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## Ministers commit to reinforcing Europol's counter-terrorism capabilities

Following the horrific attacks in Paris on Friday 13 November, Europol continues to provide 24/7 support to the counter-terrorist investigations in France and Belgium. This includes following up on investigative leads from Europol's intelligence databases, facilitating cooperation via Europol's in-house network of liaison officers from nearly 40 countries, and contributing specific expertise on various aspects of the case.

These attacks were supported by an international network of perpetrators, spanning multiple countries," says Rob Wainwright, Europol's Director. "As such, they represent a serious escalation of the terrorist threat within the EU."

Europol therefore welcomes the reinforcement of its counter-terrorism capabilities agreed by EU Justice and Home Affairs Ministers at their meeting in Brussels today. Building on existing activities, Europol will launch the European Counter Terrorist Centre (ECTC) on 1 January 2016 as a platform by which Member States can increase information sharing and operational coordination, focusing on foreign terrorist fighters, the trafficking of illegal firearms and terrorist financing. Member States will second counter-terrorism experts to the ECTC to form an enhanced cross-border investigation support unit, capable of providing quick and comprehensive support to the investigation of major terrorist incidents in the EU.

Mr Wainwright concluded: "Today, Ministers have undertaken to provide the necessary resources for the ECTC, to second counter-terrorist officers to work together under one roof, and to share all relevant information with Europol. We will make sure that Member States see a return on that investment through our reinforced support to their investigations."

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