

## EU agency for law enforcement training (CEPOL)

In October, MEPs are due to vote on a new legal framework for the European law enforcement training agency (CEPOL), to revamp its governance and broaden its remit in a context of increasing complexity and internationalisation of serious and organised crime.

### Background

The idea of setting up a European Police College took shape at the Tampere European Council in October 1999. CEPOL was subsequently established by [Council Decision 2000/820/JHA](#) and became operational on 1 January 2001. In 2004, two amending decisions were adopted, giving CEPOL legal personality and establishing its seat at Bramshill, UK. [Council Decision 2005/681/JHA](#) of September 2005 gave CEPOL a new mandate as a decentralised EU agency providing training to senior police officers from EU Member States, in line with the internal security priorities defined by the Council of the EU. CEPOL's main tasks consist not only of spreading knowledge and enhancing cross-border cooperation between law enforcement officials but also of running exchange programmes, developing common curricula and disseminating research findings. [In 2014](#), more than 10 000 law enforcement professionals took part in CEPOL's residential and online training.

### Commission proposals

In 2012, the EU adopted a [Common approach on EU decentralised agencies](#) aimed at enhancing their governance, efficiency and accountability, including through seeking synergies between agencies, such as sharing services based on proximity of locations or mergers. The Commission's proposals for CEPOL are based on this Common approach as well as on the [roadmap](#) for its follow-up.

#### *Aborted merger with Europol*

In March 2013, the Commission presented a [proposal for a regulation updating the legal framework of the European Police Office \(Europol\)](#), including the integration of CEPOL within Europol. However, both the Parliament and Council rejected this move, arguing that each agency had its own distinctive tasks, CEPOL operating as a network of training institutes and Europol as a network of operational law enforcement bodies. MEPs also [pointed out](#) that merging the two agencies could affect their independence and undermine well-functioning judicial cooperation. The idea of relocating CEPOL to The Hague was rejected too. Instead, [Regulation 543/2014/EU](#) was adopted in May 2014, moving the seat of CEPOL to Budapest, Hungary and calling on the Commission to submit a report on the effectiveness of Decision 2005/681/JHA, and, if appropriate, a legislative proposal to amend it.

#### *Current proposal*

In July 2014, the Commission presented a new [proposal](#) for a regulation repealing and replacing Decision 2005/681/JHA, whereby CEPOL would keep its status as an independent agency seated in Budapest, with two main tasks: 1. organising EU-level training and exchanges; and 2. coordinating the implementation of the [Law Enforcement Training Scheme \(LETS\)](#), the new training approach aimed at equipping law enforcement officials with knowledge and skills to effectively prevent and combat cross-border crime.

### European Parliament

The EP [report](#) on CEPOL (rapporteur: Kinga Gál, EPP, Hungary), adopted in the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) on 24 February 2015 by a large majority, puts greater emphasis on promoting respect for fundamental rights in law enforcement, including privacy, data protection and victims' rights. It also insists that CEPOL activities should be focused on thematic areas with clear EU added value and a cross-border dimension. Following trilogue negotiations, a compromise agreement with the Council was [reached](#) on 29 June 2015 and endorsed in LIBE on 15 July 2015. This text now requires a first-reading plenary vote.