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NOTE

From:	Europol
To:	Delegations
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Subject:	Europol's contribution on its short-term activities in the implementation of the Roadmap on information exchange and interoperability

Delegations will find enclosed the contribution of Europol on its short-term activities in the implementation of the Roadmap to enhance information exchange and information management including interoperability solutions in the Justice and Home Affairs area.

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EUROPOL

Short-term activities by Europol in implementation of the Roadmap to enhance information exchange and information management including interoperability solutions in the JHA area

The Slovak Presidency of the Council of the EU invited Europol to provide an overview of measures to be undertaken by the end of 2016 in implementation of the Roadmap to enhance information exchange and information management including interoperability solutions in the JHA area.[1]

Due account should be given to the fact that the business planning at Europol for 2016 had been completed prior to the adoption of the Roadmap by the Council on 10 June 2016 and that internal considerations with regard to the implementation of the Europol Regulation are still on-going.

The list below aims at providing the requested overview. Reference is made to the specific activities of the Roadmap (RM). Europol can provide more detailed information on the respective points, if required.

1.   High-level expert group of the Commission (RM 1 and cross-cutting)

Europol is supporting the work of the high-level expert group and will contribute to all three sub-groups.

2.   Interoperability solutions, "Universal Message Format" (UMF) (RM 4 and 5)

Europol is supporting the UMF-3 project to enhance and extend the implementation of a structured data format for exchanging cross-border law enforcement information that was established under the previous UMF projects. This includes the pilot project QUEST which will make it possible for Member States to also include Europol systems as part of integrated searches in (inter)national systems.

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[1] Council doc. 9368/1/16

Current discussions with the Commission and INTERPOL aim at agreeing on one data exchange format for firearms to be consistently used by all UMF partners. This would enhance interoperability of systems and subsequently facilitate the possibility for frontline investigators in MS to run searches on firearms in SISII, iARMS, Europol and national systems in one single search.

Reflections on launching a UMF-4 project are planned to be started. This should take into account the enhanced level of ambition for the development of interoperability solutions following the Roadmap.

3. Schengen Information System (SIS II) (RM 10, 11, 12, 22 and 25)

Europol is improving its technical capabilities to enable a systematic cross-matching of SIS alerts against Europol systems. A batch search mechanism is currently under development that is planned to be available by the end of 2016.

The planned legal revision of the SIS framework should take into account the business needs of Europol with regard to extending the access rights to alerts on missing persons and on persons refused entry or stay in the Schengen territory and it should facilitate the systematic cross-matching of biographic and biometric data against Europol systems.

Europol could also support Member States, if it is mandated to insert data received from third countries in the SIS. Moreover Europol is willing to contribute to a business assessment for establishing a consistent procedure to ensure the most effective follow-up to SIS alerts, including by systematically sharing relevant data with Europol and facilitating the exchange of all information related to hits via SIENA.

4. VIS and EURODAC (RM 10, 48, and 49)

Europol is preparing business requirements for the connection and use of VIS and EURODAC. Based on practical use cases, the business opportunities of increased use of existing possibilities will be highlighted, as well as suggestions made for further extension of the access to data in these systems. As currently both databases provide for very strict purpose limitations that impede the usability for Europol, law enforcement needs should be adequately reflected in the expected legislative review of the VIS framework and in the negotiations of the EURODAC Regulation.

5. Prüm framework (RM 13)

Europol will prepare a business case to help explore the possibility to become an information exchange partner in the Prüm framework. Such access would enable Europol to support MS with cross-checking data from prioritized cases received from Third Parties with MS data (DNA/fingerprints of convicted/suspected persons) and possibly identify new links that can supply relevant information to on-going cases.

6. Automation of Data Exchange Process (ADEP) (RM 16)

Europol is supporting the ADEP project, in particular with a view to ensure interoperability and complementarity with Europol systems and tools, including the storage of linked information in the EIS and the exchange of information as follow-up to identified matches.

7. Three-tier information sharing approach (RM 30)

Europol will continuously engage in assessing and promoting the opportunities of implementing a consistent three-tier information sharing approach regarding foreign terrorist fighters. Making the best use of SIS II, EIS and AWF would help close information gaps and further enhance the operational support capabilities of Europol in the counter-terrorism area.

8. Secure Information Exchange Network Application (SIENA) (RM 31)

Europol will continue the roll-out of SIENA to competent authorities including counter-terrorism units in the Member States; will conclude the upgrading of SIENA to the confidentiality level of EU CONFIDENTIAL/UE CONFIDENTIEL by October 2016 and is working further on the extension of the SIENA web services.

9. Eurojust association to FP HYDRA (RM 33)

The agreement to associate Eurojust to Focal Point HYDRA within the AWF Counter-terrorism was concluded in July 2016.

10. Passenger Name Records (PNR) (RM 37, 39 and 40)

Europol will contribute to the work of the operational PNR informal Working Group and is offering support to the EU level discussions regarding the interoperability of the EU Member States' Passenger Information Units (PIUs). Europol will prepare a proposal on how the organisation can support the national PIUs in the most effective way, including in relation to information sharing and development of targeting rules (both national and supra-national).

11. Support to EU RTF and migrant hotspots (RM 44 and 45)

Europol is committed to continuously support the work against migrant smuggling networks by deploying staff and equipment, and by implementing the guest officer concept for secondary security checks.

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