

7 June 2023

Consolidated Annual Activity Report

2022

Europol Public Information

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ABAC	Accrual Based ACcounting
CEPOL	European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training
CRBN/E	Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear / Explosive
DPF	Data Protection Function
DPIA	Data Protection Impact Assessment
DSC	Data Subject Categorisation
EC3	European Cybercrime Centre
ECA	European Court of Auditors
ECTC	European Counter Terrorism Centre
EDPS	European Data Protection Supervisor
EEAS	European External Action Service
EFEC	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
EPE	Europol Platform for Experts
EPPO	European Public Prosecutor's Office
ESOCC	European Serious and Organised Crime Centre
EUIPO	European Union Intellectual Property Office
EUIRU	European Union Referral Unit
FIU	Financial Intelligence Unit
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
HVT	High Value Target
IAC	Internal Audit Capability
IAM	Identity and Access Management
IAS	Internal Audit Service
ICS	Internal Control Systems
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
JPSG	Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group on Europol
OAC	Operational and Analysis Centre
OLAF	European Anti-Fraud Office
OTF	Operational Task Force
QUEST	QUery Europol SysTEms
SIENA	Secure Information Exchange Network Application
SNE	Seconded National Expert
WADA	World Anti-Doping Agency
WCO	World Customs Organization

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 2022, 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 2022, the MB makes the following observations:

- The report contains a comprehensive account of the activities carried out by Europol in implementing its mandate during 2022.
- From the outset, the MB wishes to praise the Agency for its outstanding achievements in a year marked by the Russian war against Ukraine and by other developments directly influencing Europol's activities. In particular: the entry into force of the amended Europol Regulation, the implementation of EU Interoperability, and the steady increase in the demand of Member States for Europol's operational and ICT delivery to counter evolving criminal threats to the EU security.

In this context, the MB commends the overall progress made in the implementation of each of the five strategic priorities set under the Europol Strategy 2020+, thereby further enhancing the Agency's ability to meet Member States' operational needs, as well as its organisational performance.

The MB notes, for instance:

- The successful establishment of the Information Management Unit, the Digital Support Unit and the Corporate Security Department.
- The development of a new ICT Strategy aimed to better support the evolving information management-related needs of both Europol and the Member States.
- The continued and increased focus on high-impact investigations leading to the establishment of new Operational Task Forces.
- The concrete initiatives successfully realised by the Europol Innovation Lab, such as the Europol Tools Repository, to support research and innovation in the Member States, encourage exchange of experiences, and promote synergies and co-developments.

Further, the MB praises Europol for its prompt response in relation to the war in Ukraine by supporting the EU Member States, Ukraine, and other third countries in preventing and combating related crime.

- The MB underlines the importance of Europol's activities, which have been intense and wide-ranging since the beginning of the war, and praises the close coordination between EU Member States, JHA agencies, the European Commission and international actors in pursuing a common endeavour.
- Amongst others, the deployment of Europol's experts and guest officers to support secondary security checks in the countries bordering Ukraine is an example of the direct and demanding support provided by the Agency and the Member States to local law enforcement authorities in order to mitigate the security impact of the war.

With regard to other areas of Europol's work, the MB emphasises that the significant results achieved in executing the annual Work Programme made Europol's prominent role as the EU criminal information hub, leading centre offering agile operational support, and key Agency in the EU internal security architecture, grow further in 2022.

In particular, the MB commends the successful efforts made by the Agency in keeping up and strengthening its operational and organisational capabilities, as well as in managing a particularly challenging corporate risk profile.

The MB underlines, amongst others:

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- That the number of messages exchanged via SIENA grew to a historical high of 1.64 million in 2022, thereby anticipating the future role of SIENA as the 'by default' EU communication channel for law enforcement authorities.
- The development of a new business value model for monitoring the progress of ICT delivery and achievements, which aims to better capture Member States' needs and expectations and to encourage closer coordination between Europol and national stakeholders in ICT planning and delivery.
- The continuous increase in the number of searches in the EIS and through QUEST, leading to more than 13 million, and of cross-border crime checks, which exceeded the annual target. These results illustrate the increasing importance of Europol's database for the every-day work of national investigators.
- The improvement in the speed of first-line response to SIENA requests, averaging at 3.1 days, which represents a notable increase compared to last year's performance (6.1 days) and shows Europol's growing service-oriented efficiency.
- The positive performance of the Europol operational centres, which in most cases exceeded the yearly targets, as reflected in the overall and specific user satisfaction levels measured through the annual user survey. Amongst others:
 - o The number of operations supported by the Europol Serious and Organised Crime Centre (ESOCC) increased by 44% compared to 2021, doubling the yearly target, while achieving the highest user satisfaction rate concerning ESOCC's operational and analytical support (10 out of 10).
 - o The number of Action Days supported by the European Cybercrime Centre (EC3) and the European Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC) largely exceeded the yearly targets and last year's performance, while the results of the European Financial and Economic Crime Centre (EFECC) exceeded all yearly targets.
 - o The users' satisfaction with Europol's operational analysis and operational training delivered to Member States and Third Parties reached higher levels compared to yearly targets and to last year's performance (9.7 and 9.8 out of 10, respectively).

The MB notes that, notwithstanding the significant achievements of Europol's operational centres, the results pertaining to strategic analysis show a decrease compared to last year's performance.

- The MB wishes to stress Europol's resilience in implementing its EU Interoperability Roadmap, amidst the difficulties arising from limited resources, re-planning arrangements resulting from timetable changes at EU level, inter-Agency dependencies, and consultation procedures with the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS).
- The MB praises Europol's efforts in this area of crucial importance for the EU internal security and notes that, thanks to such efforts, Europol was punctually ready for the entry into operation of the Schengen Information System recast, which took place on 7 March 2023.

Further, the MB acknowledges the progress achieved by Europol in implementing its External Relations Strategy 2021-2024 and, with a view to preparing its future External Strategy, encourages the Agency to pursue, in close coordination with the Member States, a continued assessment of the operational value of the cooperation established with third countries and international organisations.

Pertaining to budget implementation and human resources management, the MB takes note of the following elements:

- With a regular budget of € 192.4M in 2022, Europol reached a commitment rate of 96.6%, exceeding the yearly 95% target. While the payment rate (79.7%) fell below the target (90%) and last year's performance (83.5%), it represents a €12.3M increase in absolute amounts.

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- On the other hand, the percentage of late payments represents 1.9% of the total payments made in 2022, in terms of value, which entails a notable decrease compared to 4.6% in 2021.
- This notwithstanding, the overall budget outturn came to a surplus of more than € 10M, resulting from elapsed amounts across all budget Titles and from unused 2021 carry forward appropriations, especially under Title 3 (Operational activities).
- The vacancy rate reached 0.6%, well below the ceiling set at 2% but higher than last year (0.2%), mainly because the recruitment of the new posts allocated with the Europol Regulation recast could only start following the entry into force of the amended Regulation in June 2022.
- With regard to gender representation, the percentage of female staff was 32%, similar to the previous year (33%), with a number of female staff in Head of Unit and equivalent or higher positions slightly higher (18%) than last year.

The MB notes with satisfaction that, as in previous years:

- The European Parliament granted discharge to the Executive Director for the implementation of the budget for the financial year 2020.
- No audit findings graded as critical or very important were pending in relation to the European Court of Auditors, the Internal Audit Service or the European Ombudsman at the end of 2022.
- Europol implemented most of the critical or very important recommendations issued by the Internal Audit Capability and planned for completion in 2022, thereby largely exceeding both the yearly target and last year's performance.

Further, the MB praises Europol for other important governance-related achievements, such as:

- The renewal of the EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme certification for another year, following a successful external audit by the certification body; and
- The adoption of Europol's Diversity & Inclusion Strategy, currently being implemented by the Agency.

The MB commends Europol for its intense commitment in following up to demanding supervisory activities, in particular with regard to the EDPS supervision.

In this context, the MB notes that:

- Europol's response to such supervisory activities continued to be resource-intensive for the Agency throughout the year.
- A number of EDPS's opinions and ensuing recommendations impacted developments of key operational importance, for instance the roll-out of PERCI (the EU Platform on Illegal Content Online), put on hold in 2022 and currently still pending, while the TCO Regulation¹ has already entered into application.
- For the sake of legal certainty, the implementing rules required for the processing of personal data in accordance with the amended Europol Regulation were in place as of the entry into force of the said Regulation, thus since 28 June 2022. Thanks to the close dialogue established with the EDPS, who had challenged the referred rules from a procedural standpoint, Europol produced revised implementing rules taking into account the opinion issued by the Supervisor in November 2022, and the MB adopted them in March 2023.

The MB encourages Europol to:

- Continue implementing the changes introduced by the amended Europol Regulation, both from a legal and a technical standpoint, thus taking full benefit from this renewed legal

¹ Regulation (EU) 2021/784 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2021 on addressing the dissemination of terrorist content online.

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framework, which aims to strengthen the Agency's mandate and its operational support capabilities.

- Pursuing its intense preparations towards the forthcoming EU Interoperability 'go live' to ensure the fulfilment of its legal obligations and profit from the resulting operational opportunities while carrying out its other core business activities in support to national law enforcement authorities.
- Maintain the outstanding governance and management standards achieved by enhancing its budget consumption capacities in order to improve the payment rate and to bring budget surplus to lower levels, including by engaging in a thorough assessment of the root causes underlying last year's outturn rate, while duly taking follow-up actions in relation to the European Court of Auditors' observations.
- Improve gender representation by continuing to emphasise the principle of equal opportunities in all vacancy notices and by assessing further possible options in line with the applicable legal framework.

The MB congratulates the Executive Director, Ms Catherine De Bolle, on Europol's activities in 2022, as well as on her initiative to review the Europol Strategy 2020+ with a view to further strengthening the Agency's performance and adjusting its tools to continuously evolving operational needs. The MB especially commend the Executive Director for the close consultation established with the Member States, including by personally visiting the Heads of the national competent authorities for their guidance on the new priorities.

Looking into the future, the MB wishes to emphasise that Europol will continue to operate in times of profound changes, new opportunities and incessant challenges, both within the Union and internationally. For instance, new EU legal instruments, such as the Directive on information exchange between law enforcement authorities of Member States, or the new generation of Prüm, as well as the forthcoming entry into operation of EU Interoperability, will impact directly the Agency's activities. Furthermore, dramatic events such as the war in Ukraine may well continue bearing upon Europol's resources.

In this context, mindful of the current and foreseeable difficult budgetary context for the EU institutions and all EU citizens, the MB calls upon the EU budgetary authority to resort to any possible option to ensure appropriate and sustainable resources to Europol in the years to come.

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 2022 to the discharge authority.

The MB attaches this assessment to the CAAR 2022 for submission to the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission, the European Court of Auditors, 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,



Jérôme Bonet

Chairperson

7 June 2023

Executive Summary

Europol Strategy 2020+

The work to **review** the **Europol Strategy 2020+** began in 2022 and is expected to be completed by mid- 2023.

Operational activities

- In 2022, Europol accepted 98,068 operational contributions and supported 2,758 operations. The satisfaction with operational support delivered by Europol, measured via the User Survey, reached 9.6/10. During the reporting period Europol organised or supported 394 action days, delivered 32 Strategic Analysis Reports and established 18 Operational Task Forces (OTFs).
- Europol's **Operational and Analysis Centre** (OAC) accepted 32,523 operational contributions. In 2022, the OAC replied to first line SIENA requests in 3.1 days (6.1 in 2021). The average reply time by Europol's SIRENE office was 1.8 days (1.9 in 2021). At the end of 2022, more than 75 guest officers (GOs) were deployed, covering 28 operational areas. The total number of trained GOs at the end of the reporting period was 381.
- The **European Serious and Organised Crime Centre** (ESOCC) accepted 37,288 operational contributions and produced 4,064 operational reports. A total of 1,069 operations were supported by ESOCC in 2022. Moreover, ESOCC established 10 new Operational Task Forces (OTF) and organised/supported 233 Action Days during the year.
- The **European Cybercrime Centre** (EC3) supported 446 operations and received 8,837 operational contributions; the centre delivered 3,601 operational reports. In 2022, the EC3 established one OTF, organised/supported 42 Action Days, and registered 20 decryption platform successes.
- The **European Counter Terrorism Centre** (ECTC) supported 891 operations and received 4,357 operational contributions; the ECTC delivered 1,526 operational reports. The ECTC established four OTFs and organised/supported 30 Action Days during the year. The EUIRU monitored online content and assessed a total of 22,516 pieces of content related to terrorism and violent extremism.
- The **European Financial and Economic Crime Centre** (EFECC) supported 402 operations and produced 2,045 operational reports, with 15,075 operational contributions received. In total, the EFECC organised/supported 94 action days, leading to substantial operational outcomes and seizures with a total value of over € 1.1 billion. In addition, the EFECC established three OTFs during 2022.

Core Operational Systems

- The **uptime of core systems** was well above the target and reached 99.74%.
- Regarding **core business project delivery**, 78% of the initially planned milestones were achieved at the end of the year. A new business value model for monitoring the progress of ICT delivery was implemented in 2022.
- Over 1.6M **SIENA messages** were exchanged and more than 138k SIENA cases were initiated in 2022.
- More than 13M searches were performed in **EIS and QUEST**, and 2,339 Cross Border Crime Checks in EIS related to persons were performed in 2022.

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- In 2022, 14,859 unique visitors connected to the **Europol Platform for Experts (EPE)**, and several new platforms were opened: Counter Terrorism Experts (CTE), Core International Crimes and Counter Terrorism (CIC), WIKIPOL (dissemination of knowledge documents to all MS LE), GEFÄHRDER, Special Tactics and Operational Task Forces (OTF).
- A new **Visualisation & Analysis Tool (VAT)** was deployed in October 2022.

Financial and Human resources

- **Europol's budget** amounted to € 192.4M. The **commitment rate** was 97% or € 185.9M, while the overall **payment rate** was 80% or € 153.4M.
- The **carry over to 2022** came to a total of € 26M; the final implementation rate of the carry over was 85%.
- The percentage of **late payments** represented 1.9% of the total payments made in 2022, in terms of value, compared to 4.6% in 2021.
- The **vacancy rate** at year-end was 0.6%.
- At the end of 2022, the percentage of **female staff** was 32%; the percentage of female staff members in Head of Unit and equivalent or higher positions was 18%.

Audit Management and Internal Control

- The **European Parliament granted discharge** to the Executive Director for the implementation of the budget for the **financial year 2020**.
- The **European Court of Auditors (ECA)** issued the overall assurance statement, setting out a positive opinion in relation to the **reliability** of the 2021 final annual accounts as well as the **legality and regularity** of the underlying financial transactions in all material aspects.
- Europol implemented **89% of the critical or very important IAC recommendations** planned to be implemented during 2022. There were no critical or very important audit recommendations issued by the ECA, the IAS or the European Ombudsman pending implementation at the end of 2022.
- The **overall cost of controls** in 2022 represented **2.5% of the established revenue**.

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 of information, analysis and a number of other operational support products and services. 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 (The Netherlands), works closely with law enforcement agencies in the EU Member States (MS) 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. 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 the European centre for strategic intelligence on serious and organised crime.

Legal Basis

This report covers the period from **1 January to 31 December 2022** and presents the progress made to achieve the objectives deriving from Europol's 2020+ Strategy through the implementation of the 2022 Annual Work Programme². 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 European Commission³ and it is submitted on behalf of the Executive Director to the Management Board for assessment, in accordance with article 16 (5)(g) and 51 (3) (d) 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 2023 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).

² Included in Europol's Programming Document (PD) 2022-2024.

³ 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+**⁴, 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



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

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 2022-2024.

The work to **review the Europol Strategy 2020+** commenced in 2022, with input collected through four streams, namely: i) an evaluation of the implementation of the Europol Strategy 2020+ to assess the degree of implementation and to identify possible elements that should be taken forward under the revised strategy; ii) the Executive Director's visits to all Member States where guidance was obtained on Europol's direction and priorities for the coming years from senior police leadership and ministries; iii) a consultation within the organisation at all levels of management; iv) an assessment of the recent and on-going policy developments concerning the EU Security landscape. The collective input was used to elaborate concepts for the future strategic orientation of the Agency.

This section provides an overview of the progress made in 2022 towards achieving the multi-annual strategic priorities.

Strategic Priority 1: Be the EU criminal Information Hub

The **Information Management Unit** (IMU) was established in February 2022. In its first few months, the IMU contributed to the efforts to streamline the planning of the multi-annual ICT initiatives, consulting the MS on their business needs for the coming years. Efforts were also made to clarify further the roles and responsibilities of different actors in the Agency when it comes to information management and ICT systems, with a view to a clearer governance, with better collaboration and prioritisation of the ICT portfolio.

⁴ https://www.europol.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/europol_strategy_2020.pdf

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An **ICT Strategy** was developed in 2022, focusing on six strategic themes, namely: end-to-end aligned business-ICT planning and governance, delivery performance, technology ownership and governance, operating model and end-to-end engagement, (agile) ways of working and finally, people and culture. A hybrid-cloud strategy was also introduced to realise the benefits of cloud such as faster development, simplified maintenance and expanded capabilities, within a framework of clear governance, information security and data protection. The ICT Strategy will support the implementation of Europol's strategy in the area of information management by re-assessing implementation decisions made under political, legal, and technological conditions that were valid in the past, and have evolved significantly in the meantime.

Strategic Priority 2: Deliver agile operational support

Analysis has always been at the core of Europol's operational support. A new **analysis tool** went live in November 2022 –together with the introduction of the data analysis portal in 2021, these are two very important milestones setting the basis for decommissioning other legacy applications and for continuing the development of the unified platform by adding e.g. additional smart services and functionalities and a case management capability.

While Europol continued to work with MS in the EMPACT framework and through the traditional support to priority investigations, the Agency's operational support model increasingly focused on complex, high-impact investigations, based on the **High Value Target** (HVT) and **Operational Task Force** (OTF) concepts. During 2022, 18 new OTFs were established. The OTF concept, originally developed and driven by ESOC, expanded in other areas, with eight OTFs established in 2022 in the other operational centres.

In the context of the **war in Ukraine**, Europol became a member of the "Freeze and Seize" Task Force established by the European Commission to coordinate MS enforcement of the EU sanctions against Russia and Belarus. In addition, Europol launched in April 2022 Operation OSCAR to support MS financial investigations targeting criminal assets owned by individuals and legal entities sanctioned in relation to war.

A **Digital Support Unit** was established in October 2022 to provide an efficient and effective answer to the investigative needs of the MS and within Europol, that have increased over the last years. The Unit aims to promote a more pro-active approach from LEAs and EC3 facing complex cases that require digital forensic support such as takedowns of encrypted communication networks.

Strategic Priority 3: Be a platform for European policing solutions

The **Europol Platform for Experts** (EPE) has become the main tool to share non-personal information, with more than 60 platforms available. Several new platforms were opened in 2022; among these: Counter Terrorism Experts (CTE), Core International Crimes and Counter Terrorism (CIC), WIKIPOL (dissemination of knowledge documents to all MS LE), GEFÄHRDER, Special Tactics and Operational Task Forces (OTF).

Following the EDPS prior consultation opinion of 27 June, detailing further requirements prior to the go-live of **PERCI** (EU Platform on Illegal Content Online), which supports the implementation of the **TCO Regulation**, Europol communicated the envisaged additional measures regarding data encryption on 21 October. The consultation with the EDPS on the proposed solutions continued throughout the year. In 2022, Europol continued to provide ad-hoc hands-on demonstrations of PERCI to interested MS. Three PERCI Focus Group meetings took place during the reporting period.

In 2022, the **SIRIUS** platform continued to strengthen its position as a central repository for tools; by the end of the reporting period, it counted 42 tools submitted by Europol or MS, plus seven OSINT tools. In Q1 2022, SIRIUS launched the Programme for Online Service Providers

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(OSPs) to assist small and medium OSPs which do not have a law enforcement response policy in place. A dedicated Open SIRIUS platform was set up on the EPE to share general and practical resources on e-evidence with OSPs.

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

The **Europol Innovation Lab** became part of the Information Management Unit in 2022, bringing it closer to the context of overall information management. The Innovation Lab is also now in the same directorate as ICT, which should lead to closer, direct collaboration. This will be crucial in the next steps of implementing the revised Europol Regulation, through testing tools in a dedicated ICT environment. From an ICT perspective, the new governance structure includes an Innovation business stream with dedicated budget and resources.

The **Europol Tools Repository** (ETR) was established in 2022. The ETR was presented at the "Innovations in Law Enforcement" conference in Prague in November, and a "top ETR contributor" prize was awarded to the French Gendarmerie. In October 2022, The Law Enforcement Observatory published a report on "Policing in the Metaverse".

Strategic Priority 5: Be the model EU Law Enforcement organisation

Europol's **Diversity & Inclusion Strategy** was finalised in 2022 and work started on its implementation.

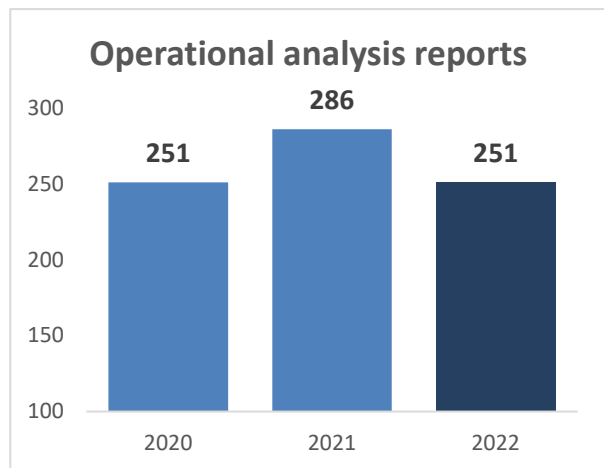
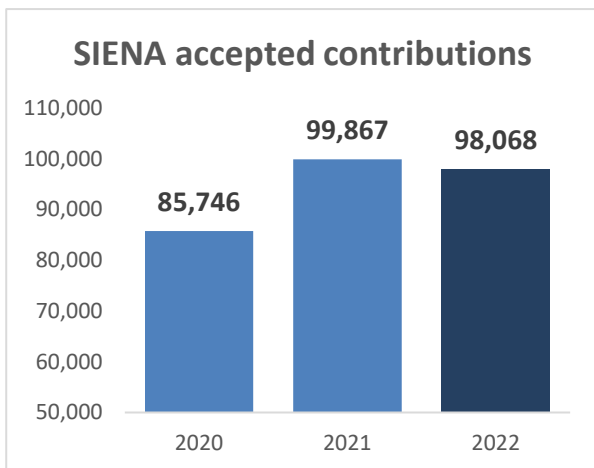
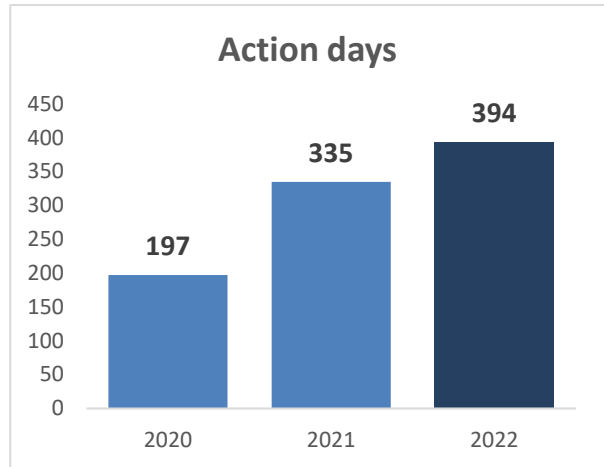
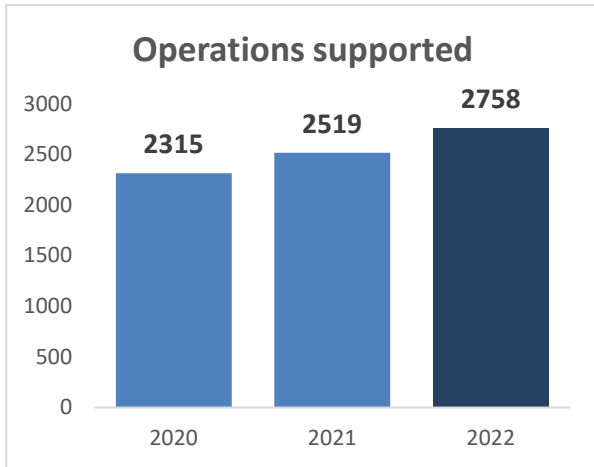
The development of a new **Europol Health & Wellbeing** (H&W) Policy was greenlighted by senior management in September 2022. An H&W Consultation Group was created in November 2022 to define the main areas of the policy and work on its development.

The **Corporate Security Department** was established in 2022 to address both the increasingly complex corporate security demands and to utilise synergies with facilities services, which had evolved to an overarching discipline for ensuring functionality, service, general safety, asset management (related to the building) and efficiency of the specific environment in which Europol operates. The establishment of the department was successful, without service disruptions and a strong buy-in from staff.

A set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are used to monitor the multi-annual performance of the agency – these are detailed in Annex I.

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Evolution of key operational indicators 2020-2022



1.2. Work Programme 2022

Activity 1. Development of operational information technology and information management capabilities



Europol's **core systems availability** reached an average of 99.74% during 2022, above the target threshold of 98.0% and above the 2021 result (99.4%).

In terms of **core business project delivery**, a business value model for monitoring the progress of ICT delivery, via assigning points per Business Stream, was agreed with the business stakeholders and implemented in Q1. Based on this model, Europol delivered 78% of the ICT Work Plan 2022 as defined at the beginning of the year. The result is above the annual target of 75%, and the result of 2021 (67.4%). It must be noted that, during the year the baseline plan had to be revised mainly due to externally driven factors such as shifted timelines regarding the EU Interoperability (changed timelines by Commission and eu-LISA) and EDPS consultations. Against the revised baseline of ICT activities, recognising externally de-scoped items, the execution rate reached 97%.

Information Exchange, Knowledge Sharing and Collaboration



The overall number of messages exchanged via **SIENA** amongst MS, Third Parties (TP) and Europol grew from 1.54 million in 2021 to a historical high of 1.64 million in 2022. In 2022, 138,903 new cases were initiated, 16% over the annual target of 120,000 and 13% over the 2021 result. The most commonly indicated crime areas in 2022 were drugs trafficking, fraud and swindling, and illegal immigration. More than 2,600 Competent Authorities were connected to SIENA in 2022, including 49 CT units, 15 PCCC and 18 US Agencies (an 8% increase compared to the previous year). During the reporting period, Greece, Sweden, Switzerland and the Czech Republic finalised their integrations of SIENA web services.

The new SIENA training environment was deployed in Q1, and made available to all MS and TPs. In Q2, two new SIENA versions were released, to allow for an increase of the attachments size and to ensure compliance with the EUROPOL Recast in terms of processing purposes and Data Subject Categorisation. In Q4, SIENA was migrated to a new underlying technical set-up. SIENA BPL (Basic Protection Level) was deployed in the test environment in Q4 and was open to the 11 Member States which already had the BPL infrastructure in place. The Czech Republic was the first country to implement SIENA Basic Protection Level (BPL) web services. In November 2022, an enhanced authentication mechanism based on two-factor authentication (2FA) was implemented for Large File Exchange (LFE).

In 2022, 1,230,492 large files were exchanged via the **Large File Exchange (LFE)**. Compared to 2021, the number of the large files exchanged increased by 42% in 2022. 1,822 ad-hoc file packages were exchanged bilaterally between MS and TP without the involvement of Europol. In terms of volume, 368,449 gigabytes of large files were exchanged in 2022, which constitutes an increase of 37% compared to 2021. Moreover, there were 3,039 individual active user accounts in 2022, which represents a 25% increase compared to 2021.



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In 2022, 14,859 unique visitors connected to the **Europol Platform for Experts (EPE)**, and several new platforms were opened: Counter Terrorism Experts (CTE), Core International Crimes and Counter Terrorism (CIC), WIKIPOL (dissemination of knowledge documents to all MS LE), GEFÄHRDER, Special Tactics and Operational Task Forces (OTF). Several releases of the platform were deployed during the reporting period, to include, among other, the implementation of two-factor authentication, as well as changes to enhance governance.

During the reporting period, the capacity of meetings supported by the **Videoconference for Operational Purposes (VCOP) BPL** increased from 100 to 200 concurrent participants. The kick-off meeting of the **Virtual Command Post (VCP) Connect** pilot project took place in June, with the participation of more than 75 experts from MS and TP. The project aims to provide several Member States access to VCP for operational day-to-day communication and enhance VCP secure communication capabilities. By the end of 2022 Europol had completed the preparatory work on the two solutions which are part of the project. The testing by MS and TP is planned to take place in 2023.

Search, Cross-checking and Data Management



In 2022, 13,374,862 searches were performed either in the **Europol Information System (EIS) Web Application** (18%) or through the **Querying Europol Systems (QUEST)** (82%), which represents a 9.1% increase compared to 2021. The number of Cross Border Crime Checks in the EIS related to persons was 2,339, over the annual target of 2,000. New improvements to EIS were implemented in 2022, aiming at enhanced data quality, helping users follow data protection rules, providing more comprehensive statistical reporting options as well as introducing a number of security and usability related enhancements. In 2022, Europol released a new version of QUEST in the MSs' Test Environment, which included a technical upgrade enabling compatibility with the Universal Message Format (UMF) v3.1. The **QUEST+** pilot project granting several pilot Member States access to Europol's Analysis Projects through QUEST (web service) on a hit/no-hit basis was released into the operational environment, however, MS were not granted access by the end of 2022 as the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) had not completed the Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) procedure. The workshop dedicated to discussing the state-of-play of the QUEST+ implementation in the pilot MS, initially foreseen for the end of 2022, was postponed to the beginning of 2023.

A version of the **Universal Message Format (UMF)** allowing users to visualise, manage, edit and generate UMF compliant data nets was made available on the EPE UMF platform in Q2 2022.

Regarding the **European Police Records Index System – Automation of Data Exchange Processes (EPRIS.ADEP)**, the new EPRIS Pilot project started on 1 November 2022 and a kick-off meeting took place on 7-8 December 2022, in Germany. The objectives of the new EPRIS project are to preserve and to build on the specific expertise and technical knowledge of EPRIS.ADEP, to align with the new Prüm automated data exchange framework, and to improve the visibility of EPRIS and its understanding among MS.

Roadmap to EU Interoperability and Europol's Access to Large Scale EU Systems

The new version of Europol's **Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS)** went live at the end of August 2022. The upgraded AFIS provides a modernised technical solution for matching dactyloscopic data and several new functionalities, paving the way for the next necessary developments (e.g. the upcoming entry into operation of fingerprints searches in SIS).



The technical proof of concept for a **new facial recognition system** was finalised in July 2022. Work on finalising procurement of the software for replacing the existing FACE tool continued.

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Regarding the **Schengen Information System (SIS) II**, on 7 June, Europol received the EDPS opinion on the prior consultation with regard to implementing searches with fingerprints in SIS; a new iteration of the prior consultation was launched on 9 September. On 30 September, Europol submitted the required 'declaration of readiness' of **SIS II** to the Commission. On 21 October 2022, Europol received the opinion of the EDPS, containing a number of recommendations on the process of searching SIS with dactyloscopic data. By the end of 2022 Europol had been working on implementing the EDPS recommendations to ensure compliance by the date set for the common entry into operations of the SIS II recast, scheduled for 7 March 2023.

By the decision of the JHA Council in July 2022, the entry into operation of the **European Travel Information & Authorisation System (ETIAS)** was postponed to November 2023. Europol continued to work closely with eu-LISA on establishing automated checks of travel application data from ETIAS against Europol data. In October 2022, a HENUs workshop took place on the key principles of processing Europol data in the context of the ETIAS. This was followed by a discussion at the MB Working Group on Information Management. In Q4, Europol presented the provisional ETIAS workflows to the ETIAS National Units.



The Czech Police Presidium hosted the 'Innovations in Law Enforcement' conference in cooperation with the **Europol Innovation Lab** in November 2022. The conference successfully combined the showcasing of successful innovation projects and a plenary meeting of the European Clearing Board (EuCB) reviewing the progress of its Core and Strategic Groups. The Accountability Principles for Artificial Intelligence (AP4AI) project underwent further validation at Europol and in other EU Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) agencies. The **Europol Tools Repository (ETR)** was established in 2022; the Innovation Lab is working on the development of additional tools. The ETR was presented at the "Innovations in Law Enforcement" conference in Prague in November, and a "top ETR contributor" prize was awarded to the French Gendarmerie to recognise their contribution and further incentivise contributions from other competent authorities. In October 2022, The Law Enforcement Observatory published a report on "Policing in the Metaverse". The **EU Innovation Hub** finalised its first "mapping" report of internal security research and innovation activities and priorities, which was presented to the COSI in December 2022.

Other initiatives under this Europol Activity include:

- **Analytical capabilities:** The Data Analysis Portal (DAP) had several new releases during the reporting period, fixing certain functionalities and adding new features. The Data Review Module (DRM) of the DAP, which will automatically flag data for which the end of the retention period is approaching, among others, was deployed to users across the entire Operations Directorate. The new Visualisation & Analysis Toolbox was deployed for a limited number of users, and a new version of the currently used database solution and analysis tool was released to CT users.
- **EU Platform on Illegal Content Online (PERCI):** On 27 June, the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) issued recommendations regarding the deployment of the PERCI Minimum Viable Product (MVP). To address the EDPS's opinion, Europol held several meetings in Q3 with the main contractual counterpart, to have an orientation on the contractual impact, and to look at possible solutions. The Commission was consulted as facilitator and main contractor for the Cloud framework contract. In October 2022, Europol communicated to EDPS the envisaged additional measures regarding the PERCI data encryption. The topic was presented by Europol to the EDPS at an online meeting on 8 December, with the intention to address any possible questions about the proposed solution. At the end of the year, EDPS had not provided further feedback.
- The **Europol Catalogue of Operational and Strategic Products and Services** was finalised and presented at the MB meeting of December 2022. Following positive feedback,

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the Catalogue was published and distributed through various channels, including through the Liaison Bureaux at Europol, to the attention of the Law Enforcement community.

- An internal network of **Information Management Coordinators** (IMC) was established in line with the Europol IM Strategy and the subsequent Implementation Plan. The first meetings took place in Q4 2022, and a first progress update was presented to Europol management in December 2022.
- **Information Management Forum:** The second Information Management Forum co-organised by Europol (IMU) and Germany (BKA) took place on 27-28 September 2022 at Europol HQ, with nearly 140 IM practitioners from the MS and Europol's cooperation partners. Among the topics discussed were the EU interoperability programme and its impact on EU internal security, real-time secure communication tools, data quality, and access to Europol-hosted data.

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Activity 2. Operational Coordination

98,068

Accepted SIENA contributions

3.1 days

Speed of 1st line response to SIENA requests

11,588

Messages received by SIRENE office

>75

Guest Officers deployed

In 2022, Europol accepted 98,068 **operational contributions** sent via SIENA, which exceeds the annual target of 91,000 contributions; 19% of all accepted contributions contained **structured data**, compared to 14% in 2021.



The **speed of first-line response** to SIENA requests, measured as the number of days to reply to 80% of the requests received, averaged at 3.1 days (compared to 6.1 in 2021), for a total of 21,522 first-line requests closed in 2022. This is a very good result, comfortably under the annual target of 5 days. Europol's **SIRENE office** received 11,588 messages from the Liaison Bureaux and sent 10,745 replies, with a reply time of 1.8 days for 80% of the requests (1.9 in 2021).


Regarding EMPACT, at the beginning of the year, Europol (OAC) supported various awareness activities under the WB Partnership against Crime and Terrorism (WBPACT) and the Europol Eastern Partnership (EaP) projects, and assisted the French Presidency in preparing the April NECs (National EMPACT Coordinators) meeting, which took place at Europol HQ. Europol contributed to the Drivers' workshop held at CEPOL in June, and delivered two ad-hoc meetings in April and June, in the framework of EMPACT mobilisation on the Russian aggression against Ukraine. The EMPACT Drivers' Days took place at Europol HQ in September. The Europol interim findings report on the implementation of the Operational Action Plans (OAPs) 2022 was shared with the NECs for discussion at their October meeting, in Prague. In the context of the OAPs 2023, Europol (OAC) coordinated and supported the drafting of 15 OAPs in Q4 2022; several meetings were organised with Drivers, Co-Drivers, Action Leaders, OAP Participants, Strategic Goal Coordinators, the General Secretariat of the Council, and the European Commission. During 2022 sixteen EMPACT high value grants (HVGs) totalling EUR 2.7 million and one-hundred low value grants (LVGs), amounting to EUR 3.9 million were awarded. Only one million of the EUR 3.9 million for the LVGs concerned the regular 2022 budget while the remaining 2.9 million consisted of returned unspent pre-financing from previous years. The returned unspent funds can for a considerable part be explained by the limited meeting possibilities for the Member States during the last years due to the pandemic.

In the framework of the **WB Partnership against Crime and Terrorism (WBPACT)**, a simulation exercise on countering terrorism financing was held at Europol HQ in March. Two week-long training courses were organised in Bosnia & Herzegovina in February and in Slovenia in March. Between 4-8 April, Europol experts (OAC, ESOC and ECTC) delivered a training course on criminal intelligence analysis for analysts from the Western Balkans region. On 5-6 May, a regional level workshop was held in Budapest to validate the findings of the Operational Training Needs Assessment. Europol also supported a training course on international law enforcement cooperation in fighting organised crime, which took place in Pristina on 16-20 May. A Strategic Cooperation Forum was held in Zagreb, on 14-15 June, to brief key stakeholders on the progress of the project, discuss current and emerging challenges, and agree on the joint way forward. On 12-16 September, Europol supported the delivery of a training course on links between terrorism and organised crime, in Montenegro. A regional training course on investigation challenges in counter terrorism took place on 19-23 September, in Prague. The first and second EMPACT Support Network workshops took place in The Hague (November), and Warsaw (December) respectively.

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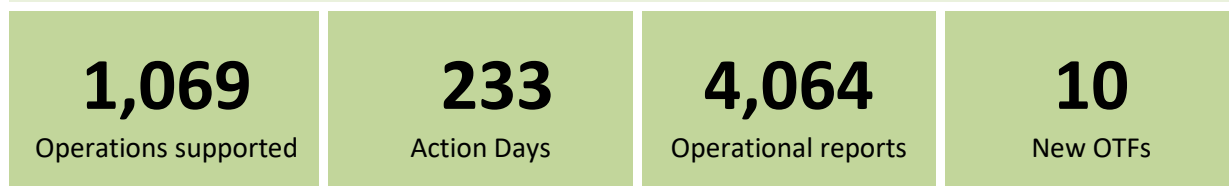
In the context of the **Eastern Partnership** (EaP), Georgia and Moldova appointed their National EMPACT Coordinators (NECs) in Q1 2022; the newly appointed NECs attended the April EMPACT meeting at Europol HQ. On 20-21 April, a delegation from the Georgian Criminal Police visited Europol to discuss cases and future actions with AP Heroin experts. Likewise, in May, officers from the General Inspectorate of Moldova (Organised Crime, THB and Cyber Forensic) visited Europol and met with several Europol APs. The NECs of Moldova and Georgia, as well as contact points from Ukraine, attended a study visit at Europol on 11-12 July; DG NEAR joined the meeting remotely. A seminar on Europol funding opportunities took place in Chisinau, Moldova, on 30 November and 1 December, with the participation of law enforcement authorities (LEAs), the Ministry of Interior Affairs, and prosecution services. LEAs from Georgia visited the Forensics Lab and Innovation Lab at Europol on 14-15 November, and on 21-22 November participated in a meeting on criminal finances and terrorism financing.

Other initiatives under this Europol Activity include:

- **Guest Officers (GO) deployments:** support to Members States and bordering countries increased early in the year due to the migratory flows from Belarus, and in the context of the war in Ukraine. At the end of 2022, more than 75 GOs were deployed in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Romania, Slovakia and Moldova, covering 28 operational areas. The total number of trained GOs at the end of the reporting period was 381.
- **Travel intelligence:** Europol made a total of 78 Art. 10 Passenger Name Record (PNR) Directive requests for data in 2022, which is below the annual target set at 100 requests, but 18% higher than the 66 requests made in 2021. In June 2022, Europol (OAC) attended in Brussels the meeting of the Working Party on JHA Information Exchange (IXIM), organised together with the European Commission; among the topics discussed were the final report of the Travel Intel Future Group, ETIAS/EES matters, and the Advance Passenger Information (API) Directive recast. 
- **EU Most Wanted** (EUMW): the 7th EU Most Wanted campaign was launched on 28 September by the European Network of Fugitive Active Search Teams (ENFAST) and Europol. This year's event, 'You could bring them down - #GameOver', focused on fugitives across Europe, members of organised crime groups. The campaign appeared across social media and there was a call to action in all EU languages, to reach as wide an audience as possible. As part of the campaign, murals were unveiled in Brussels and Barcelona, to increase awareness and to attract more media attention. The campaign imagery focused on a house of cards, as the removal of a key figure in the criminal network by an anonymous tip could cause the whole organisation to fall. The campaign (ended in January 2023) resulted in 14 fugitive cases successfully resolved.

Activity 3. Combating Serious and Organised Crime

The European Serious Organised Crime Centre (ESOCC) in 2022



During the year, the number of **operations** supported by the European Serious Organised Crime Centre (ESOCC) increased notably to 1,069 (+44% compared to 2021), exceeding the target set for 2022 (500 operations). The centre coordinated/supported a total of 233 **Action Days** (compared to 195 in 2021), leading to almost 2,200 arrests, and seizure of assets amounting to more than 122 million EUR. The **satisfaction with the operational support and analysis** provided by the Centre, measured through Europol’s User Survey, was assessed at 10/10, while the centre’s contribution to achieving operational outcomes was rated 9.4/10. During the same period, the number of **operational contributions** received by ESOCC reached 37,288, over the annual target of 36,000.

Regarding **Operational Task Forces** (OTFs), during 2022, ESOCC established ten OTFs. Further, eight OTFs were established by other Europol centres (one by EC3, four by ECTC and three by EFEC), the annual target of 15 being therefore exceeded. The 2022 OTF Grant call, aimed at financing the application of special investigative techniques and other resource demanding activities in MS, was closed on 15 November 2022. In total, 51 grants were awarded, out of 53 applications received, and the total amount awarded was 2.44 million EUR. In the framework of the HVT/OTF concept, 52 short-term SNEs were seconded in 2022 in support of OTFs, in view of improving operational support for HVT and priority cases.



A **Drugs Liaison Task Force** was launched in Q1 to enhance real time information exchange, and to respond to the operational demands of the Member States. An extensive investigation involving authorities in Brazil, Spain, Paraguay and the United States, coordinated by Europol (ESOCC), led to the dismantling of a high risk criminal network involved in large scale cocaine trafficking. The criminal group had the capacity to ship multiple multi-tonne cocaine consignments towards Europe in just a few months. In November 2022, Europol supported raids carried out across Europe and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), targeting both the command-and-control centre and logistical drug trafficking infrastructure in Europe. A total of 49 suspects were arrested and over 30 tonnes of drugs were seized by law enforcement over the course of the investigations, which ran in parallel in Spain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and the UAE. The 6th EU Annual Drugs Conference was held on 2 December at Europol and brought together representatives from MS and TPs, the European Commission, the Council of the European Union, United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre (Narcotics) – MAOC (N), EMCDDA, CEPOL and FRONTEX.

In 2022, the **European Migrant Smuggling Centre** (EMSC) supported several OTFs in connection with migrant smuggling: **OTF Flow** – focused on the Belarussian route, **OTF Dune** – focused on small boat trafficking, and **OTF Pathfinder** – focused on 14 HVTs along the Western - Balkan route. An OTF Pathfinder action day took place on 1 June leading to the arrests of two HVTs. The suspects coordinated the smuggling of at least 10,000 migrants, mainly of Afghani, Pakistani and Syrian origin, from Türkiye through the Western Balkan region, towards Austria, Germany and the Netherlands. They used social media platforms to advertise their services as safe facilitation,



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while in reality migrants were often transported in life-threatening conditions. An action day of OTF Dune on 5 July led to the dismantling of one of the most active criminal networks smuggling migrants in small boats across the English Channel. The action day resulted in 39 arrests (nine in France, 18 in Germany, six in the Netherlands and six in the UK), including three HVTs. The sixth annual report of the EMSC was published in February 2022.



During the reporting period, Europol (AP Phoenix) supported two **trafficking of human beings (THB) focused hackathons**. On 23 May, a Hackathon Action Day organised under EMPACT, gathered investigators from 13 MS and the UK to monitor various online platforms to detect criminal networks attempting to recruit vulnerable Ukrainian refugees. During the action day, six platforms of the 125 verified were confirmed to host THB content, nine THB suspects and nine potential victims were identified, and 15 new investigations were initiated. On 6 September 2022, Europol supported an on-line hackathon against trafficking in human beings, targeting criminal networks using websites and social media platforms to recruit victims for sexual exploitation. During the event, attended by 85 experts representing law enforcement authorities from 20 countries, 114 online platforms were monitored and 20 platforms with possible links to THB were identified for further investigation. Likewise, 11 suspected human traffickers and 45 potential victims were identified.

Europol was active from the first day of the crisis caused by the Russian war in Ukraine with several actions, including in the area of **child trafficking** in the context of the refugee crisis, with a large number of unaccompanied minors fleeing to EU countries,. These included the daily monitoring of reported cases with Ukrainian victims, and the daily communication with the Ukrainian liaison officer and with neighbouring countries, to raise awareness on high THB risks. A VCP (Virtual Command Post) channel was established with Ukraine, Moldova and several EU countries.

Other initiatives of ESOCC included:

- **Collaboration with Frontex:** On 1 August, Frontex resumed its physical participation in the Information Clearing House at Europol/EMSC. Work in 2022 included a joint operational report on organised migrant smuggling from Syria to Europe (Italy and Spain), via Libya.
- **3D printed firearms:** A conference organised by Europol and the Netherlands in the framework of EMPACT firearms, hosted by Leiden University, took place on 24-25 May in The Hague. The conference, first of its kind, brought together over 120 leading experts from legislation, policing, the 3D printing industry, forensics and academia, to discuss the emergent threat of 3D printed firearms.
- **Operational Facility for the protection of cultural heritage (OPFA CULT):** On 12-13 May, Europol hosted the first OPFA CULT meeting. OPFA CULT is an EU-funded initiative under the Internal Security Fund (ISF), coordinated by Italy and Romania, which aims at supporting EU LEAs in their fight against cultural property crime, facilitating international investigations and improving the intelligence picture in this field. The meeting was attended by 26 participants from specialised police and customs units representing 15 countries.

Notable operational results of the centre in 2022, include:

- In February, an action day took place simultaneously in six Member States, with operational support on the spot from Europol (AP Copper), in the framework of **OTF Casino** and **Operation Black Eagle**. The investigation, targeting an Albanian criminal network based in the Netherlands and Belgium involved in large-scale drug trafficking and money laundering, resulted in 45 arrests, 82 house searches, seizure of 24 vehicles, 12 weapons, four companies, ten properties and more than EUR 1.5 million.

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- France, Romania and Spain, with support from Europol (AP Phoenix) and Eurojust, dismantled a network involved in THB for sexual exploitation (**OTF Latino**). An action day which took place in March resulted in 16 house searches, seven arrests, including an HVT (the leader of the network) and the identification of 32 victims.
- During 6-13 June an action week targeting **child trafficking** took place, focused on unauthorised movements of third-country nationals into and within EU/Schengen area, with the participation of over 30 countries.
- In July, Europol supported an action week, led by the Netherlands and co-led by France, Italy, Romania and the United Kingdom and involving 29 countries. During the action week, authorities identified more than 500 employers linked to **labour infringements** and over 480 possible victims.
- In Q3, Europol supported a cross-border operation involving law enforcement authorities from six MS, Montenegro, and Serbia, which led to the dismantling of a criminal organisation **trafficking cocaine** from South America to the EU. On the action day of 27 July, officers raided 37 locations (mostly in Montenegro, but also in Croatia, Italy and Serbia), arrested 12 suspects and seized expensive watches, bank cards, documents, ammunition and weapons, a vehicle, a speedboat and cash.
- A complex investigation led by Spain, Italy and supported by Europol, concluded with the arrest of 32 suspects tied to the Italian 'Ndrangheta for their involvement in **large-scale drug trafficking and money laundering**. The action day in September resulted also in dismantling of an indoor cannabis plantation (600 plants), and the seizure of approximately EUR 300,000, 18 kg of amphetamine, 4.5 kg of cocaine, firearms and ammunition.
- An action day on 20 September saw the arrest of 20 suspects involved in **international drug trafficking**, as a result of an operation led by France, with the participation of six MS and Switzerland, and supported by Europol. The organised crime group had specialised in acquiring psychotropic drugs by using stolen or fake prescriptions in various EU Member States.
- An operation supported by Europol and led by Hungary and Germany resulted in the dismantling of a criminal network involved in **human trafficking for sexual exploitation**. The suspects recruited young Hungarian women from vulnerable social and economic backgrounds, for prostitution in Berlin. The investigation resulted in a simultaneous action day in Berlin and Budapest, on 21 September 2022, which led to the arrest of three members of the network, including the two leaders.

Activity 4. Combating Cyber Crime



In 2022, the European Cybercrime Centre (EC3) provided **support** to 446 **operations**, exceeding the target of 430 operations set for the year. The **satisfaction with the operational support and analysis** provided by the Centre reached an average score of 9.6/10, measured through Europol’s User Survey. The centre’s contribution to achieving operational outcomes was rated 9.1/10.

The EC3 established one Operational Task Force (OTF) during 2022. The EC3 also coordinated/supported 42 **Action Days** (compared to 27 in 2021) targeting different crime areas, leading to 2,770 arrests, and the seizure of assets amounting to more than 17.5 million EUR.

During the year, the Centre received 8,837 **operational contributions** (similar to last year’s result, 8,887) and produced a total of 3,601 **operational reports** (well above the annual target of 2,800 reports).

The **EU Law Enforcement Emergency Response Protocol** (EU LE LRP) was activated in response to the Russian aggression against Ukraine and the associated malicious cyber activities. This was a partial activation, consisting of close monitoring of the developments including regular reports, cooperation with the EU Institutions, Bodies and Agencies (EUIBAs), etc., and a constant evaluation of the situation for an eventual full activation. The Ukraine-related public crisis communication activities were shared with the other EUIBAs in the Cyber Blueprint, in the monthly meetings of the Cyber Crisis Communications network. The EU LE ERP was tested during the EU-wide cyber crisis simulation exercise Cyber Europe 2022 held in June, which gathered cybersecurity experts from across Europe. This year’s exercise scenario involved a simulated attack on European healthcare infrastructure. For the first time, Europol (EC3) participated to this event as a player, organiser and moderator.



In 2022, the **Cyber Intelligence Team** (CIT) provided support to 23 investigations with OSINT research, and expertise to several others. Likewise, CIT provided support with ETL (extracting, transforming or loading) activities in 31 complex investigations. Following the partial launch of the EU LE ERP in response to the cyber-attacks related to the conflict in Ukraine, CIT started performing enhanced OSINT monitoring of the cyber events, in order to inform the EU MS, Europol internal stakeholders and the EUIBAs on the most relevant OSINT cyber events.

In 2022, the J-CAT, together with EC3, supported 88 high-profile cybercrime operations and 7 umbrella operations. One of the latter is the new **EC3 – Joint Cybercrime Action Taskforce** (J-CAT) International Ransomware Response Model (IRMM), which was approved by the J-CAT Board in Q1 2022. The J-CAT – EC3 IRRM aims to develop pro-active response against HVTs and key facilitators of the ransomware business model. The first IRMM pilot was launched in May and already led to three major operational successes in taking down high-profile key enablers of ransomware. The annual J-CAT Board Meeting took place on 1 December; among the topics discussed were the operational results of 2022 and priorities for 2023. At the meeting, the inclusion of Finland as a new member was approved; likewise, Colombia formalised its status

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change to support member. Four roadshows to highlight the added value of the J-CAT and EC3's support tools and services to counter cybercrime were organised in 2022 in Belgium, Canada, Austria and Poland, with more than 790 participants from LEAs and judiciary authorities.

The eighth edition of the **European Money Mule Action** (EMMA 8) was initiated in Q2 2022, with the participation of 25 MS and TP, and the support of Europol (AP Terminal), Eurojust, Interpol and the European Banking Federation (EBF). A preparatory meeting was organised at Europol HQ on 21 June, and the operational part was launched on 15 September. EMMA was established in 2016 on the initiative of Europol, Eurojust and the EBF. Europol supports each stage of the preparation by connecting the law enforcement and private sector partners and facilitating the information exchange between them. In the operational phase, Europol provides analytical support, which connects the transnational cases with the money mulling networks behind them. EMMA 8 was concluded in November, followed by an awareness campaign in the first week of December. The outcomes of the operation include 8,755 money mules and 222 recruiters identified, out of which 2,469 arrested, 1,648 criminal investigations initiated, 4,089 fraudulent transactions identified, and 17.5 million EUR intercepted.

The 2022 **AP Twins Annual Expert Meeting** took place on 7-9 September, with the participation of over 100 experts from LEAs and child protection organisations. The discussions focused on best practices and ways to improve the **fight against sexual abuse of children**. At the end of October, Polish police officers, with the support of Europol (AP Twins) and the J-CAT, carried out 82 searches across the country and arrested 44 suspects aged between 18 and 66. The preliminary analysis and the searches led to the identification of 15,500 files of both video and photographic material depicting the sexual abuse of children, and to the seizure of 350 large-capacity digital storage units. Some of the images saved on the seized storage items depicted the sexual abuse of infants and toddlers. As some of the files were encrypted, they will be subjected to further examination once decrypted. The leads gathered during the operational actions have fed further investigations that are still in progress. A new set of training guidelines for first responders to potential victims of child sexual exploitation was published on 18 November 2022, the European Day on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse. The toolkit is the result of a collaboration between Europol's EC3 and the European Cybercrime Training and Education Group (ECTEG), in the framework of the GRACE project.



In the area of **Document and Digital Forensics**, Europol (EC3 Forensics) contributed to the development of the ECTEG's 'Advance Decrypt' training module and delivered the first pilot training at CEPOL, in September 2022, to 18 participants. The Vehicle Forensic Framework Developers Workshop took place on 12-13 September, organised jointly by Europol (EC3 Forensics) and the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (JRC), with nine developers from EU MS. The European Vehicle Forensic Framework was officially launched during the Europol Cyber Conference in October. On 28-29 November, Europol together with the JRC organised the Decryption Experts Network meeting in Ispra, Italy. The Forensic Experts Forum took place at Europol HQ on 6-8 December, bringing together LEAs, private industry and academia to exchange knowledge, expertise and experience on digital forensics.

Other initiatives of the EC3 include:

- **Safer Internet Day:** On 8 February, Europol (EC3) celebrated the 19th edition of Safer Internet Day (SID), with the recurring theme of "Together for a better internet", celebrating the advances made in connecting people around the globe, while raising awareness of the relevance of the digital world and the ways to make it safer.
- **Victim Identification taskforce (VIDTF):** The main aim of the VIDTF is the analysis of images, videos and intelligence with a view to identifying the victims and offenders depicted in, or related to, child abuse material. The VIDTF 11 took place in 2022, bringing together 30 specialists from 25 MS/TPs and resulting in the processing of 682 series; 11 victims globally were safeguarded and one offender was arrested as a direct result, bringing the

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overall number of safeguarded children over all VIDTFs to 599 and the arrests of offenders to 200.

- **Dark Web:** On 10 March, Europol (AP DARK WEB) hosted the Europol Dark Web Conference, focused on investigation methodologies and case presentations on takedowns of dark web marketplaces and money/cryptocurrency laundering services. The event took place online, with over 600 participants. The Cyber Patrol, a week-long initiative of intelligence gathering on high value targets operating on dark web marketplaces (vendors and buyers), took place between 24 and 28 October.
- **Virtual Currencies Conference:** On 10-11 May, Europol (EC3) hosted the 8th Virtual Currencies Conference, with over 200 participants. The discussions focused on crypto tracing, NFTs ('non-fungible tokens'), public-private partnership and best practices.
- **Global Conference on Criminal Finances and Cryptocurrencies (#6CrC):** The sixth edition of the annual Global Conference on Criminal Finances and Cryptocurrencies (#6CrC) took place in hybrid format on 1–2 September. The conference was hosted by Europol with the support of the Basel Institute on Governance through the joint Working Group on Criminal Finances and Cryptocurrencies. Crypto specialists and financial investigators from law enforcement, regulators and the private sector participated in the event: the first day, dedicated to public-private cooperation and exchange, saw over 1,700 registered participants from 119 countries; the second day, limited to law enforcement and related public authorities, numbered more than 1,100 participants from 95 countries.
- The **Europol Cybercrime Conference** took place on 19-20 October at Europol HQ, with more than 300 experts from LEAs, the private sector and academia. This year's conference was themed "The Evolution of Policing – do we need a social contract in cyber space?" and the participants discussed the challenges and opportunities which the digital age present to policing.
- The **Cybercrime Prevention Forum** was organised at Europol HQ on 27-28 October, in coordination with the Dutch police and the UK National Crime Agency (NCA), under the theme "Offender prevention in the spotlight".

Notable operational results of the centre in 2022, include:

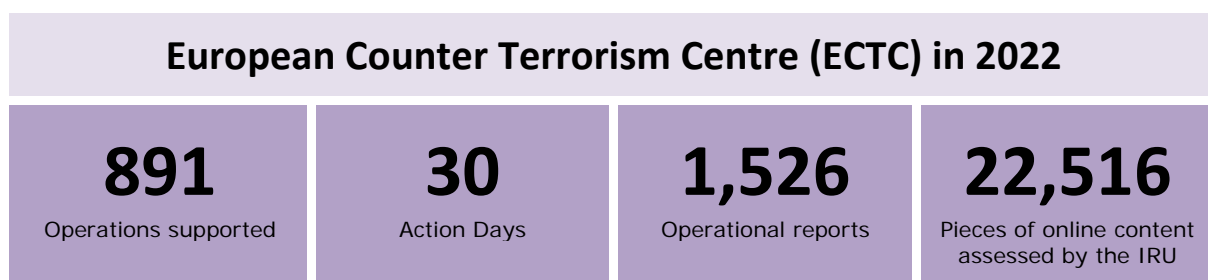
- On 17 January, Europol (AP CYBORG) and the J-CAT coordinated several actions in six MS plus Ukraine, Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom, which led to the seizure or disruption of 15 servers that hosted the **VPNLab.net's service**. This service provided double VPN and aimed to offer shielded communications and internet access, which made it a popular choice among cybercriminals.
- An international law enforcement operation supported by Europol (AP Cyborg) and the J-CAT and involving 11 countries resulted in the takedown of **FluBot, an Android malware**, which had been spreading aggressively through SMS. The spyware had been stealing passwords, online banking details and other sensitive information from infected phones across the world. In May, its infrastructure was successfully disrupted.
- An operation coordinated at international level by Europol (EC3), with the support of the J-CAT and with the participation of US, UK, Swedish, Portuguese and Romanian law enforcement authorities, culminated in the shutdown of **'RaidForums'**, one of the world's biggest hacker forums. The forum, with a community of more than a million users at its peak, was known for selling access to high-profile database leaks belonging

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to a number of US corporations across different industries. These contained information for millions of credit cards, bank account numbers and routing information, and the usernames and associated passwords needed to access online accounts. In addition to the domain seizure, the forum's administrator and two of his accomplices were arrested, and additional infrastructure seized.

- Europol (EC3), the J-CAT and Eurojust supported an international investigation involving Judicial and law enforcement authorities in Europe, Australia, the United States, Ukraine, and Canada targeting a scam website that allowed fraudsters to impersonate trusted corporations or contacts to access sensitive information from victims, a type of **cybercrime** known as '**spoofing**'. The website is believed to have caused an estimated worldwide loss in excess of GBP 100 million (EUR 115 million). In an international coordinated action carried out in November, 142 users and administrators of the website were arrested across the world, the main administrator of the website was arrested, and the website and server was seized and taken offline.
- Europol supported an international investigation into tens of thousands of accounts possessing and sharing **child sexual abuse material online**. The operation, led by New Zealand, has so far involved law enforcement authorities from Australia, Austria, Canada, Croatia, Czechia, Greece, Hungary, Slovenia, Spain, the UK and the US. To date, the international investigation has led to the opening of 836 cases internationally, the arrests of 46 individuals across New Zealand, the identification of more than 100 suspects across the EU and the **safeguarding of 146 children across the globe**. A large number of investigations are still ongoing across the EU.

Activity 5. Counter-Terrorism



During 2022, the European Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC) supported a total of 891 **operations**, above the annual target set at 800. The **satisfaction with operational support and analysis** provided by the centre was rated at 8.6/10, and the contribution to achieving operational outcomes following the support of ECTC was rated at 8.5/10. In 2022, the ECTC established four Operational Task Forces (OTF). The centre also coordinated a total of 30 **Action Days**, leading to 184 house searches and 53 arrests, among other results.

Both the number of **operational contributions** sent to the ECTC, and the number of **operational reports** produced, slightly decreased compared to the previous year to 4,357 contributions and 1,526 reports respectively. It is important to note that in 2022 the interaction with CT partners gained further weight and depth, and single contributions were rationalised towards targeted contributions, discussed upfront with the data providers, containing significant higher volumes of data. With regards to operational reports, ECTC developed tailored support, entailing longer, specialised, effective and individual case support, with the reports produced at key moments, with specific court case purpose.

Regarding information exchange in the area of counter-terrorism, the number of **SIENA messages exchanged by CT units** increased from 51,277 in 2021 to 52,749 in 2022. It is important to note that the total number of **SIENA messages exchanged related to terrorism** reached 118,481 in 2022.

The **EU Internet Referral Unit** (EUIRU) continued to monitor content on online platforms, assessing a total of 22,516 pieces of content, which is above the annual target of 20,000, and 14% over last year's performance (19,677 in 2021). In 2022, the EUIRU supported 298 operations, and delivered 487 operational reports, both results higher than in 2021 (248 and 396 respectively).

The annual **European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report** (TE-SAT), presenting figures, major developments and trends pertaining to the terrorism situation in the EU in 2021, was published in July 2022.



In the area of **Core International Crime** (CIC), the activity of AP CIC was strongly influenced by the start of the conflict in Ukraine. AP CIC engaged with MS and TP developing investigations targeting war crimes; the engagement with Eurojust also increased in this context. At a meeting on 17 March, which took place at Europol HQ with more than 30 MS and TP, it was agreed to feed the AP CIC database with relevant information, in order to allow effective coordination of the efforts of the different national CIC units. In June 2022, AP CIC proposed the establishment of a dedicated OSINT taskforce comprised of OSINT experts from different countries, in order to provide targeted support to ongoing investigations into war crimes committed in Ukraine, aiming to support prioritised investigative OSINT requests from the International Criminal Court (ICC), Ukraine and other countries with active war crimes investigations related to the war Ukraine.

The first **Counter Terrorism Program Board** (CTPB) plenary meeting of the year took place on 7 April at Europol HQ, with the attendance of all Programme Board members, representing

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14 MS and three TP. The discussions focused on the update of the work plan, the functioning of the CTPB and the sharing of national priorities and threats. Germany and Austria volunteered to lead the CTPB for the upcoming period as Chair and co-Chair respectively. In Q3, Europol supported Germany in setting up and implementing a dedicated EPE platform for experts on Gefährder (radicalised extremists reported as dangerous); several meetings took place to discuss the content of the platform. The second CTPB plenary meeting of 2022 was held at Europol HQ on 10 December with all PB members attending. The CTPB work plan for 2023 was discussed and approved at the meeting.



Throughout 2022, Europol continued working towards finalising the development of the first iteration (minimum viable product – MVP) of the **EU Platform on Illegal Content Online (PERCI)** and establishing business needs for PERCI post-MVP.

Three PERCI Focus Group meetings took place during the reporting period, in April, June and September, to discuss, among others, the work of the three working groups on prioritised topics (de-confliction, crisis response and scrutiny of removal orders).

In 2022, the **SIRIUS** platform continued to strengthen its position as a central repository for tools; by the end of the reporting period, it counted 42 tools submitted by Europol or MS, plus seven OSINT tools. Likewise, the platform reached over 7,200 users from 47 countries, and recorded nearly 30,000 downloads of the tools and more than 38,000 downloads of the 60 guidelines on specific Online Service Providers (OSPs). In Q1, SIRIUS launched a Programme to assist small and medium OSPs which do not have a law enforcement response policy in place. A dedicated Open SIRIUS platform was set up on the EPE, to share general and practical resources on e-evidence with OSPs. A first face-to-face training since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic took place in France, on 16-17 Feb 2022. The training was delivered to French Police – SDAT (Sous-direction anti-terroriste/Anti-Terrorism Sub-Directorate), and provided the 30 participants with hands-on guidance on cross-border access to electronic evidence. The SIRIUS SPOC Network took place on 20 June, in-person, at Europol HQ, with 60 participants representing 18 countries and several OSPs. Georgia (Office of the Prosecutor General) and Greece (Hellenic Cyber Crime Unit) joined the SIRIUS SPOC Network, which now counts 22 countries in total. On 29-30 November, the SIRIUS Team organised the Annual SIRIUS Conference, with more than 800 participants from EU LEAs and the private sector, to discuss the latest trends and challenges in public-private cooperation on the exchange of electronic evidence in criminal investigations, as well as the progress of the SIRIUS project. The fourth annual edition of the SIRIUS EU Digital Evidence Situation Report, a SIRIUS flagship product, was published on 22 December 2022. The report, prepared by Europol, Eurojust and the European Judicial Network, includes the results of SIRIUS' research on experiences of EU Member States' competent authorities, as well as Online Service Providers (OSPs).

Other initiatives of the ECTC include:

- **Western Balkans (WB) CT Action Plan:** In 2022, Europol continued to support DG Home in assessing progress in implementing the WB CT Action Plan. Europol supported DG Home in missions/bilateral meetings in Serbia (6-8 April), North Macedonia (3-5 May) and Kosovo⁵ (6-7 May). In Q3, ECTC supported CEPOL in two training courses organised in the framework of the Partnership against Crime and Terrorism project in the Western Balkans (WB PaCT): "Links between terrorism and organised crime", organised for Montenegro authorities (12-16 September, Podgorica, Montenegro), and "Investigation challenges in CT" organised for all WB countries (19-23 September, Prague, Czech Republic).
- **Cooperation with the MENA countries and Türkiye:** On 7-11 March, Europol (EUIRU) supported CEPOL with a regional training on Cyber Terrorism, with the participation of 20 representatives of MENA countries and international organisations. Europol attended two

⁵ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

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workshops in Q1, “Cooperation between Intelligence and Law Enforcement to fight terrorism” (2-3 February) organised by the Arab Interior Minister Council (AIMC) Secretariat, and “Exploring the link between organised criminal groups and terrorist groups” (15-17 March) in close collaboration with the Turkish National Police Academy (TNPA). On 7 June, in the framework of the EU/MENA CT INFLOW project, funded by the European Commission and implemented by CEPOL, Europol supported an online Confidence Building Workshop with Libyan CT experts. On 28 June, Europol attended the closing event of the EU Funded CT Mena project, in Tunis. On 29 September, Europol met in Rabat, Morocco, with the representatives of the newly established CT Just project (replacing the CT MENA project). On 12-13 December, Europol attended a workshop on “the Returned Foreign Terrorist Fighters (RFTF) threat”, organised by the AIMC Secretariat and the Counter-Terrorism Justice Project (CT JUST), in Tunis.

- **Cooperation in the area of CBRN/E:** In the framework of the **European Explosive Ordnance Disposal Network (EEODN)**, Europol (CBRN & Explosives Team), CEPOL, and the EU French Presidency organised jointly a conference/seminar and training event under the umbrella of EEODN, in France in May. A total of 70 European bomb technicians, explosives and CBRN experts, as well as counter terrorism and forensic experts representing 25 MS, TP, EU agencies and international organisations attended the event. The Explosive Chemical Precursor Task Force (ECPC) meeting took place at Europol HQ, on 20-21 July. Europol presented an update on some investigations in which explosives precursors were found/used, and highlighted some new recipes to produce homemade explosives. Europol attended the EU-US Explosives Experts Seminar in Brussels in September and in October, Europol attended the Global Congress on Chemical Security and Emerging Threats, organised by Interpol, in Morocco. Europol attendance to other events, included: the EU - NATO CBRN coordination online meeting (26 September), CBRN advisory group meeting on high risk chemicals (Brussels, 21 October), EU-US Ad-hoc Group on Chemical Threat Detection meeting (31 October), OPCW online conference of the State parties (28-29 November), CBRN threat stemming from the Russian military aggression against Ukraine meeting ((Brussels, 13 December).
- **Terrorist Identification Task Forces (TiTF):** Three editions of the TiTF took place in 2022, with a focus on right-wing terrorism and violent extremism. Delegations from MS and TP attended and contributed relevant cases, supported by Europol (AP DOLPHIN). New intelligence leads were generated and are currently being used by investigators supported by ECTC. The last event, which took place between 12 and 16 September, focused on terrorist financing by means of cryptocurrencies.
- **Counter Terrorism Joint Liaison Team (CT-JLT):** Additional CT experts joined the platform in 2022, which includes now representatives from 20 MSs and 7 TPs.
- **ATLAS:** During 2022, one grant was awarded to the ATLAS network of Special Intervention Units, amounting to EUR 2.7 million.

Notable operational results of the centre in 2022, include:

- On 1 February, the EUIRU coordinated a large-scale Referral Action Day targeting online content on explosive chemical precursors which was being shared among terrorist supporting networks, including jihadist, right-wing and left-wing terrorist networks. The action saw the involvement of specialised counter terrorism units from France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

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- In February, Europol's ECTC supported Spain in a major crackdown on jihadists. A total of five suspected members of the so-called Islamic State were arrested as the result of two separate anti-terrorist investigations looking into the activities of Islamist militant cells operating on Spanish soil. The ECTC provided continuous intelligence development and analysis to support the Spanish investigators, and deployed Europol experts to Spain to support two action days.
- On 7 April, Europol (ECTC) together with nine MS and Norway supported a Joint Action Day (JAD) tackling hate crime. This was the second EU-wide JAD against hate crime, focused on racist and xenophobic hate speech online and offline. The JAD targeted 176 individuals and resulted in 19 arrests, seizure of electronic devices, weapons and propaganda material; 58 pieces of content on three platforms were assessed for referral to online service providers.
- On 13 May, Europol (EUIRU) coordinated the Referral Action Day (RAD) targeting terrorist and extremist audio content on SoundCloud, an online audio distribution platform and music sharing website, with the participation of five MS and the UK. Over 1,000 profiles and audio files assessed as illegal were flagged to SoundCloud.
- On 15 December, Europol (EUIRU) coordinated the second Referral Action Day (RAD) against violent right-wing extremist and terrorist content online. The coordinated action involved specialised units from 13 MS and the UK. The participating authorities were involved in detecting and flagging terrorist content to online service providers and evaluating their responses. The activities resulted in the referral of 831 items to 34 affected platforms.

Activity 6. Combating Financial and Economic Crime



The **European Financial and Economic Crime Centre** (EFECC) provided support to 402 **operations** during 2022, similar result with the one achieved in 2021 (407), and above the annual target of 375 operations. The **satisfaction with operational support and analysis** provided by the Centre was assessed by 29 lead investigators involved in high-profile cases with a score of 9.7/10. The centre's contribution to achieve operational outcomes was rated at 9.3/10.

The EFECC organised/coordinated 94 **Action Days**, over the 2022 target of 75, which led to operational outcomes such as 658 arrests, 1,199 house searches, 857 search warrants and seizure of assets with a total value of over 1.1 billion EUR. In addition, the EFECC established three Operational Task Forces (OTF) focusing on illegal trafficking of counterfeit clothing at international level, Money Laundering Network Controllers (MLNCs) providing underground banking services based in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and operating in the EU and Money Laundering Network Controllers (MLNCs) financing organised crime over EU during the reporting period.

During the year, the Centre received 15,075 **operational contributions** via SIENA, above the target of 14,000 contributions. A total of 2,045 **operational reports** were produced, well above the target of 1,700.

The second **NextGenerationEU** - Law Enforcement Forum, chaired jointly with Italy and targeting criminal threats against the NextGenerationEU recovery fund, was hosted by Europol on 31 March. Participants included representatives from EU MS, the European Commission, EPPO, Eurojust, OLAF, CEPOL, and the Recovery and Resilience Task Force (RECOVER). Europol and OLAF produced a joint report on threats to the NextGenerationEU Fund, which was presented in Q1. On 8-9 June, Europol supported the Spanish authorities in organising a workshop for investigators from 21 MS, to increase awareness on the crime risks associated to the NextGenerationEU funds, and to enhance knowledge on existing initiatives, activities and tools for prevention, detection and investigation.



The **Joint conference Europol-UEFA on sports corruption**, postponed from 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, was successfully hosted at Europol HQ on 26 April, with over 100 participants from 49 countries.

On 2-3 June, Europol's **Intellectual Property Crime Coordinated Coalition** (IPC3) organised the third meeting of the IPC Units Network at Europol HQ, in the context of IPC being a new EMPACT priority in 2022. The Europol IP Crime Conference took place on 27-28 October, in Rome. The conference was organised by IPC3 in partnership with Italy and the International Anti-Counterfeiting Coalition (IACC) and was attended by 400 experts from LEAs, the private sector and key institutional partners.

The 18th, 19th and 20th plenary meetings of the **Europol Financial Intelligence Public Private Partnership (EFIPPP)** took place in March, September and December, respectively. Approximately 100 participants attended the events; the topics discussed included corruption, the impact of the Russian war in Ukraine and the difficulties in identifying and following-up on circumvention of sanctions, emerging threats in fraud, the fraud typologies on which LEAs and

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relevant parties should focus the most, as well as how to optimise the exchange of information and develop contrasting measures.

In the area of **Countering Financing of Terrorism (CFT)**, in May, Europol (EFECC, ECTC) participated in the first meeting of the CT network for Financial Investigators, launched by DG HOME. In September, EFECC attended the BeCaNet Workshop on legal gateways between the US and the EU, and the BeCaNet end-of-project meeting. The BeCaNet project (best practice, capacity building and networking initiative among public and private actors against terrorism financing) brought together public and private players; besides Europol, other partners in the project included the FBI, Spanish National Police and police state security units from France.

A proposal for a **SIENA connection for the information exchange between anti-corruption authorities** discussed and endorsed at the HENUs meeting of 27 October. Europol initiated the implementation of this channel of communication for the transmission of sensitive corruption investigations.



On 13 September, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) informed Europol that the Steering Committee of the **UN GlobE network** (Anti-corruption network for law enforcement agencies) approved Europol's request for the observer status. This decision was validated at the November GlobE plenary meeting in Madrid.

The **cooperation with EPPO** continued to expand in 2022; at the end of the reported period, Europol (EFECC) was supporting 21 major EPPO operations in the area of tax fraud.

Notable operational results of the centre in 2022, include:

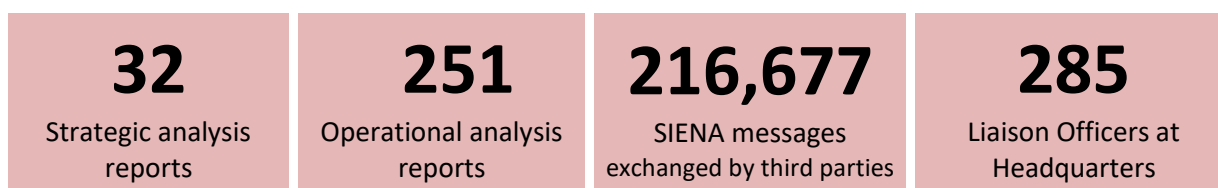
- **Operation Ludus II:** Between October 2021 and 31 January 2022, Europol coordinated operation Ludus II, targeting trafficking of counterfeit toys and other goods. The operation was led by Spain and Romania, with the involvement of LEAs from 21 countries, OLAF, EUIPO and WCO (World Customs Organisation). The operation resulted in the seizure of more than five million counterfeit toys worth nearly EUR 18 million. The kick-off meeting of a new edition of Operation Ludus, took place on 14-15 June at the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO).
- **Operation Oscar:** On 11 April, Europol, jointly with EU MS, Eurojust and Frontex, launched Operation Oscar to support financial investigations by MS targeting criminal assets owned by individuals and legal entities sanctioned in relation to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Operation Oscar will also aim to support criminal investigations by MS in relation to the circumvention of EU-imposed trade and economic sanctions. In the framework of Operation Oscar, Europol will facilitate partners' exchange of information and intelligence and provide operational support in a number of financial investigations.
- **Operation Shield:** Europol coordinated the third edition of Operation Shield, a global effort to target trafficking of counterfeit and misused medicines and doping substances, which took place between April and October 2022. The operation was led by France, Greece, Italy and Spain, and involved police and customs authorities from 19 MS and nine TP. OLAF, EUIPO, Frontex, WADA, WCO and national medicines agencies provided support. The operation resulted in seizures worth over EUR 40 million, 349 suspects arrested or reported to judicial authorities, ten underground labs and 89 websites shut down.
- **Operation OPSON XI,** targeting food fraud, took place between December 2021 and May 2022. The operation was coordinated by Europol and supported by OLAF, DG

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SANTE, DG AGRI, EUIPO, national food regulatory authorities and private-sector partners; Interpol coordinated activities outside the EU. The operation resulted in the seizure of 26,800 tonnes of illicit products and 15 million litres of alcoholic beverages; over 175 criminal cases were opened, eight criminal networks disrupted and 137 individuals reported to judicial authorities.

- 5 May – Europol supported Spain to dismantle a **money laundering ring** operating a parallel banking system for criminals. Three individuals were arrested as the result of the action day. The suspects moved around large amounts of cash, helping criminals launder illegal proceeds and fund their activities, mainly linked to drug trafficking, with profits estimated at more than EUR 250,000 per day.
- 9 May – Europol supported Hungary to dismantle a criminal organisation involved in **money laundering** and perpetrating **fraud** using administrative documents. The action day of 9 May led to five arrests and seizures of funds in 32 countries across Europe, Australia and South America.
- 11 May – Europol supported Spanish authorities to dismantle a **drugs trafficking network**, which allegedly relied on corrupt law enforcement and customs officers to ship hundreds of millions of euros' worth of cocaine and hashish into Western Europe. A total of 61 individuals were arrested, including five officers from the Civil Guard, one from the National Police and one from customs, who were identified thanks to the collaboration with Europol and Eurojust.
- 19 May – Europol supported Italy to dismantle a criminal organisation involved in **fraud, sexual exploitation and money laundering**, with support from law enforcement authorities in Germany, the Netherlands and Romania. The action day on 19 May led to 13 arrests.
- In August, an action day organised by Belgium with support from Europol targeted an **illicit production of cigarettes**. The action day led to the seizure of over 57 million cigarettes and more than 48 tons of cut tobacco.
- On 21 September, Europol supported Spain in dismantling an organised crime group involved in the production and distribution of **counterfeit euro banknotes**. The action day led to 12 arrests, one clandestine print shop dismantled, and the seizures of EUR 4.3 million in high-quality fake 500 euro banknotes and a large amount of equipment.
- With the support of Europol, Spain dismantled an organised crime group providing **financial services to criminal organisations linked to drug trafficking**, in more than twenty countries. The action day on 27 September resulted in 32 arrests and the seizure of over EUR 400,000 in cash, 19 cryptocurrency accounts worth EUR 1.5 million, 11 luxury vehicles, 70 kg of hashish, 1.2 tonnes of marijuana and a plantation with 995 marijuana plants.
- On 29 November, 18 suspects were arrested and assets worth EUR 50.8 million were seized as a result of an investigation led by EPPO and supported by Europol in cooperation with 14 MS. This investigation into a EUR 2.2 billion **VAT fraud** targeted a criminal network linked to almost 9,000 companies and more than 600 natural persons in over 30 countries.

Activity 7. Strategic and Analysis Coordination



In 2022, Europol produced a total of 32 **strategic analysis reports**, above the annual target of 30 reports. The **satisfaction with the strategic analysis** reports, measured via the User Survey, was assessed with a score of 8.9/10. In terms of operational analysis, Europol's analysts provided a total of 251 **operational analysis reports**. Reaching the annual target (295) proved challenging for a number of reasons such as: a shortage of analysts throughout the year (due to difficulties in filling vacant analyst posts); an increase in the number of analysts' tasks and activities, e.g. in relation to the war in Ukraine; implementation of additional compliance checks linked to EDPS recommendations; as well as a slight shift in the operational needs of MS, causing a corresponding shift in the operational product mix. Nevertheless, the quality of the reports remained high, with user **satisfaction with operational analysis** assessed via the User Survey with an overall score of 9.1/10.

The **satisfaction with operational training activities** delivered to EU MS and TP was assessed via the User Survey, reaching an overall user satisfaction score of 9.8/10 – surpassing the target of 8.5/10. Six operational training courses were evaluated and 86 users provided feedback.

Several new releases of the **Data Analysis Portal** (DAP) took place in 2022. In June several new functionalities were added, including a Data Review Module (DRM). Further enhancements to the DRM, as well as to a series of existing functionalities, were introduced in September and December. The new Visualisation & Analysis Toolbox (VAT) was deployed for a limited number of users on 20 October.

New E-learning modules for **analysis training** were created on EU-LEARN in Q3. All Operations Directorate (OD) staff members received training on the amended Europol Regulation; an in-house training on the Data Analysis Portal was provided to 264 OD staff members. Training on the analysis training environment, and especially the Data Analysis Portal, is now integrated into the OD induction package. A joint CEPOL and EUROPOL Operational Intelligence Analysis Training (OIAT) course, took place in Budapest on 14-25 November, with 28 participants from 19 MS.

The 2022 **European Criminal Analysis Conference**, EUCrimACon, took place on 13 June, with more than 500 participants. During the conference, Europol showcased its criminal analysis and intelligence capabilities, and best practices were shared among MS. The first Criminal Analyst of the Year Award (CAYA) was handed to an analyst from Ireland.

The 2022 edition of the **Europol Summer School** (ESS) took place between 27 and 30 June, after a break due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Among the objectives of this year's event were raising awareness about the tools and services offered by Europol, facilitating contacts, exchanging best practices, as well as increasing the know-how in specific thematic areas such as criminal intelligence analysis, cybercrime, financial and economic crimes and forensics.



In the framework of Europol's **cooperation with South America**, three high-level meetings with Colombia took place in 2022. On 4 March, Europol hosted the newly created **Latin American Committee for Internal Security** (CLASI) delegation at Europol HQ. The delegation was composed of Ministers, Vice-Ministers, Police Chiefs and delegations from Argentina, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Panamá and Peru. On 7-8 April, the Europol (Deputy Executive Director) attended the

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XIII **AMERIPOL** (the Police Community of the Americas) summit in Colombia. In the framework of the event, Europol held bilateral meetings with representatives of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile and Ecuador. During the **European Police Chiefs Convention (EPCC)** at Europol, the Executive Director held a joint meeting with the General Director of the **Investigative Police of Chile (PDI)** and the General Director of **Carabineros de Chile**, with the purpose of reaffirming the interest for strengthened cooperation and the implementation of the Working Arrangement between Chile and Europol (in force since May 2021). The MB included Ecuador and Bolivia on its priority list in December 2022. The negotiations with **Mexico** on the Liaison Officer Agreement and the MoU on the Secure Communication Line were finalised in December 2022.

Regarding the **cooperation with MENA countries**, on 2 March, Europol (Deputy Executive Director) attended the 39th Session of the Arab Interior Ministries Council (**AIMC**), in Tunis. Following this event, in Q2, Europol and AIMC set-up and nominated dedicated points of contact, aiming at establishing direct communication. The first official meeting with the dedicated points of contact took place in November 2022. On 10 May, a delegation of senior officials from **Morocco** met with the Executive Director at Europol HQ. The aim of the visit was to reopen the channel of direct communication between Europol and Morocco, in view of enhancing police cooperation. A three-week study visit of a Moroccan representative from DGSN Police took place in October. A meeting with the **Egyptian Ministry of Interior** took place in July, to discuss ways to enhance cooperation. The letters to start negotiations for a Working Arrangement (WA) with Egypt were sent in September. The signing of the WA between **Qatar** and Europol took place on 5 October at Europol HQ. The Liaison Officer agreement with the **United Arab Emirates** was signed in September 2022. During the INTERPOL General Assembly (New Delhi, India, October 2022) the Executive Director held bilateral meetings with the representatives of Egypt and **Jordan**.

In the context of the **Euromed Police V project in the MENA region**, Europol supported the second Network Capacity Building meeting in February, the aim of which was to develop a draft analysis training manual. A study visit to Europol by a delegation of LEAs from Israel, Jordan, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority and Tunisia, took place on 23-24 March. Two meetings of the Strategic Cooperation Forum took place in March and November.

With regards to the **Training and Operational Partnership against Organised Crime (TOPCOP) project in the Eastern Partnership (EaP)**, on 21-22 March, Europol hosted a study visit with participants from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Ukraine; a Joint Simulation Exercise took place during this visit. The second meeting of the Advisory Committee and the third meeting of the Steering Committee took place in September. The second Strategic Cooperation Forum meeting, organised by Cepol, took place in December, in Budapest.

Europol delivered two training sessions (Analysis Training 3 & 4) online, with joint participation from both the Euromed Police V and TOPCOP projects.

Other initiatives under this activity include:

- **Cooperation with India:** A final agreement on the text of the WA with India was reached in October 2022, which was approved by the MB meeting in December 2022.
- **Cooperation with the USA:** A strategic review of the cooperation with the United States was finalised and presented to the MB meeting in December.
- **Suspension of cooperation with Russia:** On 17 March, the Management Board decided to suspend any cooperation with Russia, including through the strategic agreement concluded in November 2003.
- **Cooperation with Interpol:** The strategic review of cooperation between Europol and Interpol was presented to the Working Group on Corporate Matters (WG CM) in May 2022 and it was discussed at the Management Board meeting of 28-29 June.

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- **Cooperation with the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT):** Europol contributed to and attended, on 24 June, the launch of the Compendium of Good Practices and Related Guidelines on Establishing and Operating a Fusion Centre, by the UNOCT Global Fusion Cells Programme.
- **Cooperation with the International Criminal Court (ICC) and with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW):** negotiations on future working arrangements progressed throughout the year.
- **Cooperation with NATO:** On 20 July, the Executive Director hosted a visit of the NATO Communications and Information (NCI) Agency General Manager.
- **Cooperation with the Council of Europe:** On 10 November, the Executive Director participated, via pre-recorded video, in the conference “Promoting the role of women in preventing, investigating and prosecuting cybercrime”.
- **EU Justice & Home Affairs (JHA) agencies' network:** On 23 August, the EU agencies active in the field of justice and home affairs issued the joint paper “Contributing to the EU's solidarity with Ukraine”. Europol, together with the other eight JHA agencies, contributed to this paper, to outline the support offered to EU Member States and institutions in responding to the conflict, and helping people affected and displaced by the war.
- In May, Europol hosted the management board of Germany's Bundeskriminalamt (BKA – The Federal Criminal Police Office of Germany) for its annual meeting. This was the first time a national police authority decided to host its annual management meeting at Europol's premises.
- In October, more than 380 high-level representatives from 49 countries (police chiefs and senior law enforcement representatives from the European Union and key partner countries) attended the 2022 **European Police Chiefs Convention (EPCC)** to discuss ways to address today's security challenges while securing tomorrow's opportunities.

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Activity 8. Governance, support and administration



The **amended Europol Regulation** entered into force on 28 June. In line with the prioritisation decided by the MB, four draft instruments had been prepared in relation to the processing of personal data, implementing Articles 18(2), 18(6), 18(6a) and 18a of the Amended Regulation – these were adopted on 28 June. In July, the EDPS challenged the MB to repeal the implementing instruments and on 17 November, delivered his opinion on the four MB Decisions implementing the above articles. Revised MB Decisions addressing the recommendations of the EDPS were adopted by the MB in March 2023. Work on the other implementing instruments, e.g. the Draft MB Decision laying down guidelines implementing Europol's external relations with EU bodies, third countries and international organisations, continued until the end of the year.

The final Europol **Programming Document** (PD) 2022 – 2024 was published in January 2022, following approval by MB in December 2021. The draft PD 2023 – 2025 was endorsed by MB in January 2022. The **Consolidated Annual Activity Report** (CAAR) 2021 was presented and approved by the MB at its June meeting, and published on Europol's website in line with the applicable Regulations (1 July).

In 2022, the overall user satisfaction, measured through the six components in the **User Survey**, was assessed at 9.1/10, with 553 users providing their feedback.



Covered in more detail in section 2.3 of this report, Europol implemented its budget in 2022 with a **commitment rate** of 96.6%, above the target set at 95%, and a **payment rate** of 79.7%, below the target set at 90%. This represents 3.8 percentage points below last year's performance (83.5%) but EUR 12.3 million more in absolute amounts. All in all, the **budget outturn** rate was 4.7%, below the ceiling of 5%. At the end of 2022, Europol complied with the target set for **late payments**, which represented only 1.9% of the total value, well below the ceiling of 5%.

The **vacancy rate** reached 0.6% at the end of 2022, well below the ceiling set at 2%. The percentage of **female staff** was 32%, similarly to previous years. In 2022, 31.1% of applicants to Europol's vacancies and 34.9% of the selected candidates were women. The percentage of female staff members in Head of Unit and equivalent or higher positions was 18% (six staff members), compared to 17% in the previous year.

Europol implemented 89.3% of the pending **critical and very important audit recommendations** planned for implementation during the year, above last year's result of 87%, and the annual target of 85%. The **corporate risk** log contained a total of 180 open risks at the end of 2022 (157 threats and 23 opportunities). Out of these risks, after careful revision and clustering, 53 threats and 12 opportunities were considered to be of corporate relevance.

From a communications point of view, Europol appeared in 6,509 **high-impact web-based media**, 60% above the 4,056 appearances the previous year.

Following the **EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme** (EMAS) certification, Europol's first Environmental Statement was published in January 2022. In February, Europol was EMAS registered by the Dutch national body. Following a successful external audit by the certification body in November 2022, and the verification of Europol's second (updated) Environmental Statement, the Agency's EMAS registration was renewed for another year. In 2022, a Feasibility

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Study project for the development of Europol's Environmental Vision 2030 was initiated, with the aim to elaborate the necessary information for the new Environmental Vision of Europol, and to define the reduction targets of Europol's greenhouse gas emissions for 2030, as well as the improvement measures needed to meet these targets. More details on Europol's environmental activities and performance can be found in Section 2.10 and Annex IX.

Regarding the **Strategic Housing Roadmap** (SHR), on 10 May, the Preliminary Design of the Europol Redesigned Headquarters and the Housing Analysis and Workplace Capacity Europol 2022 – 2045 were discussed and endorsed, during a SHR Administrative Board meeting. The Host State and Europol established an overall "Forecast Planning Strategic Housing Roadmap Programme", which provides information on the individual housing projects, their interdependencies and complexity, covering the period until 2030. The outcome of the feasibility study regarding the security requirements for an office building shortlisted as Temporary Satellite Building II (TSBII) was positive and validated by the SHR Administrative Board on 12 July. The Host State completed the shortlisting exercise for the new **Data Centre**, with eight possible locations in the Netherlands. The Host State and Europol will initiate a feasibility study to select the most suitable site, which can support Europol's security, business continuity and ICT requirements.



At the end of 2022, the implementation of the **Workplace Allocation Plan** (WAP) was ongoing, including the implementation of the flex ratio.

Other initiatives under this Activity include:

- **Learning & Development:** 327 training activities delivered to staff were evaluated in 2022 (compared to 288 in 2021), with an average satisfaction of 7.9/10.
- **Staff Engagement Survey:** An organisation-wide Staff Engagement Survey took place in 2022, to gather input on topics related to various aspects of working at Europol. Its purpose was to support the Agency in tailoring future initiatives and addressing any critical issues emerging from the survey.
- **Proctored (supervised) testing:** The pilot project on remote invigilation testing was initiated in September and was completed by the end of the year.
- **Medical Service:** The procurement of Laboratory Services was concluded and a framework contract (FWC) was signed with the service provider on 6 March. The **Risk Inventory and Evaluation** (RIE) of the **Temporary Satellite Building** (TSB) was successfully concluded in Q2, with a positive outcome.
- **Europol Health & Wellbeing (H&W) Policy:** The development of a new H&W Policy was greenlighted by senior management in September 2022; this was followed by the establishment of an H&W Consultation Group tasked with developing the policy and supporting its implementation progress. The first meeting of the group took place in November 2022.
- **Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) Strategy:** The Europol D&I Strategy 2022+ was finalised in February and shared with the Staff Committee, for comments; the Executive Director approved the final version on 11 July.
- **Financial reporting:** The new automated solution for financial reporting was deployed in Q1 2022; this was followed by training sessions with relevant staff across the organisation. By the end of Q3, the main three financial processes (budget planning, budget implementation and forecast) were fully implemented on the new platform.
- **Europol Anti-Fraud Strategy:** The MB approved the revised Europol Anti-Fraud Strategy for the period 2022-2024, at its meeting in March 2022.

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- **Business continuity framework:** The updated Europol Business Continuity (BC) Strategy was approved by senior management, in April 2022.
- **Organisational changes:** The new Corporate Security Department and the Information Management Unit (IMU) started their operations on 15 January and 15 February 2022 respectively.

Part II. Management

2.1. Management Board

Pursuant to Article 9 of the Europol Regulation, the **Management Board (MB)** constitutes, along with the Executive Director, the administrative and management structure of Europol. It is the **Agency's primary governance body** 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. The MB is comprised of one representative of each Member State and one of the Commission. It takes decisions by simple majority, with each member having one vote. Denmark, which does not take part in the Europol Regulation, is represented in the Board in an observer capacity.

During 2022, the MB held four ordinary meetings and two topical meetings dedicated to planning matters. Two ordinary meetings were held at Europol's Headquarters and two were hosted by the respective EU Presidencies, namely France and the Czech Republic. The **MB Working Groups** on Corporate Matters (WGCM) and on Information Management (WGIM) held four meetings each, as well as three joint sessions on topics of common relevance.

In the context of the scrutiny of Europol's activities by the European Parliament together with the national parliaments, the MB Chairperson presented the activities of the Board to the February and October 2022 meetings of the **Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group (JPSG)**.

Pursuant to Article 14(4) of the Europol Regulation, representatives of the JPSG attended, in an observer capacity, specific agenda items at the June and December 2022 MB meetings, relating to planning, budget and strategic matters.

The activities of the MB in 2022 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 that took place in 2022 and had an impact on Europol's activities.

2.2.1. Amended Europol Regulation

On 28 June 2022, the **amended Europol Regulation entered into force**. Based on the European Commission's proposal of 2020, the European Parliament and the Council agreed to strengthen Europol's capacity to better support the EU MS in combating serious and organised crime and terrorism.

The amendments to the Europol Regulation introduce, in particular, changes to the areas of support of criminal investigations, research and innovation, cooperation with private parties, SIS alerts, and own-initiative investigations, to name a few. The amended Regulation establishes as well a Fundamental Rights Officer (FRO) within Europol, to support the organisation in safeguarding the respect of fundamental rights in all its activities and tasks.

2.2.2. European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS)

Europol's **response efforts resulting from EDPS supervision** and the related data protection requirements was substantial in 2022, in particular due to the follow-up of recommendations from the EDPS, as well as work generated in the context of prior consultations. As reported at the 15-16 March 2022 MB meeting, Europol estimated that **25 Full Time Equivalent (FTEs)** were committed to **responding to data protection supervision and corresponding**

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assurance actions. Additionally, the **increasing pressure posed by the EDPS** has had a significant impact on the **corporate risk profile** of the organisation.

By the end of the reporting period, Europol had a number of ongoing files with the EDPS:

- The EDPS issued its opinion concerning the prior consultation of Europol's participation in the **EPRIS.ADEP** (European Police Records Index System – Automation of Data Exchange Processes), by which Member States can run pseudonymised checks against each other's databases. The new EPRIS pilot project started in the beginning of November 2022. Discussions about the data protection concerns raised by EDPS and EDPB with regard to EPRIS implementation took place during the project kick-off meeting on 7-8 December 2022. Europol and the EPRIS pilot project partners will establish a common approach, in which all data protection aspects will be addressed and responsibilities of each party will be clarified.
- On 7 June, Europol received the EDPS opinion on the prior consultation with regard to implementing searches with fingerprints in the **SIS** (Schengen Information System). Europol addressed the observations of the EDPS and re-submitted on 9 September 2022 the underlying documentation, for a new iteration of the prior consultation. On 21 October, the EDPS issued a positive opinion on the re-submitted consultation. By the end of 2022 Europol has been working on implementing the EDPS recommendations to ensure compliance by the date set for the common entry into operations of the SIS II recast, scheduled on 7 March 2023.
- On 27 June, the EDPS issued its opinion, detailing further requirements to be implemented by Europol prior to the go-live of **PERCI** (EU Platform on Illegal Content Online). To respond to the EDPS' opinion, Europol needs, inter alia, to ensure that the service provider (based outside the EU) is obliged to apply the EU GDPR requirements for the processing of operational data in the cloud, and eliminate the possibility of transfers of operational data to any third party. The technical solution that Europol developed to address the requirements from the EDPS, in particular to mitigate the risk of access by (non-EEA based) third parties to personal data was shared with the EDPS on 21 October 2022. On Europol's request, the topic was presented by Europol to the EDPS at an online meeting on 8 December 2022, with the intention to obtain positive feedback from the EDPS on the proposed solution.
- On 29 July 2022, the EDPS issued its opinion concerning **QUEST+** (Querying Europol Systems Pilot Project on MS Hit/No-Hit Access to Analysis Projects data), requiring Europol to re-submit a more detailed description of the processing operations and related data protection risks. Europol has assessed the opinion and is working towards amending the documentation for another fresh prior consultation round.

2.2.3. Russian war of aggression against Ukraine

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, supporting EU MS and TP in **combatting crime linked to the war has been one of Europol's top priorities.**

In 2022, Europol produced four threat assessments on potential implications of the war relating to serious and organised crime and terrorism in the EU, as well as several early warning and intelligence notifications (e.g. on weapons trafficking and trafficking in human beings (THB)).

Cooperation with Ukraine had been steadily growing since the signing of the Operational agreement in 2017. At the beginning of the war, the SIENA connection had to be suspended due to security concerns; the connection was restored at the end of April 2022. Europol is actively engaging with Ukrainian law enforcement through the Ukrainian Liaison Bureau at Europol headquarters.

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As regards cooperation with Russia, on 17 March 2022 the Management Board decided to suspend any cooperation, including through the strategic agreement concluded in November 2003.

Europol organised and participated in multiple meetings to discuss how to address and counter serious and organised crime threats linked to the war; as a result, many operational actions were proposed and have taken place. The **ECTC** gathered with parties of the **AP Core International Crimes** and later organised separate meetings to offer Europol's expertise and tools for war crime investigations. In addition, several operational meetings were set up for **money laundering and financial crimes, trafficking of human beings, migrant smuggling and Russian speaking Organised Crime**.

A key element of Europol's work has been the **deployments to EU MS** and partner countries to support investigations, especially THB cases, and crosscheck documents provided by the local border guards. As part of this ongoing support, the agency is in close communication with the Member States bordering Ukraine, and is currently deploying experts and guest officers to support local law enforcement authorities in Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Lithuania, Romania and Moldova.

Besides the trafficking of human beings, **fake news and cybercrime** were high on the security agenda. The EC3 was asked by EU MS to support the take down of certain telegram channels. Right at the beginning of the war, the Law Enforcement Emergency Response Protocol (LE ERP) for Major Cross-Border Cyber-Attacks was activated and has remained active since. The EC3 and the Joint Cybercrime Action Taskforce, hosted at Europol, continued to monitor the situation closely and publish weekly reports on cyberattacks targeting the EU, Ukraine and Russia.

The **EU Internet Referral Unit** (EUIRU) monitored the narrative of right and left wing extremist and terrorist groups, as well as Jihadist terrorist groups, using social media in the context of the Ukrainian war.

Europol is also part of the **"Freeze and Seize" Task Force** established by the European Commission to coordinate EU MS enforcement of the sanctions adopted against Russia and Belarus. On 11 April, Europol launched **Operation Oscar** to support financial investigations by MS targeting criminal assets owned by individuals and legal entities sanctioned in relation to the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

On 27 September, the Deputy Executive Director Operations participated in an EU **mission to Kiev, Ukraine**, under the lead of the European Commission (DG Home) and the EU Counterterrorism Coordinator. The EU representatives met inter alia with the Minister of Interior of Ukraine and the Chiefs of the National Police, State Border Guard Service and National Guard to discuss cooperation in the areas of weapons trafficking and terrorism.

2.2.4. EU Interoperability

On 23 June, eu-LISA's Management Board endorsed a new high-level planning for the **EU Interoperability agenda**, which was subsequently approved by the Justice and Home Affairs Council on 10 July. The new deadlines for entry into operation are May 2023 for the Entry Exit System (EES) (and the integration of Visa Information System (VIS) with EES), November 2023 for the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) and the European Criminal Records Information System – Third Country Nationals (ECRIS-TCN) and mid-2024 for interoperability of the central systems. As Europol's activities in the context of the EU Interoperability Programme are to a large extent, if not exclusively, dependent on the activities of eu-LISA (e.g. availability and stability of the technical documentation, technical infrastructure), shifts in the timelines at EU level required re-planning of Europol's internal activities and resources accordingly. The strongest impact was witnessed on ICT related activities, directly affecting the ICT annual work plan (Stream 1b EU Interoperability), related deliverables and resources. At the same time, there was an impact on Operations Directorate

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that is required to plan, recruit and train staff to perform the tasks stemming from the legal instruments of EU Interoperability. The needs for additional resources for Interoperability, in particular to operate ETIAS, were discussed in 2022 with the European Commission and the MB, given the substantial impact of the tasks. At the end of 2022, a proposal for a temporary transfer of posts from Frontex to Europol was put forward and discussed with all stakeholders.

2.3. Budgetary and financial management

2.3.1. Revenue

The revenue of Europol is almost fully covered by the Community subsidy (fund source IC1), amounting to € 192.4M in 2022. During the year, the subsidy was amended by € 5.4M under fund source IR1 for the 2022 contribution from Denmark (€ 4.3M)⁶, fully cashed, and for other grants, contribution agreements and Service Level Agreements (SLA's) for an additional € 1.1M⁷, fully cashed by the end of the year. The amendments were published on Europol's website.

2.3.2. Expenditure

The outcome of the main financial performance indicators for 2022 is as follows:

- The implementation of commitment appropriations was 97% or € 185.9M, 2 percentage points (pp) below 2021, but € 19.1M above in absolute terms.
- The overall payment rate was 80% or € 153.4M, 4 pp below, but € 12.3M above the same period in 2021.
- The cancelled carry-over commitments amounted to 15%: a total of € 3.8M was not used and was incorporated in the final budget result. The amounts not used were due to operational activities not implemented mainly in the areas of ICT (€ 1.1M), EMPACT grants (€ 869K), HVT/OTF grants (€ 274K), ATLAS (€ 187K), deployments/missions (€ 585K) and meetings (€ 293K).

Title 1 – Staff related expenditure

The final budget under Title 1 amounted to € 100.1M with an implementation rate for commitments of 98% and for payments of 97%.

A number of transfers in Title 1 (Staff) reduced the total budget by € 529K in total. The budget transferred from Title 1 went mainly to Chapter 11 due to a higher average vacancy rate than originally foreseen and a reduced weighing coefficient for The Netherlands.

An amount of € 2.4M or 2% of the available budget remained unused, mainly due to the recruitment delay of new posts related to the entry into force of the amended Europol Regulation.

1% or € 1.1M of the budget under Title 1 was carried over to 2023, mainly for expenditure relating to facilities (e.g. recruitment, 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 € 13.7M with an implementation rate for commitments of 85% and for payments of 55%. The payment implementation for building-

⁶ EDOC# 1225348, Amending Budget II 2022 - Agreement with Denmark - Cover Note

⁷ EDOC# 1213975, Amending Budget I 2022 - EUIPO IP, EUIPO Acquisition Fraud - Cover Note

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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 € 1M were made from Title 2. These related mainly to savings realised from activities not performed as originally planned for the Strategic Housing Roadmap (SHR) programme.

An amount of € 2M or 15% of the available budget remained unused, mainly in the area of building related expenditure, due to delays in the SHR programme.

€ 4.1M was carried over to 2023, representing 30% of the budget under Title 2. Commitments carried over were related to building related expenditure such as replacement or additional work to the building (€ 1.5M), preventive and corrective maintenance (€ 626K), furniture (€ 525K), energy (€ 184K) and cleaning (€ 112K). An open amount of € 498K for the Management Board and its Working Groups' activities was carried over, € 354K for administrative ICT costs and € 308K for various administrative and governance activities.

Title 3 – Operational activities

The final budget under Title 3 amounted to € 76.2M, with a commitment rate of 97% and a payment rate of 61%.

30% or € 22.8M of the budget available under Title 3 was used to support operational activities; of which € 4M for EMPACT grants, € 2.7M for the grant for the ATLAS network, € 3.7M for meetings, € 7.4M for deployment/missions, € 2.4M for Operational Task Forces grants and € 1.2M for operational training. € 44.9M of the budget was implemented for ICT operational activities (i.e. development projects, telecommunications and sustainment costs). Another € 5.6M was used for other operational activities (e.g. SNE costs, HENU meetings and the EPCC). Moreover, € 1M was spent for decryption capabilities projects.

Overall, € 1.5M savings were realised under Title 3, of which € 0.9M was transferred to ICT for the purchase and maintenance of hardware and software, as well as other ICT external services. Additional € 0.4M savings were repurposed within the same title, mainly towards Deployments.

€ 2.1M lapsed mainly in the areas of missions/ deployments (€ 563K), decryption platform (€ 472K), meetings (€ 272K), SNEs (€ 233K) and grants (€ 185K).

An amount of € 27.4M was carried over to 2023, representing 36% of the budget available under Title 3. This was € 7.2M more compared to the previous year. The main increase of € 6.5M was related to ICT consultancies, where a total of € 14.7M was carried over to 2023. Other areas with high carry over amounts were: € 7.3M for operational HW/SW and telecommunications, € 1.8M for operational grants (EMPACT, HVT and ATLAS), € 1.4M for operational meetings, € 402K for operational trainings and € 711K for deployments.

2.3.3. Implementation of appropriations carried over to 2022 (C8)

The carry over to 2022 came to a total of € 26M to cover commitments established during 2021. The final implementation rate of the carry over was 85%. A total of € 3.8M was not used and was therefore incorporated in the final budget result.

The unused funds were mainly related to the following:

- € 200K for Title 1, which was 14% of the amount carried over under this Title (€ 1.4M); the unused funds were related to staff expenditure (e.g. medical service, catering, and external services).
- € 263K for Title 2, for building related expenditure (e.g. energy, cleaning, car fleet, office supplies etc.), administrative ICT purchases and maintenance and statutory expenditure. This represented 6% of the total amount carried over under this Title (€ 4.4M).

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- € 3.3M for Title 3, which is 17% of the amount carried over under Title 3 (€ 20.1M). This was mainly coming from EMPACT grants (€ 868K), ATLAS (187K), ICT expenditure (€ 1M), deployments/missions (€ 858K) and meetings (€ 293K).

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

With regard to the implementation of internal assigned revenue, there is a distinction between funds established in 2022 (fund source C4) and funds carried over from 2021 (fund source C5).

C4: This type of revenue relates to refunds and other revenue, such as re-payments, tax reimbursements, revenue from third parties, unspent pre-financing by MS etc.

During the year 2022, an overall amount of € 2.6M was established and cashed. Around half of the budget € 1.3M (51%) was implemented of which € 1.1M (41%) was paid. An amount of € 1.3M budget and € 253K commitments was carried over to fund source C5, in order to be implemented in 2023.

C5: The C5 budget relates to cashed and unused assigned revenue from the previous year (under C4 funds).

Appropriations carried over from 2021 amounting to € 1.8M were fully committed, mainly in the areas of EMPACT (€ 1.4M) and ICT (€ 334K). The total unpaid amount of € 257K was carried over (to fund source C8) and will be implemented in 2023.

R0: With regard to the implementation of external assigned revenue, there is a distinction between the funds that were established in 2022 (e.g. new agreements) and the funds from before 2022 for which the implementation continued into the year.

External assigned revenue included in the budgetary accounts came to € 15.7M, of which € 9.3M was carried over from 2021 and the remaining € 6.4M was established and cashed in 2022. € 11.8M was committed during the year, of which € 9.4M was paid. € 3.9M of commitments appropriations and € 2.3M of payments appropriations were carried over to 2023.

The external assigned revenue was implemented for the following activities:

- Following the agreement between Europol and Denmark, a contribution amounting to € 4.4M was received in 2022. The full amount was used and paid under budget item 1100, Basic salaries.
- An amount of € 2.4M was carried over from 2021 for the further implementation of the Europol Pension Fund during 2022. Of this amount, € 771K (32%) was committed and € 648K (27%) was paid under budget item 1184, Pensions under the Europol Convention. The remaining amount of € 1.8M in total was carried over to 2023, of which € 1.7M of commitments appropriations and € 123K of payments appropriations.
- Several agreements were implemented during the year under budget item 3600, Operational expenditure related to subsidies and grants and 3700, Operational expenditure related to research and development projects, all carried over from 2021: EUIPO, SIRIUS2, Western Balkans (WB), H2020, EMPACT EAP and CEPOL.

2.3.5. Appropriations carried over from 2022 to 2023

With regard to the carry-over of appropriations from 2022 to 2023, there is a distinction between the funds corresponding to carry over 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 were carried over in accordance with Article 12 of the Europol Financial Regulation (FR).

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An amount of € 32.5M of payment appropriations covering existing commitments was carried over from fund source C1 to C8. This represented 17% of the overall budget (€ 192.4M). Out of the € 32.5M carried over:

- € 1.1M concerned Title 1 (Staff), which was 1% of the total Title 1 budget (€ 102.5M).
- € 4.1M concerned Title 2 (Administrative Expenditure), which was 30% of the total Title 2 budget (€ 16.7M).
- € 27.4M concerned Title 3 (Operational Expenditure), which was 36% of the total Title 3 budget (€ 76.2M). Of the amount carried over to 2023 under Title 3, € 22.4M were related to ICT, of which € 14.7M to ICT consultancies specifically, and the rest to hardware and software purchases and maintenance renewals.

Appropriations arising from internal assigned revenue carried over to fund source C8 amounted, at the end of the year, to € 257K mainly for EMPACT grants. These funds will be further implemented in 2023.

For internal assigned revenue, an amount of € 1.3M under fund source C4 was carried over to 2022 to fund source C5 as available budget for implementation in 2023. In addition, the outstanding payment appropriations of fund source C4 to cover existing commitments of € 253K was carried over to C8 for further implementation in 2023.

For external assigned revenue (amounting to € 6.2M), € 3.9M of commitment appropriations and € 2.3M of payment appropriations were carried over to 2023. The appropriations were related to:

- € 1.8M - Europol Pension Fund;
- € 2.1M - contribution agreement for EMPACT EaP;
- € 1.3M - grant agreements under Horizon 2020;
- € 307K - SLA with CEPOL;
- € 153K - SLA for EUIPO IP Crime;
- € 12K - SLA for EUIPO Fraud;
- € 455K - contribution agreement for SIRIUS2.

2.3.6. Budget Transfers

Throughout the year, a total number of 39 transfers (1 more than in 2022) were made for a total value of € 11.1M (or 6% of the budget).

In Title 1 (Staff), € 529K in total was transferred out due to a high vacancy rate than originally foreseen for new posts related to RECAST.

In Title 2 (Other Administrative Expenditure), € 1M was transferred out due to the delays in the Strategic Housing Roadmap (SHR) programme, strongly dependent on external stakeholders.

In Title 3 (Operational activities), € 1.5M additional budget was transferred in for operational activities (meetings, deployments and missions) and activities related to operational information technology.

All transfers were approved by the Executive Director in accordance with Article 26(1) of the the Financial Regulation applicable to Europol.

2.3.7. Budget Outturn 2022

The overall budget result (surplus) for the financial year 2022 came to € 10.3M. This included the following:

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- An amount of € 6.5M of the 2022 budget, which was not committed and lapsed;
- An amount of € 3.8M of appropriations carried over from 2021 to 2022, which was not Used;
- The exchange rate difference, which was a gain of € 186 in 2022.

2.3.8. Accrual rate

The accrual rate in 2022 increased to 28% (compared to 25% in 2021), with € 9.3M accrual (amount of products/services already delivered in 2022 but not yet paid) and a total carry forward of commitments of € 33M⁸.

2.3.9. Late payments

In 2022, Europol made a total of 3,373 payments which is 368 more than in 2021. The 12.1% increase was mostly attributable to the increased Europol budget. Such double-digit growth was processed without any addition in human resources.

The average number of days to pay moved from 14 in 2021 to 15.1 in 2022. Late payments in terms of value represented 1.9% of the total payments made in 2022, compared to 4.6% in 2021, which is materially less than the KPI of 5%.

The percentage of invoices paid late decreased from 7.8% in 2021 to 7.2% in 2022, which is well below the set target of 10%.

In 2022, a total of € 7.1K were paid to cover interest costs related to late payments due to 9 late payments.

⁸ For the purpose of calculating accruals, fund sources C1, C4 and C5 are used.

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2.3.10. Procurement

The table below contains an overview of the different procurement procedures run by Europol in 2022, for contracts above € 15,000⁹:

Type of procedure applied	Number of procedures resulting in contracts	Value	% of total value
Open/ restricted	8	€ 10,928,000	70.42%
Low / middle value	0	€ 0	0.00%
Competitive with negotiation/ competitive dialogue	1	€ 4,100,000	26.42%
Negotiated without prior publication of a contract notice based on points 11.1 (a) to (f) of Annex I of the FR	1	€ 411,000	2.65%
Negotiated without prior publication of a contract notice based on points 11.1 (g) and (i) of Annex I of the FR	0	€ 0	0.00%
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	1	€ 79,000	0.51%
TOTAL	10	€ 15,518,000	100.00%

Pursuant to Article 74(10) of the Financial Regulation (FR) applicable to Europol, 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.

In 2022, the total number of negotiated procedures under points 11.1 (a) to (f) of Annex I FR was slightly lower compared to the average of the last four years. The value of the contracts awarded under points 11.1 (a) to (f) of Annex I FR in 2021 is higher than the average of the previous four years, but comparable to 2021 (as outlined in the table below).

Year	Number of procurement procedures under points 11.1 (a) to (f) of Annex I FR	Value in Euro	% of the yearly value of awarded procedures
2018	1	220,000	1.56%
2019	1	24,623	0.16%
2020	2	230,000	2.98%
2021	1	405,000	0.69%
2022	1	411,000	2.65%

The overall value of the procedures awarded under points 11.1 (a) to (f) of Annex I FR represents only 2.65% of the total value of all procurement procedures awarded in 2022. This percentage is comparable to the one registered for 2020.

⁹ This overview does not include specific contract/ orders awarded under framework contracts. This overview does not include inter-institutional contracts. This overview includes only completed procurement procedures resulting in contracts.

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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. In 2022, none of these grounds were used (see table below).

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 2022, only the following contract was concluded under points 11.1 (a) - (f), (g) and (i) of Annex I FR:

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 a	Where tenders which are irregular or unacceptable, by reference in particular to the selection or award criteria, are submitted in response to an open or restricted procedure, or a competitive dialogue	Medical laboratory tests and relates services	2110/C21/N	€ 411,000	Eurofins Salux 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.

2.3.11. Cost and benefits of internal controls

To assess the **cost effectiveness of controls**, Europol assessed their **benefits**, level of **efficiency** and their **cost**.

With respect to **benefits**, the system of internal controls ensures the compliant, transparent, efficient and effective implementation of the budget and Europol's objectives. The established controls resulted in an **adequately reduced risk of financial fraud**, including based on the implementation of Europol's Financial Model and Europol's Anti-Fraud Strategy, relying on clear guidance to staff on the expected behaviour, as well as preventive, detective and deterrent controls, next to recurrent reporting arrangements and the prevention of conflict of interest situations. **No instance** of suspected **financial fraud** was identified by the end of 2022.

To date, there are **no reservations**, **nor observations** of a **material nature** with respect to the **annual accounts for 2022**; the **ECA's observations** from audits of previous years were **addressed** by the end of 2022. There were no critical risks identified ad hoc and no major deficiencies reported or identified regarding the **effectiveness**, **efficiency** and **cost of controls (economy)**. The budget outturn and resulting significant carry-forward to 2023 was the result of, in particular, external factors, including the circumstance that additional human resources related to Europol's expanding objectives and tasks could only be recruited in the second half of 2022, after the amendments to the Europol Regulation entered into force at the end of June 2022. This notwithstanding, a dedicated analysis was carried out at the beginning of 2023, to identify additional actions for reducing the carry-forward, which will be complemented by an additional audit engagement of the Internal Audit Capability (IAC) on budget management.

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In 2022, the **value of exceptions** and **non-compliance** instances concerning Europol's financial transactions was **under the materiality threshold** (0.8% vs. a materiality of 2%), the **late payment rate** was 7.2%, the **budget commitment implementation rate** reached 96.6%, the **vacancy rate** was below the target ceiling of 2% (i.e. 0.6%), and the **implementation of critical and very important recommendations** was above target (i.e. 89% vs. 85%).

Concerning the **economy of controls**, the **overall cost of controls in 2022** represented **2.5%** of the **established revenue**. The ratio is considered **reasonable** to uphold a compliant financial model, while mitigating the risk of financial fraud, in particular in light of Europol's position as a law enforcement authority at EU level, the size of the budget and increase in the number of establishment plan posts and introduction of the short-term SNEs concept, the number of financial transactions and complexity of (operational) activities as well as the changes to the organisational structure and related budgetary management.

The **calculation method** to estimate the cost of controls was developed based on the guidance of the European Commission and specific guidelines developed by the Internal Control Working Group of the Performance Development Network (PDN)¹⁰, while taking into account Europol's specific situation. To calculate the cost of control, the salary costs (based on the average full time equivalent costs for each concerned staff member) were included for ex-ante and ex-post control activities concerning the implementation of the established revenue of Europol. The salary costs were estimated for the activities for financial and operational initiation and verification activities as well as authorisation, budget planning and monitoring, procurement and grants management, next to accounting activities. In addition, external audit costs for 2022 were taken into account. Costs for information technology controls, planning and performance, maintaining the Internal Control Framework (ICF), internal assurance (e.g. data protection, internal audit and system accreditation) and anti-fraud measures, and overhead costs (e.g. building related running costs, ICT administration) were not included.

To exploit further **efficiency potential**, the Finance Unit initiated an external process review in 2022, the results of which will be taken on-board in 2023. Europol will continue to **closely monitor** the development of the **cost ratio for internal controls**.

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 Financial Regulation (FR) application to, the Executive Director performs the duties as **Authorising Officer (AO)** for **the implementation of revenue and expenditure of the budget assigned to Europol**. In 2022, the Executive Director continued to delegate the powers of budget implementation to the Deputy Executive Directors, the Head of the Corporate Affairs Bureau and the Secretary of the Management Board (MB), and their alternates, 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 FR. The duties and responsibilities of the Authorising Officer (AO) including the Europol controls and checks for financial transactions also apply 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, supported by ex-ante and ex-post financial controls, next to the safeguarding of

¹⁰ PDN is a sub-network of the EU Agencies Network.

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records of the underlying financial transactions. The delegations and sub-delegations are not governed by a time-limit and are amended/revoked based on business needs. They 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, tasks and responsibilities entrusted to staff.

The delegations and sub-delegations are maintained as part of Europol's Financial Model, last revised in December 2022 in light of organisational changes and related business needs. 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 updated on a continuous basis, with a view to ensuring efficient, effective and compliant budget implementation.

Monthly, quarterly and yearly financial monitoring and reporting mechanisms are in place. Instances of financial exceptions and non-compliance are logged in a central record and the approach for management of financial deviations was reviewed in 2022.

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 2022 Establishment Plan consisted of a total number of 686 Temporary agent ()posts, including 71 additional posts compared to the 2021 Establishment Plan, in line with the adopted Budget 2022.

On 31 December 2022, the total number of staff employed by Europol was 851: 615 staff in Establishment Plan posts and 236 Contract Agents (including 19 funded by grants/agreements); the number of non-Europol staff (Seconded Experts, Liaison Officers and staff of Liaison Bureaux, Interns and Contractors) was 743.

During 2022, 99 new staff joined Europol (60 Temporary Agents and 39 Contract Agents), while 77 staff left the Organisation (41 Temporary Agents and 36 Contract Agents).

2.5.2. Main changes in HR policies

In 2022, the Management Board agreed with the application by analogy to Europol of **Commission Decision C(2022) on working time and hybrid working** (the 'Commission Decision'), and decided to let it enter into force before the expiry of the 9-month period laid down in Article 110(2) of the Staff Regulations of Officials of the European Union (the 'EUSR'). This Commission Decision replaces the previous implementing provisions on working time and on telework, aiming at providing a framework where working at the office and telework are considered equivalent ways of working. The main novelties of the Commission Decision concern, *inter alia*:

- the replacement of the concepts of 'bandwidth' and 'core hours' with, respectively, those of 'timeframe' (within which staff should mainly work) and '(staff) availability for interaction';
- the introduction of a 'disconnection period';
- the possibility, for staff members whose duties are compatible with teleworking, to request their line managers to be authorised to telework on a determined day(s) of the working week, thus combining work from the office and telework ('hybrid working');

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- the percentages of telework in a working week that are agreed upon in the (hybrid) working arrangement;
- the possibility of teleworking from outside the place of employment for 10 working days per calendar year, as well as the possibility to request telework from outside the place of employment for exceptional circumstances, which is subject to more restrictive conditions.

The Commission Decision was implemented at Europol by means of the **Decision of the Executive Director implementing Commission Decision C(2022) on working time and hybrid working**. Such Decision, which entered into force together with the Commission Decision on 1 August 2022 and has been subject to limited amendments, takes care of further detailing the provisions of the Commission Decision (for example, by further detailing the conditions for granting a lump sum covering certain costs of teleworking staff, subject to budgetary availability or the concept of place of telework and the criteria to assess the requests for hybrid working arrangements).

In 2022, the **Decision of the Executive Director on the Duration of Contracts of Employment for Temporary Agents under Article 2(f) of the CEOS** and the **Decision of the Executive Director on the Duration of Contracts of Employment for Contract Staff under Article 3a of the CEOS** were revised and aligned to the extent possible to enhance clarity on some elements and improve readability.

Additionally, the revised **Manual of procedures for the implementation of the Decision of the Management Board of Europol on the Policy on protecting the dignity of the person and preventing psychological harassment and sexual harassment** was adopted. It increases readability, addresses data protection-related elements, implements a gender-neutral language and clarifies the roles of the actors involved in the informal procedure, in alignment with the Decision of the Management Board of Europol of 3 May 2018 on the policy on protecting the dignity of the person and preventing psychological harassment and sexual harassment.

2.5.3. Implementing rules adopted in 2022

The following **implementing rules of the Staff Regulations** were adopted in 2022 by the Management Board:

- Decision of the Management Board of Europol of 13 March 2022 laying down general implementing provisions on the conduct of administrative inquiries and disciplinary proceedings;
- Commission Decision C(2021) 8179 of 16 November 2021 laying down general implementing provisions regarding the payment of the education allowance provided for in Article 15 of Annex X to the Staff Regulations to staff members for the duration of temporary assignments to the seat of the institution or any other place of employment in the Union;
- Commission Decision C(2022) 1788 of 24 March 2022 on working time and hybrid working;
- Decision of the Management Board of Europol of 28 June 2022 on the early entry into force of Commission Decision C(2022) 1788 of 24 March 2022 on working time and hybrid working
- Commission Decision C(2022) 1715 of 24 March 2022 on home leave for officials, temporary staff and contract staff serving in a third country and repealing Commission Decision C(2013) 9035 final of 16 December 2013;
- Decision of the Management Board of Europol of 11 October 2022 on the early entry into force at Europol of Commission Decision C(2022) 1715 of 24 March 2022 on home leave for officials, temporary staff and contract staff serving in a third country and repealing Commission Decision C(2013) 9035 final of 16 December 2013.

The following **implementing rules of the Europol Regulation** were adopted in 2022 by the Management Board:

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- Decision of the Management Board of Europol of 11 October 2022 on Law Enforcement Traineeships;
- Decision of the Management Board of Europol of 11 October 2022 concerning the rights and obligations of liaison officers in relation to Europol;
- Decision of the Management Board of Europol of 28 June 2022 defining the Europol posts that can be filled only by staff engaged from the competent authorities of the Member States ("restricted posts");
- Decision of the Management Board of Europol of 28 June 2022 repealing the Act of the Management Board of Europol of 29 November 2006 laying down the rules on Europol personal files.

2.5.4. Vacancy rate

The vacancy rate at year-end 2022 was **0.6%** (615 out of 686 posts were in post and 67 appointment letters were sent), while the target was a vacancy rate of maximum 2%. The vacancy rate in 2021 was 0.2%.

2.5.5. Gender representation

At the end of 2022, female staff represented 32% of all staff working for Europol and occupied 29% of established (TA) posts filled. This was in line with the previous year. Women occupied 17% of Senior Specialist / Senior Analyst positions (i.e. 32 out of 187 staff in these posts), similarly to 2021. The percentage of female staff members in Head of Unit and equivalent or higher positions was 18% (six staff members), compared to 17% in the previous year.

The aspect of equal opportunities is emphasised by Europol in all vacancy notices. This is also highlighted in the Europol Recruitment Guidelines, published on Europol's website. Women, in particular in the law enforcement sector, are encouraged to apply for posts at Europol.

2.5.6. Member States representation

The countries with the largest representation among staff were Spain, the Netherlands, Italy, Romania, Greece, France, Germany, 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 2022 was launched on 14 January 2022 and closed on 05 May 2022 with a completion rate of 81%, compared to 75% the previous year.

Europol's Reclassification Exercise 2022 was launched through an Administrative Notice published on 23 May 2022, following the closure of the Annual Appraisal Exercise 2022.

The budgetary limit for the Reclassification Exercise 2022 was set at a maximum of 25% 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 90 (57 Administrators (AD), 2 Assistant (AST) and 31 Contract Agent (CA)) which is 11% of the staff population (posts filled at year-end).

2.6. Internal audit management

2.6.1. Internal Audit Capability (IAC)

In the first months of 2022, the IAC concluded a review of Europol's Internal Control Framework (ICF). The exercise assessed the effectiveness of the Internal Control System (ICS) for the year 2020, using a set of established sixty-one Internal Control Indicators (ICI) and by comparing actual performance attained vs. respective targets. The IAC concluded that overall all components of the ICS were present and functioning in an integrated manner across the organisation and that they effectively reduced, to an acceptable level, the risk of not achieving Europol's (multi-) annual objectives relating to operations, reporting and compliance. The performance of only a few ICIs did not meet the targets and the Agency should continue taking action to adequately address those.

Regarding the IAC 2022 Work Programme, the IAC completed the following engagements:

- **Assessment of Europol's approach to outsourcing services, based on the experience of the travel services** – the purpose of this consultancy engagement was to assess Europol's approach to outsourcing. While Europol subcontracts different types of services, this assessment only considered the experience derived from the outsourcing of the travel services used for staff missions and organisation of meetings/events at Europol. The IAC reviewed adequacy of actions taken leading to the decision to outsource this service, as well as the governance systems in place, processes implemented, performance attained, user feedback collected and extent to which the expected benefits were attained. The IAC also provided an assessment of the extent to which the expected benefits from this outsourced service were attained, namely simplification and efficiency of service, streamlining of corporate processes, increased customer satisfaction and availability of travel services on a 24/7/365 basis. The IAC advised on the way forward and elaborated on general aspects to be considered in the future when it comes to outsourcing some services.
- **Evaluation of the performance and added value of Europol's Medical Service** – as per the Staff Regulations, Europol as an employer has the obligation to provide a set of medical services to its staff. Until end of 2019, medical services (including pre-employment medical examination, annual medical check-up of staff, sick leave administration) were provided by an external company. Due to a number of reasons, Europol decided to establish its own Medical Service, which has been operating within the premises of the Agency since 2020. The purpose of this consultancy engagement was to assess the performance and added value of Europol's Medical Service. The evaluation contained a review of the activities performed towards the establishment of this service as well as assessments of how the assigned tasks were addressed and expected benefits attained. The IAC also provided guidance on what should be done before, during and after a decision has been taken to insource a service at Europol.
- **ISO 14001:2015 internal audit of Europol's Environmental Management System (EMS)** – Europol obtained its EMAS (Environmental Management Scheme) registration in February 2020. According to requirement 9.2.1 of ISO 14001:2015, the Agency needs to conduct internal audits at planned intervals. Following the relevant audit engagement, the IAC concluded that the EMS related activities conducted at Europol are performed in a controlled manner and in compliance with the requirements of International Standard ISO 14001:2015 and the EMAS Regulation. Nevertheless, the IAC noted a number of shortcomings and identified two non-conformities, three observations and two opportunities for improvement. These were communicated to the Agency for consideration and action.
- **ISO 17020:2012 internal audit of Europol's Document Forensics** – the IAC performs an internal audit of Europol's Document Forensics on an annual basis, in accordance with the requirements of the International Standard (ISO) 17020:2012 (Conformity assessment –

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Requirements for the operation of various types of bodies performing inspection). The objectives of the audit were 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 five observations were noted, two of which qualify as opportunities for improvement.

- **Validation of user access rights granted in the ABAC and MobileXpense systems** – In accordance with the internal rules on the implementation of the general budget of the EU, the European Commission requested the Executive Director to validate that the user access rights granted in the ABAC system were 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 FR 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 (MobileXpense). The IAC concluded that the controls in place for the administration of delegations/nominations under the Europol FR were managed at a strong level. The controls for implementation of delegations (or nominations) in MobileXpense were managed at a marginally satisfactory level while the management of security authorisations in the ABAC system were managed at an adequate level. The IAC issued twelve recommendations. Furthermore, the IAC reviewed the implementation status of the recommendations issued in 2021.

2.6.2. Data Protection Function (DPF)

The workload of the DPF remained at a very high level in 2022, with significant support required by the data controller. Furthermore, data protection advice regarding the processing of administrative personal data and in particular, in relation to the processing of sensitive personal data by Europol's Medical Service contributed to the increased workload together with a continuously high number of full hits on data subject access requests.

Most of DPF's activities focussed on **operational data protection matters**. Significant efforts were invested to prior consultations of the EDPS according to Article 39 of the Europol Regulation (ER), including the development and use of machine learning tools for the support of operational analysis, Dactyloscopic searches in SIS II, Data Refinery, the Visualisation & Analysis Tool (VAT) of the DAP and PERCI. Additionally, the DPF continued contributing to the handling of Europol's so-called *big data challenge* and was involved in the Europol regulation recast process.

On the **administrative data processing** area, 2022 saw a very significant increase of DPF involvement and guidance. Notably, the processing of personal data with regard to new or renewed software purchases required the DPF's input on the compliance of the intended processing activities and the provider of the services. In addition, DPF advice on data protection compliance of transfers of personal data to a third country was a significant part of the DPF's work in the administrative area. Additional workload was also encountered in the handling of inquiries, complaints, advice on the handling of personal data breaches and data protection guidance on the processing of health data.

In addition, the DPF facilitated all **data subject access requests** (Art. 36 requests). Article 36 ER grants the right to any person, at reasonable intervals, to obtain information on whether personal data relating to them are processed by Europol. In 2022, there were in total 273 requests, for 37 of which Europol held data. While the overall number of requests decreased by 23% compared to 2021 (353), the number of requests concerning which data was held increased by 15 %.

In 2022, the DPF continued to foster the data protection culture within the organisation by **training** staff as well as addressing external stakeholders by sharing knowledge and expertise. The newcomers' induction session reinforces the knowledge acquired with the e-learning module

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by focusing, among others, on data protection principles and processing purposes, data subject access rights, prior consultation process, personal data breaches, transfer of personal data to third countries and international organisations and data protection supervision. Throughout 2022, the DPF provided the induction programme on data protection to 176 newcomers.

In 2022, eight **Guest Officer (GO) Data Protection training sessions** were provided, compared to two in 2021. The aim of the training is to provide a comprehensive overview of the main issues at stake concerning the processing of operational personal data in the context of the migration crisis and the hotspots. It focuses on the applicable data protection regime and the specifics of hotspots data by emphasising human rights of asylum seekers and refugees as well as the specifics of the GO role in supporting national competent authorities. The training elaborates inter alia on operational data processing activities in the hotspots including referrals, queries of Europol systems and relevant analysis projects.

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 NGOs. EDEN is used as a channel to present projects, best practices and events linked to data protection in a law enforcement context. It is a “by invitation only” network, not suitable for the exchange of operational personal data or classified information, which currently has more than 380 active members. The main focus throughout 2022 was to prepare the ninth EDEN event held on 19-20 September at Europol Headquarters which was as usual co-hosted by the European Law Academy (ERA). Under the title “It’s the end of the world as we know it: data protection and law enforcement in a shifting world order”, the conference focussed on the law enforcement challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, two events that have changed Europe and the world since 2020. Their consequences for fundamental rights, data protection and cybersecurity from a law enforcement perspective were discussed, drawing links to Europol’s new mandate whenever appropriate.

2.7. External audit management

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

The IAS issued the **Strategic Internal Audit Plan (SIAP)** for Europol for the period **2022-2024** covering three audit themes: **Coordination and working arrangements** between Europol and the **Directorate General (DG) Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME)** of the European Commission, key controls in **Europol’s Information Management Strategy** and the work of the **Innovation Lab**.

The first audit on **coordination and working arrangements with DG HOME** was conducted in 2022. The audit report is expected in 2023.

2.7.2. European Court of Auditors (ECA)

Europol received a **positive audit opinion** on the financial implementation for the financial year 2021, namely on the **reliability of the 2021 final annual accounts**, as well as the **legality and regularity** of the underlying financial transactions in all material aspects¹¹. The ECA also reviewed the **effectiveness of conflict of interest policy implementation in EU Agencies**.

For the **financial year 2022**, the ECA carried out the **regular financial audit** in January 2023, including a review of a sample of financial transactions and procurement measures. The ECA

¹¹ https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/AGENCIES_2021/AGENCIES_2021_EN.pdf

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also reviewed, as a horizontal topic across EU Agencies, the **agencies' response to the current energy crisis and sustainability reporting in relation to energy and climate.**

2.7.3. Independent external audit of the annual accounts

The aspect of the **reliability of the information provided in the provisional accounts 2022** was audited **by an external auditor** in March 2023, as provided for in Article 104 of the Financial Regulation applicable to Europol. All audit activities performed in relation to the financial year 2022 serve as input to the ECA audit activities, with a view to expressing a formal opinion on the closure of the financial year 2022, for the final accounts to be issued by 1 July 2023, including an opinion of the MB on the final accounts.

At the end of 2022, **no issue of a material nature had been identified in relation to the closure of the financial year 2022 by Europol**, and the **provisional annual accounts** were issued on time before the end of February 2023.

2.8. Follow up of recommendations and action plans for audits

In 2022, 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 2022, further implementation activities were on-going.

In 2022, the **IAC issued 12 new recommendations, including one** graded as **'critical' and one as 'very important'**. The IAC also issued two opportunities for improvement and two minor non-conformities on the Environmental performance and the effectiveness of the Environmental Management System at Europol. Two opportunities for improvement were also issued as part of the ISO 17020:2012 internal audit of Europol's Document Forensics.

Overall during 2022, good progress was noted in relation to the follow-up of IAC audit recommendations with **89% implementation rate of critical and very important recommendations** that were foreseen for completion in 2022. The ten pending 'very important' IAC audit recommendations (see Annex XI), are being implemented in line with the envisaged planning for 2023.

As part of the **audit for the financial year 2022**, the ECA also reviewed the outstanding and ongoing actions to respond to the observations made for previous years¹², which Europol now considers closed. At the end of 2022, the **late payment** rate was successfully reduced to **7.2%** from 32.8% in 2020. Concerning the comment on the 2021 financial year on the timeline for granting former senior management authorisation to engage in a professional activity post-employment at Europol, in 2022 there were no requests from former senior management staff to engage in a professional activity.

In relation to recommendations issued by the **IAS**, there was **one pending recommendation**, from the audit on IT Security graded as 'important'. While the recommendation was not fully implemented by the end of 2022, progress was made to formalise the related documentation and there were no related critical corporate risks raised or materialised.

Europol completed the implementation of the four contract management recommendations, issued in 2021 and graded as 'important', and one IT Security recommendation (issued in 2020 and graded as 'important').

OLAF completed one investigation in 2022 and issued its report in December 2022. The decision-making on the case, which concerns incorrect mission costs statements of one staff member for an immaterial financial amount, will be made by Europol in 2023.

¹² Please refer to Annex XII - Extract from the European Court of Auditors (ECA) report

2.9. Follow up of observations from the discharge authority

The European Parliament granted discharge in May 2022 to the Executive Director of Europol with respect to the **implementation of the budget for the financial year 2020**. The discharge proceedings in relation to the financial year 2021 were well underway at the end of 2022.

Europol provided an update to the European Parliament concerning the **follow-up actions taken by Europol in relation to the European Parliament's discharge decision** for the financial year 2020. This was also shared with the ECA during the audit on the financial year 2022.

Europol followed-up on the **discharge observations** and implemented actions concerning the observations made on internal controls, data protection, external communication and the ECA's observations made to Europol in the annual report. Further activities are ongoing concerning gender diversity and digitalisation of administrative procedures with the implementation of the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and further digitalisation, through the use of European Commission information systems and tools in the areas of human resources management and contract management.

On 14 March 2023, the **Council** adopted the recommendation to the European Parliament to give discharge to Europol in respect of the implementation of the budget for the **financial year 2022**¹³. On 22 March 2023, the **Budgetary Control (CONT) Committee** adopted the draft resolution accompanying the discharge decision by the European Parliament on the **closure of the financial year 2021, including the proposal to grant discharge to Europol**¹⁴. The final version was adopted by the European Parliament Plenary on 10 May 2023, granting discharge to Europol for the implementation of the financial year 2021.

2.10. Environmental Strategy

In line with Europol's strategic priority¹⁵ of being the model EU law enforcement agency, Europol commits to its **Environmental Policy**. Europol recognises its responsibility for making a positive contribution to sustainable development and is committed to protect the environment, by limiting the environmental impact of its activities and to continuously improve its environmental performance.

Europol implemented an Environmental Management System (EMS) in 2018, which was certified against the ISO 14001: 2015 standard in 2021. The Environmental Management System (EMS) contains the environmental governance structure and process landscape, the environmental performance data, the objectives and action plan, which gives Europol the reliable and consistent method to measure and continuously improve the environmental performance of the Agency.

In February 2022, Europol obtained the **Eco-management and Audit Scheme (EMAS)** registration which will further support Europol in its commitment to contribute to the EU Green Deal's main objective of a climate neutral Europe by 2050.

Following a successful external audit by the certification body in November 2022 and the verification of Europol's second (updated) Environmental Statement, the EMAS registration was renewed for another year by the SCCM (Stichting Coördinatie Certificatie Management). The

¹³ Council recommendation 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 2021, 13 February 2023, Council Secretariat file no. FIN 161 PE-L 8/6248/23 + ADD 1 (adopted by COREPER on 23 February 2023)

¹⁴ 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 2021 (2022/2121(DEC)), 20 January 2023

¹⁵ Europol Strategy 2020+, Strategic Priority 5: Be the model EU Law Enforcement organisation.

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European EMAS Register of the Commission was updated accordingly. Europol's updated environmental statement was published on the agency's website.

Europol is committed to maintaining the EMAS certification as a sustainable mechanism for environmental and organisational improvements. During 2022, EMAS process descriptions and the EMS documentation were updated as deemed appropriate. In addition, the annual activities of the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle of Europol EMS were duly performed e.g. update of the register of applicable environmental legislation, management review, internal and external audits. Both, the environmental performance data collection for 2021 and the environmental performance evaluation were completed and the respective performance indicators were established.

Furthermore, a Feasibility Study project for the development of Europol's Environmental Vision 2030 was initiated and, at the time of writing of this report, it is ongoing. The aim is to elaborate the necessary information for the new Environmental Vision of Europol and support management in the decision making process on long term objectives and targets (2030) as well as on short to mid-term objectives and action plans. It will define the reduction targets of Europol's greenhouse gas emissions for 2030 and the improvement measures needed to meet these targets.

2.10.1. Environmental performance

Europol has implemented a systematic approach for monitoring and reviewing its environmental performance on an annual basis. The Agency focuses on its performance in the following key environmental areas reflecting the scope of its activities, defined in line with the EMAS Regulation:

- Emissions (carbon footprint);
- Energy (energy efficiency);
- Water (water consumption);
- Waste (waste generation);
- Material (paper consumption); and
- Land use respecting biodiversity (biodiversity).

In addition to the environmental areas identified under the EMAS Regulation, Europol defined environmental performance indicators related to **green public procurement**, to fully cover the areas of its environmental impact.

In 2021, Europol met most of the environmental objectives set. The COVID-19 pandemic crisis and key considerations, such as the impact of teleworking and reduction of commuting, undoubtedly contributed to the achievement of most of the objectives. For the majority of the environmental areas the targets set were not only achieved, but significantly exceeded the expected levels. The greatest change was observed for the Agency's carbon footprint. Although the COVID-19 pandemic situation resulted in a significant improvement in the core performance indicators, its positive effect should not be overstated - a rebound effect is expected with the return to normal operations.

Nevertheless, not all indicators reached or were close to the set targets. For some indicators, the observed trend indicates negative changes. In 2021, an increase in energy consumption (both gas and electricity) was observed at Europol's headquarters.

The results of the environmental performance are presented in Annex IX.

2.10.2. Actions to improve and communicate Environmental Performance

Europol continued to implement its **Environmental Objectives and Action Plan 2020 – 2022**, which defines three areas for sustainable and environmental improvement:

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

As previously mentioned, the COVID-19 pandemic had a serious impact on the way Europol was operating, as the Agency quickly and successfully adapted to the circumstances. The measures aiming to preventing the spread of the virus were planned and adopted in accordance with the decisions of Europol's Crisis Management Team, and initiated depending on the different pandemic escalation and de-escalation phases. Some of the measures relevant to environmental performance were:

- Teleworking and widespread use of virtual meetings along with the solutions upgrade;
- Implementation and upgrading of ICT systems to support hybrid (physical/virtual) meetings and conferences;
- Implementation of digital e-signature tool for external and internal use;
- Defined maximum number of staff allowed in the building for each escalation and de-escalation phase;
- Travel and mission restrictions.

Additionally, during the course of 2022, the following activities and products were finalised and/or initiated:

- EMAS and ISO14001:2015 certification activities:
 - EMS Internal Audit 2022 (by Europol's Internal Audit Capability);
 - Certification audit by the accreditation body (BSI) – ISO14001:2015;
 - EMAS registration audit by the accreditation body (BSI);
 - Renewal of EMAS Registration with the Dutch national body;
 - Europol's 2nd (updated) Environmental Statement (performance 2021) published and available for public on Europol website (in English and Dutch);
 - EMAS and ISO14001:2015 certification audit.
- Update of compliance register of applicable environmental legislation.
- Annual environmental performance reporting by EMAS Actors.
- Environmental Performance Evaluation – performance 2021.
- Environmental Review 2022:
 - Context and Stakeholders Analysis – review and update 2022;
 - Environmental Aspects Analysis – review and update 2022.
- Integration of EMAS requirements into SHR Projects.

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- Improvement Actions (EMAS Actors):
 - Analysis of increased energy consumption;
 - EU Energy Efficiency Directive - Energy Audit 2020 – follow up with the Host State on implementation of recommended actions (2021-2023);
 - New catering contract as of 1 July – (re)-introducing sustainable requirements in the catering service;
 - Waste separation improving initiatives;
 - Building maintenance (Long Term Replacement Planning) – the contractor was asked to replace certain elements with most energy efficient, sustainable and environmental friendly ones.
- Participated and exchanged notes on best practices via the EU Agencies Greening Network.
- Presented “EMAS at Europol” at the GIME meeting (03/2022).
- Feasibility Study project for the development of Europol’s Environmental Vision 2030.

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). The assessment of the Europol ICS is based on **continuous monitoring** and an annual assessment, using both quantitative and qualitative measurements. The assessment is carried out at principle and 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 76 internal control indicators and identified instances of non-compliance and or deficiencies. A self-assessment is conducted for the selected internal control indicators by comparing actual performance against defined targets, which are set for each of the 17 principles. 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 and the set of indicators was reviewed in 2022.

Qualitative aspects 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 and management of potential conflicts of interest 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 assessment of the 17 internal control principles shows that the principles are present and functioning well with some or minor improvements needed. There were no prominent internal control weakness identified in 2022. Actions to address identified weaknesses, were devised through monitoring and implementation of dedicated measures, including the mitigation of risks, under the lead of senior management.

3.1.2. Risk management

In 2022, Europol developed and released a **risk management policy**, in addition to a revised **corporate risk management process description**. At Europol, a risk is an uncertain event or set of events that, should it occur, would have an effect on the achievement of objectives related to the annual business planning (i.e. Programming Document, Work Programme) and the Europol Strategy 2020+ from an overall perspective. Furthermore, the policy sets out **universal principles** for **corporate risk management**, with a view to identifying and managing risks in a continuous and systematic manner across the organisation.

The **corporate risk management process** provides practical guidance for assessing risks, describes the roles and responsibilities, as well as the workflow for assessing risks across the organisation, which represents an integral part of Europol's quarterly performance reporting cycle. In addition to the risk reporting on a quarterly basis, Europol's corporate risk management approach also addresses risks with an organisational-wide impact that are identified ad hoc.

In 2022, **Europol's corporate risk profile** was characterised by the following **key elements**, namely the

- **Increasing mandate and tasks** of, as well as the **demand** directed at the organisation not being **sufficiently sourced** with the **required staffing levels**, for meeting Europol's obligations (implementation of the amended Europol Regulation, EU Interoperability etc.) and stakeholder expectations;

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- **Rising demand** on the **successful delivery** of **key ICT infrastructure solutions** for the processing of operational personal data (Data Analysis Portal (DAP), facial recognition, machine learning tools for operational analysis, PERCI, use of Cloud services etc.), which is impaired in particular due to **external dependencies beyond Europol's control**;
- **Continuous response** to mitigate the security and law enforcement impact resulting from the **war in Ukraine**, which consumed **considerable resources** especially in Operations Directorate, diverting resources otherwise foreseen to implement activities in 2022;
- **Increasing supervisory** and related **scrutiny activities**, in particular with respect to **data protection, consuming substantial resources** (estimated at 25 Full Time Equivalent (FTEs) in terms of staff invested for data protection related tasks alone), impacting on the responsiveness of Europol, especially with regard to the deployment of ICT solutions and innovation initiatives;
- **Incessant challenge** to Europol's **ability to absorb** the **volume and complexity of change** in compliance with the organisation's regulatory requirements, for instance with respect to the technical implementation of the amended Europol Regulation.

Europol's corporate risk profile concurs with the outcome of the **Home Affairs Agencies peer review risk assessment exercise** (chaired by Europol in Q4 2022 for the Home Affairs Agencies), concerning which **Europol's response actions** have been taken forward into 2023¹⁶ (please refer to Annex XIII).

3.1.3. Anti-fraud strategy

The Management Board adopted in March 2022 the revised **Anti-Fraud Strategy** for the period 2022-2024. The revision reflects the principles, the fraud risk assessment including the fourteen common fraud risk scenarios as defined by OLAF, anti-fraud objectives and actions, and an implementation review of Anti-Fraud Strategy 2017–2020 actions.

The three Anti-Fraud Strategy objectives are to:

- Maintain and expand anti-fraud culture and awareness;
- Manage sensitive positions;
- Manage fraud risk scenario process improvements.

Thirteen cross-organisational actions were defined to achieve the objectives concerning anti-fraud awareness and training, management of sensitive staff positions, and process improvements in the area of human resources management, conflict of interest management, and procurement and contract management. A next revision of the Anti-Fraud Strategy will take place in 2024.

To coordinate issues related to fraud or irregularities, Europol has an Internal Investigations Service (IIS) in place, which also serves as a contact point for OLAF. In 2022, there were **no instances of financial fraud identified** by Europol, OLAF or the ECA. One OLAF investigation was closed in 2022 (please refer to Section 2.8 above).

Europol has policies and procedures in place for the management of conflict of interest, including for recruitment, procurement and grant related procedures. No conflict of interest situation was raised or identified during 2022.

¹⁶ EDOC # 1192222 Europol Programming Document 2023-2025 (Annex XIV: Risks 2023)

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 2022 using both quantitative and qualitative elements and including a set of 76 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**. The assessment concluded 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. In 2022, the IAC completed the review of Europol's Internal Control Framework (ICF) for 2020 and concluded that Europol had in place a robust system of internal controls.

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 2022, 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 2022 is, to the best of my knowledge, accurate, reliable and complete.



Jürgen Ebner

Deputy Executive Director

7 June 2023

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**, integrating the principles of sound financial management, segregation of duties and transparency with: (a) up-to-date appointment authorisations of financial actors, (b) a charter for authorising officers which promotes accountability, transparency and informed decision-making, (c) a central financial initiation function, (d) a central financial verification function and (e) clear guidance to all staff on the expected behaviour (Code of Conduct etc.).
2. A robust **planning and performance monitoring 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, as well as the EDPS) 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** 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 2022.

Part V. Declaration of Assurance

Declaration of Assurance of the Authorising Officer

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;¹⁷
- 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, the annual accounts for the financial year 2022 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 2022 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

7 June 2023

¹⁷ 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. Key Performance Indicators

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	SOURCE	RESULT 2021	RESULT 2022	TARGET 2022
Number of Searches through EIS and QUEST	EIS & QUEST	12,256,546	13,374,862	14,000,000
Number of SIENA Messages exchanged	SIENA	1,542,606	1,636,115	1,400,000
Number of Operations Supported by Europol	Internal Overview	2,519	2,758	2,150
Number of Accepted Contributions by Europol	SIENA	99,867	98,068	91,000
Number of Action Days organised/supported by Europol	Internal Overview	335	394	275
Number of Operational Analysis Reports produced by Europol	SIENA	286	251	295
Number of Cross Match Reports and SIENA hit notifications produced by Europol	SIENA	14,413	14,737	14,750
Number of Strategic Analysis Reports produced by Europol	SIENA	40	32	30
Number of Thematic Reports produced by Europol	SIENA	656	n/a	750
Satisfaction with Operational Support delivered by Europol	User Survey	9.4	9.6	8.5
Satisfaction with Strategic Analysis Reports produced by Europol	User Survey	9.4	8.9	8.5
Satisfaction with Operational Training delivered by Europol	User Survey	9.7	9.8	8.5
Emissions (tonnes CO2)	Internal Overview	719	n/a	3,942
Workplace Flex Ratio	Internal Overview	n/a	n/a	80%
Vacancy rate	Internal Overview	0.2%	0.6%	2%
% of Female Staff	Internal Overview	33%	32%	35%
Budget Commitment Rate	ABAC	98.7%	96.6%	95%
Implementation of Audit Recommendations	Internal Overview	87%	89.3%	85%

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Annex II. Work Programme Indicators

EUROPOL ACTIVITY	WORK PROGRAMME INDICATOR	SOURCE	RESULT 2021	RESULT 2022	TARGET 2022
A.1. Development of information technology and information management capabilities	Core Business Project Delivery	Internal Overview	76.0%	78%	75%
	Operational Stability - Uptime of Core systems	ICT monitoring tools	99.4%	99.7%	98%
	% of Active Users on the EPE	EPE	47%	43%	45%
	Number of Cross Border Crime Checks in the EIS related to persons	EIS	2,469	2,339	2,000
	Number of Searches through EIS and QUEST	EIS & QUEST	12,256,546	13,374,862	14,000,000
	Number of SIENA Cases initiated	SIENA	122,898	138,903	120,000
	Number of SIENA Messages exchanged	SIENA	1,542,606	1,636,115	1,400,000
A.2. Operational Coordination	Speed of first-line response to MS requests	SIENA	6	3	5
	Number of accepted SIENA contributions by OAC	SIENA	30,011	32,523	28,000
	Number of Europol Requests for PNR data (Art. 10 PNR Directive)	SIENA/Internal Overview	66	78	100
	Number of deployments of Guest Officers <i>(Number of deployment months)</i>	Internal Overview	554	716	600
A.3. Combating Serious and Organised Crime	Number of accepted contributions by ESOC	SIENA	40,925	37,288	36,000
	Number of Operational Task Forces established	Internal Overview	14	18	15
	Number of Operational Reports delivered by ESOC	SIENA	6,135	4,064	5,000
	Number of Operations supported by ESOC	Internal Overview	742	1,069	500
	Number of Action Days coordinated/supported by ESOC	Internal Overview	195	233	150
	Satisfaction with Operational Support and Analysis provided by ESOC	User Survey	9.2	10	9
	Number of Operational Reports delivered by EMSC	SIENA	1,246	1,213	1,300
	Number of Operations supported by EMSC	SIENA	162	195	160
	Number of Action Days coordinated/supported by EMSC	Internal Overview	56	53	50
	Satisfaction with Operational Support and Analysis provided by EMSC	User Survey	9	10	8.5
A.4. Combating Cyber Crime	Number of Accepted contributions by EC3	SIENA	8,887	8,837	7,200
	Number of Operational Reports delivered by EC3	SIENA	3,230	3,601	2,800
	Number of Operations supported by EC3	Internal Overview	468	446	430
	Number of Action Days coordinated/supported by EC3	Internal Overview	27	42	30
	Number of Decryption platform successes	Internal Overview	29	20	20
	Satisfaction with Operational Support and Analysis provided by EC3	User Survey	9.2	9.6	8.5

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EUROPOL ACTIVITY	WORK PROGRAMME INDICATOR	SOURCE	RESULT 2021	RESULT 2022	TARGET 2022
A.5. Counter-Terrorism	Number of Accepted contributions by ECTC	SIENA	4,936	4,357	5,500
	Number of Operational Reports delivered by ECTC	SIENA	1,657	1,526	1,900
	Number of Operations supported by ECTC	Internal Overview	1,010	891	800
	Number of Action Days coordinated/supported by ECTC	Internal Overview	20	30	15
	Satisfaction with Operational Support and Analysis in the area of CT	User Survey	9.5	8.6	8.5
	% of persons checked for Secondary Security Checks in Hotspots	Internal Overview	6.7%	5.7%	6%
	Volume of content assessed by EU IRU related to terrorism and violent extremism	IRMa	19,677	22,516	20,000
A.6. Combatting Financial and Economic Crime	Number of Accepted contributions by EFECC	SIENA	15,115	15,075	14,000
	Number of Operational Reports delivered by EFECC	SIENA	2,059	2,045	1,700
	Number of Operations supported by EFECC	Internal Overview	407	402	375
	Number of Action Days coordinated/supported by EFECC	Internal Overview	95	94	75
	Satisfaction with Operational Support and Analysis provided by EFECC	User Survey	9.5	9.7	8.5
A.7. Strategic and Analysis Coordination	Number of Strategic Analysis Reports	SIENA	40	32	30
	Satisfaction with Strategic Analysis Reports	User Survey	9.4	8.9	8.5
	Satisfaction with Operational Analysis	User Survey	9.2	9.7	8.5
	Satisfaction with Operational Training delivered to MS/TP	User Survey	9.7	9.8	8.5
	Number of new JITs signed	Internal Overview	16	10	25
	Number of SIENA messages exchanged by Third Parties	SIENA	212,396	216,677	240,000
A.8. Governance, support and administration	Budget Outturn Rate	ABAC	3%	5%	5%
	Budget Commitment Rate	ABAC	98.7%	96.6%	95%
	Budget Payment Rate	ABAC	83.5%	79.7%	90%
	% of Late Payments (in value)	ABAC	4.6%	1.9%	5%
	Vacancy rate	Internal Overview	0.2%	0.6%	2%
	% of Female Staff	Internal Overview	33%	32%	35%
	Workplace Flex Ratio	Internal Overview	n/a	n/a	80%
	Emissions (tonnes CO2)	Internal Overview	719	n/a	3,942
	% of pending critical/very important audit recommendations implemented within the timeline committed to by Europol agreed deadline with the auditing	Internal Overview	87%	89.3%	85%
	Total number of News Articles mentioning Europol (high-impact web-based media)	Internal Overview	4,056	6,509	3,000
User Satisfaction	User Survey	92%	91%	85%	

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Annex III. Budget implementation 2022

Revenue 2022

		Initially adopted	Amending budget	Established revenue	Cashed revenue	Open amount
A-9000	IC1 - Regular subsidy	192,380,773		192,380,773	192,380,773	-
A-9200	IC4 - Internal assigned revenue (Re-funds)			2,386,252	1,921,045	465,207
A-9200	IC41 - Internal assigned revenue (CF Re-funds)			658,869	658,869	-
A-9010	IR1 - External assigned revenue (Grants)		950,000	2,014,542	1,934,542	80,000
A-9010	IR11 - External assigned revenue (CF Grants)		80,000	80,000	80,000	-
A-9101	IR1 - External assigned revenue (DK)		4,348,949	4,348,949	4,348,949	-
A-9200	IR1 - Other external assigned revenue (EPF)			13,160	1,671	11,489
Total Revenue		192,380,773	5,378,949	201,882,545	201,325,849	556,696

Expenditure 2022

	Initial budget 2022	Actual budget 2022	Commitments 2022	Payments 2022	Comm rate (comm/bud)	Paym rate (pay/bud)	Available budget	Open comm
Title 1: Staff	103,065,273	102,535,973	100,108,826	99,049,197	97.6%	96.6%	2,427,147	1,059,629
Title 2: Other Administrative Expenditure	14,653,500	13,652,800	11,643,924	7,565,865	85.3%	55.4%	2,008,876	4,078,059
Title 3: Operational Activities	74,662,000	76,192,000	74,116,614	46,761,428	97.3%	61.4%	2,075,386	27,355,186
Total	192,380,773	192,380,773	185,869,365	153,376,491	96.6%	79.7%	6,511,408	32,492,874
Previous year	172,964,254	168,964,254	166,794,547	141,100,280	98.7%	83.5%	2,169,707	25,694,267
Difference	19,416,519	23,416,519	19,074,817	12,276,211	-2.1%	-3.8%	4,341,702	6,798,607

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Implementation of carry over to 2022

	Initial Carry Over	Carry Over	Commitments 2022	Payments 2022	Paym rate (pay/bud)	Decomm	Open Carry Over
Title 1: Staff	1,398,219	1,398,219	1,198,950	1,197,786	85.7%	199,269	1,164
Title 2: Other Administrative Expenditure	4,422,346	4,422,346	4,217,248	4,159,345	94.1%	205,098	57,903
Title 3: Operational Activities	20,129,697	20,129,697	17,865,586	16,790,634	83.4%	2,264,111	1,074,952
Total	25,950,262	25,950,262	23,281,784	22,147,765	85.3%	2,668,478	1,134,019
Previous year	21,499,375	21,499,375	18,620,246	18,572,790	86.4%	2,879,129	47,456
Difference	4,450,887	4,450,887	4,661,537	3,574,975	-1.0%	-210,651	1,086,563

Implementation of assigned revenue

	Initial Carry Over	Actual budget 2022	Commitments 2022	Payments 2022	Comm rate (comm/bud)	Paym rate (pay/bud)	Available budget	Open comm
C4 - Internal assigned revenue		2,579,914	1,308,548	1,055,072	50.7%	40.9%	1,271,366	253,476
C5 - CF internal assigned revenue	1,797,573	1,797,573	1,797,573	1,541,047	100.0%	85.7%	0	256,526
R0 - External assigned revenue (Non Grants)	2,433,413	6,784,033	5,120,046	4,996,924	75.5%	73.7%	1,663,987	123,123
R0 - External assigned revenue - (Grants)	6,847,120	8,861,662	6,660,263	4,444,793	75.2%	50.2%	2,201,398	2,215,470
Total	11,078,105	20,023,181	14,886,431	12,037,835	74.3%	60.1%	5,136,751	2,848,595

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	Initial budget 2022	Actual budget 2022	Commitments	Payments	Comm rate (comm/bud)	Paym rate (paym/bud)	Available Budget	Grant value	Duration	
									From	To
EUIPO - Fraud	13,041	93,041	93,041	81,508	100.0%	87.6%	0	80,000	01/01/2022	31/12/2022
EUIPO - IPC	478,509	1,428,509	1,428,509	1,275,311	100.0%	89.3%	0	950,000	01/01/2022	31/12/2022
SIRIUS Phase 2	302,418	1,281,873	1,232,368	827,205	96.1%	64.5%	49,505	3,491,892	01/01/2021	30/06/2024
SIRIUS	395,881	395,881	395,881	395,881	100.0%	100.0%	0	1,630,000	01/01/2018	31/12/2021
Western Balkan	858,778	585,778	585,778	585,778	100.0%	100.0%	0	2,000,000	05/03/2015	31/12/2021
Horizon 2020 - AIDA	585,875	585,875	451,648	107,208	77.1%	18.3%	134,226	935,800	01/09/2020	28/02/2023
Horizon 2020 - INFINITY	395,684	395,684	191,948	76,577	48.5%	19.4%	203,736	533,600	01/06/2020	31/05/2023
Horizon 2020 - GRACE	447,452	447,452	434,544	299,913	97.1%	67.0%	12,908	702,550	01/06/2020	30/11/2023
Horizon 2020 - STARLIGHT	430,747	430,747	423,730	69,268	98.4%	16.1%	7,017	891,200	01/10/2021	30/09/2025
EMPACT - Eastern Partnership	2,335,934	2,341,021	621,649	237,798	26.6%	10.2%	1,719,372	2,500,000	01/07/2020	30/06/2024
CEPOL EUROMED	233,949	233,949	200,616	57,666	85.8%	24.6%	33,333	320,000	01/04/2020	31/03/2024
CEPOL WBPACT	172,076	172,076	164,108	60,582	95.4%	35.2%	7,968	240,000	20/10/2020	19/10/2023
CEPOL TOPCOP	196,776	196,776	163,443	97,097	83.1%	49.3%	33,333	320,000	01/07/2020	30/06/2024
Total	6,847,120	8,588,662	6,387,263	4,171,793	74.4%	48.6%	2,201,398	14,595,042		

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Annex IV. Activity Based Costing (ABC)

Activity-based costing (ABC) provides an in-depth analysis on how the resources (staff and budget) are used per activity as defined in the Europol Programming Document 2022-2024¹⁸. 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 budget and staff outturn per activity¹⁹, shows that 82.4% the budget was executed for operational activities (A.1 – A.7 and grants) and 72% of the staff (TA, CA, SNE and staff funded by grants) was deployed to the teams associated to operational activities.

Compared with the traditional presentation, the ABC approach splits Europol's expenditure per activity as follows:

- 82.4% for operational expenditure and grants instead of 39.9% in Title 3;
- 17.6% for non-operational expenditure, i.e. governance, administration and support, instead of 60.1% as per budget Titles (1 and 2).

	Heads	In post	% in total	Staff impl.	Budget (in M)	Impl. (in M)	% in total	Impl. rate
A.1 Development of operational ICT and IM capabilities	208	195	22.0%	93.8%	72.25	71.37	38.4%	98.8%
A.2 Operational coordination	76	66	7.4%	86.8%	14.32	13.60	7.3%	95.0%
A.3 Combating Serious and Organised Crime	130	114	12.9%	87.7%	24.65	23.68	12.7%	96.1%
A.4 Combating cybercrime	99	76	8.6%	76.8%	14.41	13.35	7.2%	92.6%
A.5 Counter-Terrorism	105	89	10.0%	84.8%	16.27	15.66	8.4%	96.3%
A.6 Combating Financial and Economic Crime	59	54	6.1%	91.5%	9.01	8.69	4.7%	96.4%
A.7 Strategic and analysis coordination	58	45	5.1%	77.6%	7.10	6.75	3.6%	95.0%
Total operational activities	735	639	72.0%	86.9%	158.01	153.09	82.4%	96.9%
A.8 Governance, support and administration	240	233	26.3%	97.1%	30.82	29.46	15.9%	95.6%
MBF Management Board Functions	17	15	1.7%	88.2%	3.55	3.31	1.8%	93.4%
Total Govern., Support and Adm incl MBF	257	248	28.0%	96.5%	34.37	32.78	17.6%	95.4%
Total	992	887	100.0%	89.4%	192.38	185.87	100.0%	96.6%

¹⁸ EDOC # 1134870 – Europol Programming Document 2022-2024.

¹⁹ The final implementation also includes the external assigned revenue (fund source R0) received from Denmark.

Annex V. Establishment Plan and Human Resources Management

Annex V-a. Establishment Plan

Temporary Agents

Grade	Establishment Plan 2022	Posts filled 31/12/2022 ²⁰	Posts vacant ²¹	TOTAL ²²
AD 16		1		1
AD15	1			
AD 14	3	3		3
AD 13	1			
AD 12	10	10	1	11
AD 11	8	6		6
AD 10	18	19		19
AD 09	43	42		42
AD 08	83	66		66
AD 07	193	219	7	226
AD 06	285	285	7	292
AD 05	9	9		9
AST 08	2	1		1
AST 07	5	1		1
AST 06	6	4		4
AST 05	7	4		4
AST 04	6	4		4
AST 03	3	2		2
AST 02	3	6		6
TOTAL	686	682	15	697

Contract Agents

Grade	Authorised Budget 2022	Headcount 31.12.2022	Headcount funded by Grants/Agreements	Total Headcount 31.12.2022
FG IV	52	59	15	74
FG III	121	108	4	112
FG II	62	50		50
TOTAL	235	214	19	236

²⁰ Offer letters sent counted as posts filled. Includes 67 vacant posts for which selections have been completed and appointment letters have been sent.

²¹ 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.

²² Discrepancies between the grades in the Establishment Plan and the grades actually filled result from the general approach to replace those staff members that leave in lower (entry) grades. 11 additional TA posts are presented (the Establishment Plan 2022 includes 686 TA posts) as job quota assigned in excess for a limited period to keep the number of vacant posts to a minimum.

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Seconded National Experts

	Authorised Budget 2022	Headcount 31.12.2022
SNE costed	71	55
SNE funded by Grants		7
SNE Guest Officers		79
SNE costed short-term		39
SNE cost free		27
TOTAL	71	207

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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 ²³	AD 15 – AD 16	Executive Director
Director ²⁴	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 ²⁵ Head of Unit
Administrator	AD 5 – AD 12	Senior Specialist/Senior Analyst ²⁶ Specialist/Analyst ²⁷
Senior Assistant	AST 10 – AST 11	Senior Assistant
Assistant	AST 1 – AST 9	Officer ²⁸ Support Officer ²⁹
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

Annex V-c. Benchmarking exercise

Europol continues to strive towards being a more operational EU Agency. In 2022, the results of the job screening exercise showed a stabilisation in the percentage of operational jobs and a marginal

²³ This is without prejudice to a different classification of the head of the agency according to the founding regulation and/or the establishment plan.

²⁴ 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.

²⁵ Posts of Head of Department are filled from grades AD 12 to AD 14.

²⁶ Posts of Senior Specialists/Senior Analysts are filled from grades AD 7 to AD 12.

²⁷ Posts of Specialists/Analysts are filled from grades AD 5 to AD 6.

²⁸ Posts of Officer are filled from grades AST 4 to AST 9.

²⁹ Posts of Support Officer are filled from grades AST 1 to AST 3.

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decrease/increase in the percentage of neutral and administrative support and coordination jobs, respectively.

The job screening exercise was performed in December 2022, according to the guidelines defined by the EU Agencies Network and based on all personnel working at Europol premises on 15 December 2022. This not only includes Temporary Agents, Contract Agents and SNEs but also Liaison Officers, Interns, Law Enforcement Trainees and external service providers based at Europol's premises.

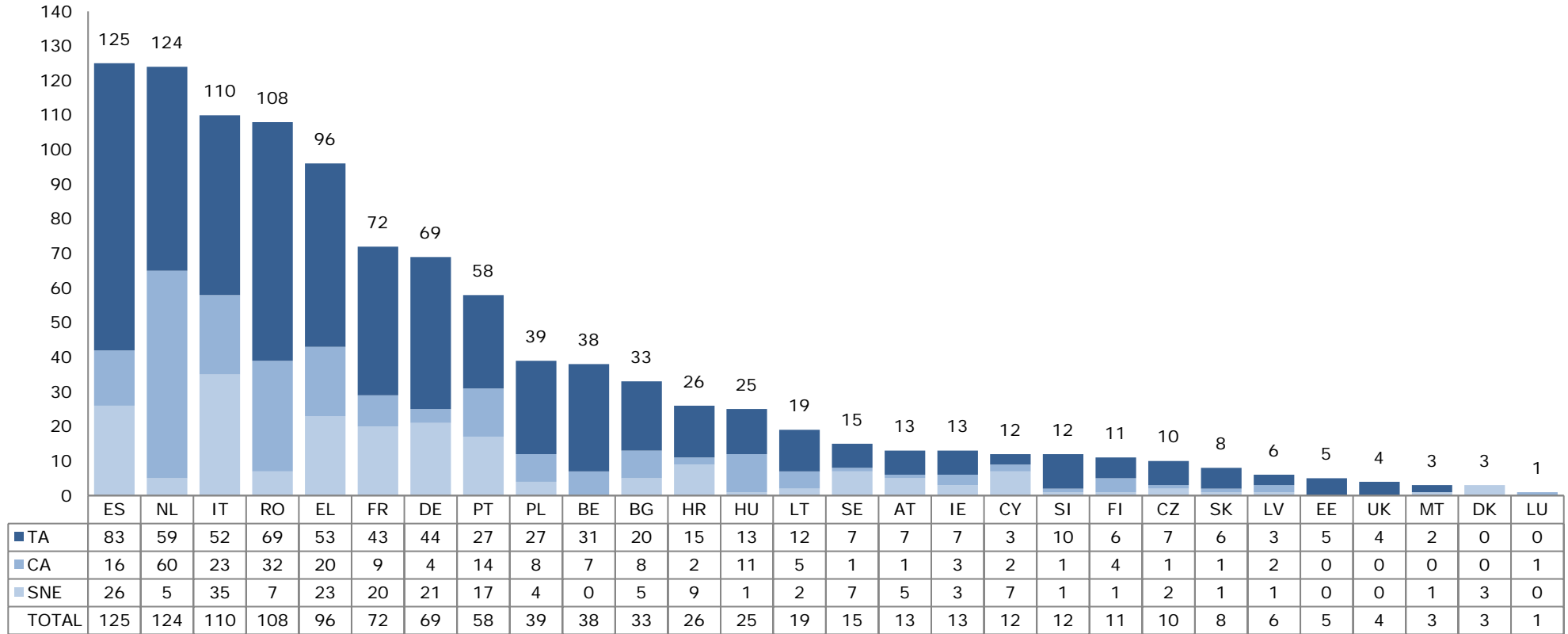
Job Type category	2021 Jobs	2021 (%)	2022 Jobs	2022 (%)	Δ 2022 ³⁰
Administrative support and Coordination	210	15.51%	235	15.59%	0.08pp
Administrative support	154	11.37%	178	11.81%	0.44pp
Coordination	56	4.13%	57	3.78%	-0.35pp
Operational	1084	80.06%	1207	80.09%	0.03pp
General Operational	783	57.83%	908	60.25%	2.42pp
Programme Management	258	19.05%	251	16.66%	-2.39pp
Top level Operational Coordination	43	3.18%	48	3.19%	0.01pp
Neutral	60	4.43%	65	4.31%	-0.12pp
Finance	60	4.43%	65	4.31%	-0.12pp
	1354		1507		

³⁰ Expressed in percentage points (pp)

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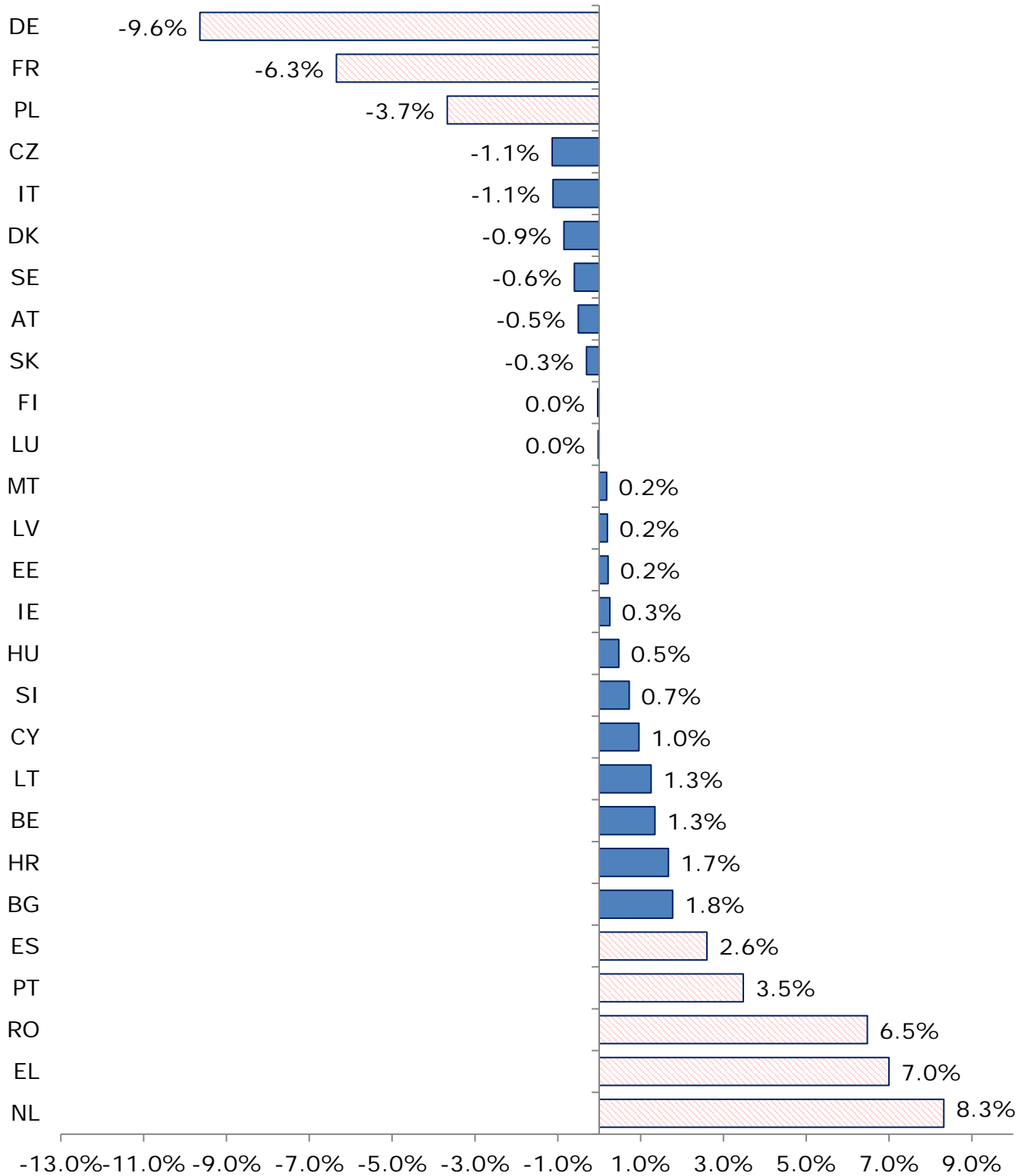
Annex V-d. Member States representation at Europol

A - Europol staff (in post) per nationality (27 Member States + UK) and type of contract



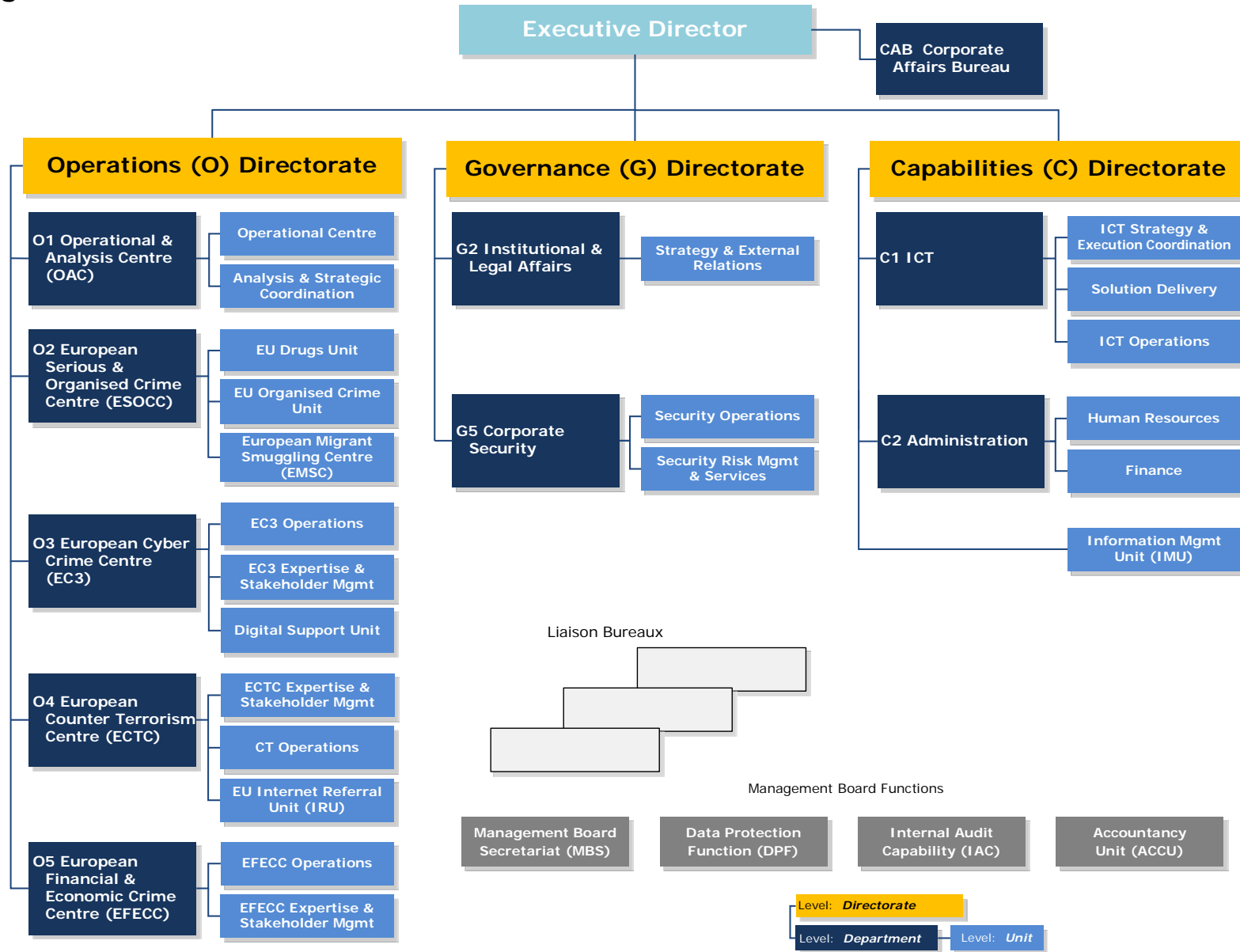
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B- Europol staff (in post) vs. EU population share per country



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Annex VI. Organisational Chart 2022



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Annex VII. Grant and Service Level Agreements

	General information					Financial and HR impact				
	Date of signature	Total amount (EUR)	Duration	Counterpart	Short description		N-1 (2021)		N (2022)	
Grant agreements										
1. Western Balkans IPA/2018 / 395-549	05/03/2018	2,000,000	45 months and 26 days	European Commission DG Near	Pilot project to deploy Europol Liaison Officers in the Western Balkans	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
							522,548	522,548	-	-
						Number of CAs	1		0	
2. SIRIUS PI/2017 / 391-896	21/12/2017 (starting date 1/1/2018)	1,630,000	48 months	European Commission Service for Foreign Policy Instruments	International Digital Cooperation - Cross border access to electronic evidence	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
							407,500	407,500	-	-
						Number of CAs	7		0	
3. H2020 - GRACE 883341 - part of consortium coordinated by Vicom, ES	18/05/2020 (starting date 1/6/2020)	6,823,512.50 for the consortium of which 702,550 for Europol	42 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
							200,729	200,729	200,729	200,729
						Number of CAs	3		3	
4. H2020 - INFINITY 883293 - part of consortium coordinated by Airbus, FR	11/05/2020 (starting date 1/6/2020)	6,866,503.75 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
							177,867	177,867	177,867	177,867
						Number of CAs	1		1	
5. H2020 - AIDA 883596 - part of consortium coordinated by Ingegneria Informatica, IT	20/05/2020 (starting date 1/9/2020)	7,690,272.50 for the consortium of which 935,800 for Europol	30 months	European Commission Research Executive Agency	Artificial Intelligence and advanced Data Analytics for Law Enforcement Agencies	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
							374,320	374,320	374,320	374,320
						Number of CAs	5		5	
6. H2020 - STARLIGHT 101021797 - part of consortium coordinated by CEA, FR	05/05/2021 (starting date 1/10/2021)	17,000,000 for the consortium of which 891,200 for Europol	48 months	European Commission Research Executive Agency	Sustainable Autonomy and Resilience for LEAs using AI against High priority Threats	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
							55,700	55,700	222,800	222,800
						Number of CAs	3		3	
Total grant agreements						Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
							1,738,664	1,738,664	975,715	975,715
						Number of CAs	20		12	
						Number of SNEs	0		0	

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General information						Financial and HR impact				
Date of signature	Total amount (EUR)	Duration	Counterpart	Short description		N-1 (2021)		N (2022)		
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
							625,000	625,000	625,000	625,000
						Number of CAs	2		2	
2. SIRIUS phase 2 New Agreement	21/12/2020 (starting date 1/1/2021)	3,491,891.50 (2,226,456 Europol, 1,265,435.50	42 months (staff for year 1 still in SIRIUS I)	European Commission Service for Foreign Policy Instruments	International Digital Cooperation - Cross border access to electronic evidence	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
							302,425	302,425	781,785	781,785
						Number of CAs	0		7	
Total contribution agreements						Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
							927,425	927,425	1,406,785	1,406,785
						Number of CAs	2		9	
						Number of SNEs	0		0	

General information						Financial and HR impact				
Date of signature	Total amount (EUR)	Duration	Counterpart	Short description		N-1 (2021)		N (2022)		
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	950,000	950,000
						Number of CAs	3		3	
2. EUIPO - Fraud	13/08/2019 (starting date 1/1/2020)	No amount specified, 80,000 in year 1 and 2	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	80,000	80,000
						Number of CAs	0		0	
3. The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (funded via Contribution Agreement with DG Near)	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
							240,000	240,000	240,000	240,000
						Number of CAs	3		3	
Total service-level agreements						Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
							1,270,000	1,270,000	1,270,000	1,270,000
						Number of CAs	6		6	
						Number of SNEs	7		7	

TOTAL AGREEMENTS						Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
							3,936,088	3,936,088	3,652,500	3,652,500
						Number of CAs	28		27	
						Number of SNEs	7		7	

Annex VIII. Extract from annual accounts

BALANCE SHEET

ASSETS	31.12.2022	31.12.2021
NON-CURRENT ASSETS	69,296,692	59,835,214
Intangible assets	39,875,105	30,346,361
Computer software	16,871,703	23,196,973
Computer software under Financial lease	-	59,418
Under construction	23,003,402	7,089,969
Tangible assets	29,421,587	29,488,853
Land and buildings	6,630,647	7,224,089
Plant and equipment	353,039	377,124
Computer hardware	17,019,492	15,632,113
Furniture and vehicles	2,449,319	2,131,244
Other fixtures and fittings	2,772,119	3,418,396
Assets under financial lease	196,971	705,887
Non-current receivables and recoverables	-	5,016
Long-term receivables	-	5,016
CURRENT ASSETS	64,208,337	57,200,075
Short-term pre-financing paid	4,388,201	5,267,813
EMPACT and other grant beneficiaries	4,158,229	5,148,816
Consolidated entities	229,972	118,998
Short-term Receivables	58,032,526	11,153,480
Current receivables	48,932,406	1,826,835
Sundry receivables	581,816	470,202
Other receivables: Accrued exchange income ³¹	43,620	31,932
Accrued non-exchange income	10,000	29,438
Deferred charges ³²	8,383,852	8,715,011
Receivables with consolidated EU entities	80,834	80,063
Cash and cash equivalents	1,787,610	40,778,781
TOTAL ASSETS	133,505,02	117,040,305
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	3,228,136	6,871,934
Pensions and other employee benefits	1,715,224	3,118,095
Pre-financing received from consolidated EU entities	1,033,545	2,041,681
Other liabilities	479,366	1,712,159
CURRENT LIABILITIES	26,203,221	18,202,791
Provisions for risks and charges	-	-
Financial liabilities	355,748	258,139
Payables	25,847,473	17,944,652
Current payables	36,813	39,299
Sundry payables	1,318,708	1,685,141
Other payables: Accrued charges	11,501,398	7,939,363
Deferred income	-	-
Accrued charges with consolidated EU entities	325,072	115,915
Accounts payable with consolidated EU entities	12,665,482	8,164,934
NET ASSETS	104,073,672	91,965,580
Accumulated surplus/deficit	92,602,872	75,218,204
Accumulated re-measurements of employee benefits	117,593	-637,292
Economic result of the year	11,353,207	17,384,668
TOTAL LIABILITIES	133,505,029	117,040,305

³¹ Includes accrued exchange income with consolidated EU entities.

³² Includes deferred charges with consolidated EU entities.

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STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

	31.12.2022	31.12.2021
REVENUE	191,148,055	170,558,275
Non-exchange revenue	182,670,275	164,095,023
European Union Contribution	182,066,681	163,865,635
Grants/agreements with non-consolidated entities	551,104	199,950
Other	41,000	29,438
Income taxes	11,489	-
Exchange revenue	8,477,780	6,463,253
Contribution from Denmark	4,348,949	3,933,571
Revenue from consolidated EU entities	3,752,953	2,205,495
Other	338,132	233,361
Sales revenue	33,710	12,220
Fixed asset-related	3,450	73,833
Exchange rate gains	587	4,774
EXPENDITURE	179,794,848	153,173,607
Operational expenditure	46,014,430	33,551,788
Administrative expenditure	133,780,417	119,621,820
Staff expenses	87,275,755	82,849,882
Finance expenses	39,188	77,142
Fixed asset-related	18,454,032	15,740,336
Expenses with consolidated EU entities	9,295,667	5,748,930
Other: Administrative and IT expenses	10,449,245	8,249,651
External service provider (non-IT)	3,262,651	2,815,086
Rent and IT operating lease	290,139	268,218
Building – maintenance, insurance and security	4,713,340	3,867,373
Exchange rate losses	401	5,202
SURPLUS/DEFICIT FROM ORDINARY ACTIVITIES	11,353,207	17,384,668
Extraordinary gains	-	-
Extraordinary losses	-	-
SURPLUS/DEFICIT FROM EXTRAORDINARY ITEMS	-	-
ECONOMIC RESULT OF THE YEAR	11,353,207	17,384,668

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CASH FLOW STATEMENT

	31.12.2022	31.12.2021
Economic result of the year	11,353,207	17,384,668
Operational activities		
Amortisation (intangible assets)	8,103,675	6,441,751
Depreciation (tangible assets)	10,349,778	9,335,436
Increase (-)/Decrease in provisions for risks and charges	-	-12,000
Increase (-)/Decrease in short-term pre-financing	990,587	-645,563
Increase (-)/Decrease in long-term receivables	5,016	6,915
Increase (-)/Decrease in short-term receivables	-46,878,275	-1,512,817
Increase (-)/Decrease in receivables related to consolidated EU entities	-111,745	-198,343
Increase(-)/Decrease in other long-term liabilities	-1,232,792	535,833
Increase (-)/Decrease in accounts payable	3,402,273	-580,067
Increase (-)/Decrease in liabilities related to consolidated EU entities	3,492,413	1,717,650
Other non-cash movements	97,609	-293,680
Net cash-flow from operational activities	-10,428,255	32,179,784
Investing activities		
Increase (-) of tangible and intangible assets	-27,915,509	-24,555,473
Proceeds from tangible and intangible assets	578	165
Net cash-flow from investing activities	-27,914,931	-24,555,308
Increase/decrease (-) in pension and employee benefits liability	-647,986	-219,700
Net increase/decrease (-) in cash and cash equivalents	-38,991,172	7,404,775
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	40,778,781	33,374,006
Cash and cash equivalents at year-end	1,787,610	40,778,781

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS

	Accumulated Surplus/ Deficit	Economic result of the year	Net Assets (Total)
Balance as at 31 December 2021	74,580,912	17,384,668	91,965,580
Changes in accounting policies	-	-	-
Balance as at 1 January 2022	74,580,912	17,384,668	91,965,580
Re-measurements of employee benefit liabilities ³³	754,885	-	754,885
Allocation of the economic result of previous year	17,384,668	-17,384,668	-
Economic result of the year 2022	-	11,353,207	11,353,207
Balance as at 31 December 2022	92,720,465	11,353,207	104,073,672

³³ This is the net result of changes to actuarial demographic and financial assumptions in accordance with EU Accounting Rule 12 (Employee benefits).

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RECONCILIATION BETWEEN STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE AND BUDGET RESULT

Description	Amount
Economic result (Statement of Financial Performance) 2022	11,353,207
Accruals/deferrals 2022	6,168,224
Accruals/deferrals reversed from 2021	-785,804
Adjustment for 2021 carry-over appropriations assigned revenue	11,078,105
Adjustment to employee benefit liability	-647,986
Cancellation of unused payment appropriations from 2021	3,802,497
Cashed balance sheet recovery orders issued in 2022	2,152,614
Cashed recovery orders issued before 2022	12,492
Depreciation and amortisation of fixed assets	18,453,454
Fixed Asset acquisitions (excluding unpaid amounts at 31.12.2022)	-11,231,239
Internally-generated fixed assets	-17,632,419
Open pre-financing paid in 2022	-9,975,303
Open pre-financing received in 2022	12,323,546
Other	255
Payment appropriations carried over to 2023	-40,478,220
Payments 2022 in Statement of Financial Performance 2021	-38,032
Payments made from 2023 budget	255,352
Payments made from carry-over 2021	22,147,765
Pre-financing paid in 2021 and cleared in 2022	7,071,623
Pre-financing received before 2022 and cleared in 2022	-3,723,683
Uncashed revenue recovery orders issued in 2022	-30,953
Unpaid invoices at 31.12.2022	41,466
Value reductions (impact of the year)	-2,872
Total = Budget result 2022	10,314,092

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BUDGET RESULT 2020

	2022	2021
REVENUE		
Union contribution, cashed	192,380,773	168,964,254
Other revenue, cashed	8,945,076	8,406,082
TOTAL REVENUE (a)	201,325,849	177,370,336
EXPENDITURE		
Title 1: Staff		
Payments current year	104,047,454	95,221,014
Appropriations carried over to next year	2,850,626	3,832,965
Title 2: Administrative		
Payments current year	7,669,416	6,412,531
Appropriations carried over to next year	4,213,172	4,526,486
Title 3: Operational		
Payments current year	53,697,456	47,238,212
Appropriations carried over to next year	33,414,422	28,668,916
TOTAL EXPENDITURE (b)	205,892,546	185,900,124
RESULT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR (a-b)	-4,566,697	-8,529,788
Cancellation of unused PA carried over from the previous year	3,802,497	2,926,585
Adjustment for carry-over from the previous year – assigned revenue	11,078,105	10,702,251
Exchange rate differences	186	-428
BALANCE OF THE OUTTURN ACCOUNT	10,314,092	5,098,619

Annex IX. Environmental indicators

The yearly collection of performance data for 2022 will be completed in 2023. A rebound effect should be expected for 2022, which is highly likely to result in a return to greenhouse gas emissions at 2018 or 2019 levels. Environmental performance indicators for 2021 were compared and evaluated against the values from the baseline year of 2018.

The table below shows Europol's environmental indicators for the years 2018-2021, the performance variation (expressed in %) from 2018 to 2021 and the performance target for 2022.

Performance indicator (description and unit)	2018 ³⁴	2019	2020	2021	Perf. trend compared to 2018 (%)	Target 2022 ³⁵	
						Δ %	Value
Total CO_{2eq} footprint (tonnes CO_{2eq})	4 128.7	3 718.7	731.6	641.5	-84.5	-4.5	3 943
CO _{2eq} footprint (tonnes CO _{2eq} /FTE)	3.37	2.98	0.59	0.48	-85.8		
CO _{2eq} buildings (kg CO _{2eq} /FTE)	54.86	16.43	12.39	6.33	-88.5		
Total energy building (MWh)	9 147	9 053	9 293	9 825	7.4		
Energy buildings (kWh/m ²)	281	279	286	302	7.4		
Energy buildings (MWh/FTE)	7.47	7.26	7.46	7.31	-2.1		
Non-renewable energy use (buildings) %	3.42	0.57	4.92	4.43	29.6		
Total water consumption (m³)	14 250	12 205	7 840	6 423	-54.9		
Water consumption (m ³ /FTE)	11.6	9.8	6.3	4.8	-58.9	-10	10.5
Total waste generation (tonnes)	91.3	110.42	75.55	62.13	-31.9		
Waste generation (kg/FTE)	74.53	88.59	60.61	46.23	-38		
Separated waste (%)	44.1	34.3	43.9	59.2	15.3 p.p.	5 p.p.	49.1
Total paper consumption (tonnes)	11.7	12.29	9.15	5.74	-50.9		
Paper consumption (kg/FTE)	9.55	9.86	7.34	4.27	-55.2	-5	9.07
Daily paper consumption (sheets/FTE/day)	9.12	9.19	6.84	3.98	-56.3		
Tenders/contracts >15k with GPP/environmental considerations	✓	✓	✓	✓	n/a	-	-
Proportion of total land that is nature-oriented (%)	76.4	76.4	76.4	76.4	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total land	9 970	9 970	9 970	9 970	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total land per FTE (m ² /FTE)	8.1	8	8	7.4	n/a	n/a	n/a

This summary shows positive changes in most of the monitored indicators. For the majority of the environmental areas, the targets set were not only achieved but significantly exceeded. However, for some indicators the observed trend indicates negative changes. In 2021, an increase in energy consumption (both gas and electricity) was observed at Europol's

³⁴ 2018 is the base year for EMAS performance

³⁵ Target for % improvement for the period 2020-2022.

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headquarters. The most significant result of the COVID-19 measures was a decline in energy efficiency of the building and therefore – a higher energy consumption. Though the number of employees present at the workplace decreased, also decreasing energy demand, the building had to be kept fully operational.

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

124th MB meeting (topical) | 21 January 2022

Main decisions

- **Europol Programming documents:** the MB endorsed the Draft Programming Document 2023-2025.

125th MB meeting | 15-16 March 2022

Main decisions

- **War in Ukraine:** starting with a minute of silence to mark its respect for the victims of the war in Ukraine and its solidarity with the Ukrainian people, the Board praised the efforts sustained by the bordering Member States to minimise, to the extent possible, the dreadful impact of war on millions of Ukrainian citizens. Further, it welcomed the prompt and active response enacted by Europol. As an immediate measure, the Board decided to suspend any cooperation with Russia, including through the Agency's strategic cooperation agreement concluded with Russia in November 2003.
- **Data protection:** the Board took note of Europol's activities concerning the implementation of the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) decision concerning the retention of large datasets.
- **Europol's performance:** the Board commended Europol for the outstanding results of the User Survey carried out in 2021, which also reflected the public's point of view on the Agency's work.

Further, the MB received an update on the developments concerning the Europol Regulation recast; the Europol Innovation Lab; the activities of the European Counter Terrorism Centre; as well as a report on the implementation of Europol's External Strategy in 2021.

In addition, the MB took note of the activity report of the Internal Audit Capability for 2021, and commended Europol on the overall positive outcome of all audit activities.

126th MB meeting | 28-29 June 2022

The meeting started with a brief ceremony to mark the entry into force of the amended Europol Regulation on 28 June.

Specific items were discussed in the presence of Mr **Juan Fernando López Aguilar**, Co-Chair of the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group (JPSG) and Chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs.

Main decisions

- **Amended Europol Regulation:** the Board adopted decisions laying down the conditions related to the processing of personal data pursuant to Articles 18(2), 18(6), 18(6a), and 18a of the amended Europol Regulation. Further, the MB endorsed the role, profile and organisational placement of the Fundamental Rights Officer (FRO) function, with a view to the designation of the FRO by the Board at a next meeting, in accordance with Article 41(c)(1) of the amended Europol Regulation.
- **Consolidated Annual Activity Report (CAAR):** the MB adopted the CAAR 2021 and its own assessment thereof.
- **External relations:** the MB approved Working Arrangements with a number of third parties, and received an update on Europol's activities with regard to the situation in Ukraine.

Further, the MB held a discussion on Europol's cooperation with Interpol.

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The Board received an update on Europol's latest and upcoming activities pertaining to Information management, including with regard to EU Interoperability, and took note of the envisioned priorities for 2023 and 2024.

The MB took note of the priorities of the incoming Czech Presidency of the Council of the EU, with a special focus on the priorities pertaining to the Home Affairs area.

127th MB meeting | 11-12 October 2022

Main decisions

- **Personnel matters:** the MB adopted decisions concerning, amongst others, home leave for officials, temporary staff and contract staff serving in a third country; law enforcement traineeships; and Liaison Officers' rights and obligations.

Further, the MB welcomed the outcome of the discussions between Europol and the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS). In particular, the Board took note that its 28 June 2022 Decisions concerning the implementation of the amended Europol Regulation remained applicable until they would be replaced by updated Decisions taking into account the EDPS opinion, which the MB looked forward to receiving.

The MB took note of the Europol six-month Activity Report and commended the Agency for the overall positive results achieved in implementing its Strategy 2020+ during the first semester of 2022.

In addition, the MB commended the Agency on the progress achieved in the implementation of its IM Strategy; received updates on ongoing and upcoming Europol's activities concerning the war in Ukraine and on recent developments related to the Agency's external relations; and commended Europol for the positive outcome of the audit and discharge activities in all the relevant areas.

128th MB meeting (topical) | 25 November 2022

Main decisions

- **Europol Programming documents:** the MB adopted the Programming Document 2023-2025.

Further, the MB took note that the EDPS had issued an opinion on the aforementioned 28 June 2022 MB Decisions implementing the amended Europol Regulation, which had been submitted to the Supervisor as new drafts updated in their recitals.

129th MB meeting | 13-14 December 2022

Specific items were discussed in the presence of Mr **Jaroslav Bžoch**, Co-Chair of the JPSG and Head of the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Parliament, representing the JPSG at the meeting.

Main decisions

- **Fundamental Rights:** in accordance with Article 41c (1) of the Europol Regulation, the Board designated the Fundamental Rights Officer of Europol.
- **Finance:** the MB adopted the final Europol budget for 2023.
- **External relations:** the Board updated the yearly list of Europol's priority partners. The Board approved the draft Working Arrangement for establishing cooperative relations between Europol and the law enforcement authorities of the Republic of India.
- **Security:** the MB took decisions pertaining to the security accreditation of core systems.
- **Audit:** the MB endorsed the Internal Audit Capability Work Programme for 2023.

The MB discussed the preliminary draft Europol Programming Document 2024-2026.

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Pertaining to Europol's operational work, the Board held a discussion on the HVT (High Value Targets)/OTFs (Operational Task Forces) tool, looking into its implementation and perspectives for future development, and received an update on the activities of the European Cybercrime Crime Centre.

Further, the MB took positive note of the outcome of the latest auditing matters and commended Europol for the progress achieved in implementing pending recommendations.

Finally, the Board was presented with the priorities of the then incoming Swedish EU Presidency in the area of Home Affairs.

MB written procedures

January – June 2022

- The MB confirmed the establishment of the new Deputy Executive Director for Operations.
- The MB adopted a decision laying down general implementing provisions on the conduct of administrative inquiries and disciplinary proceedings.
- The MB approved the summary of its 15-16 March meeting and agreed to its publication on the Europol website.
- The MB adopted an amending budget (Danish contribution).

June – December 2022

- The MB adopted its Opinion on Europol's final accounts 2021.
- The MB approved the summaries of its 28-29 June and 11-12 October meetings and agreed to their publication on the Europol website.

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Annex XI. Implementation overview of critical and very important audit recommendations³⁶ issued by the IAC

Year	Audit report	Total critical and very important			Implemented up to end 2022			To be implemented in 2023 and onwards		
		Total	C	VI	Total	C	VI	Total	C	VI
2015	Consultancy engagement on review of systems laid down by the Authorising Officer 2015 – 1st Report Accountancy: 2014 consolidation process	2		2	2		2	0		
2016	Review of the implementation of recommendations issued by the IAF in the period 2010-2014	13		13	11		11	0 ³⁷		
2016	Report on the review and assessment of the implementation of (ICS) at Europol	22	1	21	22	1	21	0		
2016	Review and assessment of the operational support provided by EC3	5		5	5		5	0		
2016	Audit on Europol Sports and Social Association (ESSA) regarding its accounts for the years 2012 to 2015	3		3	3		3	0		
2016	Validation of user access rights granted in ABAC	4		4	4		4	0		
2017	New operational support capabilities EU Internet Referral Unit (EU IRU)	1	1		1	1		0		
2017	Strategic analysis products and their alignment with the EU policy cycle	3	1	2	3	1	2	0		
2017	Missions' administration process audit	10		10	9		9	0 ³⁸		
2018	Information Communication Technology (ICT) project planning, management and change	4		4	4		4	0		
2018	Audit Report Learning, Training and Development	23	4	19	22	4	18	1		1
2018	Audit Report Operational support on-the-spot	1		1	1		1	0		
2019	Audit report on operational analysis	14	2	12	9	2	7	5		5
2019	Audit Report Grants Management Process	7		7	7		7	0		
2020	Audit Report Contract renewal process	1		1	1		1	0		
2021	Audit report Asset Management	20	5	15	17	5	12	3		3
2021	Audit Report Diversity, equality and inclusion practices at Europol	3		3	2		2	1		1
2021	Validation of user access rights granted in ABAC and MobileXpense	3	2	1	3	2	1	0		
2021	Audit report on Europol's 24/7 Operational Support	1		1	1		1	0		
2022	Validation of user access rights granted in ABAC and MobileXpense	2	1	1	2	1	1	0		
	Total	142	17	125	129	17	112	10³⁹	0	10

³⁶ Grading of recommendations, as per the table, follows these codes: C=Critical, VI=Very Important".

³⁷ Of the 13 'very important' recommendations, two recommendations were assessed as "not intended for implementation".

³⁸ Of the 10 'very important' recommendations, one recommendation was assessed as "no longer applicable".

³⁹ Three 'very important' recommendations were assessed by the IAC as "not intended for implementation" (2 recommendations) or 'no longer applicable' (1 recommendation).

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

Observations on management and control systems

Between 2019 and 2021, Europol assessed two cases of a potential conflict of interest in relation to a senior member of staff taking up a new job elsewhere. In the one case we reviewed, we found that, in contravention of Article 16 of the Staff Regulations, Europol did not issue its decision within the deadline and thus effectively authorised the person concerned to take up the new job without any restrictions.

The Agency's reply

Europol takes note of the ECA's observation and will adapt its procedures for communicating to the concerned senior staff member the related decision within the applicable timelines. From a present-day assessment of the case ex-post, Europol ascertains that the organisation was not exposed to a conflict of interest situation under Article 16 of the EU Staff Regulations, and thus no restrictions were required.

Follow-up of previous years' observations⁴⁰

Year	The ECA's observations	Status of corrective action (Completed / Ongoing / Outstanding / N/A)
2018	The Agency irregularly prolonged the duration of a framework contract or the provision of business travel services after it expired and introduced new price aspects. Europol's contract management and ex-ante controls should be improved.	Completed
2019	Europol irregularly prolonged the duration of a framework contract for the provision of business travel services by signing two amendments to it after it had expired in 2018. This demonstrates weaknesses in contract management and ex-ante controls.	Completed
2019	The tender specifications for a framework contract for furniture, accessories and related services were not specific enough. This undermined the competitive nature of the tendering procedure. Europol should ensure that tender specifications are sufficiently well thought out to allow fair and effective competition, so that procurement procedures deliver the best possible value for money.	N/A
2020	Europol had paid late in 33 % of cases. We observed similar levels of delays in 2019, 2018 and 2017. This recurrent weakness exposes Europol to reputational risk.	Ongoing

Europol's viewpoint in relation to the ongoing observation is as follows⁴¹:

As Europol has explained to the ECA, the aspect of delayed payments is considered completed/resolved with a reduction to 7.2% in 2022.

⁴⁰ As reported in the ECA report on the financial year 2021

https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/AGENCIES_2021/AGENCIES_2021_EN.pdf

⁴¹ This is the viewpoint of Europol, which was not part of the report of the ECA for the financial year 2021 and which concerns the status as at the end of the financial year 2022.

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Annex XIII. Corporate risks

No	Risk title	Risk description	Risk response ⁴²
1	Member States' demand or stakeholder expectations not met by Home Affairs Agencies' core business capabilities	<p>Member States' demand or stakeholder expectations may not be met by Europol's core business capabilities, in view of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> expanded mandate and tasks (amended Europol Regulation, including the Innovation Hub & joint operational analysis, Europol's share for the Interoperability Programme); the impact of increased supply of value (resulting in heightened demand, e.g. through the Operational Task Forces (OTFs), Europol's analysis products); elevated ICT change requirements, next to dependencies on new ICT solutions, in particular cloud solutions (for instance for PERCI, facial recognition), core business processing in light of the amended Europol Regulation; insufficient technical capacity, including at Member State & external stakeholder levels (e.g. monitoring of SIENA on a 24/7 basis); evolving timelines for deliverables, resource margins & requirements ('scope creep') or demand. 	<p>Threat – Share, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> performing 2023 Work Programme Activities (A.1-A.8); managing stakeholder expectations, including through engaging with the Management Board (MB); carrying out robust planning & performance measurement process, with close monitoring & flexible adjustment of the annual work planning, based on regular performance reporting; continuously prioritising, while discarding out-of-scope demand where necessary; adjusting the strategic programming documentation, where needed, to reflect realistic ambitions & plans; employing effective demand management, change management & process management; providing support & training to staff.
2	Insufficient human resources	<p>Europol may face insufficient human resources, due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a static Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), not reflecting the evolving mandate or tasks of Europol; the implementation scope exceeding resource estimates of the Legislative Financial Statement (LFS) for the amended Europol Regulation & Interoperability & ETIAS in particular; the impact of additional (ad-hoc) requests on the achievement of planned objectives (for instance, in view of the operational activities with respect to Ukraine); 	<p>Threat – Share, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> performing 2023 Work Programme Activity A.8, in particular implementing Europol's HR Strategy; carrying out actions as per Risk 1 above; maintaining an attractive social package & work environment (including contract entry grades); offering personal development & training; conducting proactive recruitment (reserve lists, internal mobility etc.); deploying in-/outsourcing, based on the Agency's needs;

⁴² Threat risk type responses are: Reduce (pro-active actions are undertaken to minimise the probability or impact; the responsibility for the risk effect(s) and response measure(s) stay with Europol); Remove (changing the scope of the business objective concerned); Transfer (a third party takes responsibility for the risk); Retain (conscious and deliberate decision to accept the risk and, especially, the possible effect(s) on the business objective); Share (the responsibility for the risk effect(s) and risk response measure(s) are shared between the involved parties, i.e. Europol and Member States take responsibility for certain aspects of the risk).

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> challenges to attract & recruit staff with the required skills, experience & expertise (in ICT or for analysis in Operations Directorate); the changing labour market, in particular in ICT; constraints in the applicable staff rules & the impact of national rules for employing contractors (for instance with respect to employing temporary workers); increasing staff turnover risk in terms of contract regime. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> making use of flexible working arrangements in line with staff rules & the implementing decision on working time & hybrid working; engaging with the European Commission to review the annual MFF share of resources attributed to Europol.
3	Geo-political risks & other business continuity challenges, in particular due to the war in Ukraine	<p>Europol is affected by geo-political risks & other business continuity challenges, in particular due to the war in Ukraine, in view of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the direct effects on migration, development of organised crime etc.; fast evolving global security risks impacting on Member States & relevant stakeholders; societal developments in Member States & beyond; potential targeted cyber or hybrid threats scenarios; critical infrastructure unavailability (energy supply, telecommunications etc.); insufficient business continuity arrangements (e.g. with respect to a 'back-up' office location & hot data centre for implementing especially ETIAS related tasks without disruption). 	<p>Threat – Share, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> performing 2023 Work Programme Activities A.2, A.3, A.4, A.5, A.6, A.7; implementing Europol's External Strategy 2021-2024; conducting continuous monitoring of open sources & other relevant tooling; employing ICT security monitoring & response capabilities on 24/7 basis; operating business continuity planning & the related response measures (including emergency protocols & communications); engaging with cooperation partners & stakeholders for preparedness & resilience.
4	Ability to absorb the volume & complexity of change	<p>Europol's ability to absorb the volume & complexity of change to meet Europol's objectives in compliance with the organisation's regulatory requirements, is impaired, in view of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the expanding mandate or unplanned tasks; increase in regulatory & supervisory requirements, reducing implementation pace; required change of organisational culture not taking place; business processes not sufficiently aligned; absent automated monitoring with respect to the compliant data processing, including for counter-intelligence purposes in light of Europol's enhanced role in high-profile investigations; insufficient office & meeting space due to growth of staff, SNEs for OTFs, Liaison Officers & contractors etc. 	<p>Threat – Reduce, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> performing 2023 Work Programme Activities A.1-A.8, in particular Europol's HR & Diversity & Inclusion Strategy; employing effective change & process management; negotiating with the Host State authorities on housing & office planning, implementing the Strategic Housing Roadmap (SHR); making use of flexible working arrangements in line with staff rules & implementing decision on working time & hybrid working.

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5	<p>Increasing supervisory activities consume substantial resources</p>	<p>Europol faces increasing supervisory activities which consume substantial resources, due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Europol's evolving mandate, coupled with increased regulatory requirements on supervision and prior consultations, estimated at 60 Full Time Equivalent (FTEs) across Europol on an annual basis, stalling or even stopping development; • annual cycle of audit activities performed by the ECA, IAS, EDPS etc.; • maintaining certifications (EMAS, ISO 14001). 	<p>Threat – Share, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • performing 2023 Work Programme Activity A.8; • conducting efficient compliance management to ensure preparedness; • carrying out robust planning & audit follow-up; • employing effective change & process management; • engaging with the European Commission & supervisory authorities to identify efficiency gains.
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