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Delegations will find in annex the report of the Heads JHA of Agencies meeting on 3 November 2014, submitted by European Asylum Support Office (EASO) which provided the secretariat of the Heads of JHA Agencies in 2014.

The EU Justice and Home Affairs Agencies' cooperation in 2014: working together to achieve common EU objectives

Setting the scene: the EU Agencies as key actors in the JHA field

The Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) field has experienced a profound transformation in the EU in the last two decades. Significant steps have been taken towards the development of an area of freedom, security and justice. The internal border controls in the Schengen area have been removed and an integrated management of the external borders has been promoted. A Common European Asylum System has been established while a Global Approach to Migration and Mobility has been developed. A more coordinated approach to police and judicial cooperation has been established removing obstacles to law enforcement cooperation between Member States and creating new instruments, such as the European Cybercrime Centre (EC3). An Internal Security Strategy, an EU strategy on drugs, an EU Directive on THB as well as the EU policy cycle on serious and organised crime have been adopted. The new trends in the JHA area have led to the setting up of large-scale IT systems (second-generation Schengen Information System, Visa information System and Eurodac, an IT system for asylum purposes), aiming to support the practical implementation of EU's policies in the area of police, border protection, migration and asylum. Finally, various measures to facilitate access to justice and promote full respect of fundamental rights have been implemented.

In this context, crucial developments took place during 2014 in the EU. Institutionally, a new European Parliament was elected, a new European Council President was designated and a new college of the European Commission was appointed. Regarding the policy developments in the JHA field in 2014, the European Commission adopted in March 2014 two Communications on justice and home affairs entitled, respectively, The EU Justice Agenda for 2020 – Strengthening Trust, Mobility and Growth within the Union and An open and secure Europe: making it happen, with a view to launching new, strategic ideas for the development of these policy areas in the years to come. The European Council subsequently adopted the strategic guidelines on the future development of the JHA area. In addition, the new Multiannual Financial Framework (2014-2020) entered into force.

Within this framework, the family of JHA Agencies (CEPOL, EASO, EIGE, EMCDDA, eu-LISA, Eurojust, Europol, FRA, and Frontex) have played a key role in supporting the implementation of the EU priorities and objectives in this area. The JHA Agencies have provided crucial operational and technical support to the Member States and the EU Institutions by generating, compiling and sharing expertise and knowledge and have helped to build a common European culture in the JHA area. Additionally, the JHA Agencies have also provided useful evidence-based input to the policy debate and the decision-making process. Furthermore, they have shown their ability to create synergies by fostering bilateral and multilateral (especially through the JHA Agencies' network) cooperation among themselves and with key stakeholders inside and outside the EU.

In 2014 EASO took over the Chair of the JHA Agencies' network. During this year, the JHA Agencies have focused their bilateral and multilateral activities around two main levels: the strategic and horizontal cooperation, on one side, and the operational cooperation on the other. The European Commission (both through DG Home Affairs and DG Justice as partner DGs) as well as the European External Action Service (EEAS) have been closely involved and have actively participated in the work of the JHA Agencies' network.

The aim of this report is to compile the main activities performed by the JHA Agencies' network and the results of their cooperation during 2014. This report will be presented to the Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation in Internal Security (COSI). It will be shared with the European Parliament and sent the European Commission. The report describes the key achievements by the JHA Agencies through their strategic, horizontal and operational cooperation.

Key achievements of the JHA Agencies cooperation in 2014

A significant number of activities have been planned and implemented throughout the year. The following sections outline the key achievements, a detailed summary of which is presented in the scorecard annexed to this report.

During 2014, the JHA Agencies have maintained permanent formal and informal contacts and held regular meetings regarding their activities. In order to further enhance their overall cooperation and coordination channels, three meetings of the JHA Contact Group were convened at the EASO Headquarters in Malta in January, April and September, whereas a meeting of the Heads of the JHA Agencies was organised in November.

In addition, five new instruments of bilateral cooperation entered into force in 2014: the Working Arrangement between Frontex and eu-LISA, the Working Arrangement between EASO and eu-LISA ¹, the Memorandum of Understanding between Eurojust and Frontex, the Memorandum of Understanding between Eurojust and FRA and the Memorandum of Understanding between Eurojust and EMCDDA. Finally, EASO and Frontex have been participating in their respective Consultative Fora as well as FRA, which also chaired the Frontex Consultative Forum in 2014.

a. Strategic and horizontal cooperation

1. Strategic guidelines for the development of the JHA area

In 2014, the JHA Agencies have devoted efforts to exchange views and coordinate their evidence-based input to the policy debate and decision-making process.

The Stockholm Programme and its Action Plan complete its five-year period at the end of 2014. As mentioned before, in its meeting of June 2014, the European Council adopted strategic guidelines for legislative and operational planning for the coming years in the JHA field ².

In preparation for that meeting, the Council of the EU was requested to undergo a process of reflection and the Commission was invited to present contributions. As part of this process, the Council of the EU held several meetings to discuss the future of the JHA policies. In the area of DG Home policies, the Commission carried out a public consultation process that attracted a vast number of contributions from national authorities of EU countries, NGOs, business, agencies and other stakeholders and organised a high-level conference which brought together a large spectrum of participants and high-level speakers who discussed future orientations and challenges of different areas of DG Home policies. In the area of DG Justice's policies, the Assises de la Justice conference - a forum on EU justice policies that sought to generate ideas which would contribute directly to shaping the European Union's justice policy over the coming years - generated a vast number of contributions from a wide range of stakeholders.

¹ The working arrangement between EASO and eu-LISA is planned to be signed on 4 November 2014.

² http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/143478.pdf

The Commission subsequently adopted two Communications on 11 March 2014 on Justice and Home affairs entitled, respectively, The EU Justice Agenda for 2020—Strengthening Trust, Mobility and Growth within the Union (COM (2014) 144)³ and An open and secure Europe: making it happen (COM (2014) 154)⁴. Finally, on 4 March 2014, the European Parliament adopted a report on the midterm review of the Stockholm Programme⁵.

In this context, the JHA Agencies, as EU operational actors and centres of expertise, were requested to provide their input to the future multiannual JHA programme and to analyse their role in the implementation of such a programme.

The JHA Agencies made individual contributions to the debate regarding specific thematic priorities in the multiannual JHA programme. In addition, the JHA Agencies network agreed to develop a joint document identifying which cross-cutting issues are of common interest and how could interagency cooperation help the effective implementation of the new programme. This common document of 27 February 2014⁶ highlights the fact that the JHA Agencies contribute to an area of freedom, security and justice focused on people. Moreover, it emphasises that the JHA Agencies support the coherent and effective implementation of the EU acquis and provide evidence-based input to policy and decision making. Additionally, their role in building a common EU culture in the JHA area based on mutual trust and close practical cooperation is underlined. The Agencies also point out that they promote solidarity and responsibility at operational level. Their contribution to increase the EU crisis prevention and management capacity and to support coherence between the internal and the external dimension in this field is stressed. Finally, the JHA Agencies emphasise their commitment to support the effective and efficient use of the new EU financial instruments in the JHA area and to foster synergies among themselves and with other stakeholders for strengthened coherence and consistency of policies and actions. The document containing the common general considerations was submitted to the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of the EU.

Furthermore, during the meeting of the Heads of the Agencies in November 2014, a joint statement entitled From strategic guidelines to actions: the contribution of the JHA Agencies to the practical development of the area of freedom, security and justice in the EU, was adopted. **[Hyperlink will be added].**

2. Review of the Internal Security Strategy

In 2014, the Internal Security Strategy established in 2010⁷ was subject to a review. To this effect, during 2014 the European Commission launched a wide public consultation process with all relevant stakeholders and organised a High-Level Conference on a Renewed EU Internal Security Strategy, hosted by the EU Committee of the Regions in September 2014. The Council of the EU and its bodies, particularly COSI, held discussions on the review of the Internal Security Strategy.

The JHA Agencies, many of whom directly involved in the implementation of the Internal Security Strategy, have actively participated in the debate and have been requested to provide evidence-based input to the review of the strategy.

³ http://ec.europa.eu/justice/effective-justice/files/com_2014_144_en.pdf

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/e-library/documents/basic-documents/docs/an_open_and_secure_europe_making_it_happen_en.pdf

⁵ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+REPORT+A7-2014-0153+0+DOC+PDF+VO//EN>

⁶ <http://easo.europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/JHA-Agencies-General-contribution-new-multiannual-JHA-programme1.pdf>

⁷ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0673:FIN:EN:PDF#page=2>

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/librairie/PDF/QC3010313ENC.pdf

The individual contributions provided by each of the Agencies were shared in the JHA Agencies network, and the role of the Agencies and the possibilities to cooperate in the implementation of the future Strategy were discussed and addressed in the joint statement of the Heads of the Agencies.

3. Coordinated programming and planning

Building on previous years' practice, during 2014 the JHA Agencies exchanged their draft annual and multiannual work programmes before their final adoption. Thus they have fostered further understanding on their priorities and detailed activities to promote synergies between their planned actions and avoid duplications while respecting each other's mandate.

References to joint activities performed by two or more JHA Agencies in fields of common interest have been consolidated in their respective programmes.

4. Communication activities

Communication has been identified as a key area of the JHA Agencies' horizontal cooperation. In 2014 particular attention has been dedicated to foster the Agencies' internal and external communication strategy and tools.

In this regard, the first meeting of the JHA press officers and communication multipliers was organised by EASO in March. Representatives from the communication departments of the Member States' authorities responsible for JHA issues, the European Commission and the JHA Agencies attended the meeting. The event provided the opportunity to share best practices on communication related to JHA issues and to gather inputs on how to enhance practical cooperation in this field.

A second achievement was the adoption and dissemination of The EU justice and home affairs agencies brochure⁸. The common booklet aims at strengthening public knowledge of the work of the JHA Agencies by providing an overview of the mission and tasks of each JHA Agency, in addition to a concise set of practical information.

Finally, a joint press release was issued on the occasion of the 8th Anti-Trafficking Day (18 October 2014) and the launch of the European Commission's Midterm report on the Implementation of the EU Strategy towards the eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings 2012-2016. This midterm report incorporates a report on joint actions by the JHA Agencies in the field of THB⁹.

b. Operational and practical cooperation

1. Information exchange, early warning and risk analysis

During 2014, the JHA Agencies have played a key role in promoting the exchange of information, with full respect of data protection standards, namely ensuring adequate protection of personal data, resulting in enhanced tools and products for early warning and risk analysis. A sophisticated EU intelligence sharing and information management structure is being further developed promoting the exchange of relevant information between Member States and the EU agencies. Greater

⁸ <http://easo.europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/JHA-Agencies-Brochure-Final.pdf>

⁹ <http://easo.europa.eu/latest-news/eu-agencies-issue-report-on-joint-actions-to-address-trafficking-in-human-beings/>

integration and interoperability of systems around a single central hub is being promoted, building on the European Information Exchange Model (EIXM). In the framework of DAPIX, Member States in cooperation with Europol, Frontex, Eurojust and eu-LISA as well as Interpol and OLAF are planning to take forward the third phase of the project on Unified Message Format (UMF3) allowing standardised queries into law enforcement databases and thus streamlined access to information.

Moreover, the JHA Agencies have continued the operational management, maintenance and development of critical Information Systems which underpin the area of freedom, justice and security, such as the Schengen Information System (SIS), the Visa Information System (VIS), Eurodac, the Europol Information System, the EU Early Warning System on new psychoactive substances and the preparation for the development of new systems such as the ones proposed in the Smart Borders Package.

In 2014, the JHA Agencies have increased the exchange of information among themselves. For instance, EASO and Europol have been invited to regularly participate in Frontex Risk Assessment Network (FRAN) and Bordernet meetings where the latest trends on the situation of the external borders are presented. Frontex and EASO, based on their risk assessment capacity and Early Warning and Preparedness System, respectively, have regularly exchanged their monthly and quarterly reports on the situation of the external borders and on asylum in the EU. Within the legal frameworks of their systems, Europol and Frontex made progress on the negotiation of an arrangement between both Agencies enabling the transmission of personal data.

Following the crisis in Ukraine, Frontex and EASO conducted a joint assessment on the impact of the crisis in the situation at the borders and the asylum systems. At the request of the European Commission, Frontex and EASO also developed ad hoc assessments on the potential impact of the application of visa liberalisation systems for Colombia, Peru and Georgia. EASO drafted an ad hoc report on the situation of asylum regarding Eritrean nationals which was shared with Frontex. The EASO quarterly reports have been also used by Europol in the elaboration of its Early Warning Notifications. Frontex and eu-LISA are regularly participating in the meetings of the intra-EU counterparts for the Early-Warning and Preparedness System convened by EASO. Eurojust and Europol have created a secure connection between both agencies which allows for a secure exchange of communications and operational information between both institutions. A similar arrangement has been implemented between Europol and Frontex. In order to further enhance inter-Agency information exchange, eu-LISA is currently investigating the possibilities of developing a structured information exchange of anonymous data generated by its systems with both Frontex and EASO with the aim of enriching the content of the risk analysis products.

Eurojust has been supporting Europol in the implementation of their connection to the SIS II database. Eurojust's source code for the search application was made available and the Memorandum of Understanding on sharing knowledge concerning the connection software to the second generation Schengen Information System (SIS II) database between Europol and Eurojust was signed at the end of 2014 by the two agencies. Europol has shared with the JHA Agencies Early Warning Notifications on a new trend related to victims of trafficking and organised criminal groups involved in marriages of convenience as well as on the exploitation of victims of trafficking in Pantomime activities. Only this year EMCDDA, in cooperation with Europol, issued around 100 early warnings on new psychoactive substances (NPS), published six Joint Reports on NPS¹⁰, which resulted in six risk assessment reports submitted to the Council of the EU and the European Commission. EMCDDA also co-organised with Europol the 3rd law enforcement expert meeting on NPS in September 2014.

¹⁰ <http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/activities/action-on-new-drugs>

JHA Agencies are increasingly involved in the Member States-led exercise EU Policy Cycle on organised and serious international crime, and since 2011 they contribute to a high number of actions, either as action leaders or as supporters. Actions are coordinated by the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT). For example CEPOL and Europol implemented 7 joint activities in 2014: on the judiciary/police cooperation front, CEPOL, Eurojust and the European Judicial Training Network (EJTN) delivered two residential courses and one webinar on Joint Investigation teams (JITs); one more JITs workshop for the signatory parties of the Police Cooperation Convention for South Eastern Europe was organised by CEPOL, EJTN, Eurojust and the French Police School. On the technical front, CEPOL and eu-LISA delivered training on the Schengen Information System (SIS). Europol, Eurojust, Frontex, eu-LISA, FRA, EMCDDA supported CEPOL training and learning activities involving their experts.

2. Asylum, migration and border management

Following the tragedy of 3 October 2013 when a boat carrying around 500 migrants sank off the coast of Lampedusa, the Task Force Mediterranean (TFM) was set up by the European Commission upon request of the Council, involving Member States, the European Commission, the European External Action Service (EEAS), EASO, Frontex, Europol, FRA, and EMSA aiming at preventing such human tragedies from happening again. In the framework of the European Commission Communication on the work of the TFM¹⁴, the JHA Agencies demonstrated enhanced coordination and flexibility which resulted in implementing significant actions. As an example, a pilot project is being developed by EASO, with the involvement of Europol, Eurojust and Frontex to collect information during the asylum process on the phenomenon of facilitators of irregular migrants and traffickers' routes and *modus operandi*. In order to facilitate operational cooperation against criminal groups facilitating illegal migration in the Mediterranean, a concept of a Joint Operational Team (JOT) was developed. In April 2014 the first JOT MARE meeting took place at the Europol headquarters with representatives of the most affected Member States and Frontex discussing proposals for the implementation of the envisaged operation related to the facilitation of irregular migration by sea.

In addition to the already mentioned coordinated efforts in the field of training and risk analysis, the JHA Agencies coordinated operational activities relevant to asylum, migration and border management in the context of the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT). Facilitated illegal immigration constitutes one of the priorities of EMPACT, for which Frontex is a Co-Driver with Europol, CEPOL and Eurojust also being involved.

Furthermore, EASO and Frontex made progress in the development of common identification and registration procedures organising two field exercises in Bulgaria and Poland. Frontex participated in the Operation Archimedes of Europol starting with two new projects, namely VEGA Children and Flight Tracking Project, and sharing the operational results from 15 ongoing Joint Operations with Europol and Member States. In 2014, Frontex, with the support of FRA, established a code of conduct for joint return operations, which foresees monitoring and other fundamental rights safeguards. Furthermore, in order to support the gradual development of an integrated border management approach and to develop a European border guard culture, Frontex, in collaboration with other JHA Agencies, designed a number of training tools for Member States. Tools such as the Common Core Curriculum or the Master's Program in Border Guarding are based on the Sectoral Qualifications Framework (SQF) and contributes to the harmonisation of border guard education at all levels. Specialised training modules, such as those related to detections of falsified documents,

¹⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-is-new/news/news/docs/20131204_communication_on_the_work_of_the_task_force_mediterranean_en.pdf.

detection of stolen vehicles, fundamental rights, anti-trafficking and others complement Frontex activities in this regard. To further enhance operational cooperation with regard to situational awareness of emerging trends and migration flows, Europol has participated in several Frontex-led Joint Operations with the Europol Mobile Unit.

Two regional training sessions were organised by EASO at Frontex Headquarters, with the additional participation of FRA, on the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), inclusion, interview techniques and evidence assessment. Further regional training is planned in November 2014 at the European Commission premises. During 2014, EASO and Frontex delivered joint training in Greece on the identification process within mixed migration flows. Moreover, EASO and FRA cooperated for the development of Frontex e-learning module on fundamental rights and EASO started discussions with Frontex and FRA to develop a common training module on International Refugee Law and Fundamental Rights in 2015. As regards exchange of knowledge and expertise, FRA, with the support of Frontex and EASO, carried out research on the situation of fundamental rights at EU's air and land borders¹². Results of this research were presented at the annual Fundamental Rights Conference, held by FRA, in close cooperation with the Italian Presidency and the active involvement of Frontex, EASO and EIGE. EASO and Frontex also contributed to the joint FRA-European Court of Human Rights Handbook on European law in the field of asylum, borders and immigration¹³, which was recently updated, published in 11 EU languages and widely disseminated in the JHA network.

eu-LISA is currently planning, in cooperation with the stakeholders (in particular the Commission, the Member States and Frontex), the implementation of the pilot project, entrusted to it by the Commission, for the technical implementation of the Smart Borders Package (including the Entry/Exit System and the Registered Travellers programme). The Smart Borders will further support EU's concept on Integrated Border Managements, taking into account the implications of Smart Borders on the fundamental rights and data protection dimensions. This pilot on Smart Borders Package and its direct connection to the border management system acts as a catalyst between Frontex and eu-LISA, aiming at contributing, also through use of new technologies, to the efficiency of border management.

With regard to the Schengen evaluation mechanism, Europol, CEPOL, eu-LISA and Frontex, with the support of FRA, contributed to the training of Schengen evaluators, providing assessments, which should guide the evaluators and indicate fields requiring further improvements. Finally, Eurosur, thanks to a successful inter-agency cooperation, reached the cruising speed in its development and security, taking up active part in the operational integrated business processes in border management increasing situational awareness and response capacity at EU external borders.

3. Trafficking in human beings

The multilateral cooperation among JHA Agencies achieved successful results in the field of Trafficking in Human Beings (THB), in particular in the context of the implementation of the Joint Statement 'Together against Trafficking in Human Beings' signed by Heads of JHA Agencies on the occasion of the 5th EU Anti-Trafficking Day on 18 October 2011.

At strategic level and in order to ensure synergies and avoid a duplication of effort, during 2014, three coordination meetings of THB contact persons were organised by the Office of the EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator in DG Home Affairs of the European Commission. The meetings focused on the joint actions and individual activities undertaken by the JHA Agencies in the context of the implementation of the EU strategy towards the eradication of THB 2012-2016. As a result, the JHA

¹² Hyperlink will be available beginning of November

¹³ <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2013/handbook-european-law-relating-asylum-borders-and-immigration>

Agencies contributed to the Midterm report on the implementation of the said THB Strategy coordinated by the European Commission with a joint report of their activities in this field. The mid-term report was presented on the eve of this year's 8th EU Anti-Trafficking Day.

At operational level, progress has been made in the implementation of the Operational Action Plan EMPACT on THB. Frontex has updated the Handbook on Risk Profiles on THB 2014 and made it available on the Europol Platform of Experts (EPE). Additionally, thematic expert meetings were organised by EASO and by Europol with the participation of other JHA Agencies. Eurojust started the planning of a strategic seminar on THB to be held in 2015, which is part of the Eurojust THB project aiming at identifying and addressing difficulties in international judicial cooperation in THB.

Moreover, as part of the EU Policy Cycle on serious and Organised Crime Operational Action Plan, CEPOL updated its common curriculum on THB and aligned it with its THB e-learning module, all in synergy with the other Agencies. CEPOL delivered 2 courses and 2 webinars on THB in cooperation with experts from Europol and FRA. FRA, in close cooperation with European Commission and the EU Anti-Trafficking Office, developed a Handbook on guardianship for children deprived of parental care¹⁴ and finalised studies on victims' support services and on severe forms of labour exploitation – both prepared in consultation with other JHA Agencies.

In 2014 Europol, in cooperation with Eurojust, supported 4 Joint Investigation Teams targeting trafficking networks operating in the EU. Moreover, Europol and Eurojust are officially associated to the first trilateral JIT set up in the field of THB, and two agencies have been actively supporting two IFS-funded operational projects focusing on the most prominent third-country nationals victims of trafficking into the EU. In 2014, Eurojust was involved in 11 active JITs in THB cases in total.

In September 2014, Europol organised a Joint Day of Action under Operation Archimedes targeting criminals engaged in serious and organised crime, including human trafficking. Frontex and Eurojust also provided support to the operational activities undertaken in the MS.

Europol contributed to the CEPOL THB training course held in Lithuania in May 2014.

4. Organised crime, including drug trafficking, terrorism and other forms of crime

In 2014 the implementation of the first four-year EU Policy Cycle on serious and organised crime was initiated. The nine priorities that were agreed by the Council in 2013 are addressed in twelve Operational Action Plans (OAPs) in the European Multidisciplinary Plan Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT).

In this context, the JHA Agencies have implemented a number of important joint actions in the different areas related to crime, particularly organised crime, drug trafficking and terrorism.

Active cooperation and pooling of evidence and expertise was achieved to counter hate crime more effectively, particularly in the context of the European Law Enforcement Training Scheme (LETS). CEPOL, in cooperation with FRA, held training seminars addressing hate crime reporting and recording as well as law enforcement response to bias-motivated crimes targeting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons.

FRA has conducted the first ever EU-wide survey exploring women's experiences of violence, with inputs from EIGE as part of the expert group assigned to follow the survey. FRA also supported training carried out by other JHA agencies in the field of organised crime with ad hoc advice and

¹⁴ <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/guardianship-children-deprived-parental-care-handbook-reinforce-guardianship>

expertise, but also through thematic handbooks, such as the Handbook on Data Protection¹⁵ and the Fundamental rights-based police training manual¹⁶.

Fruitful multilateral synergies were developed for the implementation of the Operational Action Plan in the framework of EMPACT while Europol and Eurojust continued to cooperate as regards the promotion of support for the setting up and running of Joint Investigation Teams (JITs). Both agencies regularly inform each other on JITs supported by them, and closely cooperate with the JITs Network Secretariat for the organisation of the annual meeting of the Network of National Experts on JITs. Furthermore, Europol issued the European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2014 (TE-SAT) including contributions from Eurojust.

Given the cross-sectorial nature of the fight against organised crime, enhanced operational cooperation between Frontex, Europol and Eurojust should be fostered. In this regard, Frontex and Europol initiated discussions to revise their working arrangement also allowing for the exchange of personal data. CEPOL supports all Policy Cycle priorities with training and learning portfolios. In total 32 activities have been implemented (18 courses and 14 webinars). All actions are implemented in line with Operational Action Plans. CEPOL works closely with Europol, Eurojust, Frontex, EMCDDA in the delivery of these activities. CEPOL supported Europol operations with two webinars on the new EMPACT financing mechanism.

During 2014 EMCDDA closely collaborated with Europol to develop joint analysis for the second EU drugs market report¹⁷ and the Threat Assessment Report on Methamphetamine. Collaboration between EMCDDA, Europol and other relevant agencies including Eurojust, in developing drug supply and supply reduction indicators, continued through the development of the monitoring tools and databases for drug production sites and active work of the EU reference group on drug supply data. As part of its strategic project on enhancing the work of Eurojust in drug trafficking cases, in September 2014 Eurojust, with the participation of EMCDDA and Europol, organised a strategic seminar on drug trafficking focused on judicial aspects of drug trafficking, including NPS. Synthetic drugs as well as cocaine and heroin are EMPACT priorities in which Europol, CEPOL, Eurojust and EMCDDA are actively involved.

Furthermore, in November 2014 the relevant JHA agencies participated in the strategic meeting on Cybercrime and in the annual strategic and tactical meeting on terrorism organised by Eurojust. Others tangible results of the JHA Agencies cooperation in 2014 were the initiative by CEPOL, Europol and Eurojust to develop a cybercrime training competency framework, currently being finalised. Further achievements also concerned the European Cybercrime Centre (EC3) of Europol, which is the European Union's focal point in the fight against cybercrime; indeed, CEPOL, ENISA and Eurojust participated in the Steering Board, and Europol and Eurojust have agreed on the temporary placement of a representative from Eurojust at the EC3.

Apart from the areas described above, the JHA Agencies were actively involved in all the other priorities defined under the Policy Cycle. Europol is a Co-Driver for the priority on Counterfeits Goods, while CEPOL and Eurojust are also actively involved. Europol, CEPOL and Eurojust participate in EMPACT activities against Excise Fraud as well as MTIC (Missing Trader Intra-Community) fraud. Europol is Co-Driver for the priority on Cybercrime, which covers Card Fraud, Child Sexual Exploitation and Cyber Attacks, while CEPOL and Eurojust are also involved in EMPACT activities against the three cybercrime phenomena. Europol, CEPOL and Eurojust are also involved in the remaining EMPACT priorities, namely, Firearms and Organised Property Crime.

¹⁵ <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/handbook-european-data-protection-law>

¹⁶ <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2013/fundamental-rights-based-police-training-manual-police-trainers>

¹⁷ <http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/joint-publications/drug-markets>

5. Training to build a common EU culture

Common training is crucial to enhance mutual trust between all the professionals in the JHA field at national and EU level as it is the best way to promote common operational practice. A genuine common European culture can only be built on the basis of fundamental rights, common values, shared ethical and professional standards as well as mutual trust between all the professionals in the JHA area at national and EU level. To build this common EU culture, exchange of experiences and good practices, as well as common training and common information which is easily accessible to practitioners across the EU, are essential.

The JHA Agencies have followed a coordinated approach, in line with the approach featured in the Commission Communication on the LETS, in order to promote synergies and to increase the focus on quality. In addition, further to the Commission's proposal for a new Regulation on CEPOL, equipping the Agency with the means to start implementing the LETS, CEPOL will be able to effectively take over its coordinating role by delivering quality, avoiding overlaps and bringing coherence in terms of law enforcement training on EU level.

In 2014, the JHA Agencies exchanged their training programmes in order to promote synergies concerning training activities in areas of common interest and CEPOL fostered cooperation with other authorities as well, including customs. A comprehensive overview of the Agencies' training activities was developed through the elaboration of a training matrix. The matrix constituted both a tool enabling information exchange on training activities as well as an operational tool to further coordinate and plan training activities in the upcoming year, pooling resources and avoiding overlapping. The matrix is hosted on CEPOL's platform and has been regularly updated by the JHA Agencies in 2014.

A JHA Agencies' training coordination meeting was organised at the EASO Headquarters in April. The meeting offered the opportunity to exchange best practices on training methodologies, didactic methods and e-learning solutions, and to discuss accreditation and certification as well as effective evaluation of training initiatives.

Moreover, Frontex assisted EASO in developing its accreditation and certification process, CEPOL shared the Common Curriculum with Eurojust, CEPOL and eu-LISA contributed to training delivery for national SIRENE officers and Europol supported 35 CEPOL and joint CEPOL-Europol activities. Finally, on the front of collaborative new learning methodologies, CEPOL organised 19 webinars in cooperation with the other JHA agencies, in particular Europol which provided a number of speakers, while CEPOL and eu-LISA collaboration resulted in CEPOL hosting on its e-Net platform eu-LISA's Training Platform.

6. External dimension

The JHA external dimension contributes to the area of freedom, security and justice and at the same time supports the EU external relations policy and objectives. The internal and the external dimensions in the JHA field are closely interlinked. Migration, asylum, border management, judicial cooperation, the fight against organised crime and the prevention of drug trafficking cannot be understood without taking into consideration cooperation with third countries.

The events of 2014, with the situation in countries like Ukraine, Syria and Iraq, as well as other neighbouring countries underlined even further the importance of coordination amongst all EU actors involved in the JHA external dimension to ensure greater EU added value and efficient use of resources.

The JHA Agencies operate with full respect of the EU institutional context and within the framework of the EU external relations policy. In this sense, other EU Institutions and bodies play a crucial role in the external dimension of the JHA area, particularly the Commission and the EEAS.

In this context many of the JHA Agencies have played a significant role during 2014 in supporting the implementation of external actions in agreement with the European Commission and in coordination with the European External Action Service (EEAS). In this regard, many of the JHA Agencies have engaged in cooperation and capacity-building activities (i.e. delivering training, sharing expertise, providing technical assistance, including the establishment, operational management and use of specialised IT systems, and promoting fundamental rights) in key third countries.

In line with their mandates, the JHA Agencies have proven to be an essential instrument contributing to the objectives of the EU external relations policy, such as the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility.

During 2014 the JHA Agencies' network promoted the exchange of their respective external relations strategies. In addition, a regular exchange of information was fostered, mainly through the update and further development of a RELEX matrix. The matrix gives an overview of the diversified set of cooperation instruments existing at bilateral level among the different JHA Agencies and between the JHA Agencies and third countries or International Organisations. In addition, the matrix provides the updated list of technical cooperation projects undergoing implementation, including information on thematic areas, activity focus and funding sources. Furthermore, during 2014 the JHA contact list for external relations matters was consolidated.

In 2014 EASO and Frontex launched their first joint cooperation project with Tunisia and Morocco. The project, funded by the European Neighbouring and Partnership Instrument, aims at building the capacity of the targeted partner countries in the field of asylum, migration and border management. In the Neighbourhood region, the JHA Agencies' cooperation with third countries is aligned with the 'more for more' principle established by the European Council strategic guidelines, according to which support to neighbourhood countries is adapted in accordance with their progress in building democracy and implementing agreed reform objectives.

Furthermore, on 23 October 2014 the European Commission convened the first internal coordination meeting on JHA agencies' activities in the external dimension with the participation of relevant Commission services, the EEAS and the JHA Agencies. The meeting facilitated the exchange of information on the policy priorities and legal frameworks, as well as the promotion of best practices when coordinating the external actions of JHA agencies and their involvement in EU-funded external assistance projects. The European Commission, and in particular the partner DGs of the JHA agencies (DG HOME and DG JUST), will ensure appropriate follow-up in view of increasing policy coherence between the JHA agencies' contributions in relation to the external dimension.

c. Perspectives for 2015

The Heads of the JHA Agencies agreed that in 2015 and 2016 the network will be chaired by eu-LISA and FRA respectively. The network will continue to prioritise strategic and operational cooperation, contributing in 2015 to the review of the Internal Security Strategy and bringing synergies to implement the strategic guidelines on the future development of the JHA area, especially in the field of training and exchange of information and analysis. The study of the phenomenon of foreign fighters as well as the cooperation regarding Smart Borders have been identified as one specific topic which will receive particular attention by the JHA Agencies' network. Furthermore, in 2015 the JHA Agencies will further strengthen their efficient cooperation, exploring the use of ICT solutions

and related economies of scale and joint projects. Finally, the Agencies will further develop their external communication in order to increase their visibility and will continue to provide evidence based input and assessments to the policy makers in the areas in the remit of the JHA Agencies.
