its own website and on social media, but not on the website of the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO)	Completed
2018	The Agency irregularly prolonged the duration of a framework contract or the provision of business travel services after its expiry and introduced new price aspects. The contract management and ex-ante control should be strengthened	Outstanding

Europol's viewpoint in relation to the outstanding observation is as follows⁷⁷:

The travel service related framework contract expired in March 2020. The overall amount expensed for this contract was € 1,328 (rounded) in 2020. The resolution of the European Parliament (EP) of 28 April 2021, accompanying the decision on discharge for the implementation of the financial year 2019, notes Europol's explanation on the 2019 Court's observations, outlining that the decision to prolong the contract in 2019 was the result of a conscious decision to preserve business continuity and did not constitute a weakness in ex-ante controls according to Europol's assessment.⁷⁸

The final audit report of the Internal Audit Service (IAS) on contract management is not available at the time of the finalisation of the Consolidated Annual Activity Report (CAAR) for 2020. Europol's upholds its position after the audit that the contract management processes at Europol are adequately designed, efficient and effective to achieve the objective of contract management.

⁷⁷ This is the viewpoint of Europol which was not part of the report of the Court for the financial year 2019.

⁷⁸ Paragraph 20 of European Parliament – Discharge 2019: European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol): Decision and resolution on Europol discharge for the financial year 2019, Europol Parliament (EP) file P9_TA(2021)0196, Europol file no. EDOC #1168074v1 (available on www.europarl.europa.eu)