

EUROPOL IS THE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Our aim is to help achieve a safer Europe by supporting European Union law enforcement agencies in their fight against serious international crime and terrorism.



Over 800 personnel at Europol headquarters in The Hague, the Netherlands, work closely with law enforcement colleagues in the EU and beyond towards this common goal. Europol personnel come from different kinds of law enforcement agencies, including regular and border police, gendarmerie,

customs and security services. This multi-agency approach helps to close information gaps and minimise the space in which criminals can operate.

From our position at the heart of the European security architecture we offer a unique range of services. Europol is a support centre for law

enforcement operations, a hub for criminal information, and a centre for law enforcement expertise.

Working with EU law enforcement authorities, our ultimate goal is to achieve a safer Europe for the benefit of all EU citizens.



EUROPOL

MAKING EUROPE SAFER

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Illicit drugs are one of the major threats to the health and security of EU citizens, with up to two million problem drug users. Fighting drug-related crime has been a priority for Europol since its very beginning.

Europol's experts support EU law enforcement authorities to disrupt the activities of criminal organisations that are producing and trafficking drugs such as heroin, cocaine, cannabis and synthetics.

Our specialist team also helps to safely dismantle synthetic drugs laboratories in the field.

Trafficking in human beings (THB) affects all EU countries, with the number of victims just in Europe estimated to be hundreds of thousands. This form of crime abuses individuals' human rights and treats men, women and children as commodities through, for example, sexual and labour exploitation.

Europol regularly supports high-level human trafficking investigations, providing on-the-spot operational support through our mobile office, and giving access to our criminal databases and analytical tools. This has resulted in disrupting the activities of many criminal networks involved in THB.

Facilitated illegal immigration is assisting, for financial gain, entry into or residence in a country in violation of that country's laws.

The criminals involved in facilitated illegal immigration are often also involved in other crimes such as drug and people trafficking, forgery of passports/IDs and money laundering.

Europol provides support to major international investigations by coordinating operational activities, providing forensic and technical expertise, and access to criminal intelligence and analysis.

Europol is the European Union's Central Office for combating **euro counterfeiting**.

We cooperate closely with EU Member States, the European Central Bank, Interpol and other partners to prevent and combat the forgery of money and disrupt the organised crime groups behind it.

Europol is involved in all major euro counterfeiting investigations in the EU, facilitating international cooperation, the exchange of criminal intelligence, providing technical and forensic support, and training.



The piracy and counterfeiting industry is estimated to be worth up to US \$200 billion and the goods produced cross every imaginable product sector. Counterfeit products are often inferior in quality, may be unsafe and even lethal, produced in sweat shops which are 'staffed' by children who are paid very little. Counterfeiting affects legitimate business, investment, innovation and jobs.

Europol's **intellectual property crime** (IPC) specialists support international IPC investigations with law enforcement and private sector partners, to protect consumers and identify the criminals behind these networks.

It is estimated that the illicit tobacco trade costs the EU around 10 billion euros annually in lost revenue. The vital revenue lost to **tobacco smuggling** could have been spent on essential public services such as schools, hospitals, roads and law enforcement. Illegal tobacco is produced with cheap materials, with little regard for health or quality controls, often resulting in a seriously unhealthy mix of chemicals and organic matter.

Europol assists customs and other law enforcement authorities to share intelligence, resulting in the detection of illicit cargo and identification of the organised crime groups involved.

The European Commission estimates that **VAT fraud** costs the EU at least 60 billion euros annually. Missing trader intra-community (MTIC) fraud is tax fraud carried out by criminals attacking the VAT regimes of EU countries.

A mutation from tangible goods-based fraud into service-based fraud has been experienced, with criminals involved in carbon credit fraud in the environmental/energy markets.

Europol supports EU Member States' investigations by coordinating operations and disseminating intelligence to identify the most prominent criminal targets and bring them to justice.

No crime is as borderless as **cybercrime**, with such investigations regularly involving hundreds of victims and suspects all over the world. In response to this growing threat, the European Cybercrime Centre (EC3) at Europol is the focal point in the EU's fight against cybercrime: pooling expertise and intelligence; supporting and mobilising law enforcement resources for investigations; building operational and analytical capacity; and promoting EU-wide solutions.

The EC3 team delivers high-level expertise through three specialist teams that focus on combating child sexual exploitation, payment card fraud and cybercrime, bringing cutting-edge support to EU law enforcement cybercrime investigations.



Mobile organised crime groups (MOCGs) operate with a high degree of flexibility and mobility in multiple jurisdictions and criminal sectors. Primarily involved in property crime or fraud, these criminals focus on activities such as: (armed) robberies; burglaries; organised shoplifting and pickpocketing; cargo and metal theft; cash machine and cash-in-transit attacks; theft of vehicles, trucks and heavy machinery from construction sites, and even theft of rhino horn.

Europol works closely on investigations with law enforcement agencies from the EU and beyond to identify and dismantle the criminal networks behind mobile organised crime.

Most cases investigated by law enforcement authorities have one common denominator – a financial motive for committing the crime. Europol helps to prevent and combat criminal **money laundering** activities through a dedicated operational analysis project.

The Europol Criminal Assets Bureau helps EU authorities to trace the proceeds of crime worldwide in investigations supported by Europol. Europol also hosts the secretariat of the Camden Assets Recovery Inter-Agency Network (CARIN), whose aim is to assist cross-border cooperation in tracing, freezing, seizing and confiscating criminal assets.

Terrorism continues to pose a threat to Europe, with extremist and terrorist groups active in the EU and impacting the lives of its citizens.

Europol assists EU Member States to conduct investigations in this area by providing intelligence exchange and support, and analytical products such as the annual EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT). We provide various tools and platforms to help experts work together and share knowledge in their diverse specialist areas.

Europol also exchanges intelligence on maritime piracy to identify the key perpetrators, logistical assets and financial flows linked to these criminal activities.

The aim of the **EU Policy Cycle on serious and organised crime (SOC)** is to tackle the most relevant criminal threats to the EU and to ensure a systematic approach by all EU actors to fight SOC.

The policy cycle starts with Europol's Serious & Organised Crime Threat Assessment (SOCTA) which delivers an in-depth analysis of the major crime threats and helps define priorities for the next four years. From this, coherent and robust action plans are developed from EMPACT projects, to define operational goals for combating each threat and to ensure effective cooperation between Europol, law enforcement and other partners. Major threats currently being tackled include crimes such as synthetic drugs, cybercrime and trafficking in human beings.