

Directorate-General for Internal Policies of the Union
Directorate for Budgetary Affairs
Secretariat of the Committee on Budgetary Control

Brussels, 1 February 2018

Report on the fact-finding mission of the Budgetary Control Committee to Europol, The Hague

19 to 20 September 2017



1. Introduction

This delegation authorised by the Conference of Presidents on 11 May 2017 was made in the framework of the rules on EU Agency visits. The delegation was part of the programme of missions and ad-hoc delegations for the second half of 2017.

The delegation focused on governance and compliance at Europol, its administrative and financial management, as well as on its operational activities in the area of migrant smuggling, counter-terrorism and cyber-crime.

2. Introductory meeting with Mr Luis de Eusebio Ramos, Europol's Deputy Executive Director for Capabilities

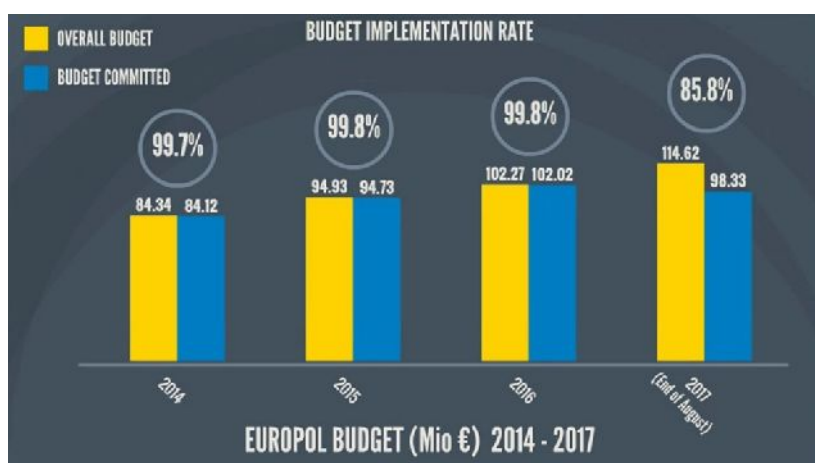
Mr Luis de Eusebio Ramos welcomed the CONT delegation, and presented Europol's latest operational priorities such as counter-terrorism and migrant smuggling. He noted that, with the entry into force of the new Europol Regulation on 1 May 2017, the agency has been provided with a stronger mandate as well as a new governance and accountability framework. Mr Ramos pointed out that the new regulation opened new opportunities for collecting, storing and managing information, under the scrutiny of the European Data Protection Supervisor.

Due to new responsibilities, Europol increased its staff members. In addition, Mr Ramos noted that, if the proposal for the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (on horizon for 2019) is to be implemented, Europol will need additional resources to successfully implement the project.

3. Governance and compliance and financial management at Europol

Mr Gregor Wewer, from the Office of Europol's Executive Director, presented Europol's 2016-2020 strategy:

- 1) EU criminal information hub, providing information sharing capabilities to law enforcement authorities in the Member States;
- 2) Effective operational support and expertise to MS investigations by developing and employing a comprehensive portfolio of services;
- (3) Europol will be an efficient organisation with effective governance arrangements and a positive reputation;



It was noted that following the audit findings of the European Court of Auditors, Europol established its procurement department in order to improve its Internal Control Framework. As regards the discharge recommendations, it was noted that Europol implements well its budget and keeps its carry-overs small, thereby adhering to the budgetary principle of annuality. Its Management Board adopted the rules on management of conflicts of interests in May 2017, in order to formalise the existing practices. In addition, Europol's anti-fraud strategy was adopted in February 2017.



Europol staff allocation 2017

Europol's staff is divided across Operations Directorate (438 staff members), Capabilities directorate (212 staff members), Governance Directorate (118 staff members) and the Executive Director and Management Board Functions (18 staff members). The delegation was informed that Europol's facilities in The Hague were at full capacity, which was originally foreseen to be reached in 2022. The discussions were ongoing with the Dutch government to provide additional space resources within existing building or outside, but in vicinity.



Europol's budget and staff allocation per WP activities

4. Briefings on the European Migrant Smuggling Centre and the European Counter-Terrorism Centre

The delegation was further briefed on the activities of the European Migrant Smuggling Centre (EMSC) by Mr Robert Crepinko, Head of the EMSC. Members were informed about the recent trends in facilitated illegal immigration, as well as with the Malta Implementation Plan. The plan focuses on information sharing between military and law enforcement, having an information and intelligence hub and breaking smugglers' business model, the deployment of Europol experts – EUBAM Libya, EEAS and detecting/monitoring suspicious vessels. For the way forward, Europol should implement the political tasking emerging from the Malta Declaration - information clearing house, operational task forces and deployments to missions/third countries.

Mr Peter Kusters informed the delegation about the activities of the European Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC) operating at Europol. He pointed out that the cornerstone of the operations is sharing data with third countries, for which a cooperation agreement is needed and without which exchange of information is not possible. Mr Kusters pointed out that ECTC is trying to move its operations from reaction to prevention, and is working together with the intelligence community to accomplish this. In addition, he pointed out that the analytical work at the ECTC is now only partially done by computers, and the rest by human analysts – guest officers who are employed as seconded national experts and whose expenses are borne by the Member States.

5. Briefing on Europol ICT systems and interoperability



Mr Marcello Fini, Head of Europol's ICT department presented the key figures regarding Europol's ICT capabilities and the related budget. Europol is currently supporting more than 130 solutions with more than 12 000 users, dedicates over 16,000 man-days per year for new development projects and devotes an additional 16,000 man-days per year to managing the production environment,

including 2 on-site data centres, 6 secondary equipment rooms, 1 data centre in Austria and 1 ICT Lab containing more than 2000 virtual servers and 5 PB of storage. Europol's ICT budget for 2017 was at 21,39 million EUR, committed at 16,45 million EUR at the time of the CONT delegation's visit. As regards Europol's ICT budget management, new processes are in place since 2013 with monthly forecasting and change control process. Europol has one of the best ICT teams in the EU, however due to the limited contract length of 9 years it has problems in attracting qualified IT personnel, as 20 % of the staff rotates every year.

In addition, Mr Krzysztof Klebek from the Capabilities Business Product Management presented Europol's core operational systems: SIENA (Secure information exchange), EAS (Europol analysis system), EIS (Europol information system) and EPE (Europol platform for experts), as well as the key interoperability initiatives on EU systems. He pointed out that for many IT projects with a

small investment value, there is a great business value as information exchange services are being provided to the authorities of Member States.

Mr Olivier Burgersdijk finally presented the interoperability agenda and Europol's integrated data management which consists of cross-checking against Europol data, strategy and thematic analysis (ex. detection of crime-specific travel patterns and characteristics), operational analysis (which connects Europol's operational work in analysis projects to the movements of persons and goods) and finally of facilitating information exchange (follow up to hits, exchange of information and operational coordination).

6. Briefing on Europol Cybercrime Centre

Mr Steven Wilson, Head of European Cybercrime Centre (EC3) presented the EC3's activities to the CONT delegation. EC3 was created in January 2013, with three core areas of responsibility: strategy, forensic expertise and operations. The CONT delegation was informed about the multi-faceted approach to countering cybercrime, as well as on recent key trends and the types of operations EC3 is carrying out.

7. Visit to the 24/7 operational centre and forensic lab

CONT delegation finally visited Europol's 24/7 operational centre, as well as the forensic laboratory on falsified Euro banknotes.

8. Recommendations

CONT delegation reminds that the Europol Regulation was adopted in May 2016, with applicability as of 1 May 2017, to introduce enhanced arrangements on Parliament oversight and an improved operational support mandate.

The delegation is pleased with the budget monitoring efforts implemented at Europol, in particular its high budget implementation rate and low carry-overs indicating that commitments are made in a timely manner.

The delegation welcomes the fact that Europol established in 2016 the European Counter-Terrorism Centre (ECTC) and the European Migrant Smuggling Centre (EMSC), including on-the-spot the deployment of staff to perform over 4,800 secondary security checks in migration hotspots by the end of 2016. The delegation is pleased that over 270 counter terrorism operations were supported by Europol, which represents more than a twofold increase, compared to the entire year 2016.

The delegation welcomes that Europol pioneered innovative investigative support tools, including the EU Most Wanted website and a new Image and Video Analysis Solution.

Brussels, 13 September 2017

**Fact-finding mission
of the Budgetary Control Committee (CONT)
to EUROPOL
(The Hague, the Netherlands)**

19-20 September 2017

FINAL PROGRAMME

Members of the delegation:

1. Ms Caterina CHINNICI, S&D
2. Mr Dennis De JONG, GUE/NGL

CONT Secretariat

3. Mr Hrvoje Svetic, EP staff responsible for this delegation (tel: +32 498 983 593)
4. Ms Marcia Maguire

European Court of Auditors

5. Mr Karel Pinxten (Member of the Court)

Interpreters:

(working languages: English, Polish and Italian)

6. Roberto Aquino, Team Leader
7. Caterina Balasso

Transport (Brussels - EUROPOL - Brussels):

- Parliament's DG INLO minibus
- Driver: Mr Alexander Bernath

Accommodation/Hotel:

HILTON The Hague

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Date in: 19/09/2017 & Date out: 20/09/2017

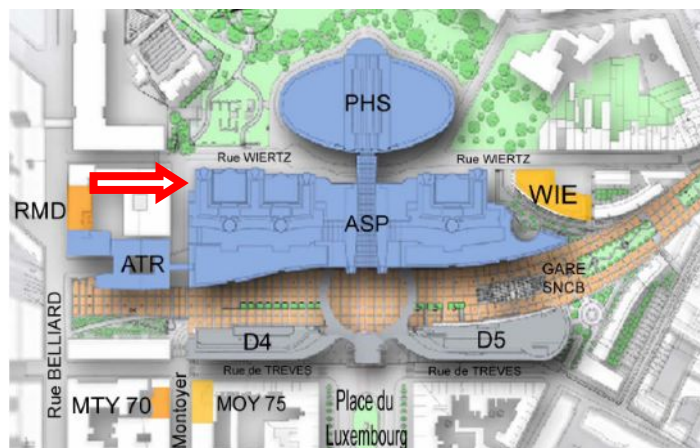
Contact at Europol

Mr. Edoardo Boggio Marzet
External & EU Institutional Affairs
Corporate Services, EUROPOL
Email: Edoardo.Boggio-Marzet@europol.europa.eu

Final Programme:

Tuesday 19 September 2017

10:00 *Departure of the Delegation to Europol, The Hague*
Transport by mini-bus
Meeting point: Rue Montoyer, in front of the Committee of the Regions - see below map:



12:20 *Arrival at the Europol*

12:30 - 13:00 **Meeting with Europol's Deputy Executive Director for Capabilities, Mr Luis de Eusebio Ramos**
Participants (Europol): Mr Edoardo Boggio Marzet, Ms Elisavet Spitadaki

13:00 - 14:00 *Lunch break - private lunch*

14:00 - 14:40 **Meeting on “Governance and compliance at Europol”**
Participants (Europol): Mr Gregor Wewer, Office of the Europol Executive Director

14:40 - 15:10 **Meeting on “Europol financial and administrative management”**

15:10 - 15:45 **Operational briefing on migrant smuggling/ presentation of European Migrant Smuggling Centre**
Participants (Europol): Mr Robert Crepinko /Head of European Migrant Smuggling Centre

15:45 - 16:00 *Coffee break*

16:00 - 16:40 **Operational briefing on the activities of the European Counter-Terrorism Centre**
Participants (Europol): Mr Peter Kusters/ European Counter-Terrorism Centre

17:00 *Departure for hotel*

20:00 *Private dinner*

Night in The Hague, Netherlands

Wednesday, 20 September 2017

09:30 *Departure from hotel*

09:45 *Arrival at Europol*

10:00 - 10:40 **Operational briefing on the Europol IT systems and interoperability**
Participants (Europol): Mr Krzysztof Klebek, Mr Olivier Burgersdijk, Mr Marcello Fini

- 10:40 - 11:10 **Operational briefing on cybercrime/presentation of Europol Cybercrime Centre**
Participants: (Europol): Mr Steven Wilson/ Head of Business of Europol Cybercrime Centre
- 11:10 - 11:35 **Visit to 24/7 operational centre + operational room**
- 11:35 - 11:50 **Visit to forensic lab (including the Laboratory on falsified Euro banknotes and protection of Euro)**
- 11:50 - 12:00 **Farewell by Europol Deputy Executive Director, Capabilities and Departure, Mr Luis de Eusebio Ramos**
- 12:15 *Departure from Europol*
- 13:00 - 14:30 *Lunch break - private lunch*
- 14:30 *Departure of the Delegation to Brussels*
- 17:00 *Official end of programme*