

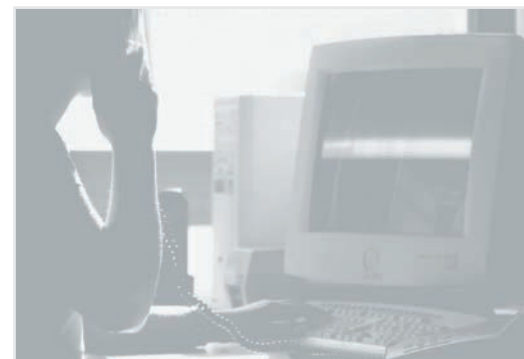
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Annual Report 2003

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Annual Report 2003

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# Director's Foreword



*It is a pleasure to present the Annual Report on Europol's activities for the year 2003. I am proud that the results and measures described within the Annual Report reflected and matched the expectations of Member States' law enforcement agencies. These activities have been successfully carried out, not only due to the full operational support of Member States but also to the enthusiasm and professional dedication of Europol staff.*

*2003 witnessed a significant increase in operational activities for Europol and the Member States. Using a target oriented approach, Europol focused on those criminal organisations working within the*

*Europol priority areas of combating terrorism, drugs, illegal immigration networks and human beings trafficking, Euro counterfeiting and financial crime. Great operational efforts to improve information exchange and intelligence analysis allowed the targeting of these organised crime groups and assisted Member States' law enforcement authorities to identify suspects and links, which led to arrests and initiated further criminal investigations.*

*In total, the information exchange via the Europol Liaison Bureaux Network supported more than 4,700 cases in 2003 compared to 3,400 in*

## Director's Foreword

2002, representing an increase of nearly 40%. In addition, Europol is soundly emerging as **the** European centre for handling criminal intelligence, as the intelligence analysis department supported 19 multi-national and multi-disciplinary projects covering all Europol's crime priority areas with significant investigative results.

This report outlines the operational activities in these important areas which, once more, proved the added value Europol can offer to Member States' international investigations into organised crime and terrorism.

The historical decision of the European Council on the expansion of the European Union by ten new Member States had a huge impact on Europol's activities, when in August 2003, the Europol Enlargement Project set up an effective strategy to allow full integration of all ten Accession States into the Europol structure by autumn 2004.

Europol has also continued to improve its international co-operation by establishing full Operational Agreements with Bulgaria and Romania as well as a Strategic Agreement with Russia.

It is worth noting that ten years have passed since the Europol Drugs Unit was established in 1993, developing into the Europol in place today. During this time, and in close co-operation with Member States, Europol has strived to contribute to the safety of European citizens. The future European Union of 25 Member States will bring many new law enforcement challenges and Europol is looking forward to continuing improving its operational activities and successfully meet these challenges, to ensure a common area of Freedom, Security and Justice.

The Hague, July 2004

**Jürgen Storbeck**

Director

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# Introduction

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# Introduction

## ► 1.1. Priorities in 2003

The Work Programme 2003 contained five priority crime areas on which Europol was to focus. These were based on the dominant trends identified within organised crime<sup>1</sup> at the time of planning Europol's work.

An approach focussing on criminal organisations (the Target Orientated Approach) was taken, and continues to be utilised across the priority crime areas of:

- Terrorism
- Drugs Trafficking
- Illegal immigration and trafficking in human beings (THB)
- Crimes against Euro currency
- Financial crimes

<sup>1</sup> See EU Organised Crime Report dated 31 October 2002 ref. 2530-130

» THB includes illegal trafficking of women for sexual exploitation



e | p | o | r | t



« Financial crimes are a priority crime area

2 | 0 | 0 | 3

# Introduction

a n n u d | | | | | r | | | |

► **1.2. Enlargement**

A work area of major consideration in 2003 was planning for the impact on Europol of the accession of 10 new Member States to the EU in May 2004. The evaluation of the organisational needs related to the EU enlargement began in 2002 and was consolidated by action and preparation in 2003. In April 2003, Europol organised a major conference for accession states which explored the implications of joining Europol. This event brought together senior police and government officials from each of the Accessing States.

In the latter half of the year, the Europol Enlargement Project was created with the objective of ensuring the efficient and effective integration of the ten new Member States during 2004. A comprehensive and structured work plan was developed which identified more than 1500 internal and external tasks necessary for achieving the project objective. The plan was developed in conjunction with experts from the Accessing States through a series of workshops both at Europol and on a regional basis.



e p o r t

General Crime Related Activities  
and Organised Crime Groups

Europol Annual Report 2003

# General Crime Related Activities and Organised Crime Groups

## ► 2.1. General Trends

Criminal groups seldom concentrate on a single type of crime. They frequently engage in various criminal activities by employing business-like principles which direct efforts toward as many areas of profit as possible. As a consequence, there is a need for an organisation



like Europol to fight international organised groups involved in different types of crimes, not only by following a strict crime-area based approach, but also by applying a horizontal approach and targeting the actual criminal groups themselves.

In 2003, the main organised crime groups on which Europol concentrated (and continues to concentrate) are East European Organised Crime groups (EEOC), Outlaw Motorcycle Groups (OMCG) and Ethnic Albanians Criminal Groups (EACG). Europol also use a regional approach, focusing on specific commonly defined regional crime phenomenon (inside the EU or specific threats at the new borders) where possible.

In targeting organised crime groups, Europol's priority for all projects and activities is to provide support to live investigations. Specific activities in this area were aimed at developing investigative methods which are closely interlinked to criminal investigations.

The increase of information exchange of Europol with Member States and non-Member States in 2003 suggests a greater awareness and appreciation of the products and services provided by Europol staff. There was an overall increase in information exchanged of 39% between 2002 and 2003. The greatest increases were seen in the areas of Forgery of Money (102%), Terrorism (76%) and Financial Crime (67%).

◀ Organised Motor Cycle Criminal Groups (OMCGs) are also involved in vehicle crime

## ► 2.2. Main activities 2003

### 2.2.1. Eastern European Organised Crime

As a result of Europol operational analysis, a network of thousands of predominantly UK-based companies providing money laundering services to Organised Crime groups was detected; ad-hoc reports were produced and two joint investigations were undertaken, one in Germany and one in Italy.

### 2.2.2. Organised Motor Cycle Criminal Groups (OMCG)

Organised Motor Cycle Criminal Groups (OMCG) are involved in drugs trafficking, (mainly cocaine and amphetamines), arms trafficking, money laundering, cyber crime, vehicle crime, trafficking in human beings, contract killing, racketeering and extortion. The main focus of Europol's work in this area was on two particular OMCGs. In addition to eight operational analysis reports produced, investigations have resulted in searches and arrests within for example, the Netherlands. This year, Europol staff also provided the coordination for European law enforcement officials attending a large-scale OMCG event in the United States, attended the event itself and processed all related information which was subsequently forwarded to Member States. This information was used to assist in ongoing investigations.

### 2.2.3. Ethnic Albanian criminal groups

Ethnic Albanian criminal groups are involved in international drug trafficking, arms trafficking, illegal immigration, trafficking in human beings and extensive money laundering. An Analysis Work File on these particular crime groups was opened on the 30 December 2003.

### 2.2.4. High Tech Crime

Increasingly, information technology and other forms of modern high-tech equipment are being employed by Organised Crime (OC) groups, for instance to commit new types of crime, to commit traditional forms of crime with greater efficiency (and in new ways) or to avoid law enforcement. In order to combat this Europol:

- Developed a High Technology Crime Centre based at Europol
- Developed and maintained a network of experts in High Tech Crime in the Member States of the European Union, with the aim of exchanging modi-operandi and best practices



report

Crime Related Activities  
in specific areas

Europol Annual Report 2003



# Crime Related Activities in specific areas

## ► 3.1. Counter Terrorism

### 3.1.1. General Trends

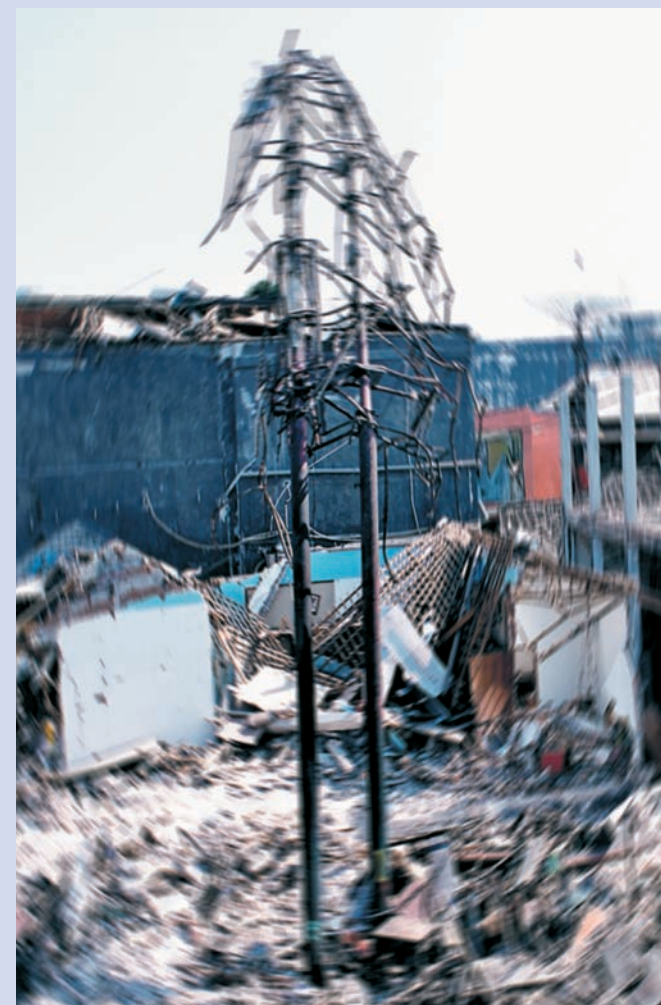
Combating terrorism is a top priority at both European and global levels. The events of 11 September 2001 required a new level of cross-border cooperation of all institutions/organisations working in counter terrorism. Europol faced this challenge and all services provided by Europol are developed in response to the needs of the law enforcement environment of the European Union.

The Council Conclusions of 21 September 2001 provided the mandate for the Counter Terrorism Task Force (CTTF). At a High Level Expert Meeting in November 2002 the decision was taken to fully integrate the work of the CT Task Force into Europol. During the first three months of 2003 a transition period was foreseen for Europol's Counter Terrorism Unit to take over the remaining tasks.

### 3.1.2. Main activities 2003

During the year Europol improved the framework of the collection of terrorism related data by opening a new Analytical Work File dealing with indigenous terrorism. Europol has also been involved with the Terrorism Working Group (Third Pillar) and the Counter Terrorism

- » Europol produced a monthly overview on Islamic terrorism (distributed to all Member States)



Group<sup>2</sup>. In the field of counter proliferation the wide spread mandate was combined in the Counter Terrorism Programme (CTP). The main focus in establishing the programme was its basic development and creating strategic partnerships as a basis for more operational work in following years.

Europol has provided operational support to Member States and joint team operations initiated in response to Europol produced threat assessments (e.g., Extreme Islamic Terrorism). The European-wide Bomb Database was further developed this year which provides additional operational support in this area. Furthermore, Europol has joined the Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear Rapid Alert System (CBRN-RAS) that is to be implemented towards the end of 2004 providing another important tool in the fight against terrorism.

Europol provides central services like the Collection of Counter Terrorism legislation; Reference of Counter Terrorism responsibilities in the Member States; Glossary of terrorist groups and National contact points for illicit trafficking of nuclear and radioactive substances.

<sup>2</sup>The Security Services counterpart to the Police Working Group on Terrorism (PWGT)

Europol fully utilised the open source material available. Once evaluated and confirmed with the competent authorities, several reports were produced for the benefit of Member States agencies such as:

- A weekly Open Source Digest
- A monthly overview on Islamic terrorism (distributed to all Member States)
- Threat assessments and specialist briefing papers

Europol produced the Annual Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT) for the Working Group on Terrorism in the Third Pillar presented during the Italian Presidency of the European Union. The key purpose of this document is to inform the European Parliament of current terrorist threats.

Detecting and tackling new phenomenon in the terrorist sphere has mainly centred on activities related to Illicit Trafficking in Nuclear substances and Radioactive Materials. Europol has established a partnership with the UN International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to further work in this area and has also produced a situation report on this topic for the exchange of technical information.

# Crime Related Activities in specific areas

## ► 3.2. Drugs trafficking

### 3.2.1. General Trends

According to the EU Organised Crime Report 2003, drugs trafficking remains one of the most productive trades for OC groups in the EU, and is greatly assisted by the international network structures that OC groups have developed. There is also a trend towards OC groups trafficking in multiple drug types requiring OC groups to be targeted.

Europol contributed significantly to European Union law enforcement actions against drugs trafficking. Specifically, Europol provides specialist knowledge and operational support related to matters concerned with illicit drugs to improve the co-operation, effectiveness and awareness of law enforcement authorities of the Member States.

### 3.2.2. Main activities 2003

#### 3.2.2.1. Traditional drugs

Europol provided co-ordination and/or support to activities of law enforcement agencies aimed at the identification and targeting of criminal organisations, in particular Turkish criminal groups, operating towards and within the European Union, and involved in the trafficking of

drugs, primarily **heroin**, and other related crime. Turkish criminal groups continue to play a prominent role in the trafficking and wholesale distribution of heroin in the European Union. The groups, although autonomous, often co-operate, for instance with ethnic Albanian criminal groups in the joint importation of large consignments of heroin. Turkish groups are increasingly engaged in the trafficking of ecstasy and cocaine. To that aim they have contacts with other ethnic groups including Colombians, Moroccans and Surinamese. Violence is frequently used against other groups to protect their market share.

- ∨ The European Union remains a primary source of amphetamine



The identification of international matches continues to initiate contacts and information exchange between operational investigation teams. On the basis of the analysis undertaken by Europol over 1100 actual matches between entities were forwarded to Member States in 2003. Analysis of data has also led to the dissemination of analytical and intelligence reports to participating Member States.

Based on these matches and other analytical information provided by Europol, investigations linking Turkish Organised Crime Groups with Ethnic Albanian Crime Groups were initiated and new targets and their communications were identified. This led to greater information sharing and closer international cooperation in this area.

Other projects resulted in the identification of a West African potential target group responsible for the trafficking of substantial amounts of **cocaine** into several Member States.

Another area of focus for Europol was targeting Estonian nationals involved in **cannabis** trafficking from Spain mainly to the Nordic countries.

#### 3.2.2.2. Synthetic drugs

The European Union remains a primary source of amphetamine. Trafficking is to a large extent limited to the European and intra-European Union level. The trafficking of ecstasy produced in the European Union takes place on a global scale. Huge amounts are being

smuggled to various world destinations, mainly to North and South America, South Africa, Asia and Australia. The diversion of precursors from licit trade remains the main means used by criminal groups to obtain the chemicals that they need for the illicit manufacture of synthetic drugs.

Europol participated in joint investigations on the production of synthetic drugs throughout the year targeting amphetamine production and trafficking and precursor chemicals. Another project focusing on drug trafficking between the Netherlands and Germany was implemented late in 2003. Criminal investigations in the Member States have been supported by Europol through the provision of advice, operational support in the dismantling of synthetic drug production laboratories and training. Europol's efforts in the Early Warning System on New Synthetic Drugs contributed to the introduction in the Member States of control measures on four new substances.

Key results in this area are:

1. The continued implementation of the Europol Illicit Laboratory Comparison System (EILCS) that contains information and comprehensive photos that have been collected, processed and evaluated from over 150 production sites. This has contributed to the operational activities in Member States including the identification of more than 30 links between laboratories and has led to several follow-up

# Crime Related Activities in specific areas

investigations. In addition, the reporting to the EILCS on seizures of 26 tableting machines by two Member States and one Accession State and subsequent consultation of the system contributed to the identification and conviction of two sources and a criminal investigation into another source. This Europol system, combined with a tactical law enforcement concept developed by the Dutch Unit Synthetic Drugs was the recipient of the Dutch Police Innovation Prize in November of 2003.

2. (i) The use of the Europol Ecstasy Logo System (EELS) which contains information, including photos plus basic forensic data and was designed to assist Member States to identify links between live investigations, e.g. on major seizures and on tableting locations, and/or to initiate new investigations. Both the quality of the information provided and the level of participation by Member States have increased this year resulting in follow-up investigations and new investigations. As a result of the information provided by Member States, 34 reports were provided and six investigations were initiated and/or supported by Europol related to ecstasy.

(ii) The increased use of the Europol Ecstasy Catalogue extends well beyond the Member States to the Accession States, other countries and international organisations attesting to the success of this product. In addition, an Equipment Catalogue was issued.

Four reports were produced on new synthetic drugs and situation reports were drafted for heroin, cocaine and synthetic drugs. Europol also kept Member States updated with the Drugs Information Bulletin.

## ► 3.3. Illegal immigration and trafficking in human beings (THB)

### 3.3.1. General Trends

Facilitated Illegal Immigration is one of the most profitable activities OC groups engage in and trafficking in human beings (THB) affects almost all member States<sup>3</sup>. Europol seeks to improve the effectiveness and co-operation between law enforcement authorities of the Member States in preventing and combating THB including Child Sexual Exploitation (including Child Pornography) and Facilitated Illegal Immigration.

All activities proposed in the Work Programme 2003 in the area of Crime against Persons were undertaken including threat assessments on illegal immigration, (trafficking in human beings and child sexual exploitation still to be finalized). Europol was also able to generate five intelligence reports in 2003; two in the area of trafficking in human beings (including child pornography) and three in relation to illegal immigration. In addition, Europol was asked by the Police Chiefs Task Force (PCTF) to draft two action plans: one on how to

<sup>3</sup> See EU Organised Crime Report dated 31 October 2002 ref. 2530-130 p. 18



# Crime Related Activities in specific areas

combat facilitated illegal immigration (focusing on the Ukraine) and the other on how to fight trafficking in human beings (focusing on Bulgaria). Both these action plans were successfully completed and delivered to the PCTF in May 2003. Europol further develops and implements the action plans.

## 3.3.2. Major activities in 2003

### 3.3.2.1. Illegal Immigration

With the support of Europol, Member States undertook a number of coordinated actions targeting illegal immigration. These included operations in the Mediterranean area, at land borders, ports and airports. As a result of the information provided by Member States, Europol contributed to investigations targeting networks from the Indian sub-continent involved in illegal immigration, through the production of three intelligence reports related to specific targets and a larger scale report that was aimed at quantifying the links between three investigations currently underway. In addition, Member States' contributions have resulted in the identification of three main clans operating across the countries involved.

Other projects aimed at combating illegal immigration. These resulted in a substantial number of arrests of illegal immigrants and facilitators and the seizure of several vessels (see below). The key results of these initiatives were the:

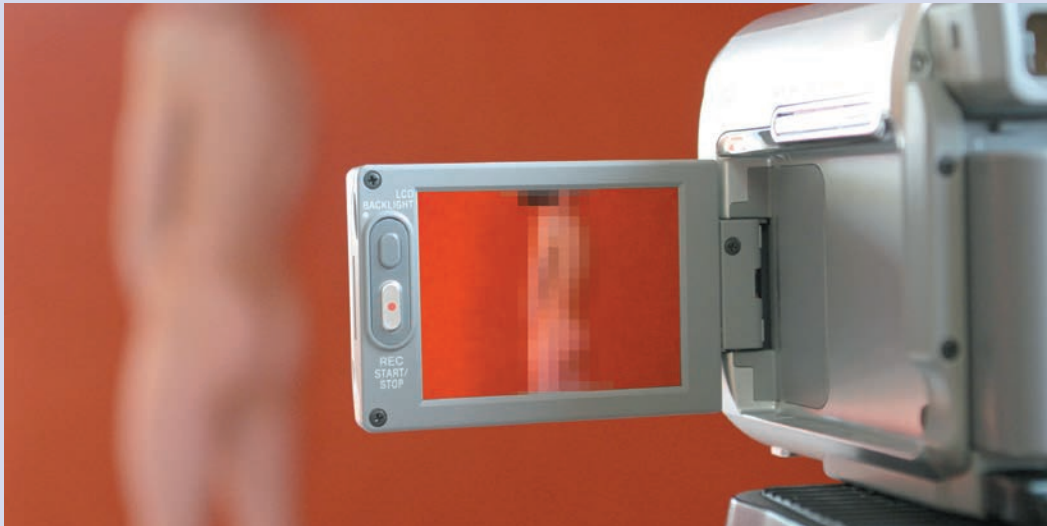
- (i) Interception of 3783 illegal immigrants and 57 facilitators as a result of a pilot project on the control of the Eastern land borders of the EU initiated by Greece.
- (ii) Arrest of 297 illegal immigrants at sea and 155 on the coast as well as the seizure of 18 vessels as a result of a Spanish initiative designed to prevent illegal immigration by sea through sealing off the external sea border.
- (iii) Interception of 86 illegal migrants and six facilitators and the checking of 203 vessels as a result of a Greek initiative to combat illegal immigration at sea through maritime control checks in territorial waters.
- (iv) Interception of 255 illegal migrants and four facilitators as a result of a project initiated by Spain aimed at preventing seaborne illegal immigration by testing and assessing the facilitated illegal immigration risk posed by major EU ports.
- (v) Arrest of 445 illegal immigrants at sea, 396 on the coast and 3 facilitators and the seizure of 14 vessels as the result of an Italian initiative designed to combat seaborne illegal immigration in the Central and Eastern Mediterranean through patrolling groups.
- (vi) Apprehension of 44 illegal immigrants and arrest of 2 facilitators as a result of a project initiated by Italy to prevent illegal immigration at European air borders.

### 3.3.2.2. Trafficking in Human Beings (including child pornography)

Due to the unavailability of the Europol Information System it was not possible to store child sexual exploitation related data. One basic and one advanced training workshop on fighting child sexual exploitation on the internet was delivered to Member States, Accession States, Interpol, Ukraine and the United States for which positive feedback was obtained.

In relation to child pornography, cooperation between Europol and Member States on a large-scale operation has led to the identification of 59 suspects this year and a total of 129

- ⇒ In child pornography Europol cooperated with Member States on a large-scale operation



suspects since the project began in 2001. In addition, the following operational results were obtained since project inception, making it one of the most successful Europol projects:

- Over 100 arrests
- the seizure of a number of digital devices and other related material<sup>4</sup>

A project initiated by the Greek Presidency to combat trafficking in human beings through simultaneous coordinated actions was successful. The operation was carried out during the second week of May and Greece, Italy, Portugal and the SECI members with the exception of Turkey, participated in the action. 55 persons were arrested, 569 interviews conducted, 257 victims rescued and 145 investigations initiated.

## ► 3.4. Euro – Forgery of Money

### 3.4.1. General Trends

Europol acts as the central European Office for law enforcement agencies for currency counterfeiting, particularly the Euro currency. This year saw more sophisticated printing facilities and the employment of professional counterfeiters who have dramatically improved

<sup>4</sup> This included: 66 computers, 26 hard discs, 4.333 CD ROM, 1. 849 Floppy Discs, 1.090 videos, 30 ZIP discs, 241 magazines and 8 digital cameras



# Crime Related Activities in specific areas

the quality and quantity of euro counterfeits in Europe. In addition, there was also an increase in the number of OC groups involved in currency counterfeiting, especially Lithuanian and Bulgarian groups<sup>5</sup>.

All the activities in the area of forgery of money planned for 2003 were undertaken and the demand for operational assistance in this area has increased this year evidenced by the 10 operational meetings facilitated by Europol staff.

### 3.4.2. Main activities in 2003

The first component of the Europol Information System (EIS) that became operational in 2002 contains information related to the Euro and other counterfeit currencies affecting the European Union. It contains all information and intelligence resulting from investigations on counterfeiting and combines it with the technical description of the counterfeit banknotes from the CMS database (European Central Bank). Currently it contains 2000 names of suspects. There are approximately five to ten requests a day from Member States for searches, however the current version of EIS is limited and is not able to perform the full searching functions required<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> See EU Organised Crime Report dated 31 October 2002 ref. 2530-130 p. 21

Europol provided operational support to Member States and joint investigations resulting in significant operational outcomes. This included the identification of a highly active criminal group involved in the counterfeiting of US Dollars and Euro banknotes impacting on several Member States.

Support was also given to non-EU States, to include the Accession States (particularly Eastern European countries such as Lithuania) which also resulted in significant operational results. This included the disruption of a very important criminal group in Lithuania through the arrest of a number of criminals and the dismantling of five clandestine print shops. In addition, Europol also supported Serbia, Bulgaria and Poland in the dismantling of clandestine print shops.

Technical investigation support was provided by Europol, together with the ECB, resulting in the arrest of individuals by Member States.

The Counterfeiting Situation Report compiled by Europol containing both tactical and technical information was disseminated on a quarterly basis to all Europol partners. In addition, eight intelligence reports on various modi operandi were sent to Member States or relevant parties in 2003.

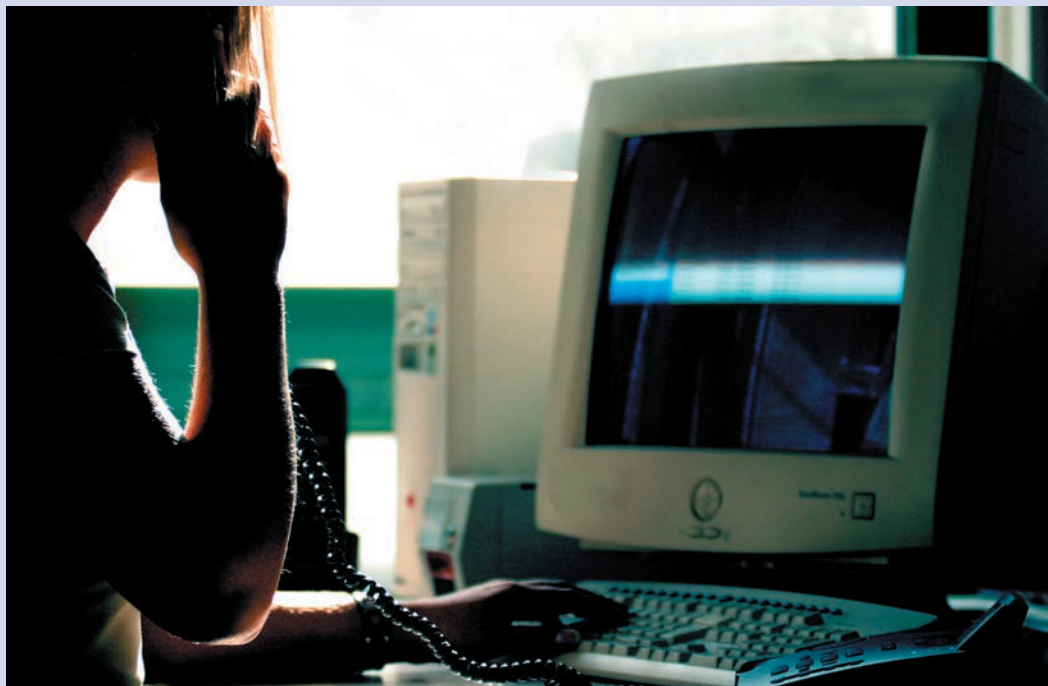
<sup>6</sup> Certain search functionalities are not available, for example Vehicle Identification Numbers or printing technologies specifically for the US dollar



# Crime Related Activities in specific areas

Early Warning Messages (EWM) describe serious counterfeits and new modi operandi. Detailed images together with important information (both operational and technical) are sent via Liaison Officers to the concerned parties, rapidly disseminating the technical and/or operational data to those concerned in protecting the Euro. The number of Early Warning Messages disseminated doubled from the 2002 figure to 50 in 2003.

- ◀ Europol supports international money laundering investigations



## ▶ 3.5. Financial and Property Crime

### 3.5.1. General Trends

Money laundering is a core activity for the majority of OC groups (EUOCR<sup>7</sup>, 2003) and financial organised crime is becoming an increasing phenomenon within the EU. The primary focus of Europol in this area is to support international operational money laundering investigations, to provide financial expertise in the course of major serious crime investigations carried out by Member States, as well as to set up and provide law enforcement agencies with appropriate co-operation tools.

In relation to crime against property, car theft remains a major issue with 1 175 000 cars stolen within the EU at an estimated cost of Euro 10 billion a year (Enfopol 2004/4).

### 3.5.2. Major activities in 2003

#### 3.5.2.1. Financial crime

Operational support work in this area increased this year evidenced by the increase in analysis reports produced and the growing number of investigations supported. In the area

<sup>7</sup> See EU Organised Crime Report dated 31 October 2002 ref. 2530-130

of credit card fraud, as a result of operational meetings held with participating Member States, information on the links between ongoing investigations in the EU Member States provided by Europol led to the subsequent arrest of main targets in Italy. Another operational project was initiated in response to the various modus operandi used in association with automatic cash dispensers where credit card details are stolen for further illegal uses. For better consistency in the exchange of operational and technical information related to non-cash payment fraud, Europol initiated, in co-operation with the Interpol Universal Classification System database, a technical analysis centre for counterfeited credit cards. Furthermore a crisis centre was created with the private industry in order to be able to react to major global attacks against the non-cash payment system within the EU.

A project on timesharing<sup>8</sup> was initiated this year to counteract fraud in this area. Unplanned for 2003, Europol, in co-operation with Eurojust, responded to the urgent request of some Member States facing this common criminal phenomenon where criminal organisations are now heavily involved. An Analytical Work File<sup>9</sup> on suspicious transactions with regard

<sup>8</sup>The time-sharing concept is a relatively established, legal business whereby a customer can buy a share in a specific holiday property, for a specific time each year, over a specific number of years. A recent development has been the similar sale of shares in floating vessels (luxury yachts)

<sup>9</sup>AWF Sustrans

- » In the area of credit card fraud an information link provided by Europol led to arrest of main targets in Italy.



# Crime Related Activities in specific areas

to money laundering enabled links to be made with crimes committed in the EU. The financial expertise provided by Europol to Member States investigations assisted in the identification of criminal money trails.

In 2003, no threat assessments or intelligence bulletins were completed in this area. However effort was concentrated on the development of the Financial Crime Information Centre (FCIC). This project was initiated in 2000 (but frozen until 2003). The first part of this project was completed in 2003 and consisted of an encrypted web-site containing technical information to enable Member States' law enforcement agencies to check forgery details, gather legal and international information, and to be a platform for the exchange of information. In addition, the Europol criminal asset centre was initiated to assist Member States in the identification of the proceeds of crime.

Europol has also been working with the EU Commission on the production of EU standards for training in combating financial crime.

### 3.5.2.2. Crimes against property

Europol again produced a CD-Rom containing valuable information related to motor vehicle crime. The EUVID (European Vehicle Identification Database) collates identification information on different types and models of vehicles and also includes descriptions and

images of vehicle registration documents from 40 European countries currently in use. The CD-Rom also contains guidelines on "How to Investigate Motor Vehicle Crime" as well as a catalogue containing a description of original keys sold with the vehicle. A total of 5000 CDs have been distributed to specialised law enforcement agencies in the Member States, some Eastern European countries, and some vehicle registration departments in the EU.

An operational project focusing on specific modus operandi of vehicle theft was launched and has assisted in Member States investigations. Due to the extension of its mandate, Europol also participated in a feasibility study on the possibility to create an EU database for stolen cultural goods.

At the request of some Member States an operational project was initiated focusing on organised crime gangs operating along the Mediterranean Coast and specialising in burglary of individual or commercial premises<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> Opened as an AWF in January 2004

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## Operationally Related Activities

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# Operationally Related Activities

## ► 4.1. Analysis

A substantial amount of operationally related work is now produced with 18 Analysis Work Files and related analytical reports<sup>11</sup>, and one MSOPES (see Table 1). In general, analytical projects developed positively and led to important operational results, e.g. the identification of targets, the initiation of operational activities in the Member States, arrests and the initiation of new cases. There is a trend to a remarkable increase in the demand of analytical support by investigating units in the Member States. Therefore while the progress of some projects is hindered by a lack of information from Member States resulting in the redefinition of the

Crime area	Number of AWFs 2003
Drugs Trafficking	4+1 MSOPES <sup>12</sup>
Crimes against Persons	3
Financial and Property Crime	5
Organised Crime Groups	2
Terrorism	2
Forgery of Money	2
Total	18 +1 MSOPES

⤴ Results of Europol's operationally related work (Table 1)

project focus, in many other cases the amount and quality of information related to live investigations given has improved the added value available for the Member States. This in turn is generating more requests for support, up to a point where it is necessary to prioritise work and find strategies to increase analytical staff at Europol.

The EU Organised Crime Report 2003<sup>13</sup>, was compiled from information received from Member States. Europol is currently creating a commonly accepted framework across Member States for the development of this report into a Threat Assessment. The benefit of this being that it will identify priorities and enable better focused planning within both Europol and the Member States. During this year, the open version of the report was presented for the first time during a joint press conference with the Presidency of the EU.

<sup>11</sup>An analytical report is a report displaying analytical findings and resulting recommendations and can be of operational or strategic nature. Analytical reports can differ greatly in format, length and content due to the fact that they are always tailored towards specific needs. They are used to identify specific links and help Member States focus the investigation in a particular direction

<sup>12</sup>MSOPES: Member States Operational Project with Europol Support

<sup>13</sup>See EU Organised Crime Report dated 31 October 2002 ref. 2530-130

Europol is seen as a centre for excellence in providing training in operational and strategic intelligence analysis. This is evidenced by the increased demand for training from Member States, Accession States non-EU States and international Organisations. During 2003, Member States and Accession States received three strategic intelligence analysis and three operational analysis courses. In addition Europol supported several other training courses organised by the Member States and Accession States in the field of analysis. During 2003 Europol continued to carry out searches on the Dun & Bradstreet™ database to provide business intelligence both on request of Member States and for AWFs. During this year the demand for Dun & Bradstreet™ searches for AWFs has increased remarkably.

#### ► 4.2. Heads of Europol National Units (HENUs)<sup>14</sup>

The Heads of Europol National Units met six times in 2003 to advise Europol and, on an ad hoc basis via Europol, the Management Board on issues of both an operational and strategic nature and also to discuss among themselves issues of interest for the HENUs, Members States and Europol.

A more operational course was set during the year with an emphasis on operational work, priority crime and networks, expert meetings, the role of the Europol National Units, the Liaison Desks at Europol, Joint Investigation Teams and Analytical Work Files and how these support Members States operations in the best possible manner.

Business procedures for the HENUs were discussed and approved in order to have a defined framework within which the HENUs can act as advisors to Europol and Management Board and act as facilitators of operational work.

An ideal model of a Europol National Unit was initiated by the HENUs and carried out by Europol. This model should not only serve as an ideal for the ten Accession States, but also serve as a model for the 15 EU states in order for them to improve the standards of their National Units.

The work on service standards for the Europol Liaison Desks and Europol Liaison Officers were initiated during the year in order to describe the ideal Liaison Desk, which could be a model for all to strive for.

In order to have a common understanding of the procedures of opening, maintaining and closing Analytical Work Files a, 'HENU's Reference Guide' was made and is to be printed by Europol for distribution among stakeholders.

<sup>14</sup> Contribution from the Chairman of the HENUs

<sup>15</sup> Reference number: 14242/01 COPEN 71 + COR 1 dated 13 June 2002



# Operationally Related Activities

The tool 'Joint Investigation Teams' (JITs) as contained in the Council Framework Decision of 13 June 2002<sup>15</sup> has been discussed at length and a document outlining how to use a JIT was approved by the HENUs. This work is to be continued in a working group<sup>6</sup> and should result in a handbook for easy reference.

The Video Conference facility was tested by a number of countries with a positive result.

A matrix on crime trends has been developed on the basis of the Organised Crime Situation Report and additional crime trends from the Member States, Accession States and Third Countries. The aim of the matrix is to identify crime groups and crime areas to address operationally.

## 4.2.1. European Union Liaison Bureaux

Europol is pleased to provide various kinds of support for Liaison Bureaux (Member State and non-EU State) in order to assist with the successful integration of the Europol Liaison Officers into Europol. Such support includes monitoring and processing of information flow, preparing regular meetings between Europol Liaison Officers and Europol, preparing official visits, receipt of new ELOs, and assistance related to ELOs personal welfare.

Europol welcomed three new non EU State Liaison Bureaux into the organisation this year: Bulgaria, Cyprus and the Slovak Republic, bringing the total to nine<sup>17</sup>.

There was an increase in the overall information exchanged between Europol and Liaison Bureau of 43% (66,192 messages in 2002, compared with 94,723 messages in 2003). For non-EU and Accession States a total of 6,524 messages were exchanged. This is an increase of 223% from last year.

A detailed compilation of the Liaison Bureaux activities can be found in the Annex.

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<sup>15</sup> Reference number: 14242/01 COPEN 71 + COR 1 dated 13 June 2002

<sup>16</sup> Chaired by Europol, there are representatives from Denmark, Italy, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden, United Kingdom on the working group

<sup>17</sup> The other non-EU States and Accession States with Liaison Bureaux at Europol are the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Norway, Poland, and Slovenia

### ► 4.3. Operational Exchange and Liaison

#### Co-operation with Third States and International organisations

In addition to the existing agreements<sup>18</sup> the following new ones were signed:

(i) Strategic Agreements: Russia

(ii) Operational Agreements: Latvia, Lithuania and Romania

There are also several operational agreements<sup>19</sup> and strategic agreements<sup>20</sup> under negotiation.

<sup>18</sup> Strategic agreements: EU Commission, European Central Bank (ECB), European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) and World Customs Organisation (WCO), Colombia and the USA. Operational agreements: Interpol, Norway, Iceland, Hungary, Poland, Estonia, Slovenia, USA and the Czech Republic

<sup>19</sup> Canada, Eurojust, OLAF, Malta, Monaco and Switzerland), European Monitoring Centre

#### 24-hour information service to third states

In order to provide a more comprehensive service, Europol now delivers a 24 hour service accessing Europol's information systems and a Europol staff member is on call if a search is required out of hours.

#### Liaison bureau in Washington D.C

The Europol Office in the US has achieved significant progress in 2003<sup>21</sup>. In general, it can be stated that the obligations comprised in the co-operation agreements<sup>22</sup> between Europol and the USA were fulfilled. The two Liaison officers posted in Washington DC helped raise the awareness on Europol's role and activities. A difficulty concerning information exchange

<sup>20</sup> Bolivia, Morocco, Peru, Turkey, United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime

<sup>21</sup> The secondment of two EUROPOL Liaison Officers in Washington took place in August 2002

<sup>22</sup> Strategic and operational co-operation agreements were signed on 6-12-2001 and 20-12-2002. respectively

# Operationally Related Activities

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remains since an internal US policy stipulates making use of the bilateral liaison network in EU Member States as a first priority (this is particularly true of the Federal Bureau of investigation (FBI), and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)).

## **Liaison with Interpol**

In 2002, Europol recruited a Liaison Officer for its planned office at the ICPO Interpol General Secretariat in Lyon. In May 2003, a Memorandum of Understanding in relation to the Interpol liaison officer was signed for this purpose. In particular, Europol has been working with Interpol in relation to two projects: one on illegal immigration in the Mediterranean area and one in relation to terrorism and is continuing to develop protocols on the exchange of classified information between Europol and Interpol<sup>23</sup>.



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<sup>23</sup>A Memorandum of Understanding was signed on 2 February 2004 designed to enhance the exchange of information between Interpol and Europol. Europol has now been given (24/7) access to Interpol's global communication system providing access to different databases (nominal, stolen vehicles, stolen travel documents and notices)

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## Information Technology (IT)

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# Information Technology (IT)

## ► 5.1. Information Technology (IT)

A substantial proportion of the IT activities within Europol are related to the support and the maintenance of the hard- and software, including:

- accounts management,
- monitoring and preventive maintenance of the various systems,
- fault detection,
- diagnostic and configuration restoration of the network,
- security equipment,
- databases,
- the users' IT environment,
- the corrective and evaluative maintenance of Europol's systems and corporate applications.

### 5.1.1. Europol Information System(s) (EIS)

#### Version 0.2

This version was declared fit for formal review in April 2003 after which it was operationally used by the Forgery of Money Unit. In order for this version to be accepted all the remaining anomalies had to be corrected. During October a new delivery was made available for Europol to test. Because of the lack of a test platform and resources, no test has yet been carried out.

#### Version 1.1

Delivery of the Europol Information System (EIS) by the consortium was planned for February 2003. However, it was not delivered due to the under-estimation of the number of problems that would arise and/or the overestimation of the Consortium's capacity to deliver. The expected revised delivery date of June was met but when delivered, the product was not up to standard. Between February and June the developers worked on development issues, integration and problem-solving, followed by a testing period. At the end of October, the Consortium delivered the final version which is the version currently being tested.



Following the December 2003 Management Board meeting Europol decided that the Specific Agreement (attachment to the framework contract) should be dissolved and a new agreement should be negotiated. The October release of v1.1 is not stable enough to be used by Europol or Member States. The Information System Consortium was given the task of making a stable version of the v1.1 by the end of February 2004 as specified in the new agreement.

#### **EISA**

EIS Alternative (EISA) is the contingency plan for the EIS. In June 2003, the internal development of EISA was selected as the emergency option. The development planning in the Project Initiation Document of EISA shows it could be developed within nine months of the official decision to proceed. The Management Board meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> of December 2003 made the recommendation to proceed.

« A substantial proportion of the IT activities within Europol are related to the support and the maintenance of the hard- and software

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## 5.1.2. Europol Analysis System (OASIS)

The initial intention was for this system to be functional at the beginning of 2003 however, following the 2002 review, the users added extra functionalities to the existing requirements postponing its delivery. The activities related to the development of this system were performed until the beginning of August 2003 when a strategic decision was made to stop development and reassess the OASIS development strategy, in order to incorporate within it existing commercial products that in the meantime had been released (Ibase4).



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Corporate

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## ▶ 6.1. Corporate Governance

In 2003, structural changes to the organisation such as the amalgamation of Information Management, Open Sources and IT units into an Information Management Department have resulted in a greater consolidation of information management processes and a closer link between EIS development and information management.

The culture of evaluation has been further developed within both operational and non-operational areas with units seeking feedback on services or products, including AWFs, from recipients. While this process could be more structured and formal it is seen as a positive step.

Performance indicators were implemented for the first time in 2003 and are now used as supporting evidence for the evaluation of the activities. They will be further developed and improved both to support strategy implementation and to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of Europol's key products and services.

In addition, a self-assessment of the organisation was conducted. It offered the opportunity for a large part of Europol staff to share knowledge about all aspects of their business and to identify the strengths and areas for improvement<sup>24</sup> Out of this process 24 recommendations were identified. These will be translated into concrete actions and implemented within the framework of a development plan for the organisation<sup>25</sup>.

## ▶ 6.2. Human Resources

The total number of staff employed at Europol is 299<sup>26</sup> (including local staff (13), the Management Board (3) and the Financial Controller's Office (2)). In 2003, Europol initiated 39 recruitment procedures concerning a total of 73 new posts in the organisation. The number of staff by Member State is shown in figure 1 below.

<sup>24</sup>The European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) model and self-assessment method have been used. In addition to the 12 Europol staff members who have been trained to assess the organisation's performance, Directorate members have lead one or more of the 9 criteria in the EFQM model (Leadership, People, Policy & Strategy, Partnerships & Resources, Processes, People Results, Customer Results, Society Results and Key Performance Results). Through the interviews of 60 Europol staff members, evidence of strengths and areas for improvement within the organisation have been gathered and analysed

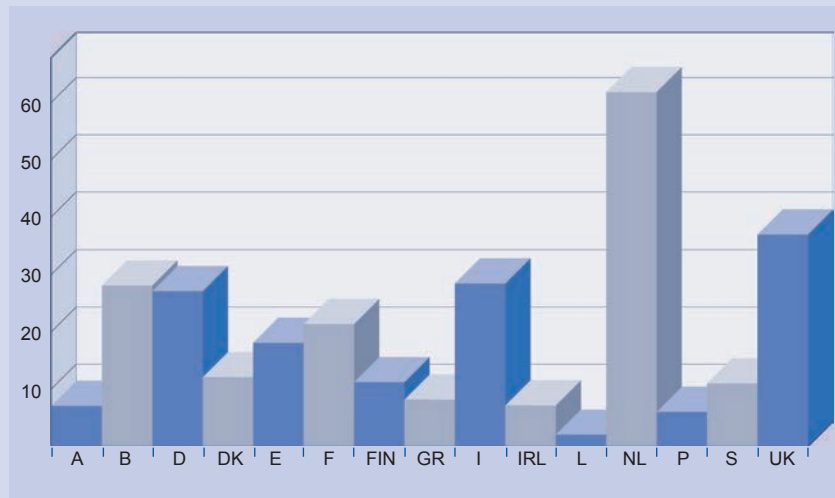
<sup>25</sup>In addition to these recommendations, will be those not yet completed from the Change Plan as well as already identified business procedures that are being implemented (e.g. signing policy, documents archiving policy) will be part of this new development plan. A better coordination of all these initiatives and a streamlining with the current overall strategy will hence be ensured

<sup>26</sup> Excludes: ELOs (63), Security (25), Organs (5), Seconded Experts (12), Trainees (9) and Temporary staff (16)

# Report

Almost half of all staff are employed in the Serious Crime department of Europol (47%). This is followed by Information Technology (18%), Resources (13%), Corporate Development (10%), Information Management (9%) and the Directorate/Management Board (Director, Deputy Directors and Management Board staff) (3%).

The activity of recruiting and selecting qualified personnel has a huge impact on Europol's activities as in any knowledge-based organisation the personnel is the most important asset. Europol received 3931 applications from which a total of 73 officials were recruited.



⤴ Europol's number of staff by Member State (Figure 1)

In the framework of the Personnel Policy Programme adopted by the Management Board further developments took place in the areas of recruitment, administration relocation and induction of new personnel.

### ► 6.3. Finance

The Europol budget 2003 was €57.8M. Of this amount €41.1M was included for the Common budget (Part A) and €16.7M for the Europol computer system (Part B). The Host State budget (Part C) added up to €4.2M. These amounts include supplementary and amending budgets that have been adopted in the course of the year. The supplementary and amending budget for Part A (€0.4M) was for two projects (forgery of money training and awareness seminars) which have been funded partially by the European Commission. For Part C, a supplementary and amending budget of €2.1M has been included to cover additional maintenance of the Europol headquarters financed by the Host State.

In 2002 the total expenditure for Part A and B came to €48.1M. For 2003 this increased to €53.4M (provisionally). This increase is mainly a result of a rise in the number of staff members. Another reason for this increase is installation costs (€0.8M) relating to an additional building that Europol has taken into use in September 2003.



In 2003 the focus was on developing and implementing new work procedures concerning tender procedures, conclusion of contracts and the registration of fixed assets. The following has been achieved:

- The central procurement and fixed asset management group was established as of the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2003.
- More units have gained access to the financial system and have been trained in how to use it and this will continue in 2004. Related to this is the improved (more extensive, stable and detailed) reporting on a monthly basis to all the units and improved financial understanding in the units.
- The Management of the pension fund reached an agreement on a proposal to amend the rules on the transfer of pension rights. On the basis of this, the procedure to amend the Staff Regulations will be started and in co-operation with the European Central Bank negotiations with Member States will begin. To date no bilateral agreements with Member States have been concluded.

#### ► 6.4. Public Relations

In 2003, Europol's Public Relations priority focus was on serving the increased awareness needs of the Member States' competent authorities. In fact, Europol has received a high level of interest from political and law enforcement services in visiting Europol's Headquarters for information and cooperation issues. The EU enlargement process has also instigated a large number of visits consisting of law enforcement delegations from Accession Countries. A considerable increase in requests from various public and academic institutions to visit Europol and get first-hand briefings on Europol's activities has also occurred.

Special information brochures, reports, press releases and a high quality Europol promotional film were prepared to increase awareness on Europol's role in combating organised crime. In total, the Public Relations Unit has prepared nearly 200 visits, managed more than 1500 public information requests communicated mainly via Europol's Central Internet email box, and dealt with more than 1000 media requests for interviews and background information on Europol's activities. These data constitute a very encouraging factor in promoting and establishing a good level of Europol's awareness and transparency in the European community.



Report

## Liaison Bureaux Activities<sup>27</sup>

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Annex

<sup>27</sup> Contributions submitted by Liaison Bureaux

# Liaison Bureaux Activities

## ► A1. European Union Member States

### A1.1. Austria

In the past year the Austrian Desk and the ENU faced some changes with regard to their staff. In the Austrian Desk one of the Europol Liaison Officers took over a new job at Europol headquarters, and in the Europol National Unit two new colleagues joined the team. The main results achieved from the viewpoint of the Austrian Desk in the previous year can be summarised as follows:

- A further increase of new cases initiated via the Europol channel (235 cases in 2002 in comparison to more than 440 cases in 2003)
- A further increase of contributions to the AWF's running in the "traditional fields" of organised crime such as drugs, illegal immigration and counterfeiting of money (292 contributions 2002 in comparison to more than 530 contributions 2003), but also in the new mandated areas such as homicide and robbery. Austrian experts and ELOs are furthermore engaged in the works of EJUP, assuming an important role with respect to our colleagues from the applicant countries and third countries.
- The Austrian Desk was the first Desk (February 2003) to informally invite the national member of Eurojust and her Spanish colleague to an internal meeting to negotiate

a solution to improve the workflow of a target group analysis, lead by AT. The communication with Eurojust could be further improved due to the close working relationship developed between the Austrian member at Eurojust and colleagues from the Austrian Desk.

- The Austrian Desk developed a model to train Austrian analysts at Europol. Based on the model agreement concluded between the Europol directorate and criminal intelligence service in Austria, colleagues from Austria are now regularly seconded for a six month period of time. The evaluation from the secondments showed that the awareness amongst analysts working in Austria about Europol in general, and analysis in particular, could be improved. There is an aim to use those seconded to raise awareness in local analysis departments.
- The Austrian Desk held several seminars in Austria to raise awareness about Europol. All of them were well received by the participants and led to an increase of requests especially in the "new" mandated areas of Europol (information exchanges in 2002 was 138 compared with 310 in 2003).
- Furthermore, the Austrian Desk was involved in working groups aiming to improve the workflow between the Member States and Europol. Together with other Member States and Europol staff, a manual on handling of operational information is being developed.

### A1.2. Belgium

The number of cases initiated by Belgium remained at the same level as in 2002. However, within the field of drugs, the number of cases nearly doubled compared to the previous year. By contrast, the number of initiated cases in the field of forgery of money dropped considerably due to problems with the domestic collection process of this kind of information.

Several measures were implemented to speed up the exchange of information related to operational matters and to improve the quality of the information exchange processes in order to ensure swifter and more complete answers to the requests from both Belgian and other States' investigation teams.

A vast program of awareness that was planned for 2003 had to be postponed due to several organisational circumstances. It will, however, start in the first half of 2004 parallel to the efforts conducted in the general Europol awareness program.

A very important development, which will contribute considerably to the forwarding of intelligence to Europol, is the implementation of the integrated national criminal database (Algemene Nationale Gegevensbank) which started in 2003 and will be finalised in 2004.

After the integration of the counter-terrorism task force into Europol the Belgian Liaison Officers' Desk took over the work previously performed by the Belgian seconded experts to the task force.

### A1.3. Denmark

In 2003 the number of Danish initiated cases showed an increase of approximately 80% on last year's number. Compared with 2001, the number of initiated cases at the Danish Desk has increased by 220%. As a natural consequence of the extension of the mandated area (in 2002) new areas were introduced. The number of drug cases increased again in 2003 despite the fact that this area has been the largest since the start of Europol. Through the year all mandated areas have been referred to the information exchange. Most remarkable is that the trend is clearly towards on-going and more complicated cases with more requests in every case.

Since February 2003 the Danish Desk has been the exclusive intelligence channel for information exchange inside Europe in relation to Danish cases. As a result of this it has been decided to extend the number of Danish liaison officers from three to four as of 1 February 2004.

### A1.4. Finland

As in previous years and as expected, the workload increased again in the year 2003. The number of cases initiated is slightly less than in 2002, but the operations handled via the Liaison Bureau have been to some extent more demanding and complicated than before. One of the major priorities of the Finnish Liaison Bureau has been and still is the support to

# Liaison Bureaux Activities

and the co-ordination of operational cases. The Liaison Bureau is frequently consulted for instructions and advice. As the awareness of Europol and its possibilities to support operations have increased in Finland the requests have also become more demanding. The co-operation with Europol and Member States has been excellent and has produced good results. In one case the support of Europol Liaison Officers posted in the USA proved to be crucial as their support and the information received via them "solved" one of the main cases coordinated by the Finnish Desk this year.

An examination of the volume of exchanged information reveals that "Drugs" still are leading when measured in quantity as well in quality of the information exchanged. A clear increase of information concerning Forgery of Money cases has been noticed.

## **A1.5. France**

Information exchange statistics for 2003 showed an obvious increase in the overall operational activity of the French Desk involving Europol and other Liaison Bureaux: 498 new cases were initiated, compared with 173 in 2002. This significant figure corresponds to the general increase of Europol's activity, but also tends to show the benefits of awareness programmes set up by the French authorities to promote Europol.

Drug cases remain dominant (209 cases), followed by terrorism (103 cases), forgery of money (74 cases), vehicle crimes (26 cases) and money laundering (24 cases). Most of these cases (355) were submitted to Europol's analysis unit to be inserted in Analytical

Work Files supported by France. Several hits were subsequently made and contributed to ongoing investigations. The French Desk also took part in several controlled delivery operations to support British and German law enforcement services. A total of 4893 messages were processed during the year by the French Desk. The French services were also involved, since the beginning, in the Joint precursor workgroup (EJUP) and support of its associated AWF.

The French Desk actively contributed to the organisation of a high-level visit by Interior Ministry authorities such the General Director of National Police, the Head of Judicial Police, and the Head of International Police Cooperation Service. Finally, the French Desk also organised various introductory visits for a member of the French Parliament, and representatives of police and gendarmerie operational services.

## **A1.6. Germany**

The upward trend of the last two years, as far as quantity and quality of cases and other areas of engagement were concerned, continued again in 2003. The overall number of transactions exceeded 9000; an increase of 43% compared to 2002 and the highest figure of all member states. The number of initiated cases was 655, representing a 45% increase compared to 2002.

As in 2002 more than half of all cases were of a multi-lateral nature, demonstrating the increasing complexity of the cases. Most of the requests were again related to the area of drugs and illegal immigration followed by fraud and swindling as well as forgery of money

and vehicle crime. A number of operational meetings have been organised as a result of the information exchanged.

It can be assumed that the high figures are partly due to the positive “word of mouth” promotion by officers on the ground whose investigations were supported and facilitated by the Europol Liaison Officers Network and Europol Analysis. On the other hand, credit has to be given to another successful marketing campaign which further assisted to raise the profile of Europol in Germany. The German Liaison Office and the National Unit contributed to the Europol Awareness Programme through delivering a large number of presentations to specialised officers and high level delegations.

Germany is participating in all Analytical Work Files except for one and is one of the top contributors to all of them with the Liaison Officers taking an active role in this work. They have acted and supported Europol on a regular basis as an intermediary and partly as a stand-in for nominated German experts within Analytical Working Group Meetings. The most successful results of AWFs have been in the area of child pornography, heroin trafficking, precursors (EJUP), counterfeit currency and THB.

#### **A1.7. Greece**

Since February 2003, the Greek Desk was staffed by two new Police Officers who supported the activities of the Desk. The Greek Desk during the Greek Presidency of the E.U. (first semester of the year), supported and contributed (as appropriated) through a coordination

role the preparation and carrying out of several operations including: one aimed at combating illegal trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation; another aimed at combating drug trafficking and a third aimed at tackling illegal immigration flows by sea. Several seminars were also organised, the topics of which included: on the financing of terrorism; on safety measures in conjunction with major sports events and on Bio-terrorism. In addition the Greek Desk organised seminars on: the financing of terrorism; safety measures in conjunction with major sports events and bio-terrorism. The desk also organised various other meetings.

During the year 2003, Greece initiated 140 new cases across all serious crime areas. The Hellenic Desk was mainly involved in activities related to illegal immigration, drugs, trafficking of human beings, forgery of money and stolen vehicles. The level of information exchange of the Hellenic Desk decreased slightly by 13% compared to 2002.

There were a total of 62 illegal immigration cases. This number of cases is smaller than in the previous year (2002) possibly as a result of the strict and efficient controls and actions taken by our Competent Authorities dealing with combating this kind of phenomenon, both on sea and at land borders.

There was a significant rise in the number of forgery of money cases (28). The increase could be attributed to the position of our country on the “Balkan axis”, from where counterfeited euro banknotes are imported into our country.



# Liaison Bureaux Activities

In addition, the Greek Desk continued to support Analysis Work Files and other Europol projects. As representatives of Greece, the Greek Liaison Officers were involved in several expert meetings and provided advice to their national authorities.

As a result of the multi-disciplinary cooperation within the Europol framework, the Greek Desk in close cooperation with the Spanish and German Desks exchanged information which resulted in the arrest of two criminals in Athens involved in trafficking stolen vehicles.

## **A1.8. Ireland**

The Irish Liaison Bureau continued to work with two staff members, both from An Garda Síochána (the National Police force). The possibility of increasing the staff by an additional officer from the Irish Customs is still under consideration.

The volume of InfoEx transactions continues to increase when compared with previous years. Current statistics indicate an increase this year over 2002 of approximately 25%. Contributions to the various Analytical Work Files have also increased by about the same percentage during the year with Ireland currently being an active participant in eight work files. One identifiable trend in this area is that we are streamlining our involvement in analytical work files to ensure maximum value for effort. We have also worked hard to

increase our contributions in other areas such as the Ecstasy Logo System and this work is ongoing. Ireland also participates in the workgroup addressing "Standards for Liaison Bureaux" at Europol.

Overall 2003 has been another progressive year with operational successes and much valuable co-operation in the area of European Law Enforcement.

## **A1.9. Italy**

The work done by the Italian Desk in 2003 was strongly characterized by the commitments connected to the Italian Presidency during the second semester 2003. The attention to the regular exchange of information did not decrease, and stayed at the same highest level of 2002, rendering Italy one of the more committed MS in this activity. We saw a more active role of Italy and of the Italian Desk also in the field of Operational Projects, AWFs and in High Impact Operations, where Italy had a very active role both in terms of invested personnel (many experts in different subjects came from Italy for meetings, workgroups, presentations) and data contributions, where a constant flow delivered by all Italian police forces was noted.

The Italian Presidency was also particularly active in planning operational projects (for example the International airport plan). During the period of Presidency the Italian Desk was also strongly engaged in the organisation of many important meetings, as, for example:

- The Heads of Operational Services' meeting
- The Conference on co-operation between the Europol, Schengen & Interpol frameworks
- The Conference of EU Member States' Liaison officers posted in the Balkans.

The Italian Desk also participated in the promotion within the Personnel expert meeting, of important feasibility studies such as those related to:

- Team of interpreters and translators in Europol
- Medical structures in Europol
- Revision of the annex of the staff regulation concerning job descriptions.

#### **A1.10. Luxembourg**

There was a general decrease of 28.5% in requests related to new cases initiated by the Luxembourg National Unit in 2003. This decrease is mainly due to a large fall in requests in the area of forgery of money. The activities in the other crime areas have been about the same as in 2002. No controlled deliveries were initiated by the Luxembourg National Unit in 2003.

An increase of 52% was realized in the involvement of other Liaison Desks by the Luxembourg National Unit.

In 2003 the Luxembourg Liaison Bureau received about the same amount of requests from other Liaison Desks as in 2002. The large majority of those requests were related to drugs, followed by forgery of money and terrorism. An increase of 36.36 % in the area of forgery of money and a large decrease of 56.5 % in the area of illegal immigration were noted.

#### **A1.11. Netherlands**

##### **Developments and trends**

The overall number of cases initiated via all participants within the Europol framework increased tremendously compared to the previous years. Main reason for this was the initiative of a number of countries to change the routing of the international information exchange from other channels (e.g. bilateral liaisons and Interpol) to the network of liaisons within Europol. Furthermore a trend was noticed that the liaison network was more often used for sending out formal judicial requests in relation to bilateral and multilateral assistance. These requests were mainly requests for surveillance assistance, controlled deliveries and initiatives for parallel – or support investigations. The majority of the

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cases in which information was exchanged was drug related (almost 45%) followed by Illegal Immigration (11%) and Terrorism (9,9%). This is a continuation of the trends noticed over the previous years.

## Overall evaluation of the work done by the Dutch Liaison Bureau

The overall increase of the use of the liaison network for the exchange of information in operational investigations was also noticed at the Dutch Desk. The number of cases in which the Dutch Desk was involved increased with almost 21% compared to 2002. Overall the Dutch Desk was involved in over 27% of the total number of cases dealt with within the full Europol network. Due to the increasing workload including the growing complexity of a number of cases in which the Netherlands was asked for direct assistance in operational investigations and the fact that no possibilities could be found to increase the number of staff within the Liaison Bureau priorities had to be set. Main priority was the providence of assistance in direct operational matters including the Analysis Working Files in which information out of life investigations was handled. This priority was fully met. As a result of the increased workload in combination with the limited staffing we were not able to continue the more active approach of operational teams in the Netherlands that could contribute to the running Analysis Working Files as started in 2002. The number of cases initiated from the Netherlands sent out via the Dutch Liaison Bureau increased with 33% compared to 2002. Around 80% of the total number of cases initiated by the Netherlands was linked to bilateral investigations. Spain (16.8%), Germany (15.6%), United Kingdom (13.2%) and Italy (11.4%) were the countries approached most frequently from the Netherlands.

The main areas in which the Netherlands was involved in the exchange of operational linked information were drugs, illegal immigration and terrorism. The main numbers of cases in which requests were received by the Netherlands were initiated by the United Kingdom (16.2%) and Germany (14.9%).

## Additional information

To create a better awareness of Europol representatives of the Dutch Desk provided monthly one or more presentations for representatives of the Dutch law enforcement agencies as well as representatives of Ministerial policy making departments. The number of persons who attended these presentations varied from 1 till approximately 600. In a number of occasions the initiative for this kind of presentations was made by the policy department of the Dutch Europol National Unit.

## A1.12. Portugal

During 2003 the Portuguese Desk received almost the same number of requests, from our National Unit, as in 2002 (206 compared with 208 in 2002). On the other hand, the number of information transactions increased around 12%. No significant changes were noticed concerning the areas of crime. Drug trafficking is still the major subject of information exchange but our Desk received requests from Portugal of all crime types listed in the Europol mandate. There was an evident increase of the quality of the requests, meaning that the work of our Bureau is becoming more and more operational and the responses provided to our colleagues in Portugal were, in some cases, crucial for the development

of investigations. The Liaison Officers also had a significant role in the AWF's with their participation in meetings and in the promotion in Portugal of the need to send the relevant data to Europol. Our Bureau was involved in four successful controlled deliveries which led to drug seizures and arrests.

#### **A1.13. Spain**

An increase of initiated cases from 2002 to 2003 of about 109% was noted, most of them related to drugs trafficking, terrorism, fraud and swindling. The Spanish National Unit carried out an awareness programme in order to promote Europol as a useful and quick tool in international investigations. Most of the Units have repeated their requests due to the high level of satisfaction thanks to the quality of the information and the speed in the responses via Europol.

Furthermore, Spain has made use of Europol to conduct several long term investigations in different fields like terrorism, money laundering, trafficking in stolen vehicles or organised robberies with excellent results.

The Spanish Desk has coordinated surveillances, controlled deliveries, arrests and home searches with other Desks, especially with the United Kingdom, Denmark, Finland and Germany. The speed and the availability of the Spanish Liaison Bureau has made it possible to organise surveillance requests for other countries in less than two hours or even airport checks in less than half an hour.

The surveillances carried out by Spanish teams have provided high quality intelligence to the UK in the framework of several drugs investigation. Spain has also accepted several controlled deliveries offered by the UK and The Netherlands with excellent results due to the amount of drugs seized and criminals arrested. Furthermore the good cooperation between the two countries led to the whereabouts of a target who had escaped from the UK in during a money laundering investigation. The information exchanged in this field between both countries has been excellent, supporting several long-term Spanish investigations.

In the field of stolen vehicles Spain has contributed regularly to the AWF in relation to several investigations on Armenian criminals, together with Germany and Greece. For instance Spain sent real-time information to the Greek borders with Bulgaria in Turkey via the Liaison Bureaux network, on cars stolen in Spain in order to prevent the criminal organisation driving them outside the European Union. Those enquiries have led to the arrest of several targets in Spain, Germany and Greece and the seizure of different high-valued cars in those countries. In addition, coordinated home searches were carried out at the same time in Spain and Germany.

Thanks to Spanish information it has been possible to arrest important targets in Denmark (for example very a dangerous armoured-vehicles robber and drug dealers with significant cannabis seizure (more than 350 kilograms). Spain has been also very active in the field of

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organised robberies, initiating the information exchange on a former-Yugoslavian criminal group involved in burglaries in Spain, France and Italy. The outcome of this investigation was an AWF proposed by France.

With regards to the Accession Countries Spain has cooperated with most of them with an excellent information exchange mainly with Estonia (drugs trafficking and armed robberies), Czech Republic (Stolen Cultural Goods) or Hungary (frauds).

Furthermore, the Spanish Desk gives full support to the national experts involved in different projects like AWFs, advising them and promoting the use of Europol as a tool to fight organised crime. Spain is participating in all AWF except for two. Spain has a key role in an AWF targeting timesharing fraud.

Finally it is necessary to mention that Spain is supporting the Europol Terrorism Unit with three seconded experts in that field and is leading a long-term investigation on this topic using Europol channel.

## **A1.14. Sweden**

In the year 2003 two out of three of the liaison officers at the Swedish Liaison Bureau were exchanged due to ended contracts. This meant that during the summer month's two new liaison officers were introduced to the various working procedures at the Liaison Bureau and Europol.

The long term positive trend showing an increase of cases dealt with by the Swedish Liaison Bureau has continued also during 2003. Not being able to statistically prove it in exact figures it can however be established that this year's increase to a large extent can be explained by customs cases.

The most common mandated crime area is still drugs and several successful operations ending with large seizures have been accomplished during the year. The second and third most common mandated areas are illegal immigration and fraud and swindling. The last area can mostly be referred to as a number of cases concerning smuggling of cigarettes.

Sweden is participating in most AWFs. Among those the strongest commitment has been to the AWF involving the Swedish National Laboratory of Forensic Science carrying out impurity profiling analysis of amphetamine on behalf of the participating countries in order to establish links between seizures which eventually will generate added value and basis for common national operations. Several hundreds samples have been sent to the AWF during this year. Other AWFs where Sweden has contributed actively were related to Heroin, outlaw motorcycle gangs, child pornography, Euro counterfeiting, Illegal immigration and Cocaine.

Sweden and other concerned parties have formed operational sub-groups to some of the AWFs which has resulted in very good operative results in different places around Europe.

The work with awareness has been continued and several police officers have been visiting Europol during the year. Moreover, the former Head of the Desk has been assigned to strengthen the work nationally within the judiciary. The Prosecution Service is vital in order

to successfully involve Europol in ongoing investigations. In order to enhance the knowledge and awareness about Europol approximately 100 Swedish prosecutors have visited the Swedish Desk during the year. Furthermore the contacts with the Swedish Eurojust representative have been elaborated and strengthened.

Measures have been taken during the year to prepare the installations of new computer facilities which will provide the desk with on line connections to all national files and databases by early March 2004. This will create a foundation for the introduction of a swift reply system on non-complicated requests which will be developed at the desk. The ambition is to cut timeframes on non-complicated requests considerably while having the possibilities to answer them directly on the desk. In this context a trial period with administrative support on the desk may be considered in order to enable the police and customs officers to concentrate on more complicated requests where direct liaison with Europol and other desks is essential for added value.

#### **A1.15. United Kingdom**

The trend in recent years towards the UK making increasing operational use of Europol's services continued strongly in 2003. A total of 803 UK intelligence requests were initiated during the year, which represents a significant 45% increase on the corresponding figure for 2002, largely due to the UK NCIS electing early in the year to use Europol as its pre-

ferred channel for European intelligence enquiries. This figure is once again the highest of all member states and represents, in particular, large rises in the amount of drugs and terrorism intelligence initiated by the bureau.

Quality, too, has remained high; 42 people were arrested in possession of a total of €24 million worth of drugs as a direct result of information exchange involving the UK Liaison Bureau.

Significant restructuring has taken place at UK NCIS during the year leading to an increase in staff both in London and at Europol, as a result of which the UK Liaison Bureau is in a strong position at the start of 2004.

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## ► A2. Candidate and Accession Countries

### A2.1. Bulgaria

The Operational Cooperation Agreement Bulgaria - Europol was signed June 17, 2003 in Sofia, however the Bulgarian Europol Liaison Officer took over his duties at Europol on September 17. The Bulgarian Europol Liaison Officer is to date representing the four MOI's National Services, being part of this Agreement (National Counter Organised Crime Service, National Security Service, National Police Directorate and National Border Police Service). The information sharing and exchange process has been already started, with some Bulgarian contributions to different Europol's AWF and other projects. The main areas of joint interest so far are currency counterfeiting, trafficking in human beings and drug trafficking.

### A2.2. Cyprus

Cyprus sent its Liaison Officer to Europol on 17th of October 2003. From the 27th of October 2003 and the Cypriot Liaison Bureau was able to start exchanging information with Europol. From this date on the flow of information exchanged between Europol and Cyprus has become more intense and the number of exchanged information has grown from day to day. Cypriot law enforcement officers were also engaged in Europol activities.

Many of them participated in Europol meetings. The Deputy Chief of the Police of Cyprus is participating at Management Board Meeting.

The secure link between the Cyprus Liaison Bureau and the Cyprus National Unit was established on the 11 of December 2003. In this short period, the Cypriot Liaison Bureau dealt with a growing number of requests which mostly dealt with Drug Trafficking and Illegal Immigration. In addition, the Cypriot Desk continued to support Analysis Work Files.

### A2.3. Czech Republic

There was considerable development in co-operation with EU member states as the Czech law enforcement approach to Europol concerns in 2003. Common ideas of co-operation have already been implemented at a national level. Growing awareness within the Czech Police has led to more effective co-operation via the Czech Liaison Bureau. This is reflected in the increasing number of cases initiated by the Czech Desk. In total 1103 operational information exchange have been dealt with. An increase of more involvement in several AWF was also noted.

The cases initiated by the Czech Police and Customs resulted in an increasing number of requests. This increase covered mainly crime areas as drugs, forgery of money and illegal immigration. Other mandated areas were also dealt with such as "illegal trade with weapons

and explosives” and “other means of payment”. The drugs crime area was the most important one in the last period (2003). Intelligence provided by Europol was again an efficient tool for suppressing this type of crime in the territory of the Czech Republic.

The Czech Republic has joined target groups in the AWF's as the only possible way of working in close co-operation before becoming a full member.

#### **A2.4. Estonia**

The Estonian Liaison Bureau has had a steady increase of operational information exchange in the first half of the year. The highest volume of information exchange has been in relation to drug cases and an especially large number of exchanged messages was in relation to Estonian national drug traffickers operating from Spain delivering drugs to the Northern Countries.

An unfortunate trend continues to be that about 90% of all the exchanged information is initiated by countries other than Estonia, which keeps us in the position of serving other countries more than receiving support in our own investigations. This is mainly due to the lack of awareness among Estonian investigators due to our new partner status with Europol. The Liaison Bureau also worked towards increased awareness of Europol and its services among the end users.

An important non-operational issue is the Enlargement Project. Estonia has participated in Enlargement Project meetings and presented its Critical Areas Managers list to Europol in order to enhance co-operation.

#### **A2.5. Hungary**

During 2003 the Hungarian Liaison Bureau provided assistance to both national and international requests for cooperation in more than 500 cases. Hungarian law enforcement authorities have regularly contributed to four AWFs, and this cooperation has already achieved concrete operational results. The work of the Liaison Bureau became more operational, and the international cooperation via the Bureau has covered mainly the crime areas of forgery of money, illegal drugs trafficking, bankcard fraud and illegal migration.

#### **A2.6. Poland**

The secure line between the Liaison Bureau and the National Unit Poland was finally operational from August 2003, making the work more effective. The Polish Liaison Bureau dealt with over 500 cases during the year 2003. We also initiated a multilateral, operational co-operation in 2 cases. The number of information exchanges is increasing, especially in the field of forgery of money and bank cards fraud. Two Polish officers had five weeks internship at Europol in October and December and another seven officers for one week in December.



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The Polish police are sending few requests to so we have put a lot of effort on raising awareness. The capacity of the Liaison Bureau should increase with the arrival of the second Polish officer will.

The new structure of international co-operation was drafted in Poland. One of reasons for its creation is to identify new possibilities of using Europol for operational work. The main changes are the integration of all the channels of information exchange and the creation of a national network of international co-operation. The new structure will probably be operational before 1st of July 2004.

## **A2.7. Slovak Republic**

On 13 June 2003 an operational agreement between the Slovak Republic and Europol was signed in Bratislava. It came into force on 23 December. A secure line was set up with Bratislava on 12 December 2003. Slovakia is looking forward to co-operation with all EU and Non-EU states in 2004.

## **A2.8. Slovenia**

The year 2003 was the first complete year of Slovenian presence at Europol. The Slovenian Liaison Bureau at Europol was established at the beginning of June 2002. The Slovenian Liaison Officer represents the Slovenian Police, Customs Administration and Office for Money Laundering Prevention.

In 2003 over 1000 different messages of information with Europol, Member States and NEUS was exchanged, from this figure about 400 directly relate to operational cases and the other 300 to operational matters. The main areas were drugs trafficking, forgery of money and illegal immigration, with valuable information for the IIS and AWF being provided.

The Slovene Desk at Europol and Europol National Contact Point in Slovenia raised awareness of Europol amongst the Slovenian competent authorities. Consequently the quality of Slovenian requests has improved in terms of operational content.

We have been very much involved in the ongoing enlargement Project and we expect to assure the optimal function of the Slovenian Europol channel in the forthcoming year 2004.

## **A3. Other Liaison Bureau**

### **▶ A3.1. Norway**

For Norway the year 2003 was the first complete year at Europol. It has been a very active year for Norway. We were involved in cases related to all mandated areas and there has been a growing number of operational cases both to and from Norway. Norway has also supported Europol in a number of different projects. From January 2004 one officer from the Norwegian Customs will be based at Europol.



Europol

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