



Europol Strategy
**DELIVERING SECURITY
IN PARTNERSHIP**

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Foreword

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Executive Director

As part of my second term as the Executive Director of Europol and having consulted our Chiefs of Police, I decided to renew the Europol Strategy in order to calibrate our strategic direction for the coming years.

Much has been achieved since we launched the Europol Strategy 2020+, in terms of successfully implementing our strategic priorities and developing new tools.

Over the past four years, important adjustments were made to align the corporate structure and functions with the optimal delivery of the Europol Strategy 2020+. In the coming years, we will use this as the basis for further improving our performance, while benefitting from new opportunities introduced by the recently amended Europol Regulation.

We will do this despite the several global crises facing society, crises which are causing criminal threats to evolve rapidly - not the least by making full use of modern technology and communication.



In moving forward, we remain loyal to our mission, vision and values, which we will continue to embrace and foster.

Our strategic priorities for the Europol Strategy 2020+, which served so well to navigate us through the volatility of the last few years, are adapted in this renewed strategy to reflect the current operational needs of the Member States and the security threats they are facing.

This strategy also introduces an additional strategic priority, underlining Europol's role in bringing relevant partners together for operational cooperation. This is to ensure we build the very best partnerships in support of Member States' action against serious and organised crime, cybercrime and terrorism.

Building on our collective operational successes over the past years, we aim to become even more operationally relevant for the Member States in the times ahead.

We put additional focus on this by investing in innovative growth that supports law enforcement, and by strengthening partnerships that contribute to collective operational delivery, especially with Schengen-Associated Countries, key JHA Agencies such as Frontex, and Interpol.

I regard being granted a second term as Executive Director as an immense privilege. This strategy presents an exciting step forward for the Agency, building on almost 25 years of operational successes with new ideas and enhanced capabilities. Most importantly, it will support the law enforcement authorities of the Member States as we pursue our top priority: Making Europe Safer.

Foundations of Europol

Europol's foundation and raison d'être within the European Union lies in Article 88 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, as well as the Europol Regulation. Our mission, vision and values are directly derived from the objectives specified in those instruments.

Mission

Europol's mission is to support its Member States in preventing and combating all forms of serious international and organised crime, cybercrime and terrorism.

Vision

Europol's vision is to ensure an effective EU response to the threats of serious international and organised crime, cybercrime and terrorism. The Agency does this by acting as the principal information hub for law enforcement, delivering agile operational support and providing European policing solutions in conjunction with our network of partners.

Values

We work in a spirit of:

- 1 / service,
- 2 / integrity,
- 3 / accountability,
- 4 / initiative,
- 5 / partnership,
- 6 / diversity.

Strategic Priorities

In the coming years, Europol will carry out its mandate by focusing on the following strategic objectives:

1	Be the EU criminal information hub, including for data acquisition;
2	Deliver agile, real-time operational support;
3	Be a platform for European policing solutions;
4	Bring the relevant partners together for cross-border cooperation and joint action;
5	Be at the forefront of law enforcement innovation and research;
6	Be the model EU organisation for law enforcement cooperation.

Be the EU criminal information hub, including for data acquisition

Europol’s function as the EU criminal information hub will be further expanded to enable compliant access to data stored outside Europol’s own data repositories, within legal and practical possibilities. This includes operational use of EU databases (such as SIS, VIS, EES, ETIAS, and Eurodac) and the provision of support for the exchange of information involving national repositories (e.g. Prüm, ADEP-EPRIS).

Data gathering at Europol should be aimed at minimising criminal intelligence gaps and focus on data from live, complex investigations. The latter goes hand-in-hand with the prioritisation of Europol’s support to coordinated action against High-Value Targets (HVTs) and Operational Task Forces (OTFs), including those with a regional focus.

Europol will prioritise the acquisition of data that fulfils this purpose, such as real-time data from large and complex investigations, lawfully-intercepted and decrypted communications of criminal networks, and seized darknet servers used for criminal purposes. The Agency will also focus on data concerning crime hubs, hotspots and key crime enablers, as well as priority areas such as financial crime, migrant smuggling, drug trafficking, cybercrime, the illicit weapons trade and large-scale fraud schemes.

Member States will have access to more self-service tools, including for data and operational contributions.

Highlights:

- Conducting targeted data collection with specific interest for Europol’s focus areas;
- Facilitating instant communication, swift transfers from national data repositories, and integration with (joint) case management capabilities;

- Enhancing the intake of information through short-term on-the-spot deployments of frontline support officers;
- Enabling smooth data intake from private parties in relevant sectors (e.g. online service providers, the banking sector, crypto-currency exchangers) in consultation with Member States;
- Furthering Europol’s role in EU information exchange by implementing related policies and enabling new initiatives, including the creation of a dedicated unit to coordinate Europol’s work concerning interoperability and travel intelligence;
- Defining criteria for operational deployments to increase relevance and effectiveness, including for data collection.

Deliver agile, real-time operational support

Europol’s operational support to Member States’ investigations consists of several elements, chief among which are operational analysis, specialised capabilities, and the facilitation of operational coordination. Increasing the operational relevance of Europol calls for continued efforts and investments in such areas.

Europol’s capabilities should wherever possible be targeted towards the kind of investigations and operations, on which Europol can have most impact and added value. These investigations and operations are primarily large and complex cross-border investigations requiring real-time support.

Highlights:

- Furthering the OTF and HVT concepts for operational support;
- Supporting the investigation of all aspects of the criminal business model, including criminal finance, logistics, communication, corruption and intimidation;
- Creating an analysis training and coaching programme to increase the number of qualified operational and strategic analysis at Europol and in Member States, while promoting harmonisation of methodology;
- Expanding the flexible deployment of short-term SNEs/guest experts;
- Optimising internal coordination of OSINT monitoring across Europol’s centres;
- Stepping up support for migrant smuggling cases with essential partners for data collection outside the EU, with additional support coming through regional OTFs.
- Nurturing (new) partnerships for combating corruption and environmental crime through dedicated alliances, including relevant private parties;
- Specialised and coordinated support in financial investigations, crypto-currency tracing and online crimes through knowledge management among experts.

Be a platform for European policing solutions

Europol's role of offering a platform for competent authorities to develop and use policing tools and expertise has benefitted from the Europol Platform for Experts (EPE) and Operations Network Experts Platform (ONEP). These will be further developed in line with user needs and technical developments.

In addition, Europol will seek, where relevant and possible, to invest in platforms that can contribute to operational coordination between partners. These may also serve joint capacity building and the sharing of expertise and tools.

Highlights:

- Enabling the coordination of the collective response to the criminal threats through EMPACT and, where relevant, by suitable means for counter-terrorism;
- Creating a coordination and de-confliction solution for HVTs;
- Facilitating rapid crisis response mechanisms;
- Providing guidance for Member States' users to find the right products and services, including technical tools and extended support services to manage their expected growth;
- Creating a single digital portal for accessing Europol's processing systems, specialised tools, services, data, contacts and expertise;
- Rolling out in-built translation tools to facilitate communication for users in Member States' competent authorities and other partners.

Bring the relevant partners together for cross-border cooperation and joint action

Operational support to Member States often involves the facilitation of contacts with law enforcement from non-EU countries, with Interpol and other international organisations, and increasingly with private parties. In the interest of coordination at EU level, the engagement with EU Agencies in the field of Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) is also indispensable.

Since its establishment, Europol has developed into a strong enabler that brings the relevant partners together, with the significant and valuable community of Liaison Officers at its heart. The Agency intends to foster this evolution in the coming years to maximise operational results, first and foremost for the Member States, but also for our other partners. Europol will especially invest in its partnerships with the Schengen Associated Countries, Interpol, and key JHA agencies such as Frontex.

Highlights:

- Intensifying the cooperation with the Schengen Associated Countries as essential partners of the EU Internal Security Architecture;

- Seeking practical solutions for a more targeted operational cooperation with strategic third parties within the applicable legal frameworks;
- Assessing roles and competences that will enable cooperation between Europol and Interpol, with a view to address Member States' needs for products and services in relation to Third States;
- Coordinating with other EU JHA Agencies , to offer an aligned set of products and services to Member States;
- Stepping up cooperation with other (non-EU) Agencies and international organisations, including operational cooperation where possible;
- Developing a dedicated strategy for cooperation with private parties, including NGOs and academia, to optimise their engagement, both for operational interests and to nurture potential innovation.

Be at the forefront of law enforcement innovation and research

The Innovation Lab and its structured connection to Member States serves as a solid foundation for well-coordinated, collective innovation in the coming years. The operational relevance of innovation is a leading principle in the Lab's work. As a consequence, the connection to the operational needs of the Member States, JHA partners, as well as within Europol, has to be fostered and promoted.

The extended legal possibilities for the processing of personal data for research and innovation purposes are to be explored and acted upon in an adapted development environment.

Highlights:

- Identifying the innovative tools and processing capabilities Member States need most, and enabling their development together with specialised law enforcement services as well as research and industry partners;
- Pursuing the rapid development of tools supporting data collection and processing, including through data science and artificial intelligence;
- Expanding the Europol Tool Repository with new cutting-edge technology;
- Optimising the possibilities for funding and priority attribution for grant schemes;
- Engaging proactively with private sector, academia and research institutes, including through Industry & Research Days;
- Stimulating a culture of innovation across Europol.

Be the model EU organisation for law enforcement cooperation

The operational mission of Europol must stand out in all aspects of its work. This applies also to the internal support functions that should fulfil their tasks with operational delivery in mind. The consideration for the specific needs of the law enforcement context in which Europol operates will be made a priority throughout the Agency, optimising our performance and output.

Highlights:

- Investing to attract, train and retain specialists in relevant domains of expertise;
- Increasing the encouragement of personal development, talent management and empowerment;
- Work with the Management Board and Member States to address legal and administrative impediments to operational delivery;
- Creating an Operational Readiness Function, including relevant internal support services, for rapid operational response to crises and emergency situations;
- Identifying possibilities for a more flexible incorporation of tools and services within the ICT environment;
- Acting on our environmental responsibility to minimise carbon emissions;
- Creating a dedicated change management capability across the organisation, in which in particular the applicable requirements are structured and applied for every technical solution, process or work practice;
- Fostering continued engagement with former Europol staff by investing in the Europol community, even after their employment with the Agency has ended.