

5958/99

LIMITE

CRIMORG 22

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

of: Multidisciplinary Group on Organised Crime - Meeting of the Contact and Support Network

on : 8 January 1999

1. Adoption of the Agenda

The Agenda as set out in Telex no 5787 of 15 December 1998 was adopted.

2. Discussion of procedure for the 1998 Organised Crime Situation Report

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The Presidency outlined the procedure that it wished to introduce to the Group concerning the working programme and timetable in order to improve the 1998 Organised Crime Situation Report and to avoid time delays in completing this year's report.

Europol informed the delegations of its experiences in compiling the 1997 report and informed participants of its experiences with the European Union Report on Organised Crime and highlighted the main issues that had arisen. Furthermore, it explained the lessons that had been learnt and could be taken forward and highlighted several areas that would require improvement to ensure that the 1998 report would be both more timely and meaningful.

In particular Europol stressed the need for Member States to adopt a common structure in respect of their national contributions and to adhere to the timetable for the submission of contributions. A further development of the national contact points was also required in order to reflect all agencies' contributions to the national report. In addition Member States were encouraged to submit both a detailed report and a summarised version to allow Europol to utilise its resources for the analysis of all the contributions.

To elaborate on the development of the cross checking mechanism Europol made further proposals to extend the mechanism building on the experiences gained in the previous report.

The UK delegation welcomed the proposals from Europol as a positive step forward and underlined the need for Member States to contribute two versions of their report to Europol. Furthermore it emphasised the necessity of utilising the input of academics in the process.

The French delegation raised the question of the possibility of translating the national contributions into all official languages.

The Netherlands delegation supported the role of Europol in respect of the cross checking mechanism. However, it was concerned that in order to do this effectively Europol would need access to operational data which would raise issues of a procedural nature. It suggested that this matter should be referred to the Multidisciplinary Group.

Portugal and Sweden also raised the matter of the use of experts and scientists in providing a strategic overview but stressed the need for specific guidelines as to the scope of their work if this approach were adopted.

To assist delegations, Europol proposed the formation of an experts group in order that national contributions could be discussed prior to being forwarded to the Contact and Support Network. This would ensure that any practical and specific issues could be dealt with at these meetings.

Europol made a further contribution to the implementation plan of the 1997 Organised Crime Situation Report recommendations and explained the need to address the 1997 recommendations. As a first step in doing this, Europol had drawn up a schedule containing a plan of action and follow-up.

The Presidency stressed that this was a fundamental approach in order that work could commence forthwith on the implementation of the recommendations and it welcomed comments from Member States on the content to be forwarded to Europol by the end of January 1999. It was agreed that a document would subsequently be prepared by Europol incorporating these comments to be available for the proposed experts meeting to be held in February 1999.

The Presidency then introduced document 14385/98 CRIMORG 205 "Discussion paper from Germany/Europol - Suggestions for improving the EU Situation report on Organised Crime". While there was general support for the document Member States reserved the right to obtain experts' opinions. It was agreed that Member States would submit the document to their respective experts in order that a full discussion could take place at the forthcoming meeting on 9/10 February 1999. Europol stated that it would forward an agenda for that meeting to delegations the following week.

3. Any other business

The UK delegation informed Member States of strategic studies carried out by N.C.I.S. and encouraged them to make available similar information.