

The Hague, 21 October 2021

Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group (JPSG) Secretariat

To the attention of the JPSG Co-Chairs

By email only:

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Europol answer to written question from Ms Florea, Head of the Romanian Delegation to the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group (JPSG)

Dear Co-Chairs,

In accordance with Article 4.2 of the JPSG Rules of Procedure and Article 51 of the Europol Regulation, Europol would like to respond to the question raised by Ms Florea, Member of the Parliament of Romania, received by Europol on 9 October 2020 as follows:

Written question

In the past weeks we all witnessed the retreat of allied armies from Afghanistan. As a result, Taliban troops regained power and this situation caused a refugee wave which is likely to reach European borders.

Security experts argue that this refugee wave might also bring terrorists to the EU. As you know, in 2020, more jihadist attacks were concluded than prevented by the authorities, with 254 suspects arrested and 12 casualties sadly registered.

In this context, I would like to know what measures are or will be taken by EUROPOL in order to preserve the European security.

Europol's answer

In the JHA Council Statement of 31 August 2021, the EU Ministers of the Interior requested the EU agencies "to make full use of their mandates to upholding EU response to migration and security challenges stemming from the situation in Afghanistan". Europol was asked to "provide an analysis of the criminal risks linked to the development in Afghanistan". In its Resolution on the Situation in Afghanistan of 16 September 2021, the European Parliament called for "thorough registration and security checks on those being evacuated from the region and an enhanced exchange of information between the Member States' law enforcement authorities, the US and Europol to prevent possible security threats stemming from terrorism and organised crime"; Also, it called "on Europol to provide criminal risk analysis and enhanced cooperation with third countries in the broader context of the developments in Afghanistan".

So far, no major changes have been reported to Europol on migrant smuggling activities and terrorism linked to the situation in Afghanistan. However, it is important to note that over the last few years:

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- Afghan irregular migrants have been among the top nationalities smuggled to the EU and in secondary movements through EU Member States.
- Similarly, facilitation of migratory movements has often been reported in connection to Afghan criminal networks, smuggling both their own nationals and other irregular migrants on a variety of routes. Afghan smugglers rely on a strong criminal infrastructure already set up in the EU.

While some indications may result from monitoring serious and organised crime and terrorism in the EU, pointing to the possible risk of terrorists using the migration route to enter the EU, it is premature to have a view of investigations that may have a direct link to the recent developments in Afghanistan.

In implementing the JHA Council Statement, Europol has activated all relevant operational tools to support Member States. Europol is actively promoting and facilitating the exchange of information and criminal intelligence on Afghanistan, through the Europol's Joint Liaison Teams on terrorism and migration. EU Member States receive regular updates and assessments of the situation through the European Migrant Smuggling Centre (EMSC) and EU Internet Referral Unit (EU IRU) weekly operational messages.

With a view to further enhancing the EU security response beyond current deployments in Italy, Greece, Cyprus and Malta, Europol is ready to deploy Guest Officers to support Member States in secondary security checks when necessary.


Accordingly, Europol has already deployed GOs to Lithuania since 28 July 2021. The Team is fully equipped with Universal forensic extraction devices (UFED) and Mobile Offices, enabling forensic support with data extraction and direct access to Europol's databases.

The EU Internet Referral Unit at Europol is monitoring migration smuggling-related online content, facing however some challenges for the lack of capacities in some of the regional languages.

Intensified information sharing from Member States to Europol contributes to improve the situational picture, while stepping up strategic and operational cooperation with other EU Agencies and Bodies is of key importance. Accordingly, Europol has pooled strategic analysts and experts from its dedicated terrorism, drugs trafficking and migrant smuggling response capabilities, who are tasked to produce update reports based on the data collected, including that contributed by Members States and Europol's partners.

I hope that this answer will prove satisfactory. Europol remains available for further clarifications.

Yours sincerely,


Alfredo Nunzi

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(Acting Deputy Executive Director of Governance)