

25 June 2025

Consolidated Annual Activity Report

2024

Europol Public Information

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ABAC	Accrual Based ACcounting
CEPOL	European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training
DPF	Data Protection Function
DSC	Data Subject Categorisation
EC3	European Cybercrime Centre
ECA	European Court of Auditors
ECTC	European Counter Terrorism Centre
EDPS	European Data Protection Supervisor
EEAS	European External Action Service
EFEC	European Financial and Economic Crime Centre
EIS	Europol Information System
EMPACT	European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats
EMSC	European Migrant Smuggling Centre
EPE	Europol Platform for Experts
EPPO	European Public Prosecutor's Office
ESOCC	European Serious and Organised Crime Centre
EUIPO	European Union Intellectual Property Office
EUIRU	European Union Referral Unit
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
HVT	High Value Target
IAC	Internal Audit Capability
IAS	Internal Audit Service
ICS	Internal Control Systems
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
JPSG	Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group on Europol
OAC	Operational and Analysis Centre
OLAF	European Anti-Fraud Office
OTF	Operational Task Force
OSINT	Open-Source Intelligence
QUEST	QUery Europol SysTems
SIENA	Secure Information Exchange Network Application
SNE	Seconded National Expert
WCO	World Customs Organization

Management Board's analysis and assessment

The Management Board of Europol (MB) takes note of the Consolidated Annual Activity Report (CAAR) for the year 2024, submitted by the Executive Director of Europol in accordance with Article 16(5)(g) of the Europol Regulation and Article 48 of the Financial Regulation applicable to Europol.

In analysing and assessing this Report, the MB notes that it contains a comprehensive account of the activities carried out by Europol in implementing its mandate in 2024.

The MB commends the Agency for its operational achievements and for its outstanding performance, mostly exceeding yearly targets, in spite of a challenging geopolitical context and an ever-evolving criminal landscape, and a steadily growing demand from the Member States' law enforcement authorities and other key stakeholders.

Against this background, the MB expresses its appreciation for the efforts deployed by the Agency in implementing the operational and strategic priorities set under Europol's Strategy "Delivering Security in Partnership", and for continuously seeking efficiency gains.

Further, the MB congratulates Europol on the activities and projects developed to promote innovation and technological developments for the benefit of competent national authorities, in strict compliance with all applicable requirements, including with regard to the Artificial Intelligence Act.

The release of the first iteration of the Europol Innovation & Research Sandbox, the increase in the number of tools available on the Europol Tool Repository, and the further expansion of Europol's related services, are tangible examples of the results achieved in this area.

With regard to EU Interoperability, the MB notes the constraints resulting from the repeated revisions of the official timeline and the consequent postponement of the entry into operation of the relevant information systems, and commends Europol's resilience.

The MB also praises Europol for its continued assistance to the Member States and the Schengen Associated Countries in implementing the Information Exchange Directive, which became applicable, for most of the provisions, in 2024, in close coordination with the European Commission.

Further, the MB commends Europol for the initiative launched in 2024 to assist the national competent authorities in navigating through an increasingly complex EU legal and policy Information Management landscape.

The Topic Oriented Workshops organised by Europol in several areas, including the Information Exchange Directive, Biometrics, Standardisation and Automation, continued to prove an appropriate tool for enabling exchange of experiences and practices between national experts; promoting a common understanding of the applicable legal framework; and advancing innovation and information management capabilities at national level.

Pertaining to Europol's operational delivery, the MB wishes to emphasise the significant growth of the activities performed during the year 2024, as illustrated, for instance, by the overall increase in the number of operations supported, well-above the yearly targets; the improvement in the SIENA first-line response (3.2 days against 4.2 days in 2023); and the greater number of operational analysis reports (366 in 2024 against 275 in 2023), notwithstanding a slight decrease in the number of strategic analysis reports, falling below the yearly target.

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Besides, the increase in the number of received operational contributions, in particular within the mandate of the ECTC and the EFEC (a 67% and 12% increase respectively), illustrates the dynamism and trust underlying Europol's cooperation with the Member States.

The MB acknowledges the major focus put by each Europol operational centre on the OTFs concept. Overall, Europol supported a significant number of OTFs, leading to important operational results for the involved national competent authorities in several crime areas. The OTFs constitute an essential tool for the national competent authorities and Europol to fulfil their respective mandates and to implement the priorities laid down in Europol's overarching "Delivering Security in Partnership" Strategy.

The MB welcomes the important operational results achieved in partnership with key third countries, international organisations and Justice and Home Affairs Agencies, and note the increasing cooperation with the European Public Prosecutor Office (EPPO), as reflected by the steady growth of cases supported by Europol.

In this context, the MB takes note, amongst others, of the close coordination established between Europol and Eurojust, well-reflected in the "notable operational results" reported by the Europol operational centres, as well as in several projects of strategic relevance. It also notes Europol's active support to the Joint Investigation Team on alleged core international crimes committed in Ukraine.

The MB welcomes the significant progress achieved with regard to SIENA, which is bound to become the by-default security communication channel for the exchange of information between the law enforcement authorities of the EU Member States and the Schengen Associated Countries. The progress achieved is instrumental to such evolution, for instance: the continued increase in the number of messages exchanged through SIENA, reaching over 2 million in 2024, the highest number to date, and in the number of connected competent authorities, 18.6% more than in 2023.

Notwithstanding the significant results and high-performance levels achieved by Europol in 2024, the MB notes that:

- The overall users' satisfaction with the operational support delivered by the Agency remained essentially stable across the centres;
- Resource pressure affected the ICT delivery and led, amongst others, to descope developments of significant operational relevance.

The MB commends Europol for the progress made in budget implementation, resulting from a sound and efficient management of resources, as well as from effective planning and monitoring:

- Europol achieved a rate of 99.9% of budget execution over a € 220.2M budget, and an overall payment rate of 89%, higher than in 2023;
- The percentage of late payments amounted in value to 0.6% of total payments and remained well below the ceiling of 5%. This represented a significant improvement as compared to the previous year, when such percentage reached 2.2%;
- The vacancy rate reached 1.2%, while the ceiling envisages a maximum of 2%. This number has substantially decreased as compared to 2023 (1.7%).

Further, Europol maintained, and improved in some instances, its high governance, internal control and compliance standards:

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- The European Parliament granted discharge to the Executive Director for the implementation of the budget for the financial year 2022;
- There were no critical findings by the Internal Audit Service, nor material observations by the European Court of Auditors. The European Ombudsman did not identify instances of maladministration at Europol;
- Europol implemented 89% of the critical or very important recommendations of the Internal Audit Capability envisaged for 2024.

The MB wishes to commend Europol and the MB-related Functions for their unwavering efforts in developing close and constructive relationships with the relevant supervisory authorities. On the other hand, the MB notes the challenges posed by enhanced supervision and the resulting need to preserve operational efficiency and to manage excessive strain on Europol's limited resources.

The MB acknowledges the central role entrusted to Europol under the ProtectEU Strategy, in line with President von der Leyen's Political Guidelines, aiming to "make Europol a truly operational police agency and more than double its staff over time" while providing for a strengthened mandate and oversight.

Against this background, it is indeed crucial to enable a sustainable growth of Europol.

The MB stresses the importance of securing the Agency's budgetary needs by providing it with sufficient resources, to be adequately reflected not only in the next Multiannual Financial Framework as of 2028, but also in the preceding annual budgets.

Adequate resources are indispensable to ensure that Europol may not only fulfil its mission to fight serious organised crime, cybercrime and terrorism, but also meet the expectations deriving from its role in protecting the EU Internal Security, a responsibility meant to grow further in the future.

To conclude, the MB takes note that the Executive Director has no critical issues to report that would affect the presentation of the annual accounts for the financial year 2024 to the discharge authority.

The Board hereby attaches its analysis and assessment to the CAAR 2024 for submission to the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission, the European Court of Auditors, the national parliaments and the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group, in accordance with Articles 11(1)(c) and 51(3)(d) of the Europol Regulation, and Article 48(2) of the Financial Regulation applicable to Europol.

For the Management Board,



Ireneusz Sieńko
Chairperson
25 June 2025

Executive Summary

Europol Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Progress to implement the Europol Strategy 'Delivering Security in Partnerships' has been made across all strategic priorities in 2024. Key highlights include: the reinforcement of the Operational Task Force concept, integration and coordination work on Artificial Intelligence, the External Relations Strategy 2025+, a first draft of the strategy on cooperation with private parties; a first version of the Research and Innovation Sandbox and activities to nurture and promote innovation.
Operational delivery
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Europol accepted 114,459 operational contributions in 2024 and supported 3,324 operations.- The speed of SIENA first line response averaged at 3.2 days in 2024, for a number of 22,644 first-line requests closed during the reporting period. 13,262 SIENA messages were exchanged with the SIRENE Bureaux.- In 2024, Europol coordinated 432 Action Days, which led to 4,124 arrests and over € 1.4B worth of assets seized.- During the reporting period, Europol provided support to 65 Operational Task Forces (OTFs). Out of these, 44 have been supported by ESOCC, three by EC3, eight by ECTC and ten by EFECC.- In terms of operational products, Europol produced 21,281 operational reports in 2024, including 13,409 Cross Match Reports and SIENA hit notifications.- Furthermore, during the reporting period, Europol produced 29 Strategic Analysis Reports and 366 Operational Analysis Reports. The user satisfaction with the Operational Support delivered by Europol, as well as the satisfaction with the Operational Training activities organised for EU MS during this period, reached 9.4/10.
Core Operational Information capabilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The availability of core operational systems reached an average of 99.6% during the year.- Over 2 million SIENA messages were exchanged in 2024, and over 169K SIENA cases were initiated. 20% of the SIENA messages received by Europol contained structured data.- More than 3,500 Competent Authorities from MS and TP were connected to SIENA at the end of the year.- During the reporting period, more than 12.7M searches were performed in EIS and QUEST, and over 2.1M files were exchanged via the Large File Exchange (LFE).- As every year, the ICT Work Plan was complex and ambitious, with the aim to deliver business value to all stakeholders, both internal and external. While several milestones were achieved, resource pressures in 2024 resulted in the re-baselining of the plan through several measures identified, such as reducing consultancies and licenses, postponing some procurement activities and reducing the scope or deliverables of projects for 2024.- A series of informal sessions dedicated to exploring the impact of artificial intelligence on both work and daily lives, organised by the Innovation Lab and supported by staff

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from various Europol Departments took place in April 2024. Named 'AI April', the events allowed participants to explore important themes related to AI in an interactive way and it was launched following the AI staff awareness session on 8 April, hosted by Europol's Executive Director and the newly appointed Chief AI Officer.

Financial and Human resources

- Europol's budget amounted to € 220.2M. The commitment rate was 99.9% or € 220M, while the overall payment rate was 89.4% or € 194.7M.
- The carry-over to 2024 came to a total of € 23M; the final implementation rate of the carry-over was 93%.
- The % of late payments in value was 0.6%, well below the 5% ceiling.
- The vacancy rate at year-end was 1.2%, under the ceiling of 2%.
- At the end of 2024, the percentage of female staff was 33%. Women represented 20% of staff in Senior Specialist / Senior Analyst positions. The percentage of female staff members in Head of Unit and equivalent or higher positions was 21%.

Risk Management, Internal Control and Audit Management

- In 2024, Europol's corporate risk profile was in particular characterised by the security impact of geopolitical developments (in particular Ukraine, Middle East), lack of resources and capabilities - human, financial, ICT, office space, which are needed to be able to deliver the new tasks of Europol's increasing mandate, and necessary to meet the increased demand by Member States. In addition, the evolving regulatory environment at Europol has resulted in enhanced supervision, requiring additional effort and careful resource allocation. While ensuring compliance, this also poses challenges in balancing regulatory demands with innovation and operational efficiency.
- Europol's corporate risk profile in 2024 concurs with the outcome of the Home Affairs Agencies peer review risk assessment exercise (chaired by Europol in Q4 2024 for the Home Affairs Agencies).
- The European Parliament (EP), based on recommendation by the Council, granted discharge to the Executive Director for the implementation of the budget for the financial year 2022.
- The European Court of Auditors (ECA) issued its overall assurance statement, setting out a positive opinion in relation to the reliability of the 2023 final annual accounts as well as the legality and regularity of the underlying financial transactions in all material aspects.
- Europol implemented 89% of the critical or very important Internal Audit Capability (IAC) recommendations planned to be implemented during 2024. There were no critical issues raised by the Internal Audit Service (IAS), nor any material observations by the ECA. The European Ombudsman did not identify instances of maladministration at Europol.
- Europol assessed the effectiveness of its Internal Control System (ICS) for the year 2024 and concluded that the internal control components operated together in an integrated manner. The overall cost of controls in 2024 represented 2.1% of the established revenue.

Introduction

Europol's mission

Europol is the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation and its main goal is to help achieve a safer Europe for the benefit of all EU citizens by supporting law enforcement authorities through the exchange of information, analysis and a number of other operational support products and services. Europol's mission is to support the Member States in preventing and combating all forms of serious international and organised crime, cybercrime and terrorism.

Europol, with its headquarters in The Hague (The Netherlands), works closely with law enforcement agencies in the EU Member States (MS) and in other non-EU partner states.

The Agency uses its unique information capabilities and the expertise of its staff to identify and track the most dangerous criminal and terrorist networks in Europe. This has led to the disruption of many criminal and terrorist networks, to the arrest of dangerous criminals, to the recovery of millions of Euros in criminal proceeds, and to the saving from harm of hundreds of victims, including children trafficked for sexual exploitation. Europol also acts as a major centre of expertise in key areas of law enforcement and as the European centre for strategic intelligence on serious and organised crime.

Legal Basis

This report covers the period from **1 January to 31 December 2024** and presents the progress made to achieve the objectives deriving from Europol's Strategy through the implementation of the 2024 Annual Work Programme¹. An overview of the budget implementation and human resources, audits, risks and internal controls management activities are also included in this report.

This Consolidated Annual Activity Report (CAAR) has been prepared following the guidelines provided by the European Commission² and it is submitted on behalf of the Executive Director to the Management Board for assessment, in accordance with article 16 (5)(g) and 51 (3) (d) of the **Europol Regulation** and article 48 of the **Financial Regulation** applicable to Europol.

According to article 11 (1)(c) of the Europol Regulation, this report shall be adopted by the Management Board which shall send it, with its assessment, by 1 July 2025 to the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission, the Court of Auditors and the national parliaments. Europol shall transmit the CAAR to the Joint Parliamentary Supervisory Group (JPSG) in accordance with article 51 (3)(d). The report shall be made public and available on Europol's website.

¹ Included in Europol's Programming Document (PD) 2024-2026.

² Communication from the Commission on the strengthening of the governance of Union Bodies under Article 70 of the Financial Regulation 2018/1046 and on the guidelines for the Single Programming Document and the Consolidated Annual Activity Report, 20 April 2020, C(2020) 2297 final, Annex 2.

Part I. Achievements of the year

1.1. Multi-Annual Strategic Priorities

Europol's current Strategy, "**Delivering security in partnership**", was endorsed by the Management Board in June 2023. The renewed Strategy expands upon the five strategic priorities of the Strategy 2020+, and introduces an additional priority aimed at addressing the growing demand for law enforcement cooperation at EU level, and strengthening the role of Europol in bringing relevant partners together for international cooperation.

These strategic priorities guide Europol's work to further improve its performance and to better address the operational needs of the Member States and the security threats they are facing:



Be the EU criminal information hub, including for data acquisition



Deliver agile, real-time operational support



Be a platform for European policing solutions



Bring the relevant partners together for cross-border cooperation and joint action



Be at the forefront of law enforcement innovation and research



Be the model EU organisation for law enforcement cooperation

The implementation of the renewed Europol Strategy advanced across all strategic priorities. Europol delivered targeted operational and strategic support to Member States, in particular through furthering the support provided to Operational Task Forces (OTFs). The EU criminal networks intelligence picture has been further enriched to support the Member States in addressing the security threats posed by serious crime and terrorism. Developments are underway for delivering a platform for Member States to perform joint operational analytical work.

Europol developed the External Relations Strategy 2025+, endorsed by the Management Board in October 2024, to foster bringing together the relevant partners and enhance cross-border cooperation and joint action, thus supporting the Member States. A dedicated strategy on cooperation with private parties, including NGOs and academia, and the related implementation framework were in development at the end of 2024.

With the enhanced opportunities and legal possibilities for the exchange of information between law enforcement authorities, Europol's role in providing Member States with the necessary infrastructure, tools, expertise and services is expanding. In accordance with the Information Exchange Directive (IED), the Europol Secure Information Exchange Network Application

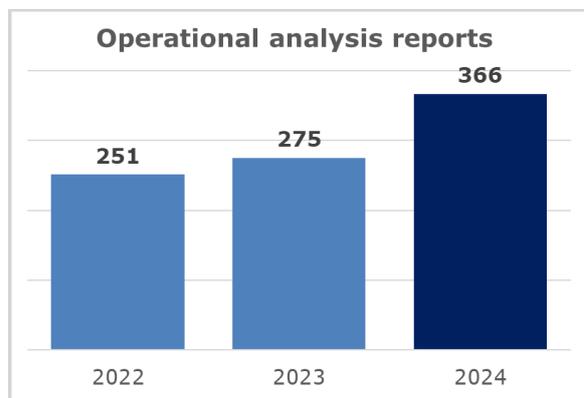
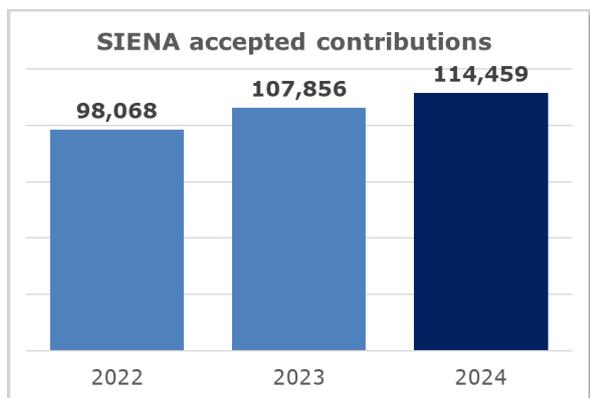
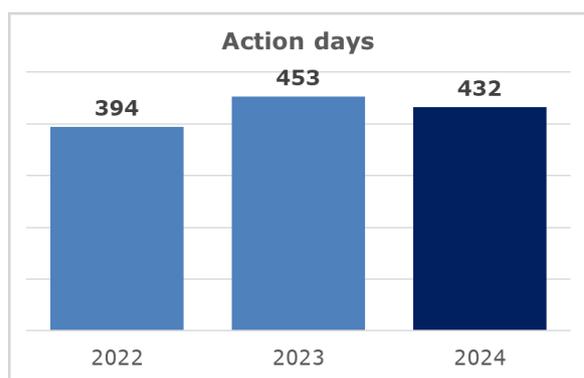
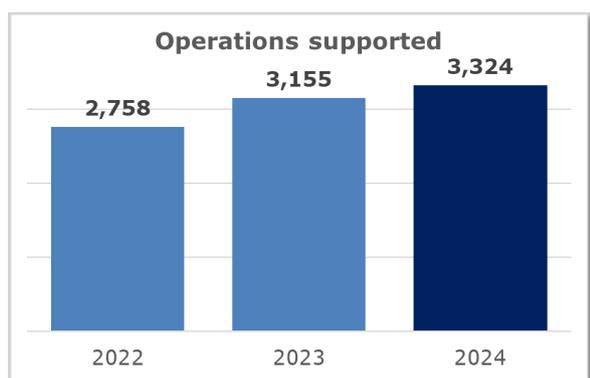
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(SIENA) is the default channel of communication for all exchanges of information between law enforcement authorities of Member States and Schengen Associated Countries (SACs). Europol has been supporting Member States and SACs in realising this transition and navigating the complexity of the EU Information Management landscape. In connection with the EU Interoperability Roadmap, Europol continued to make the necessary preparations to ensure its readiness to implement Europol's share with respect to the entry into operation of the different large-scale IT systems.

Developments continued in the areas of innovation and the use AI. A first version of the Research & Innovation Sandbox was completed in 2024. The toolset available on the Europol Tool Repository (ETR) continued to expand and Europol set up a pilot project for the deployment of a secure large language model at Europol. In recognition of the successful innovation efforts of law enforcement authorities in Member States, the Europol Excellence Awards in Innovation 2024 were presented during the European Police Chiefs Convention (EPCC). The first edition of the Industry and Research Days was held at Europol in January 2024, with further editions envisaged.

Initiatives to optimise the performance and output of the Agency continued with efforts to modernise the administrative collaboration environment, enhance the analytical training portfolio, and advance staff retention and talent mobility. An Employer Value Proposition was developed to amplify Europol's employer brand impact.

Evolution of key operational indicators 2022-2024



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1.2. Work Programme 2024

Activity 1. Development of information technology and information management capabilities



Europol's **core systems availability** reached an average of 99.6% during 2024, above the target of 98%. In terms of **core business project delivery**, a descoping and budget release exercise took place in Q2 2024, to address the budget deficit impacting the resources needed to deliver the ICT 2024 Work Plan. The measures taken included the shortening of consultancy contracts from 220 to 160 days/year, as well as a reduction of the number of licenses and postponing some procurement activities to 2025. Likewise, a number of initiatives and deliverables were descoped for 2024, e.g., EU Firearms Hub, and CryptoPortal. In line with the agreed business value model for monitoring the progress of ICT delivery, Europol implemented 89% of the ICT Work Plan 2024 as defined at the beginning of the year; against the Q4 revised baseline of ICT activities, the execution rate reached 85%.

Information Exchange, Knowledge Sharing and Collaboration



The overall number of messages exchanged via **SIENA** (Secure Information Exchange Network Application) amongst MS, Third Parties (TP) and Europol grew from 1.8 million in 2023 to **over 2 million in 2024**, the highest number to date. In 2024, 169,498 new cases were initiated, a result higher than both the annual target (150,000) and the previous year's result (151,318). Over **3,500 Competent Authorities** from MS and TP were connected to SIENA in 2024, including five new Police and Custom Cooperation Centres (PCCCs), for a total of 24 PCCCs. Compared to 2023, the number of connected Competent Authorities increased by 18%. In 2024, 20% of the SIENA messages received by Europol contained structured data, which represents a slight decrease compared to the 21% in 2023. Several new SIENA versions were successfully deployed in production in 2024 (v5.4 in March, v5.5 in October and v5.6 in December) bringing enhancements such as **improved support for the Universal Message Format (UMF) 2.0.1 standard**, **improved User Interface (UI) language translation** support, message grid filtering and assignments enhancements, as well as changes stemming from the Directive on Information Exchange (IED). In the context of the expansion of SIENA and the Europol Information System (EIS) user communities, several training activities were delivered in 2024, aiming at the needs of MS and TPs; among these, six SIENA train-the-trainer (TTT) events took place, in Moldova (March), the United Kingdom (June), Spain (October), as well as at Europol HQ (March, June, and November), attended by over 140 participants from MS and TPs.

Regarding the **Secure Lines**, the establishment of the secure connection with San Marino was finalised on 27 March 2024. The hardware required for the establishment of the secure connection with Qatar and the International Criminal Court (ICC) were likewise successfully received in their respective destinations.

Several new versions of the **Identity and Access Management (IAM)** were released during the year (v6.4 to 6.7), introducing enhancements for the benefits of Europol, MS and TP IAM administrations and end users. Updates include the possibility to remove a training from a user, leading to access revocation and additional notifications upon password change for enhanced security, reinforcements of the IAM password management related processes, etc.

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On 29-30 May, Europol hosted the **Product Management Forum** (PMF), in a hybrid format, to discuss the latest developments related to the core systems directly available to the MS and to foster collaborative discussions between Europol and the National Product Managers regarding the priorities and future development of these systems. The 15th anniversary of SIENA and the IAM were celebrated during this event. The 3rd iteration of the **Information Management Forum** was held at Europol on 2-3 October 2024, co-hosted by the German Bundeskriminalamt (BKA) and under the auspices of the Hungarian Presidency. The Forum featured a plenary session, six workshops and exhibitions showcasing various information management tools and projects. Key take-aways from the discussions highlighted the need for simplification and automation, which will be a driving force in shaping the future approach to information management.

During the reporting period, Europol has continued with the implementation of the **Topic Oriented Workshops** (TOW) concept, aimed at enabling exchange of experiences and discussions between MS on IM-related topics and Europol developments. In the framework of the **TOW on National Law Enforcement IM Strategies** (TOW I), the Guiding Principles for National Law Enforcement Information Management (IM) Strategies were endorsed by the MB in March 2024. In November 2024, a document mapping the approved strategic principles and suggesting implementation approaches to those MS which are willing to set up a national Law Enforcement IM Strategy, was shared with the WGIM. The finalisation of this document marked the official closure of TOW I. Regarding the **TOW on the Information Exchange Directive** (IED) (TOW II), a plenary meeting was organised at Europol on 4-5 April 2024; the meeting focused on a 'table top exercise' and the collection of views on various topics of common interest (e.g., involvement of competent authorities in Single Points of Contact (SPOC), automation, knowledge repository). On 5 November 2024, a meeting on the **TOW on Standardisation and Automation** (TOW III), with a specific focus on the Querying Europol Systems - Pilot Project on MS Hit/No-Hit Access to Analysis Projects Data (QUEST+), was held at Europol. The meeting marked the official closure of the pilot stage of QUEST+, hence making it a fully operational Europol product, ready for implementation by all MS who wish to make use of it.

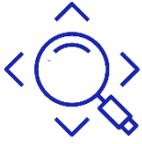
Regarding the **Europol Platform for Experts (EPE)**, on 10 May 2024, a security incident resulting in unauthorised access to the platform through a compromised external user account took place. The compromised account accessed a limited number of expert communities on the EPE, while no other Europol applications were affected. The EPE was made temporarily unavailable to all users until 17 May, when it was again established with a number of accounts disabled. Following the incident, several technical and organisational measures have been taken in order to protect the platform and its users, including security measures, such as prohibiting access via anonymised connections (e.g., VPN, Proxies). A new version of the platform, v5.0, was released in November, bringing besides an increased security posture, a more modern look and feel, as well as new features.



Since January 2024, MS and TP are able to bilaterally organise **Videoconference for Operational Purposes** (VCOP) meetings through the intermediary of their Liaison Bureau. During the reporting period, the **Virtual Command Post** (VCP) was used to provide real-time operational support and coordination. Following the positive outcome of the VCP Connect Pilot project, a decision was taken to proceed with the deployment in production of the piloted solution and replace the existing real-time communication capability. The legacy version of VCP was decommissioned at the end of June and replaced with **VCP Connect**. The new version comes with a number of significant improvements and allowed to increase the number of users from 500 to 2,000.

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Search, Cross-checking and Data Management



In 2024, 12,795,330 searches were performed either in the **Europol Information System (EIS) Web Application** or through the **Querying Europol Systems (QUEST)**. New versions of the EIS were released in 2024, bringing additional technical and business improvements. In October 2024, a first EIS eLearning module was launched into operation at Europol. In December, a new instance of the EIS Data Loader in the Basic Protection Level (BPL) network was released into the Validation environment; this will allow MS to test the integration of their data loader solutions that will be used to feed the EIS from unclassified/BPL networks.

Roadmap to EU Interoperability and Europol's Access to Large Scale EU Systems

In 2024, Europol continued implementing the EU Interoperability @ Europol Programme, in line with the High-level Roadmap on Interoperability endorsed by the Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) Council in October 2023. On 15 August 2024, eu-LISA made available the updated integrated planning to reflect the latest changes in the technical timeline.

The **Prüm II Regulation** was adopted on 13 March and entered into force on 25 April. On 30 April, Europol attended the Prüm II implementation conference, organised by the European Commission.

During the 4th **European Police Records Index System (EPRIS)** Project Plenary meeting which took place on 17-18 April in Madrid, Europol reaffirmed its commitment towards EPRIS implementation and presented the status of the preparations for the transition of EPRIS from project to central management at Europol. On 26-27 June 2024, an informal meeting took place between Europol, the European Commission, Germany, and Finland, to discuss the potential content of Prüm II implementing act on EPRIS and the future EPRIS Governance, as well as the first draft of the EPRIS implementation roadmap 2025-2027. The EPRIS project closing meeting took place on 30 September to 1 October 2024 in Berlin where the EPRIS software was formally handed over to Europol by the project team.

Regarding the **Schengen Information System (SIS)**, on 3 July, phase one of implementing a feature to further automate alert deletion notifications from SIS went live.

In July 2024, the European Commission announced the new entry into operation date of the **Entry/Exit System (EES)** and of the **Visa Information System (VIS)** integrated with the EES. Europol's declaration of readiness was sent to the European Commission on 9 September 2024. However, the entry into operation of the EES, planned for 10 November, was delayed to 2025.

On 16-18 January, under the remit of Europol's **Innovation Lab**, Europol hosted its first ever Industry and Research Days, where selected private companies and research organisations presented their most innovative products to law enforcement practitioners from across Europe. At the event, over 150 participants had the opportunity to hear from and interact with 24 selected technology providers; the solutions presented by companies covered five themes: AI tools, emerging platforms, robotics, data protection assessment platforms, and Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT).



The Innovation Lab organised a series of workshops in support of '**AI April**', an initiative focused on raising awareness among Europol staff on the current and potential future impact of AI.

On 9 April, the first in-person meeting of the **Innovation Hub's** new 'AI' cluster took place. On the same day, the Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation on Internal Security (COSI) endorsed the Hub's annual activity report and annual work plan, including the new cluster approach.

During the reporting period, the **European Clearing Board for Innovation (EuCB)** continued to manage its Core Groups and Strategic Groups of experts based on the gaps and needs

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identified. On 7-9 October 2024, the EuCB held a physical meeting at Europol headquarters for the first time.

In 2024, the **Europol Code Repository** continued to provide a co-development environment for MS LEAs to securely and jointly create software solutions. At the end of 2024, the user base had 517 users and there were 254 projects supported by the platform, including in areas such as Digital Forensics, Operational Analysis, Decryption, Online investigations, Crypto Currency Investigations. Likewise, the **Europol Tool Repository** (ETR) continued to grow during the reporting period, reaching 40 tools, which were downloaded more than 8,000 times, and 3,500 users.

The report '**AI and policing – The benefits and challenges of artificial intelligence for law enforcement**', was published in September 2024. The report aims to provide insight into the present and future capabilities that AI offers, projecting a course for a more efficient, responsive and effective law enforcement model. It also looks at concerns about data bias, fairness, and potential threats on privacy, accountability, human rights protection and discrimination, which are particularly relevant in the context of the EU's Artificial Intelligence Act.

The **Research & Innovation Sandbox** was successfully launched in December 2024, providing a secure, isolated environment for developing, testing, and validating AI models and tools using operational data.

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Activity 2. Operational Coordination

114,459

Accepted SIENA contributions

3.2 days

Speed of 1st line response to SIENA requests

13,262

Messages exchanged with SIRENE Bureaux

32

Active deployment stations supported

In 2024, Europol accepted 114,459 **operational contributions** sent via SIENA, above the annual target of 101,000 contributions, and the previous year's result of 107,856; 20% of all accepted contributions contained **structured data**.



The **speed of first-line response** to SIENA requests, measured as the number of days to reply to 80% of the requests received, averaged at 3.2 days, compared to 4.2 days in 2023, achieving the annual target of maximum 5 days. A total of 22,644 first-line requests were closed in 2024 (21,096 in 2023). The **SIRENE office** reply time in 2023 was 1.2 days for 80% of the requests, improved from 1.5 in 2023. 13,262 SIENA messages were exchanged with the **SIRENE Bureaux**.

In the area of **travel intelligence**, at the end of 2024, all EU Member States had Passenger Information Units (PIUs) with SIENA accounts in place. During the reporting period, the Travel Intelligence team continued the exchange of travel data in SIENA with Third Party PIUs from Australia, Iceland, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States. In addition, travel data has been exchanged with Third Party countries without operational PIUs: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Switzerland. Between 12-14 March, Europol delivered, together with several external experts, a Passenger Name Record (PNR) Data Analysis Training, at the International Training Centre (ITC) in Budapest. The training was attended by 24 participants from 17 EU MSs, Norway, Iceland and the UK. In this context, a content development workshop was held on 5-6 November, in Budapest in partnership with the ITC. On 26-27 June, Europol hosted the Informal Working Group (IWG) meeting of the Passenger Information Units, and the European Commission's 15th PNR Directive Application meeting. The main topics covered during the IWG plenary session included the use of Interpol databases by the PIUs, business aviation, land border and other modes of transport, and regional operational cooperation. The PNR Directive Application meeting covered the current main developments and challenges of the EU PIUs, as well as updates on the latest and planned policy related developments.



During the reporting period there was good progress on all work streams of the **European Travel Information and Authorisation System** (ETIAS) implementation. In 2024, Europol continued its close cooperation with the ETIAS Central Unit at Frontex on various topics, such as data protection, ETIAS Screening Board, and Europol related workflows. Europol participated actively in the regular meetings between ETIAS Central Unit and National Units organised by Frontex, and in related informal workshops bringing together the European Commission, eu-LISA and interested Member States to clarify different practical aspects related to ETIAS implementation – among these: the third informal workshop on Europol related workflows in ETIAS, in January 2024, with the participation of the European Commission, Frontex, eu-LISA and several MS to discuss, among others, the verification of Europol hits by the ETIAS Central Unit at Frontex and the provision of information to the applicant in situations where the decision to reject the travel authorisation application is based on a Europol reasoned opinion; the second workshop on data protection, on 29 February, to discuss data subject access requests; the fourth ETIAS workshop on procedures, on 23 May, to discuss the business workflow for ETIAS related processes, the second joint meeting of Europol National Units and ETIAS National Units on 17 September 2024, at Frontex, to discuss Europol-related ETIAS workflows. Likewise, Europol, in close cooperation with ETIAS Central Unit, the training team at Frontex and ETIAS trainers from Member States, continued to support the training courses to ETIAS operators in ETIAS National Units. At its October meeting, the MB endorsed the draft MB Decision specifying the procedures

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in relation to the responsibilities and tasks of Europol as regards its entries in the ETIAS watchlist, in view of further sharing the document with the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) for consultation.



In the area of **Biometrics**, on 26 June, Europol's new facial recognition system (FRS) went live. The system includes an internally developed component supporting the ingestion and management of biometric data, which was upgraded to allow streamlined ingestion of facial images, besides the processing of fingerprint data. In addition to supporting operations, the new solution is one of the main critical enablers for the Interoperability programme at Europol. During the reporting period, Europol's Biometrics team participated in the ongoing scientific working groups related to biometric data, such as the FISWG (Face Identification Scientific Working Group), IAEWG (Interpol AFIS Experts Working Group) and IFEWG (Interpol Facial Experts Working Group).

In the framework of **Special Tactics**, on 12-13 March, more than 90 participants from 33 countries and Europol took part in the first edition of a Trackathlon focused on locating wanted fugitives through OSINT (Open-source intelligence) and SOCMINT (Social media intelligence). The event, hosted by Europol and the German Fugitive Active Search Team (FAST), as the European Network of Fugitive Active Search Teams (ENFAST) president, resulted in the investigation of 59 high-level fugitive cases. The 2024 EU Most Wanted Campaign, "Blood on their hands", was launched on 9 December with the participation of 17 Member States, with a focus on fugitives who took or attempted to take life of others.

At the end of 2024, **Guest Officers** (GO) were deployed to 25 permanently staffed stations in eleven countries (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Moldova), covering 32 operational areas. Since June 2024, Europol deploys GOs to Poland, in response to migratory pressures at the Poland-Belarus border areas. Due to budget constraints, between September and November the stations in Greece and Romania were temporarily unstaffed and covered by GOs from other locations – these became fully staffed again on 1 December. During 2024, GOs provided support including for investigations on migrant smuggling and terrorism in Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Moldova and Malta.

During the reporting period, Europol provided support to major **sports events**. In cooperation with the host countries, Europol supported the UEFA EURO 2024 football tournament in Germany and the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games, including with 24 staff members deployed, establishment of coordination cells and points of contact, open-source monitoring and strategic intelligence analysis.

Activity 3. Combating Serious and Organised Crime

The European Serious Organised Crime Centre (ESOCC) in 2024

1,187

Operations supported

247

Action Days

4,854

Operational reports

9/10

Satisfaction with operational support/analysis

"We wouldn't have succeeded without Europol. Thank you for (the) support."

(Investigator's feedback on operational support provided by ESOCC – Europol User Survey)

The European Serious and Organised Crime Centre (ESOCC) supported 1,187 **operations** during the year, and produced 4,854 operational reports. The Centre coordinated/supported a total of 247 **Action Days** leading to 2,977 arrests, and seizure of assets amounting to more than EUR 346M. The **satisfaction with the operational support and analysis** provided by the Centre, measured through Europol's User Survey, was assessed at 9/10.

During the reporting period, the ESOCC supported 44 **Operational Task Forces (OTFs)**; **High Value Targets (HVT)** were identified in 22 operational cases. In 2024, Europol continued to assess and further develop the HVT/OTF concept; an updated Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) was distributed to MS/TP in March 2024. In the framework of providing management, administrative and logistical support to the OTFs, a tool (OTF.360) was established to monitor the progress of activities within the OTFs, and to ensure proper prioritisation and reporting.

The **Drugs Program Board** met twice during 2024, with representatives from Austria, Belgium, Croatia, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Romania, Spain, the United Kingdom, the European Commission and EUDA (formerly, EMCDDA). The meeting on 12 February focused on drug trafficking trends, ongoing investigations and priorities, as well as the growth of EU-based cannabis plantations and the increased use of violence associated with drug trafficking. On 11 September, the discussions included cocaine trafficking, the partial legalisation of cannabis in Germany, nitazenes and cannabis trafficking from Thailand. On 20 March, Europol attended the first technical meeting of the EU Port Alliance Public Private Partnership, in Belgium. In December, Europol hosted the 8th European Annual Drugs Conference, with 140 participants from 27 EU MS, 24 non-EU countries as well as EUDA, Eurojust, Frontex, DG HOME, the General Secretariat of the Council of the EU and MAOC-N (the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre – Narcotics). In 2024, Europol developed the concept of a Maritime Anti-Trafficking Coordination Hub (MATCH). MATCH is expected to act as a single point of contact for maritime operations, and focus on the collection, processing and analysis of data and intelligence on drug trafficking criminal networks. The concept was presented at the EU Port Alliance Customs Project Group, on 20 September, and the 8th European Annual Drugs Conference.



In the context of an OTF supported by Europol, an investigation led by Spain resulted in the collapse of a cartel involved in large-scale **drug trafficking** from South America to the EU. This latest internationally coordinated action, the culmination of a series of actions against this network that took place over the course of three years, is tied to a number of national and international investigations led by Belgium, Brazil, Croatia, Germany, Italy, Serbia and Türkiye. The overall results of actions targeting this criminal network include 40 arrests (three of which were High Value Targets) in Brazil, Croatia, Germany, Serbia, Spain and Türkiye, around 8 tonnes of cocaine seized in Belgium, the Netherlands and Spain, and seizures of assets including EUR 12.5 million and USD 3 million in Brazil, and over EUR 50 million frozen in Serbia.

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In 2024, the **European Migrant Smuggling Centre** (EMSC) continued to contribute regularly to the EU Migration Preparedness and Crisis Management Mechanism Network (Blueprint Network), as well as to the work of the Steering Group activities under the Situational Awareness, Early Warning and Forecasting Capacity Development Project of the European Commission. During the year, the EMSC attended 35 Blueprint meetings with the EU Commission, MS, Schengen Associated Countries, Frontex and other EU Agencies, regarding migrant smuggling.

In the framework of **priority cases**, special attention is given to the identification of HVTs and to the creation of regional OTFs with the relevant countries. At the end of the reporting period, the EMSC was supporting the coordination of eight OTFs combating criminal networks organising migrant smuggling. During Q4 2024, seven action days were organised within the framework of these OTFs, resulting in the arrest of 86 suspects, including eight HVTs.

During the reporting period, the EMSC supported multiple **large-scale investigations**, involving law enforcement agencies from source, transit and destination countries. On-site support was provided by Europol with analysis/cross-checks and also with forensics UFED extractions. Likewise, cooperation with third countries remains a priority area for engagement. Enhanced operational cooperation with Western Balkan countries is ongoing through the integration in common investigation cells and/or regional OTFs.

From 20 to 27 April 2024, law enforcement, border guards and labour and tax authorities across Europe joined forces to identify and tackle **labour exploitation**. Led by the Netherlands, and carried out by authorities from 31 countries with support from Europol and the European Labour Authority (ELA), the EMPACT Joint Action Days (JADs) led to the arrest of 51 persons and identification of 334 potential victims of human trafficking. Over 15,000 officers from law enforcement and labour and tax authorities checked over 165,000 entities and identified 160 persons suspected of trafficking of human beings, of which 93 for labour exploitation. 476 new investigations in various crimes, of which 80 in labour exploitation, were launched as a result.

On 24 May 2024, in the context of the **Europol – Frontex collaboration**, a joint meeting took place at FRONTEX headquarters in Warsaw, and online, focusing on the exchange of information between the two agencies.

Between 3 and 9 June, 39 countries from across the globe participated in the EMPACT joint action days against **trafficking in human beings**. Led by Austria and co-led by Romania, Europol, Frontex and INTERPOL, the massive operation codenamed 'GLOBAL CHAIN' resulted in the arrest of 219 persons and the identification of over 1374 victims, including 153 children. Aimed at disrupting high-risk criminal networks, the action week focused on cases of sexual exploitation, forced criminality and forced begging.



Between 17 and 20 September, 76 experts from 27 countries joined forces to monitor, detect and investigate leads on human trafficking activities enabled by the internet. This third edition of the **EMPACT Hackathon**, organised by Europol, aimed to identify key indicators of human trafficking on online platforms, explore how legal business structures may be misused by traffickers and advance new criminal investigations. During the event, 16 suspected human traffickers, and 60 potential victims of human trafficking were identified.

Notable operational results of the Centre in 2024, include:

- At the end of January 2024, a French-Belgium-led investigation supported by Europol, resulted in a major hit on a 3D firearms production and trafficking network supplying 3D weapons to the EU. The joint action day in Belgium and France led to 12 arrests, including a High Value Target, the disruption of a 3D workshop in Belgium and the seizure of 20 firearms and dozens of 3D parts seized in both Belgium and France.

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- On 6 February, a Spanish-led investigation involving Ecuador and supported by Europol, resulted in a major hit on a high-risk drug trafficking network supplying cocaine to the EU. The joint action day in Spain and Ecuador led to 31 arrests (13 in Spain and 18 in Ecuador), including two High Value Targets, and the seizure of electronic equipment estimated at about EUR 13 million, 25 vehicles, 10 firearms, and almost EUR 3 million cash in various currencies. Likewise, property worth about EUR 48 million (EUR 12 million in Spain and EUR 36 in Ecuador) was frozen.
- On an action day executed in Naples on 21 March, Italian law enforcement raided several locations and arrested eight members of a criminal group responsible for violent watch robberies across Europe (27 arrests had already been made over the last months). While the criminals were most active in Spain, hitting major cities and tourist hot spots, robberies executed by the same group were reported across major cities in all involved countries (Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland).
- On 24 April, during an action day supported by Europol and Eurojust in Georgia and Latvia, four Georgians suspected of stealing antique and rare books from libraries across Europe were arrested. The criminal group is believed to be responsible for the theft of at least 170 books, causing financial damages amounting to around EUR 2.5 million and an immeasurable patrimonial loss to society. Some of these stolen historical artefacts were sold via auction houses in St. Petersburg and Moscow, making them irrecoverable. Over 100 law enforcement officials were deployed on the action day in Georgia and Latvia, searching 27 locations in total.
- During an action week in February 2024, a total of 1 388 firearms were seized in a framework of an operation led by Romania and coordinated by Europol, spanning across 16 European countries. Hundreds of law enforcement officers carried out more than 630 house searches and performed 107 arrests. Other weapons, such as air guns or rifles designed to fire metal pellets, were also recovered, along with over 60 000 rounds of ammunition and 19.5kg of drugs.
- On 22 May, Europol supported an action day in Italy to successfully dismantle a Turkish criminal organisation involved in multiple homicides across Europe, in the framework of an operation led by Italy and co-led by Türkiye. 17 individuals – all Turkish nationals – were arrested.
- Europol and Eurojust supported the Greek and Serbian authorities in dismantling a drug trafficking network allegedly involved in the murder of four members of a rival gang in Greece. In total, ten suspects were arrested in Serbia, Greece and Spain for the murders, which took place in 2020. The organised crime group (OCG) was based in the Western Balkans and was mainly involved in large-scale drug trafficking. It faced a split within its own organisation in 2014, with a rival group set up in Greece. This split in the OCG led to a series of murder attempts and killings across Europe. Four members of the Greek-based criminal network were killed in 2020 on Corfu and in Vari on the mainland of Greece.
- Europol supported Spain in dismantling a criminal group involved in the trafficking of human beings for sexual exploitation. The suspects lured Ukrainian victims with promises to arrange for them refugee visas, financial support and work. An action day on 24 May led to five arrests (1 Spanish, 2 Russian and 2 Ukrainian nationals), including of the suspected leader and the identification of 14 victims.
- On 19 August, Bulgaria arrested eight suspected members, including four HVTs, of a gang involved in smuggling migrants into Europe. The gang charged up to EUR 6 000 per person and smuggled more than 130 people from Türkiye into Bulgaria and then on to other European destinations via the WB route. Europol experts as well as Romanian and Moldovan police officers supported the action day.
- Law enforcement authorities from France, Portugal and Spain, supported by Europol, arrested 62 members of multiple organised criminal groups involved in the illegal fishing of contaminated molluscs in Portugal and Spain. The 17 action days resulted in the seizure of 30 tonnes of molluscs and 6 tonnes of glass eels worth up to EUR 10 million on the seafood market. Six of the suspects are considered High Value Targets by authorities.
- A French-led investigation, supported by Europol, resulted in the dismantling of a large criminal network comprising several small criminal groups involved in migrant smuggling from the Indian sub-continent (India, Sri Lanka and Nepal) to Europe, the United Kingdom and North America, and money laundering. The overall results include 26 arrests, and seizures of real estate, luxury vehicles, gold, jewellery, cash and cryptocurrencies worth over 11 million EUR.
- Law enforcement authorities from all across the continent came together for the EMPACT Joint Action Days South East Europe (JAD SEE) 2024. During the JAD SEE 2024, law enforcement from 26 countries targeted multiple criminal threats, including trafficking in human beings, migrant smuggling, drug and illegal firearms trafficking,

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and the fight against high-risk criminal networks. 796 individuals were arrested, 316 investigations initiated and 442 weapons seized as a result of the massive operation, which involved 31 109 officers.

- In September, Europol and Eurojust, together with law enforcement and judicial authorities from around the world, successfully dismantled an encrypted communication platform that was established to facilitate serious and organised crime perpetrated by criminal networks operating on a global scale. The platform was used as a tool to carry out a wide range of criminal activities, including large-scale drug trafficking, money laundering, instances of extreme violence and other forms of serious and organised crime. Over the course of the investigation, 51 suspects were arrested.
- An EU-wide operation, led by Germany, resulted in the takedown of a large criminal network involved in migrant smuggling, weapons trafficking and document fraud along the so-called Balkan route. The investigation was conducted within the framework of a Europol OTF made up of authorities from Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Serbia, the United Kingdom and other European countries. Over 450 officers were deployed on the ground during the action day on 20 November, which led to 25 arrests, including three High-Value Targets.
- On 25 November, Albanian authorities, with the support of Europol, took enforcement actions against 21 individuals, including a former judge, a lawyer, a police officer and two investigative journalists as part of a corruption investigation linked to a high-risk criminal organisation. The former judge and lawyer are accused of manipulating judicial proceedings in favour of the criminal organisation, while the police officer is suspected of leaking sensitive operational information. During the investigation, supported by Europol, and authorities from Belgium, France, Italy and the Netherlands, two significant drug seizures were linked to the network: approximately 450 kilograms of cocaine intercepted in the Netherlands and a further 900 kilograms seized in Ecuador.
- On 4 December 2024, an operation involving authorities from France and Germany, coordinated by Europol and Eurojust, targeted a large criminal Iraqi-Kurdish network suspected of illegally smuggling middle-Eastern and East African migrants from France to the United Kingdom using non-EU certified low-quality inflatable boats across the English Channel. The action day led to 13 arrests, including one High Value Target, and seizures of equipment, including 21 inflatable boats, cash, goods, and electronic devices.
- During a coordinated operation supported by Eurojust and Europol, an encrypted messaging service was taken down by Dutch and French authorities and follow-up actions were executed by Italy, Lithuania and Spain. During an action day on 3 December, three suspects were arrested and the main servers in France and Germany were taken down. More than 2.3 million messages, linked to serious crimes such as international drug trafficking, arms trafficking, and money laundering, in 33 languages, were intercepted and deciphered during the investigation.

Activity 4. Combating Cyber Crime

The European Cybercrime Centre (EC3) in 2024

535

Operations supported

31

Action Days

3,846

Operational reports

9.6/10

Satisfaction with operational support/analysis

"Everything was perfect. Thanks for all!"

(Investigator's feedback on operational support provided by EC3 – Europol User Survey)

In 2024, the European Cybercrime Centre (EC3) provided **support** to 535 **operations**, and produced 3,846 **operational reports**. During the year, the Centre supported three OTFs and coordinated/supported 31 **Action Days**, leading to 199 arrests. The **satisfaction with the operational support and analysis** provided by the Centre reached an average score of 9.6/10, measured through Europol's User Survey.

The **EU Law Enforcement Emergency Response Protocol** (EU LE ERP), which entails proactive OSINT monitoring and enhanced tactical coordination, remained partially activated in 2024, in relation to malicious cyber activities in the context of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine.

Europol contributed to the new report by the EU Innovation Hub for Internal Security, **First Report on Encryption**, published in June 2024. The report is looking into how to uphold citizens' privacy while enabling criminal investigation and prosecution. Encryption represents an important means of securing private communications, however, at the same time, it also enables threat actors to manage their malicious activities below the radar of law enforcement. Understanding the needs and challenges of stakeholders in the Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) community is the foundation for adopting the necessary measures to keep Europe safe, while safeguarding fundamental rights.

The **Europol Document Lab** is co-chairing the Law Enforcement Advisory Group (LEAG) advising the Central Bank Counterfeit Deterrence Group (CBCDG) on counterfeit practices and threats, as well as the organisation and behaviour of counterfeiters. During the reporting period, the Lab supported, together with AP SOYA, the implementation of a template with information linked to currency counterfeiting. A report, based on the information gathered from EU MS, will be developed and shared with the LEAG. In 2024, the Lab organised several forensic training sessions on document inspection and the use of forensic equipment, for guest officers. EC3 **Forensics** supported the delivery of a train-the-trainer session on Decryption for the European Cybercrime Training and Education Group (ECTEG) in Lille, France. In July, the EC3 Forensics team organised and hosted a Live Forensic Workshop, with 20 representatives from partner agencies; the event focused on new tools designed to tackle criminal IT infrastructure. The **Forensic Experts Forum**, bringing together law enforcement, forensic institutes, projects and academia to exchange knowledge, expertise and experience, but also to identify new trends, developments and best practices in digital forensics, took place at Europol HQ, and online, on 28-29 November.

The Kick-Off meeting of the **Quantum Safe Financial Forum** (QSFF), a group of financial institutions which joined forces to address the transition to Post Quantum Cryptography (PQC), took place on 1 February. On 17 April, Europol hosted the first plenary meeting of the QSFF, with more than 30 participants. The EC3 provides the secretariat of the group.

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In 2024, Europol hosted two editions of the **Victim Identification Task Force (VIDTF)**. Between 29 April and 10 May 2024, the 14th edition of the event, which gathered over 30 participants from 24 partner countries, as well as Europol and INTERPOL, focused on supporting the identification of victims and perpetrators present in over 68 million media files containing child sexual abuse material seized by various law enforcement authorities and submitted to Europol. The participants analysed over 400 datasets depicting specific unidentified victims of child sexual abuse, and managed to identify the countries where the crimes were likely to have been executed for over 180 of the datasets analysed during the operation. Europol had already disseminated over 70 of these datasets to the competent authorities while this process was still ongoing. In 15 of the datasets, experts included identification information on the victims or offenders. The 15th edition of VIDTF took place between 2-13 September; following analysis of 282 datasets, experts identified the country of abuse for over 230 of them and gathered information on victims and offenders.



The 10th edition of the **Internet Organised Crime Assessment (IOCTA)**, Europol's assessment of evolving threats and trends in the cybercrime landscape, was published in July 2024. The report highlighted relevant trends in crime areas such as cyber-attacks, child sexual exploitation and online and payment fraud schemes. It also provided an outlook of what can be expected in the near future, especially regarding new technologies, payment systems, AI, cryptocurrencies and illicit content online.

On 14-15 May, the **18th AP Cyborg Experts Group Meeting** took place at Europol HQ, to discuss recent developments and best practices related to major cybercrime investigations. The **AP Twins Annual Expert Meeting** took place on 5-6 June. Around 160 experts from law enforcement, prosecution, academia, healthcare and NGOs, gathered to discuss best practices, threats and opportunities of new technologies, and possible ways to improve cooperation. The



Dark Web annual meeting took place on 19-20 November, with over 230 experts from more than 35 countries; the event explored trends on Dark Web crime, and the impact of international police operations and the exchange best practices were discussed.

The first **Cyber Innovation Forum** took place at Europol on 18-19 June. More than 120 participants representing LEAs, private industry and academia gathered at the event to identify innovative solutions to advance the EU capability to prevent, detect, and investigate cybercrime.

On 19-20 June, Europol supported the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA) in the **Cyber Europe exercise 2024 (CE2024)**. The 7th edition of the event was designed to test the preparedness in case of a large-scale cyber-attack on Europe's energy sector. The 13th joint ENISA - EC3 Workshop took place on 11-12 September, in Portugal, with the participation of EU LEAs, national CSIRTs (Computer Security Incident Response Teams), and the European Commission.

On 16-17 October, Europol hosted the **European Cybercrime Conference**. More than 460 participants from 82 countries attended this iteration of the event, organised under the theme "Detect, investigate, and disrupt", which focused on bolstering the EU's security and resilience in the face of growing cyber threats. The event included the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Joint Cybercrime Action Taskforce (J-CAT).

Other events include:

- On 20-21 March, the European Cybercrime Centre (EC3) hosted the **EU Cybercrime Task Force (EUCTF)**; at the event, the Heads of the National Cybercrime Units provided updates and were briefed on the latest operational and strategic developments of EC3.
- On 6-8 May, Europol hosted the 10th **Virtual Currencies Conference**, with over 500 participants, to discuss cryptocurrency investigations as well as public-private partnership.

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- On 27-31 May, Europol's Cyber Intelligence Team delivered the **Virtual currency DeFi and Advanced DeMixing training**, to 40 law enforcement participants, with a focus on Decentralised Finance and demixing techniques.
- On 24-28 June, EC3 organised in Avila, Spain, a **training on digital skimming, card present fraud, phishing, misuse of AI, and cryptocurrency tracing**, for 32 participants.
- A **table-top exercise** took place on 14 October, co-organised and hosted by EC3, with more than 30 participants from EU LEAs, J-CAT, Europol, the EC3 Advisory Groups and other private partners. The exercise uncovered gaps and weak points of **ransomware payments** in the international payment (cryptocurrency and banking) ecosystem.

Notable operational results of the Centre in 2024, include:

- Europol supported Romania and Spain in an operation against a group of scammers engaged in the publishing of fake advertisements for cheap holiday rentals. Although this type of cyber fraud is not new, the level of sophistication exhibited by the gang involved in this case is unprecedented, and a multifaceted investigation was required to crack the case. During the action day on 19 March, nine individuals were arrested, and over EUR 180 000, as well as a number of electronic devices, seized.
- In a significant breakthrough in the fight against cybercrime, law enforcement from ten countries, disrupted the criminal operation of a ransomware group, widely recognised as the world's most prolific and harmful ransomware, causing billions of euros worth of damage. The operation took place in the framework of an international taskforce coordinated by Europol and Eurojust. The operational results included two arrests and the takedown of 34 servers in the Netherlands, Germany, Finland, France, Switzerland, Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom. In addition, more than 200 cryptocurrency accounts linked to the criminal organisation were frozen.
- An international operation resulted in the seizure of several internet domains that were used by cybercriminals to sell malware. Through the use of this malware, cybercriminals could secretly access and connect to victims' computers for malicious purposes. The operation was led by the FBI and supported by Europol and the Joint Cybercrime Action Taskforce (J-CAT). On 7 February, two suspects were arrested in Malta and Nigeria in the framework of the operation. The suspects are accused of selling the malware and supporting cybercriminals who used it. The operation involved authorities from Australia, Canada, Croatia, Finland, Germany, Malta, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Romania and the United States.
- On 9 January, Ukraine, with the support of Europol, arrested an individual believed to be the mastermind behind a sophisticated cryptojacking scheme. The suspect is believed to have mined over USD 2M (EUR 1.8M) in cryptocurrencies. Cryptojacking in a cloud environment is a malicious activity to gain unauthorised access to cloud computing infrastructure and use its computational power to mine cryptocurrencies. By stealing cloud resources to mine cryptocurrencies, criminals can avoid paying for the necessary servers and power, the cost of which typically outweighs the profits. The compromised account holders are left with huge cloud bills.
- Based on investigative techniques shared and acquired in an educational seminar supported by Europol, with the participation of 27 countries, 57 men suspected of possessing and sharing depictions of child sexual abuse were arrested and several children safeguarded from physical or potential abuse. The training and the ensuing action, was organised within the EMPACT framework. During the action, over 100 000 illegal files were seized. The men arrested in this action for downloading and disseminating child sexual abuse material using peer-to-peer (P2P) networks, are between 23 and 72 years old; four of the suspects are school teachers and one suspect works with disabled children, which renders this successful law enforcement effort even more meaningful.
- Europol and the J-CAT supported an investigation led by the UK against a phishing-as-a-service platform, which facilitated the phishing of users of hundreds of financial institutions worldwide, for a monthly subscription fee. Between 14 and 17 April a total of 70 addresses were searched across the world, resulting in the arrest of 37 suspects, including of four individuals in the UK linked to the running of the site, among which, the original developer of the service.

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- A joint investigation conducted by several European law enforcement authorities, supported by Europol and Eurojust, led to the arrest of nine suspects following a cannabis cultivation crowdsourcing platform investment scam case. During the investigation and the action day on 11 April, which involved over 400 law enforcement officers in 11 countries, EUR 4.7M in bank accounts, EUR 1.5M in cryptocurrencies, EUR 106 000 in cash and EUR 2.6M in real estate assets were seized or frozen. The total damages resulting from fake investments in this case amount to EUR 645M, but actual and unreported damages could be significantly higher.
- Europol and Eurojust supported law enforcement agencies from Austria, Cyprus and Czechia, in an investigation targeting the creators of a seemingly new cryptocurrency launched in December 2017. In May 2024, this resulted in the arrest of six Austrians responsible for the online cryptocurrency scam and the seizure of EUR 250 000 as well as over EUR 500 000 in cryptocurrencies, cars and luxury property worth EUR 1.4M, and the freeze of dozens of bank accounts.
- The first ever joint operation between Europol and the Specialised Cybercrime Centre of Ameripol resulted in the dismantling of a phishing network, with over 480,000 victims worldwide. The operation, supported by Europol and authorities from Spain, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru targeted a criminal network engaged in unlocking stolen or lost mobile phones through a phishing platform. The action week took place between 10 and 17 September and resulted in 17 arrests and 921 items seized, mainly mobile phones but also other electronic devices, vehicles and weapons.
- Law enforcement disrupted the launching of Distributed Denial-of-Service (DDoS) attacks to take websites offline, ahead of annual Christmas attacks, in an operation coordinated by Europol and involving 15 countries. The action resulted in three arrests and 27 'booter' and 'stresser' websites taken down (these platforms enabled cybercriminals to flood targets with illegal traffic, rendering websites and other web-based services inaccessible).
- Europol has supported Belgian and Dutch authorities in an international operation against a phone phishing gang. On the action day, law enforcement carried out 17 searches in different locations in Belgium and the Netherlands, which led to the arrest of eight suspects, and the seizure of electronic devices, luxury watches and jewellery, cash, and a firearm.
- Europol supported the dismantling of a criminal network responsible for facilitating large-scale online fraud, in an operation led by Germany, and supported by law enforcement authorities across Europe. During an action day on 4 December, 50 servers were seized, more than 200 terabytes of digital evidence was secured, and two key suspects were placed in pretrial detention.

Activity 5. Counter-Terrorism

European Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC) in 2024

1,255

Operations supported

44

Action Days

2,383

Operational reports

9.4/10

Satisfaction with operational support/analysis

"Everything was 10/10. (...) We are looking forward to have another great cooperation with Europol"

(Investigator's feedback on operational support provided by ECTC – Europol User Survey)

During 2024, the European Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC) supported a total of 1,255 **operations**, and produced 2,383 **operational reports**. The Centre supported ten **OTFs** and coordinated 119 **Action Days** during the year, which led to 56 **arrests**. The **satisfaction with operational support and analysis** provided by the Centre was rated at 9.4/10.

In the area of **Core International Crime (CIC)**, during the reporting period, AP CIC continued to be engaged in the gathering and processing of information at EU level for the facilitation of priority cases involving war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity, with a focus on the war of aggression of Russia in Ukraine aiming to streamline the cooperation with Ukraine and EU MS dealing with such cases. Europol continued to support the joint investigation team (JIT) on alleged core international crimes committed in Ukraine; seven countries (Lithuania, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Slovakia, Romania and Ukraine), Eurojust and ICC participate in this JIT. Likewise, Europol continued to support the OSINT OTF aiming at providing targeted support to ongoing investigations into alleged war crimes committed in Ukraine.

Europol's **CBRN & Explosives** Team provided a presentation on bioterrorism at the expert meeting on biological threats in the framework of hybrid threats scenarios at the ECDC, in February 2024. The first European Advanced Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Training, organised by the ISF-EEODN consortium, took place in March 2024; the event, attended by 14 senior bomb technicians from MS, focused on capabilities on improvised explosive devices, homemade explosives ordnance disposal and underwater Improvised Explosive Device (IED) and CBRN. On 17-19 September, the CBRN & Explosives Team assisted the European Commission with the organisation of the 11th EU-US Explosive Expert Seminar, with around 100 participants, including high-level representatives from the US FBI and DG Home, as well as all EU Member States. On 5-7 November, the ECTC organised together with the ECDC the Cross-Sectoral Biorisk Awareness and Mitigation training, in Athens, Greece, with the participation of more than 70 participants from MS and EU-associated countries representing law enforcement, public health, and civil protection authorities. Other training delivered/supported in this area included: "Explosive ordnance used in Ukraine" (Tallin, Estonia, 3-14 May), International Bomb Scene Management Training (IBSMT) (Ossendrecht, the Netherlands, 21-28 October); Manual Neutralisation Techniques Training (Kassel, Germany, 9-13 December).

The annual **European Explosive Ordnance Disposal Network (EEODN) Conference** took place in Portugal on 19-22 November in Porto, Portugal. The event was attended by over 80 bomb technicians, explosives experts and CBRN specialists from MS, TPs and international organisations.

The **SIRIUS SPOC Network** annual meeting took place on 25-26 April, in Dublin, with 47 representatives from 25 LEAs and 29 from the private sector. The topics discussed included the

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latest developments, best practices, common challenges and possible solutions in the area of cross-border access to electronic evidence. Phase II of the **SIRIUS Project** ended on 30 June; a request for a no-cost extension of the project for six months was approved by the European Commission on 17 June, setting the end date of Phase II to 31 December 2024. This was the result of budget savings, mainly linked to the COVID-19 pandemic which impacted the implementation of SIRIUS. The negotiations between Europol, Eurojust and European Commission concluded in November and the new contribution agreement was signed on 6 December 2024. The start of SIRIUS Phase III was set for 1 January 2025, to last for three years. One new member joined the SIRIUS SPOC Network during the reporting period; the total number of SPOC countries is currently 25. In 2024, three short videos of the "SIRIUS Explains" series were published, created using AI avatars. The educational material is available for download from the restricted SIRIUS platform and it touches upon basic aspects of cross-border access to electronic evidence. A video about the EU Electronic Evidence Legislative Package, dedicated to the law enforcement community, aiming to inform LEAs about the recent legislative developments, was also published.

On 27 February, the first meeting of the 7th Joint Review pursuant to Article 13 of the **Terrorist Financing Tracking Programme** (TFTP) Agreement was held at Europol, to discuss, among others, the effectiveness of the Agreement and its implementation, intelligence gaps, new trends in terrorist financing and data protection. Four editions of the **Terrorist Identification Task Force** (TITF) took place in 2024, hosted by Europol; at these events, representatives of MS and TPs contributed cases which led to several hits as well as links between the different cases (TITF9.0), targeted investigations with potential involvement of the Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP, TITF10.0), focused on non-conventional forms of terrorism, highlighting new modi operandi developed both in EU MS and TP which led to the identification of new links with the criminal environment, such as the "crime as a service" modality (TITF11.0), and shared information and contributed cases on terrorist financing through the use of cryptocurrencies (TITF 12.0).

On 7 March, Europol organised an **EU Crisis Protocol** tabletop exercise, in cooperation with the European Commission. Among the tested elements was the new obligation for hosting service providers, introduced by article 14(5) of Regulation (EU) 2021/784 on addressing the dissemination of terrorist content online, to promptly inform competent authorities when they become aware of terrorist content involving an imminent threat to life. This year's exercise brought together law enforcement representatives, online service providers, the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT), as well as policymakers from governments and EU bodies.

The 5th **ECTC Advisory Network Conference on terrorism and propaganda** took place at Europol on 26-27 March. The event was attended by over 200 participants from law enforcement, academia, private parties, EU institutions and international organisations; the topics discussed included recent developments and challenges in the field of counter-terrorism, such as radicalisation of young people and the role of social media.



On 15-16 April, Europol hosted the **European Heads of Counter Terrorism** meeting, which comprised of a strategic session, jointly attended by the Heads of CT and EU institutions, with a focus on the terrorist threat, as well as a session which addressed EU interoperability, particularly the opportunities that may arise to prevent and to counter terrorism, through the connection of data. On 16-17 April, the first **Counter Terrorism Programme Board** (CTPB) plenary meeting of the year took place. Over 120 participants from 29 countries attended the two back-to-back meetings, together with ECTC staff and different teams across EUROPOL. The second CTPB plenary meeting was hosted by Spain, in Madrid, on 11-12 November, and was attended by representatives of 17 countries. In Q4, Denmark's request to become a member of the Board was accepted; this raised the membership to 18 countries.

Several versions of the **Plateforme Européenne de Retraits de Contenus Illicites sur Internet** (PERCI) were released in 2024. The latest, PERCI 1.8, released to the MS and Europol

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users on 5 December, includes access to the PERCI reporting functionality for users of the MS competent authorities responsible for overseeing the implementation of specific measures and penalties in the context of the TCO Regulation. The Reporting functionality contains non-personal data, including statistics and trends with regard to the evolution of the illegal content online dissemination in hosting service providers. The Contribution agreement with DG CNECT (to initiate the adaptation of PERCI for Digital Services Act (DSA) Art. 18) was signed on 19 December.

In the area of **cooperation with EU institutions**, in 2024, Europol continued to host the recurring "tour d'horizon" meeting between ECTC and DG HOME, and to attend the Terrorism Working Party (TWP) meetings, a preparatory body of the EU Council. Other relevant activities include:

- On 13-15 May, Europol attended the 12th plenary meeting of the Council of Europe Committee on Counter-Terrorism (CDCT);
- On 10-11 July, ECTC co-hosted the Counterterrorism Law Enforcement Forum (CTLEF) together with the U.S. Departments of State and Justice; the meeting focussed on countering the global threat of right-wing terrorism and violent extremism;
- On 12 July and 10 December, Europol attended two meetings organised by the US National Counterterrorism Centre (NCTC) in The Hague and London, respectively, in the framework of the Transnational Racially or Ethnically Motivated Violent Extremism (REMVE) Intelligence and Strategy Conference (TRISC).

In 2024, Europol continued to manage the **Counter Terrorism Joint Liaison Team** (CT-JLT) operational platform, ensuring its performance as an effective mechanism for accelerating exchange of information and coordination. During the reporting period, the platform continued to grow – at the end of 2024 it comprised of 30 Countries (22 MS and 8 TP) and 35 CT agencies.

Regarding **cooperation with the Western Balkans** (WB), the ECTC supported DG Home in the assessment of the sixth report from Bosnia and Herzegovina on the Implementing Arrangements of the Joint Action Plan on Counter-Terrorism for the Western Balkans (JAP CT WB). During the reporting period, Europol joined the EU TAIEX (Technical Assistance and Information Exchange) peer review scoping missions to Serbia (9-12 April), Bosnia and Herzegovina (14-16 April), Albania (27-28 April) and Kosovo³ (29-30 April) on the JAP CT WB. On 17 April and 15 October, the ECTC attended the Regional Network of National CT/CVE (Countering Violent Extremism) Coordinators (RNNC) of the WB, in Tirana, Albania and Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, respectively.

Between 18-20 November, Europol participated in a national table-top exercise in Sarajevo, organised by the Transnational Threats Department (TNTD) of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), in collaboration with the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The exercise focused on preventing and countering the use of the internet for terrorist purposes.

Regarding **cooperation with the MENA countries**, during the reporting period, the ECTC continued to participate and contribute to the activities of the Counter-Terrorism Information Exchange and Criminal Justice Responses (CT INFLOW) project, and attended the project's Strategic Cooperation Forum on 22-23 May, in Istanbul. On 13-16 May, the ECTC attended a workshop on Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF) and migration flows, organised in the framework of the CT JUST project in Mellieħa, Malta. On 23-24 October, Europol attended the 27th Arab Conference on Counterterrorism organised by the Arab Interior Ministers Council (AIMC) in Tunis, Tunisia.

³ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

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On 6-7 June, Europol participated in the 13th meeting of the **Law Enforcement Coordination group** (LECG), held at Interpol HQ in Lyon, France. The meeting was attended by LEAs, prosecutors, and financial practitioners from more than 35 EU and non-EU countries.

Notable operational results of the Centre in 2024, include:

- In June, the European Union Internet Referral Unit (EU IRU) coordinated a referral action in the framework of a year-long investigation into terrorist-operated websites, targeting key assets in the online dissemination of terrorist propaganda, including those of the so-called Islamic State, al-Qaeda and its affiliates, and Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham. The operation specifically targeted terrorist-operated websites used to disseminate terrorist propaganda, thereby limiting the ability of terrorist organisations to recruit, radicalise and mobilise recruiters online. As a result of the operation, which involved law enforcement authorities from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Denmark, Germany, Iceland, Moldova, Romania, the Slovak Republic, Ukraine and the United Kingdom, EU IRU referred 13 websites spreading terrorist propaganda to hosting service providers for removal. Four servers were seized and the associated websites removed.
- Europol and Eurojust coordinated and supported an action week in June 2024 resulting in the dismantling of critical online infrastructure in a large-scale operation to disrupt platforms and websites for terrorist communications and propaganda. Servers were taken down in Germany, the Netherlands, United States and Iceland, with the Spanish authorities arresting nine radicalised individuals. The servers supported multiple media outlets linked to Islamic State. They were used to disseminate worldwide propaganda and messages capable of inciting terrorism in at least thirty languages.
- On 27 June 2024, Europol coordinated a Referral Action Day aimed at identifying and combatting antisemitic content online. The operation, led by authorities in Switzerland and the United Kingdom, involved law enforcement agencies from 18 countries, working with Europol's EU IRU and major online service providers. The RAD targeted a wide range of antisemitic content, including hate speech, Holocaust denial, and the glorification of violence against the Jewish community. The primary objective was to remove illegal content and ensure that online platforms adhere to European regulations concerning hate speech and discrimination. In total, close to 2 000 pieces of antisemitic content were identified and referred by Europol and the participating countries to online service providers for removal.
- On 12 December, the EU IRU supported a Referral Action Day (RAD) led by Spain and Hungary, and involving LEAs from 18 countries, targeting hate speech and incitement to violence targeting ethno-religious groups. In total, 12 countries collected over 6 350 links from 46 online platforms and 20 websites that incite violence or contain hate speech against such groups. This includes material produced or disseminated by organisations, individuals or groups containing illegal hate speech, such as anti-Semitic hate speech, as well as material celebrating or calling for violent or terrorist acts against an ethno-religious group.

Activity 6. Combating Financial and Economic Crime

European Financial and Economic Crime Centre (EFECC) in 2024

400

Operations supported

119

Action Days

2,585

Operational reports

9.6/10

Satisfaction with operational support/analysis

"Europol is an important component of international investigations, which has become indispensable."

(Investigator's feedback on operational support provided by EFECC – Europol User Survey)

The **European Financial and Economic Crime Centre (EFECC)** provided support to **400 operations** during 2024, and produced a total of **2,585 operational reports**. The **satisfaction with operational support and analysis** provided by the Centre was assessed with a score of 9.6/10. During the year, the EFECC coordinated/supported **119 Action Days**, which led to the arrest of 979 suspects and the seizure of over EUR 1.15B in criminal assets. The EFECC also supported ten **OTFs** during the reporting period.



The **Intellectual Property Crime Coordinated Coalition (IPC3)** delivered a presentation on the dangers of IP crime and its links with other crime areas during Europol's Open Day on 16 March, aiming to encourage the public to be vigilant when shopping online, protecting themselves from the dangers of fake goods. At the event, an exhibition of seized counterfeit products was also organised. On 30 May, the Europol Intellectual Property Crime (IPC) Units Network meeting took place, in Sofia, Bulgaria, with 32 representatives from 19 MS and four TP, and EUIPO, with the aim to identify strategic directions and review operational priorities. On 23-24 April, IPC3 organised the kick-off meeting of the 15th edition of operation **In Our Sites (IOS)**, in Alicante, Spain. The operation, which is part of the EMPACT framework, is a recurrent joint global exercise aimed at tackling the sale of counterfeit goods and distribution of online piracy on e-commerce platforms and social networks. 70 participants from LEAs, customs, EU agencies and the private sector attended the meeting. A joint EUIPO-Europol strategic analysis report, 'Uncovering the ecosystem of intellectual property crime', produced under EMPACT, was published in October 2024. The report details the criminal processes behind IP crime, examining factors enabling it and its connection to other organised crime. On 24-25 October, the EFECC co-organised, together with the EUIPO and Spanish authorities, the **Intellectual Property Crime Conference**. This iteration of the event, titled 'Follow the Money to Fight IP Crime', took place in Madrid, Spain, with over 240 representatives from LEAs as well as public and private sectors.

Cooperation with the **European Public Prosecutor Office (EPPO)**, as well as the number and range of cases supported continued to grow in 2024. In Q1 2024, EPPO joined AP SUSTRANS. **OLAF** also remains an important partner for Europol, particularly in connection with operational and strategic initiatives linked to the protection of the **NextGenEU** Funds and **Operation Sentinel**, the EU wide operation targeting fraud against COVID-19 EU recovery funds that Europol has been supporting since October 2021, in cooperation with EPPO, Eurojust, OLAF and several MS.

In Q1, Europol continued to contribute to the work of the **Task Force 'Freeze and Seize'** established by the European Commission to coordinate MS enforcement of the adopted sanctions

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against Russian and Belarusian individuals and companies in the context of the war of aggression against Ukraine.

The Annual Plenary of **Operation OSCAR** was held in February, at Europol. The operation focuses on financial investigations targeting criminal assets owned by individuals and legal entities sanctioned in relation to the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Several plenary meetings of the **Europol Financial Intelligence Public-Private Partnership** (EFIPPP) took place in 2024, with over 170 participants from LEAs, financial institutions, EU institutions and FIUs, to discuss terrorist financing and other emerging threats. The EFIPPP OSINT Taskforce, the working groups and working streams also provided updates on their activities.

In 2024, Europol continued to support and host the secretariats for the **Anti-Money Laundering Operational Network** (AMON) and the **Association of Law Enforcement Forensic Accountants** (ALEFA), and organised several Steering Group meetings for the two bodies. On 12-13 June, the AMON Annual General Meeting took place at Europol HQ, with over 70 participants and representatives from around 50 jurisdictions; the topics discussed included the state of play of the network, best practices, and current threats and trends in the field of anti-money laundering.

Europol continues to support and host the secretariats of the **Camden Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network** (CARIN). Four meetings of the CARIN Steering Group took place in 2024, in Paris (29 February – 1 March, 25-26 September, and 19 November), and Europol (17-18 June). The CARIN Annual General Meeting 2024 took place on 20-22 November, in Paris.

In the area of **falsified medicines**, the kick off of the 5th edition of Operation SHIELD, a global effort targeting the trafficking of counterfeit and misused medicines and illicit doping substances, was organised in Athens, Greece, on 6-7 March 2024. During Operation SHIELD IV, law enforcement, judicial, customs, medical and anti-doping authorities from 30 countries across three continents joined forces, with support from Europol, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO), Frontex, the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) and national medicine agencies, to investigate 52 organised crime groups. The operational results included 296 arrests and prosecution of additional 988 suspects and seizures worth more than EUR 64 million. Four underground labs were dismantled and 92 websites shut down.

The kick-off meeting of **Operation OPSON XIV** was held in Edinburgh, the United Kingdom, on 26-27 November. Operation OPSON is a Europol-INTERPOL joint operation targeting fake and substandard food and beverages.

On 11-12 September 2024, the 8th **Global Conference on Criminal Finances and Cryptocurrencies**, co-organised by the Basel Institute and Europol, and hosted by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), took place in Vienna. The two-day hybrid conference attracted over 1,000 participants, including key stakeholders from the private sector, LEAs, government bodies, intergovernmental organisations, academia and civil society.

Other activities during the reporting period include:

- In Q1, a meeting with the Union of **European Football Association** (UEFA) to discuss updates to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two organisations took place.
- In March 2024, Europol attended the **World Police Summit** in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE).
- On 23-24 May, the EFECC hosted a high-level delegation from UAE. The visit contributed to the mutual understanding of the mandates and capabilities in the **fight against financial crime and money laundering**, the legal and judicial requirements for investigating/prosecuting money laundering, as well as challenges.

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- In September, in München, Europol attended, together with the **International Olympic Committee** (IOC) and LEAs, a seminar dedicated to improve the exchange of information. A similar meeting took place in Madrid, with the **International Tennis Integrity Agency** (ITIA) and the **Union of European Football Association** (UEFA), focused on the exchange of information with sport federations.
- On 26-27 November, Europol attended the 23rd Annual Professional Conference and General Assembly of the **European Anti-Corruption Network** (EACN) and the **European Partners Against Corruption** (EPAC) network in Bucharest, Romania.

Notable operational results of the Centre in 2024, include:

- In January 2024, Dutch, German, Latvian and Lithuanian authorities conducted an action day against criminals suspected of circumventing EU sanctions against Russia. Europol and Eurojust supported this investigation, which led to the arrest of three suspects. Investigations revealed that a Dutch company was ordering goods from Germany, and shipping them to Latvia and Lithuania. From there, the goods would cross the border into Russia. Exporting such goods could be classified as a breach of the EU's sanctions imposed against Russia in response to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.
- Judicial and law enforcement authorities in Italy, Latvia and Lithuania took concerted action against a large-scale money laundering business, centring around a Lithuanian financial institution, which was set up in Lithuania in 2016 by an Italian-based OCG, and offered money laundering as a service to thousands of criminals across the EU. Since 2017, an estimated EUR 2 billion has been laundered. During an action day on 27 February, which involved around 250 judicial representatives and law enforcement officers, supported by Eurojust and Europol, 55 locations were searched, 18 suspects were arrested, including the 3 main suspects, and over EUR 11.5 million in assets and bank accounts were frozen.
- In an operation led by the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) and supported by Europol, three suspects were arrested during an action day on 20 February, and over 80 searches were conducted in Germany and Italy. The investigation into an alleged criminal organisation suspected of a multimillion-euro VAT fraud involving car sales, led to over EUR 70 million in lost VAT in Germany alone. During the searches, carried out in several locations across Germany and Italy, over 40 luxury vehicles, a luxury apartment in Munich, as well as luxury watches, jewellery and several luxury bags, were seized, and several bank accounts, valued at over EUR 1.2 million were frozen.
- On 28 February, 14 individuals believed to have orchestrated a massive EUR 195 million VAT fraud, spanning across 17 countries, were arrested. The arrests are the result of an investigation led by the EPPO in Munich and Cologne, Germany with Europol's support. Over 180 searches were carried out simultaneously in Albania, Austria, Cyprus, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Over 680 tax and police investigators supported the investigative measures. During the searches, law enforcement seized vast quantities of smartphones, worth more than EUR 15.3 million, as well as a yacht, worth EUR 3 million, and EUR 1.2 million in cash and cryptocurrency. Several cars were seized, including a Rolls Royce, a BMW and a Range Rover. Jewellery, luxury watches and 2.5 kilograms of gold were also found in the suspects' residences.
- Europol supported a large-scale operation led by Belgian law enforcement authorities to dismantle an Israeli organised criminal group. The criminal organisation allegedly produced and imported counterfeit luxury watches and diamonds to Antwerp's "Diamond District". The successful operation led to the arrest of 15 suspects in Belgium, Israel, the Netherlands, and Slovakia. The action day on 12 March resulted also in the seizure of 165 luxury watches with certificates, jewellery and other counterfeit products, 200 diamonds, over EUR 200,000 in cash, 14 kg of drugs, crypto ledgers, weapons, and multiple electronic devices, including phones and computers.
- On 8 April, 63 money counterfeiters responsible for faking Euro banknotes worth over EUR 6 million were arrested in an action day supported by Europol and led by Italy and France. The Italian organised criminal group based in Naples, Italy, was involved in the distribution of high-quality counterfeit banknotes in several denominations across Europe. The forged security features displayed on the fake banknotes were of high quality, as confirmed by the European Central Bank's analysis. Leading up to the action

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day, Italian authorities had already traced 83 sales activities, arrested 7 couriers and seized up to EUR 200 000 in counterfeit notes.

- Europol supported a large-scale operation led by Italian and Portuguese authorities, with the participation of Austria, France, Germany, Romania, Spain, Switzerland and Eurojust, against two networks of money-mule recruiters working for a criminal organisation carrying out cryptocurrency scams. A series of raids on 21 and 27 May in France, Italy and Romania resulted in 11 detentions, including the mastermind behind the money laundering scheme. The crime group carried out 'rip-deal' scams, targeting millionaires looking to invest or sell properties, and outsourced the money laundering to two other criminal networks. These networks recruited people who received money from a third party in their bank account and transferred it to another account or withdrew it in cash, giving it to someone else in exchange for a commission.
- In an operation coordinated by Europol, investigators from law enforcement authorities in Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and Spain had been tracking down a criminal group responsible for producing highly convincing counterfeit euro banknotes, which they offered for sale via a popular encrypted messenger service. On an action day on 10 June 2024 in Lecce, Italy, a sophisticated counterfeiting print shop was dismantled and over EUR 100 000 in counterfeit banknotes and over EUR 10 000 in cryptocurrencies were seized.
- On an action day conducted in Naples, Italy, on 14 August, Italy arrested a notorious money forger, dismantled his sophisticated counterfeiting print shop and seized nearly EUR 3 million in high-quality counterfeit banknotes. Collaborating closely with France, experts from the respective anti-currency counterfeiting units tracked down the criminal believed to be responsible for selling millions of euros worth of forged banknotes. Europol supported this investigation, which started in 2022 and has since seen the intelligence contributions from at least ten countries reporting seizures of the same type of faked euro bills.
- In the context of an OTF, authorities from Spain, Bulgaria and Cyprus, supported by Europol, dismantled a criminal network laundering money generated by the production and distribution of illicit tobacco products and cannabis through a network of companies located in various countries, using fake loans and false invoicing. The operation resulted in 15 arrests and the seizure of cash, cannabis, vehicles and real estate valued at around EUR 5.8 million.
- From 12 to 24 November, Europol supported Customs authorities from 23 EU Member States in a large operation against money laundering, transnational criminal activities and terrorism financing, led by France, and also involving OLAF. The operation resulted in the detection of illicit cash flows of almost EUR 2.7 million. This amount is likely to increase in the upcoming months as many discoveries are currently being prosecuted. In addition to cash, authorities also seized valuable items such as gold and jewellery, including 18 gold bars with a value exceeding EUR 1.7 million.
- Europol supported an operation led by Latvia in carrying out a large-scale operation to dismantle a criminal network involved in illegal tobacco production. Investigators discovered a massive illegal cigarette manufacturing site, which was fully equipped with production machinery and raw materials. The operation led to the detention of 32 people and the seizure of nearly 300 million cigarettes and approximately 47 tonnes of shredded tobacco leaves. If these cigarettes had entered the Latvian market, the estimated financial loss to the state would have exceeded EUR 75 million.
- Europol supported the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) and law enforcement authorities from 16 countries in taking down a major criminal network involved in value-added tax (VAT) fraud. The international investigation uncovered a complex VAT fraud scheme involving the trade of popular electronic goods, resulting in an estimated VAT loss of EUR 297 million. During the action day, 32 people were detained, and goods valued at more than EUR 47.5 million were seized. In addition, 62 bank accounts with a combined value of over EUR 5.5 million were frozen.
- Law enforcement authorities across Europe, supported by Europol and Eurojust, took down one of the largest illegal streaming networks operating within and outside the EU. The investigation targeted 102 suspects, 11 of whom were arrested, for illegally distributing material from streaming services. They also pirated more than 2 500 television channels, making them available to over 22 million users worldwide without the consent of the copyright holders.

Activity 7. Strategic and Analysis Coordination

366

Operational analysis reports

304,709

SIENA messages exchanged by third parties

54

Liaison Bureaux at Europol

9.4/10

Satisfaction with operational analysis



In 2024, Europol produced 366 **operational analysis reports**, as well as 29 **strategic analysis reports**. The quality of the reports remained high; the user **satisfaction with operational analysis** was assessed via the User Survey with an overall score of 9.4/10, and that for the **strategic analysis** with 8.5/10. Additionally, the User Survey measured the satisfaction with the **Operational Training** delivered to experts in the EU MS and TP, which reached 9.4/10 at the end of 2024.

On 16 February, Europol hosted the **EU Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment (SOCTA) Advisory Group**; developments on the EU SOCTA 2025 methodology and data collection, its timeline and way forward were among the topics discussed. On 10-11 December the EU SOCTA academic advisory board met to review an early draft of the report. In April 2024, Europol published a new report, '**Decoding the EU's most threatening criminal networks**', which describes in detail how the most threatening criminal networks are organised, which criminal activities they engage in, and how and where they operate. All EU Member States and 17 of Europol's partner countries contributed data which resulted in a unique dataset of 821 most threatening criminal networks, with extensive information on all aspects that describe them and help assess their threat.

Several new releases of the **Data Analysis Portal** took place during the year, improving user experience. Updates included integration of the SIRENE flows into its scope, as well as the introduction, and later improvement, of the Cross-Check Module, a powerful new feature for crosschecking information, which is now deployed to all analysts in the Operations Directorate. The newest version, v2.8, introduced feature-based access authorisation, enabling specific functionalities based on the user profile. Likewise, the **Europol Training Network** was consolidated, to offer end-to-end training on all analysis solutions.

On 15-19 January, Europol delivered a telecommunication data analysis training to analysts from the International Criminal Court (ICC). On 15-19 April, Europol delivered a training in Greece, to 17 representatives from LEAs. The training provided insight on the strategic intelligence analysis cycle, and allowed participants to focus on indicator-based analysis, the EU SOCTA methodology and foresight analysis. On 22-26 April, Europol hosted the joint CEPOL-Europol training on advanced operational intelligence analysis. The training, attended by participants from 24 MS, covered the analysis of complex data sets using analytical tools for visual analysis, graph analysis and geospatial analysis. Three Operational Integrated Analysis Training (OIAT) sessions took place in 2024: on 16-20 August, in Greece, on 7-11 October, in Cyprus, and on 21 November, in Bulgaria – a total of 66 participants attended these sessions. On 11 December, Europol delivered a lecture on intelligence analysis as part of the Master of Policing course of the Netherlands Police Academy.

The **Europol Summer School 2024** took place on 27-30 August at Europol HQ, with 36 participants from EU MS.

The **5th European Criminal Analysis Conference (EU-CrimACon)** on analysis training and coaching took place on 19-20 September, with over 300 participants. **Europol's Criminal Analyst of the Year Awards** were awarded to analysts from Spain, Ireland and Romania.

Two meetings of the Heads of **Liaison Bureaux** took place during the reporting period: on 23 April, under the chairmanship of Belgium, at Europol Headquarters, and on 21-22 November, at

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the Ossendrecht Police Academy. On 17 June the Liaison Bureau South Korea was established at Europol, followed by the official opening ceremony on 20 June. The total number of Liaison Bureaux at Europol reached 54.

During the reporting period, Europol participated as an observer in the **Schengen evaluation in the field of police cooperation**, in Croatia, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and Czech Republic.

In the framework of the **EU funded project EUROMED Police V**, the EUROMED Threat Assessment Report, describing the evolution and trends of key criminal threats in the Middle East and North Africa Region, was officially endorsed by the project partners during the Networks Capacity Building (NCB) workshop, on 17-18 January, in Budapest. The EUROMED V project was concluded on 30 September. The sixth iteration of the project, EUROMED VI, started on 1 October, and will run until 30 September 2028. Europol's component has the objective to increase strategic analysis and dialogue on criminal threats affecting the Southern Partner Countries, within the context of the project.

Between 27 February and 1 March, a drafting session and a study visit to the Strategic Analysis Department of the Belgian Federal Police, for analysts from Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, took place in the framework of the **Eastern Partnership (EaP) Training and Operational Partnership Against Organised Crime (TOPCOP)**. In Q1, the analysts continued the drafting of the regional threat assessment, with a focus on Firearms trafficking, Cybercrime and Organised Property Crime. On 22–24 May 2024, analysts from Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine attended a review session under project TOPCOP. The focus was on the review of the draft of the regional threat assessment that the analysts had been preparing under the guidance of Europol experts. On 16-17 July, a National EMPACT Support Team workshop to exchange best practices took place, with the participation of NECs from four MS as well as Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. A new phase of the TOPCOP project kicked off on 17 September. **TOPCOP II** aims to increase the effectiveness of joint response mechanisms, police cooperation and information exchange between Eastern Partnership and EU MSs LEAs.

On 30-31 January, high-level law enforcement representatives from the **Eastern Partnership (EaP)** and **Western Balkans** regions met at Europol HQ for a joint Strategic Cooperation Forum of **TOPCOP** (EaP Training and Operational Partnership Against Organised Crime) and **WBPACT** (Western Balkan Partnership against Crime and Terrorism) projects. The second phase of the WBPACT project started on 1 April 2024, and will last for four years (kick-off meeting took place on 26 September).

On 26-27 November, Europol organised together with CEPOL a TOPCOP-WBPact EMPACT Support Network meeting focusing on combating the illicit trade of medicines, with experts from Austria, Czech Republic, Spain, France, Greece, Italy, Slovakia and the United Kingdom, as well as from EUIPO and Europol.

The 2024 **EU-Western Balkans Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) on Justice and Home Affairs** took place on 16 April in Brussels. The Home affairs sessions included senior representatives from the six Western Balkan partners, the Council President, DG HOME, Frontex, Europol, EUDA (then EMCDDA), EUAA, DG NEAR, EEAS, EU CTC Office, Eurojust and the European Network for Administrative Approach (ENAA). The two topics on the SOM's agenda were: 1) Countering criminal infiltration into the legal economy and society through corruption and 2) Strengthening migration, asylum and border protection.

In 2024, Europol continued consultations in view of shaping the **External Relations Strategy 2025+**. The new External Relations Strategy draws upon the discussions held with and comments expressed by Member States and the European Commission regarding the future of Europol's external relations, as well as internal consultations. The External Relations Strategy 2025+ was endorsed by the MB at its October meeting.

On 29 February, in line with the revised Europol Regulation and the enhanced possibilities for co-operation with Private Parties, as well as following the Implementation Roadmap of the Europol Strategy "Delivering security in partnership", a cross-directorate project was set up to

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ensure cross-organisational coordination and a structured approach to the development of Europol's strategy on the **cooperation with Private Parties**. An outline of the Strategy for cooperation with Private Parties, drafted based on consultations with MS, was presented to the Corporate Matters Working Group at its meeting in November 2024.

In terms of **information exchanged by Third Parties** (TP), a total of 304,709 SIENA messages were exchanged by Third Parties, 18% above the 2023 result, and the 230,000 target. When it comes to enhancing **cooperation with Europol's stakeholders**:



- **Cooperation with EU neighbourhood countries:** The cooperation with the European Union Advisory Mission (EUAM) Ukraine continued during the reporting period, at strategic and operational level; Europol contributed to EUAM trainings delivered in the field of war crimes, e-evidence gathering and cryptocurrencies. Moreover, Europol regularly hosts visits and awareness sessions addressed to Ukraine LEAs (e.g., awareness raising online workshop co-organised by Europol and EUAM Ukraine in early April 2024). The official communication of ratification of the implementing instruments of the WA by the Armenian Parliament was received in early May 2024. In 2024, working level relations have been established with the new EU Partnership Mission (EUPM) in Moldova, which was established primarily to strengthen the country's resilience to hybrid threats, including cybersecurity, and countering foreign information manipulation and interference.
- **Cooperation with the MENA countries:** In Q1, the negotiations for a Working Arrangement (WA) with Jordan were launched, and continued throughout the year. In February, a study visit to Europol HQ by a Jordanian delegation took place, to further familiarise with Europol activities, with focus on the work of the Liaison Bureaux of external partners at Europol HQ. A new liaison officer of Türkiye was deployed to Europol in Q1; Türkiye participates in 8 OAPs in the framework of EMPACT 2024. On 23-25 April, Europol welcomed a delegation of law enforcement officials from Egypt. The visit aimed at providing the delegation with in depth knowledge of the EMPACT framework, as well as facilitating discussions on several crime areas. Negotiations with Egypt on the WA were concluded at the end of September, and the text of the document was approved by the Management Board at its December meeting.
- **Cooperation with Latin American countries:** During 2024, Europol continued to support the European Commission following the initiation of negotiations of International Agreements with Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador. The negotiations for an International Agreement with Brazil were finalised during the reporting period. Negotiations with Ecuador on the implementing instruments of the Working Arrangement (concluded in October 2023) were finalised during the reporting period, and are in force as of 19 June 2024. The strategic review of Europol's partnership with Colombia, outlining the level of cooperation across crime areas, including involvement in Europol's analysis projects (AP), operational task forces (OTF) and EMPACT operational actions, was presented to the Management Board for discussion at its meeting in June 2024. A negotiation meeting for a WA with Argentina took place in August. The LO Agreement and the SIENA Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) were countersigned by Chile in December. The official kick-off of EU funded project EL PACCTO 2.0 took place in March 2024. A visit of the new EL PACCTO team to Europol took place in April 2024. The EU – CLASI (Latin American Internal Security Committee) Senior Officials Meeting took place in Brussels, on 30-31 May 2024. Participants included delegates of COSI, Europol, Eurojust, CEPOL, EUDA (then EMCDDA), Frontex, MAOC-N (maritime Analysis and Operations Centre – Narcotics), EL PACCTO 2.0, Ameripol and senior officials from CLASI countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay). Topics included the fight against drug trafficking, response to organised crime, and perspectives for future EU-CLASI cooperation.

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- **Cooperation with Asian countries:** The WA with India was concluded and entered into force on 22 March 2024. In Q1, negotiations of the Working Arrangement with Singapore, continued and the conclusions were submitted to the Management Board for endorsement at its June meeting. The WA with Singapore was signed on 28 November 2024.
- **Cooperation with other countries:** The agreement between the EU and New Zealand on the exchange of personal data with Europol entered into force on 15 August. The agreement includes provisions on the exchange of information and data protection, the rights of data subjects, the establishment of a supervisory authority, and administrative and judicial redress. This is the first agreement of its kind since the Europol Regulation 2017, which allows Europol to transfer personal data to an authority of a third country on the basis of an international agreement between the EU and the third country.
- **Cooperation with EU institutions, bodies and agencies, and international organisations:** In 2024, Europol continued to provide technical support to the negotiating team of DG HOME in the framework of the EU-Interpol agreement discussions. In January 2024, Europol and Eurojust established an informal working group (iWG) to explore the business needs and opportunities related to the implementation of the cooperation agreement, with a particular focus on information sharing and information flows. On 5 June, Europol had an introductory meeting with the Head of the Authority for Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (AMLA) Task Force. The meeting allowed to establish contacts with the Task Force and to have an exchange of views about the future cooperation between Europol and the AMLA. The Working Arrangement between the EU Satellite Centre (SatCen) and Europol was approved by the MB at its June 2024 meeting. Internal consultations on the draft WA with Frontex continued in the second part of the year. Simultaneously, Europol and Frontex continued working on the Joint Concept Note regarding the exchange of operational personal data. The LO Agreement and SIENA MoU with the International Criminal Court (ICC) were signed on 18 September. Europol continued negotiations with the Commission for a WA on cooperation in the context of the implementation of the Digital Services Act; in this regard a familiarisation visit for DG CNECT and DG HOME was organised in December 2024. Cooperation in the area of cybercrime was enhanced overall. Institutional cooperation with the EU Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA) was enhanced, including through a pilot cyber intelligence exchange programme in September-October 2024. Cooperation with CERT-EU continued, as well as with the EEAS, in the framework of the EU Cyber Diplomacy Toolbox.

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Activity 8. Governance, support and administration

99.9%

Budget commitment rate

8,429

News articles mentioning
Europol

1.2%

Vacancy rate

89%

Overall user satisfaction

Between 4-8 March, the Europol **Diversity & Inclusion** (D&I) Advisory Group (AG) organised the Europol Diversity Days. The event aimed to raise awareness against discrimination by, among others, providing information about the work of the European LGBTQI Police Association (EGPA) and the Europol Domestic Violence Working Group, educating staff on how to report a case of violence, advocating for change and getting insights from the Fundamental Rights Officer (FRO) on staff's fundamental rights. Other activities of the D&I AG in 2024 include: participated in the 10th Conference of the European LGBT Police Association (on 17 May, in Brussels), and gave a presentation on Europol's D&I Strategy; attended the International Gender Champion Super Focal Points Meeting (28 May) – the AI April activities were mentioned as a best practice by Europol; met with the UK's CT Head of Inclusion, Diversity & Equality (IDE) – topics included Europol's approach, best practices, reducing biases in recruitment, increasing the number of women in management in LE (2 July); attended a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Workshop for EUAN under the auspices of the eu-LISA 2024 Justice & Home Affairs agencies' network (JHAAN) Presidency in Tallin, Estonia (24 September). On 10 October, during the EU Agencies Network (EUAN) meeting held in Budapest, Hungary, Europol received the **2024 EUAN Award on Diversity and Inclusion**.

During 2024, Europol's **Fundamental Rights Officer** (FRO) continued the weekly monitoring of guest officers' activities, as well as the assessment of tools for the Europol Tools Repository (ETR). The FRO provided input to the whistle-blower procedure to ensure the inclusion of fundamental rights violations, as well as on draft working arrangements, to the new External Relations Strategy and on the draft strategy on cooperation with Private Parties. Likewise, the FRO implemented, and delivered training sessions on fundamental rights for senior management and newcomers/staff members. During the reporting period, the FRO became a member of the Strategic Group on Ethics of the ECB.



Concerning Europol's financial management, in 2024, Europol achieved a **budget commitment rate** of 99.9% (99.8% in 2023) with a payment rate of 89.4% (88.6% in 2023). The % of **late payments** remained well below the 5% ceiling and was, at the end of 2024, at 0.6% in terms of value of the payments (2.2% in 2023). By the end of 2024, the **vacancy rate** reached 1.2% (1.7% at the end of 2023). When it comes to **gender balance**, female representation remains stable at 33% (slightly under the 2023 result, 34%).

In 2024, in the area of **strategic planning and monitoring**, Europol participated, in the context of the Performance Development Network (PDN), in the working group on "Flexible Allocation of Resources" with the aim of developing a paper for EU Agencies Network (EUAN), regarding the next MFF. Additionally, during the reporting period:

- The Annual report on information provided by Member States in 2023 in accordance with Article 7(11) ER was shared with the MB at its meeting in June, and submitted to the European Commission, the Council, the Parliament and the JPSG.
- The Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2023 was adopted, without observations, by the MB in June and submitted to the European Commission, the Council, the Parliament, and the JPSG.
- The Six-month Activity Report 2024 was presented at the MB at its October meeting.
- The Programming Document 2025-2027 was adopted by the MB on 10 December 2024.

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Following development of the **Strategy Implementation Roadmap**, the ED appointed, upon proposal of the Strategy Implementation Steering Committee (SISC), the project leaders and teams for the main strategic initiatives identified under the roadmap. A reporting mechanism was established, ensuring alignment with the regular quarterly performance reporting.

In 2024, Europol implemented 89% of the pending critical and very important **audit recommendations** planned for implementation during the year, above the annual target of 85%. (More details about audits can be found under 2.3 Assessment of audits and follow up of recommendations and action plans.)

On 24-25 September, Europol organised the annual **European Police Chiefs Convention** (EPCC) at its HQ, to discuss collaborative strategies to combat emerging criminal threats and enhance international cooperation. This event was co-hosted by the Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, was attended by over 450 delegates from 50 countries, and included topics such as drug trafficking, online fraud and the impact of cyberattacks, disinformation and hybrid threats on policing. During the convention, Europol announced the winners of the 2024 Europol Excellence Awards in Innovation; the Croatian, Estonian and Dutch Police were recognised for their achievements in three categories: Innovation initiative in ethics, diversity and inclusion, Innovative operation, and Innovative technical solution.

In March 2024, Europol's **Corporate Security Department** delivered a **crisis management** exercise with the aim of strengthening Europol's preparedness. To demand for a greater level of complexity, MS Liaison Bureaux also participated in this year's exercise, centred around a simulated duress incident involving a Europol staff member. Due to the setup of the fictive incident, the Crisis Management Team (CMT) had to closely coordinate with the Liaison Bureaux to effectively navigate the situation. A post-exercise report, presenting all the findings and resulting actions, was finalised in Q2. Moreover, a specific training, addressing several of the actions identified during the exercise was designed; the first phase of the training was conducted on 4 December.

During the reporting period, the Events Office supported the organisation of several **high-level visits and events**; among these, the visit of Their Majesties the King and Queen of the Belgians at Europol, on 27 February, the Industry and Research Days (300 participants), the Strategic Cooperation Forum (90 participants), the European Police Chiefs Convention (450 participants), and Europol 25th anniversary event, to name just a few.

The implementation of the **Strategic Housing Roadmap** continued and in April 2024, the Host State, Eurojust and Europol initiated the de-commissioning process of the **Temporary Satellite Building (TSB) 1**; the lease of TSB1 will expire on 31 December 2025.



The environmental permit for the **TSB2** was granted in May 2024 and the construction process is underway. The development of **TSB3** is to be completed in two construction phases. The environmental permit for phase 1, initially planned to be issued in June 2024, was delayed for 2025; the preliminary design process for phase 2 is advancing.

During the reporting period, the Host State performed an analysis of the live loads in the Headquarters, in the framework of the **Mid-Term Housing Solution**. As a result, the overall weight in the office environment and public spaces was reduced. In Q4 2024, the Host State contracted a new design team. The start of the construction works of the MTHS is linked to the availability of TSB3.

Regarding the **Low-Rise** of the building which will accommodate the new **Medical Centre**, and the **Gym & Fitness facilities**, after relocation from the HQ, the definition phase was completed in May 2024, and a new design team was contracted in December 2024 for elaborating the preliminary design; the forecasted delivery date of the building is Q2 2027. The location research done by the Host State and Europol for the **Hot Data Centre** (HDC), to host a second HDC in the Netherlands, was ongoing at the end of 2024.

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With regards to the **Long-Term Housing Measures**, on 24 April, the Host State provided its interim findings on the Security Gap Analysis and Feasibility Study for the building initially chosen to host the second Headquarters (HQ2) – the feasibility of the implementation of Europol’s Programme of Requirements highlighted serious difficulties. Alternative buildings/locations in The Hague are being investigated. As input for the new search criteria of HQ2, Europol updated its previous “Strategic Housing Roadmap (SHR) - Planning Strategic growth 2031 – 2045 (UPDATE)” of 2021. Europol shared this information with the Host State, together with the security stand-off zone criteria and (draft) spatial programme of requirements, in December 2024.

Regarding **Europol’s environmental management system (EMS)**, in October 2024, an external audit was concluded and Europol was recommended for re-certification for the EMAS and ISO14001 standards. The new Environmental Statement was also endorsed by the external verifier.

Part II. Management

2.1. Management Board

Pursuant to Article 9 of the Europol Regulation, the **Management Board** (MB) constitutes, along with the Executive Director, the administrative and management structure of Europol. It is the **Agency's primary governance body** and its most important stakeholder environment. It ensures strategic guidance, oversees the implementation of Europol's tasks and performs other functions as mandated by the Europol Regulation. The MB is comprised of one representative of each Member State and one of the Commission. It takes decisions by simple majority, except for specific matters requiring a two-thirds majority, with each MB member having one vote. Denmark, which does not take part in the Europol Regulation, is represented in the Board in an observer capacity.

In 2024, the MB held four ordinary meetings and one topical meeting dedicated to planning matters. Two ordinary meetings were held at Europol's Headquarters and two were hosted by the respective Presidencies of the Council of the EU, namely Belgium and Hungary. The **MB Working Groups** on Information Management (WGIM) and on Corporate Matters (WGCM) held four meetings each.

In the context of scrutiny of Europol's activities by the European Parliament together with the national parliaments, the MB Chairperson presented the activities of the Board to the February and November 2024 meetings of the **Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group** (JPSG).

Pursuant to Article 14(4) of the Europol Regulation, a representative of the JPSG attended the December 2024 MB meeting in an observer capacity for matters of strategic and political interest⁴.

Annex X to the CAAR outlines the main decisions taken by the Board at each meeting and the main topics discussed. Furthermore, Annex X includes a list of the main decisions taken by the MB through written procedure.

2.3. Budgetary and financial management

2.3.1. Revenue

The revenue of Europol is almost fully covered by the Community subsidy (fund source IC1), amounting to € 218.2M of Commitment Appropriations⁵ (CA) and € 215.7M of Payment Appropriations⁶ (PA) in 2024. At the end of November 2024, the budget was amended by € 2M (CA and PA), following the Draft Amending Budget (DAB) proposal No. 5 to the General Budget 2024 of the EU in relation to the impact of the adjustments on the salaries⁷. These together summed up to € 217.7M of PA, representing the amount of cash needed in 2024 as the main financial source of revenue (European Union contribution) under fund source IC1, which was fully established and cashed by the end of the year.

An amount of € 2.9M was established as internal assigned revenue (fund source IC4/IC41) of which € 2.4M was also cashed (received). This cashed revenue was linked to expenditure budget

⁴ The co-Chairs of the JPSG had also been invited to attend the June 2024 MB meeting. The co-Chairs could not attend due to other obligations and no other JPSG member joined the MB meeting. Two administrators from the LIBE Committee Secretariat were present for the items of strategic and political interest.

⁵ Commitment appropriations cover the total cost, in the current financial year, of the legal obligations entered into for operations to be carried out over more than one financial year. This type of appropriation constitutes the upper limit of expenditure, which can be committed during the financial year.

⁶ Payment appropriations cover expenditure arising from commitments entered into during the current financial year or preceding years.

⁷ EDOC# 1424349 Amending Budget VI 2024 – Europol salary update 2024.

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items and the outstanding amount (non-cashed recovery orders) of € 557K was carried over to 2025⁸.

External assigned revenue (fund source IR1/IR11) was amended for an amount of € 2.2M, relating to various agreements with the European Commission and other agencies and for an amount of € 5.3M relating to the contribution to Europol from the Kingdom of Denmark⁹ for the budget year 2024, which was fully cashed. Also included in the revenue cashed under fund source IR1/ IR11, was an amount of € 58K relating to the Europol Pension fund.

2.3.2. Expenditure¹⁰

The outcome of the main financial performance indicators for 2024 is as follows:

- The implementation of CA was 99.9% or € 220M, +0.1% and € 13.3M above 2023.
- The overall PA rate (which takes into account the budget related to PA of € 217.7M) was 89.4% or € 194.7M, +1% or € 13M above the same period in 2023.
- The cancelled carry-over PA amounted to 7%: a total of € 1.7M was not used and was incorporated in the final budget result. The amounts not used were due to operational activities not implemented mainly in the areas of ICT related expenses, meetings and missions & deployments.
- The PA not used for grants, amounting to € 1.5M not implemented, lapsed at the year end.

Title 1 – Staff related expenditure

The CA under Title 1 amounted to € 125.1M with an implementation rate for commitments of 100% (€ 10.8M more than 2023) and for payments of 99% (€ 10.9M more than 2023).

€ 1M was carried over to 2025 as PA to cover existing commitments, which represented 1% of the budget under Title 1. The budget carried over was mainly related to external services relating to the Strategic Housing Roadmap (SHR), supplementary clerical and interim services and various other services such as Catering costs, training of staff etc.

An amount of € 20K of the actual budget remained unused and lapsed.

Title 2 – Other administrative expenditure

The CA under Title 2 amounted to € 12.8M with an implementation rate of 100% (€ 2.5M less than 2023) and a payment rate of 69% (€ 1.8M less than 2023).

An amount of € 4M was carried over to 2025 as PA to cover existing commitments, which represented 31% of the budget under Title 2. In this area, the payment implementation for building-related expenditure is slower as it requires the involvement of (sub-) contractors before the Host State can issue invoices. This results in high amounts carried over each year.

An amount of € 40K of the budget remained unused and lapsed.

Title 3 – Operational activities

⁸ Out of this amount, € 405K (IC41) relates to the grant pre-financing paid to the Agency for European Integration and Economic Development, which was declared insolvent in 2022. Europol's claim was accepted by the Commercial Court of Vienna in 2022, but the outcome and likelihood of this claim being settled remains unclear.

⁹ Following the application of the Europol Regulation on 1 May 2017, Denmark is regarded as a third country with respect to Europol. This is a consequence of the application of the Protocol (no 22) annexed to the TFEU on the position of Denmark, under which the Kingdom of Denmark does not take part in the adoption of measures pursuant to Title V of Part Three of the TFEU and such measures are not binding upon nor applicable in Denmark. The Agreement on Operational and Strategic Cooperation between the Kingdom of Denmark and Europol ("Denmark agreement") was signed on 29 April 2017 with the purpose to establish cooperative relations.

¹⁰ Apart from Chapter 39, all other appropriations are non-differentiated (NDA), meaning that the commitment and the payment appropriations are of the same amount and comply with the principle of annuality (an annual nature). Europol uses differentiated appropriations (DA) only for Grants, for multiannual activities for which funds are fully committed in the first year, while payments follow in subsequent years.

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The CA under Title 3 amounted to € 82.1M, with an implementation rate of 100% (€ 5M more than 2023) and a payment rate of 78% (€ 3.9M more than 2023). As mentioned above, in Title 3 the payment rate takes into account the budget for PA, which was € 79.8M in 2024.

100% or € 77.2M of the budget available under Title 3 was used to support operational activities, including various operational grants. Moreover, € 41.3M of the budget available under Title 3 was implemented for ICT strategic priorities such as, but not exclusively, Interoperability, Analysis capabilities, the Innovation Sandbox, PERCI and the New Forensics Environment (NFE), besides the regular ICT operational, telecommunication and sustainment expenditure. The remaining € 24.1M was implemented mainly for various activities for the operational support to MS.

An amount of € 138K lapsed under this Title.

An overall amount of € 16.2M (excluding grants) was carried over to 2025, representing 20% of the budget available under Title 3. This was € 3.1M less compared to 2023. Areas with carry-over amounts were mainly, but not exclusively, operational ICT expenditure, meetings, operational training, deployments and missions.

2.3.3. Implementation of appropriations carried over to 2024 (C8)

The carry-over of PA to 2024 came to a total of € 23M, to cover existing commitments established during 2023. The final implementation rate was € 21.3M or 93%. The cancelled commitments amounted to 7%. A total of € 1.7M was not used and was therefore incorporated in the final budget result. The unused funds mainly related to the following:

- € 154K for Title 1, which was 13% of the amount carried over under this Title (€ 1.2M) - mainly related to other external services and the Paymaster Office (PMO) management costs;
- € 105K for Title 2, which represented 2% of the total amount carried over under this Title (€ 4.6M) - mainly related to water and energy costs and postal and delivery charges;
- € 1.5M for Title 3, which was 8% of the amount carried over under Title 3 (€ 17.2M) - mainly related to operations and ICT expenses.

2.3.4. Implementation of assigned revenue (C4, C5 and R0)

With regard to the implementation of internal assigned revenue, there is a distinction between funds established in 2024 (fund source C4) and funds carried over from 2023 (fund source C5).

C4: This type of revenue relates to refunds and other revenue, such as repayments, tax reimbursements, revenue from third parties, unspent pre-financing by Member States etc. During the year 2024, an overall amount of € 2.4M was established and cashed. Only € 208K (or 9%) was implemented of which only € 2.2K (or 0.1%) was paid. An amount of € 2.4M of PA was carried over to fund source C5, in order to be implemented in 2025.

C5: The C5 budget relates to cashed and unused assigned revenue from the previous year (under C4 funds) (C4 -> C5). Appropriations carried over from 2023, amounting to € 2.1M, were fully committed mainly in the areas of Grants (€ 1.1M), decryption platform (€ 612K) and administrative/operational ICT (€ 322K). Payment implementation reached 99.9% and € 3K remained unpaid at the end of the year and carried over to fund source C8.

R0: With regard to the implementation of external assigned revenue, there is a distinction between the funds that were established in 2024 (e.g., new agreements) and the funds from before 2024 for which the implementation continued into the year. Part of the funds included in fund source R0 refer to grants which are usually committed and spent within a multi-annual period. The amount carried over in respect of R0 includes also non-committed amounts to be used in future years.

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External assigned revenue included in the budgetary accounts came to € 17.4M, of which € 5.3M was carried over from 2023 and the remaining € 12.1M was established and cashed in 2024. The commitment rate came to 69% and the payment rate to 52%. The available CA (€ 5.4M) and PA (€ 8.3M) were carried over to 2025.

- Title 1: Following the agreement between Europol and Denmark, a contribution amounting to € 5.3M was received in 2024 and was fully implemented, while the budget for the Pensions under the Europol Convention had limited implementation and the available amount of € 1.4M CA and € 1.5M PA were carried over to 2025.
- Title 3: Under budget item 3600 (Operational expenditure related to subsidies and grants) – the actual budget 2024 was € 4.8M of which € 1.7M was carried over from 2023 and the rest was cashed during the year for the contribution agreement EMPACT EAP Phase 2 (€ 1.8M) and the service level agreement with CEPOL (€ 1.2M). A remaining budget of € 2.3M was carried over to 2025.

The budget 2024 under budget item 3700 (Operational expenditure related to research and development projects) was € 5.6M of which € 1.9M was carried over from 2023 and € 3.7M was cashed during the year for several agreements; EUIPO (€ 1.0M), SIRIUS (€1.2M), Horizon 2020 (€ 0.2M) and PERCI (related to Art.18 of the Digital Services Act), € 1.2M). The final commitment rate was 69% and payment rate 43%. The budget of € 1.7M was carried over to 2025.

2.3.5. Appropriations carried over to 2024

With regard to the carryover of appropriations from 2024 to 2025, there is a distinction between the funds corresponding to carry over of payment appropriations and carry over of commitment appropriations. All appropriations have been carried over in accordance with Article 12 of the Europol Financial Regulation.

European Union contribution 2024 (fund source C1 to C8)

An amount of € 21.2M of PA was automatically carried over to 2025 from fund source C1 to C8 covering commitments made during 2024. This represents 10% of the overall budget PA of € 217.7M. Out of the € 21.1M carried over:

- € 1M concerned Title 1 (Staff), which was 1% of the total budget PA in Title 1 (€ 125.1M), mostly relating to the consultancy services for the Strategic Housing Roadmap (SHR) programme, as well various external services such as hospitality, move, catering and supplementary clerical and interim services.
- € 4M concerned Title 2 (Administrative Expenditure), which was 31% of the total budget PA in Title 2 (€ 12.9M), mostly relating to building-related expenditure, furniture and Management Board activities.
- € 16.2M concerned Title 3 (Operational Expenditure) of Non-Differentiated Appropriations (NDA), which was 20% of the total budget PA in Title 3 (€ 79.8M), mostly relating to ICT operational expenditure and other operational activities.

Internal assigned revenue (fund source C5 to C8)

An amount of € 3K was carried over to C8 in Title 2 to cover open commitments from 2024.

Internal assigned revenue (fund sources C4 to C5)

An amount of € 2.2M of CA and € 2.4M of PA under fund source C4 were carried over to fund source C5.

External assigned revenue (fund source R0 to R0)

€ 5.4M of CA and € 8.3M of PA were carried over to 2025. The PA carried over related to:

- € 1.5M - Europol Pension Fund;

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- € 2.6M - contribution agreement for EMPACT EaP/EaP2;
- € 1.5M - contribution agreement for SIRIUS phase2/phase3;
- € 262K - grant agreements related to Horizon 2020;
- € 111K - service level agreement for EUIPO IP Crime / Fraud;
- € 1.2M - service level agreements with CEPOL;
- € 1.2M - contribution agreement for PERCI (related to Art.18 of the Digital Services Act).

2.3.6. Budget Transfers

Throughout the year, a total number of 36 transfers for fund source C1 were made, for a total amount of almost € 14.4M (or 6.6% of the budget).

In Title 1 (Staff), a total of € 7.3M (or 5.8%) was transferred in due to a higher weighting coefficient for The Netherlands and additional needs of budget. Of the amount transferred in, € 2M were related to the Draft Amending Budget (DAB) proposal no. 5 to the General Budget 2024 in relation of the impact of these adjustments on the revised salaries¹¹. The remaining amount was related to the re-allocation of savings realised during the year under Titles 2 and 3, in order to cover for the additional budget necessary in the salaries area. Such budget transfer was submitted for adoption to the MB on 30 November 2024 since the value was exceeding the 10% threshold related to the Financial Regulation¹².

In Title 2 (Other Administrative Expenditure), a total of € 2.2M (or 14.7%) was transferred out as a result of savings achieved across the organisation and, specifically in this area, thanks to the lower interpretation costs for the Management Board (MB), as well as due to activities not performed as originally planned for the Strategic Housing Roadmap.

In Title 3 (Operational activities), a total of € 3M (or 3.5%) of budget was transferred out, in order to transfer the savings realised in the operational budget towards the shortage in the salaries area as well as to cover for the additional needs for deployments. As such, among others, the meetings and mission budget, as well as the budget related to SNEs, including Short-term SNEs, were reduced.

All transfers were approved by the Executive Director in accordance with Article 26(1) of the the Financial Regulation applicable to Europol, except the transfer necessary to cover for the higher salary needs, which was approved by the Management Board in accordance with Article 26(2,4) of the Financial Regulation applicable to Europol.

2.3.7. Budget Outturn 2024

The overall budget result (surplus) for the financial year 2024 came to € 3.5M, which was € 2.8M less than in 2023. The surplus included the following:

- € 198K of not committed and lapsed CA relating to the European Union contribution, for Non-Differentiated Appropriations (NDA) in the 2024 budget;
- € 1.5M of not used PA relating to grants as Differentiated Appropriations¹³ (DA) in the 2024 budget;
- € 1.7M of not used PA, carried over from 2023 to 2024, which were not used and lapsed;

¹¹ EDOC# 1424349 Amending Budget VI 2024 – Europol salary update 2024

¹² EDOC# 1417781 – 2024 Budget transfer for MB approval

¹³ Differentiated appropriations (DA), as opposed to non-differentiated appropriations (NDA), are divided into commitment appropriations and payment appropriations. Operations extending over more than one financial year have a deadline attached, i.e., a date by which the relevant projects must be completed. In contrast to DA, NDA have the same budget for commitment appropriations and payment appropriations because all payments made in a given year relate to expenditure arising from commitments and legal obligations entered into during the same financial year

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The exchange rate difference in 2024 was a loss of € 229.

2.3.8. Accrual rate

The accrual rate 2024 increased to 27% (compared to 25% in 2023), with € 5.8M accrued (the amount of products/services already delivered in 2024, but not yet paid) and carry forward commitments of € 21.2M¹⁴.

2.3.9. Late payments

In 2024, Europol made a total of 4,081 payments which was slightly more than in 2023 (4,055), while the total value paid during 2024 increased by 3.1% compared to 2023.

The total of invoices paid late decreased from 5.2% in 2023 to 3.4% in 2024. The value of late payments reached 0.6% at the end of 2024, considerably under the ceiling of 5%.

In 2024, a total of € 5K were paid to cover interest costs related to 15 late payments.

2.3.10. Procurement

The table below contains an overview of the different procurement procedures run by Europol in 2024, for contracts above € 15,000¹⁵:

Type of procedure applied	Number of procedures resulting in contracts	Value (EUR)	% of total value
Open/ restricted	4	127,990,000	99.68%
Low / middle value	0	0	0%
Competitive with negotiation/ competitive dialogue	0	0	0%
Negotiated without prior publication of a contract notice based on points 11.1 (a) to (f) of Annex I of the FR	2	114,000	0.09%
Negotiated without prior publication of a contract notice based on points 11.1 (g) and (i) of Annex I of the FR	0	0	0%
Negotiated without prior publication of a contract notice based on points 11.1 (h), (j), (k), (l), and (m) of Annex I of the FR	1	300,000	0.23%
TOTAL	7	128,404,000	100%

Pursuant to Article 74(10) of the Financial Regulation (FR) applicable to Europol, each authorising officer by delegation must draw up a list of the negotiated procedures under points 11.1 (a) to (f) of Annex I FR, i.e., negotiated procedures without publication of a contract notice and, if the trend shows a significant increase of this type of procedures, to report on measures taken to reverse such a trend.

In 2024, the total number of negotiated procedures under points 11.1 (a) to (f) of Annex I FR was comparable to the average of the last four years. The value of the contracts awarded under

¹⁴ For the purpose of calculating accruals, fund sources C1, C4 and C5 are used.

¹⁵ This overview does not include specific contracts/orders awarded under framework contracts. This overview does not include inter-institutional contracts. This overview includes only procurement procedures initiated by Europol and resulting in contracts.

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points 11.1 (a) to (f) of Annex I FR in 2023 was much lower than the average of the previous four years (as outlined in the table below).

Year	Number of procurement procedure under points 11.1 (a) to (f) of Annex I FR	Value in Euro	Proportion (%) of the yearly value of awarded procedures
2020	2	230,000	2.98%
2021	1	405,000	0.69%
2022	1	411,000	2.65%
2023	4	25,898,811.88	85.11%
<i>Average 2020-2023</i>	2	6,736,203	22.86%
2024	2	114,000	0.09%

In addition, point 3.2 of Annex I FR stipulates that the negotiated procedures under points (g) (building contracts) and (i) (contracts to be declared secret) of point 11.1 shall be included/annexed to the Consolidated Annual Activity Report. The other grounds of negotiated procedures referred to in points 11.1 (h), (j), (k), (l), and (m) of Annex I FR are subject to separate publication (i.e., publication in the Annual List of Contractors on Europol's website). Therefore, these procedures are not included in this report.

In 2024, the following contracts were concluded under points 11.1 (a) - (f), (g) and (i) of Annex I FR:

Point of Annex I to the FR	Brief indication of the circumstances justifying the use of procedure	Subject of the tender	Procedure ref.	Maximum value (EUR)	Contractor
point 11.1 e	For new services consisting in the repetition of similar services or works entrusted to the economic operator to which the same contracting authority awarded an original contract	Increase of the budget ceiling of the framework contract 1231221 for Legal Services	EUROPOL/2024/NP/0006	60,000	REDEKER SELLNER DAHS Rechtsanwälte Partnerschaftsgesellschaft mbB
		Increase of budget ceiling FWC 1241118 for Legal Services	EUROPOL/2024/NP/0012	€ 54,000	Ashurst Europe SRL

Pursuant to Article 163(3) FR, publication of certain information on a contract award may be withheld where its release would impede law enforcement or otherwise be contrary to the public interest, would harm the legitimate commercial interest of economic operators or might prejudice fair competition between them. Europol did not identify any reason to withhold information based on Article 163(3) FR.

2.3.11. Cost and benefits of internal controls

To measure the **cost effectiveness of controls**, Europol assessed their **benefits**, level of **efficiency** and their **cost**.

With respect to **benefits**, the system of internal controls ensures the compliant, cost effective and efficient implementation of the budget entrusted to Europol, the mitigation of risks, and the achievement of corresponding objectives, including the compliance and reporting objectives.

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Europol's activities are subject to oversight, supervision and scrutiny to ensure that the Agency delivers on its mandate in a compliant way.

Since Europol became an EU Agency, the ECA has issued an **unqualified audit opinion** on the reliability of the accounts and on the legality and regularity of the transactions underlying the accounts. The ECA observations concerning the previous financial years were addressed by the end of 2023 and to date there are no reservations with respect to the annual accounts for 2024. The **European Parliament** granted the Executive Director **discharge** on the implementation of the budget for each financial year, to date.

The established controls resulted in an **adequately reduced risk of financial fraud**, including based on the implementation of Europol's financial model and Europol's Anti-Fraud Strategy, relying on clear guidance to staff on the expected behaviour, as well as, in particular preventive and detective controls, next to reporting mechanisms and measures for the prevention of conflict of interest situations.

There were no critical risks identified ad hoc and no major deficiencies regarding the **effectiveness, efficiency and cost of controls (economy)**.

In 2024, the **value of exceptions** and instances of **non-compliance** concerning Europol's financial transactions was **well below the 2% materiality threshold** (i.e., 0.7%), the **budget commitment implementation rate** reached 99.9%, the **payment rate** was 89.4%, the **vacancy rate** was below the threshold of 2% (i.e., 1.2%), and the **implementation of critical and very important recommendations** was above target (i.e., 89% vs. 85%). Budgetary performance further improved in 2024, in particular concerning the budget outturn and carry-forward to 2025, as a result of dedicated measures, including through the use of a reserve list of initiatives.

Concerning the **economy of controls**, the **overall cost of controls in 2024** represented **2.1%** of the **established revenue**. The ratio is considered **reasonable** to uphold a compliant financial model, while mitigating the risk of financial fraud, in particular in light of Europol's position as a law enforcement agency at EU level, the renewed mandate under the Europol Regulation and renewed Europol Strategy, the complexity of (operational) activities, the evolution of the budget and the number of establishment plan posts as well as other staff financed from the funds entrusted to Europol¹⁶.

The **calculation method** to estimate the cost of controls was developed based on the guidance of the European Commission and specific guidelines developed by the Internal Control Working Group of the Performance Development Network (PDN)¹⁷, while taking into account Europol's specific situation. To calculate the cost of controls, salary costs (based on the average full time equivalent costs for each concerned staff member) were included for ex-ante and ex-post control activities concerning the implementation of the established revenue of Europol. The salary costs were estimated for the activities for financial and operational initiation and verification as well as authorisation, budget planning and monitoring, procurement and grants management, next to accounting activities. In addition, external audit costs for 2024 were taken into account. Costs for information technology controls, planning and performance, maintaining the Internal Control Framework (ICF), internal assurance (e.g., data protection, internal audit and system accreditation) and anti-fraud measures, and so-called overhead costs (e.g., building related running costs, ICT administration) were not included.

Europol continues to **closely monitor** the development of the **cost ratio for internal controls**, also in anticipation of the developments to digitalise the management of EU funds with the implementation of SUMMA, replacing the Accrual Based Accounting System (ABAC) as of 2027 at Europol.

¹⁶ Contract Agents (CAs) and Seconded National Experts (SNEs)

¹⁷ The PDN is a sub-network of the EU Agencies Network (EUAN).

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2.4. Delegation and sub-delegation of the powers of budget implementation

In accordance with the provisions of Article 59(1) of the Europol Regulation and Article 39(1) of the Financial Regulation (FR) applicable to Europol, the Executive Director performs the duties as **Authorising Officer (AO)** for **the implementation of revenue and expenditure of the budget assigned to Europol**. In 2024, the Executive Director continued to delegate the powers of budget implementation to the Deputy Executive Directors, the Head of the Corporate Affairs Bureau and the Secretary of the Management Board (MB), and their alternates, for the budget allocated to their respective areas.

Sub-delegation for the implementation of revenue and expenditure requires prior agreement by the Executive Director, in accordance with Article 41(2) of the FR. The duties and responsibilities of the Authorising Officer (AO) including the Europol controls and checks for financial transactions also apply to Authorising Officers (AOs) by delegation or sub-delegation, who possess the necessary professional skills for the implementation of budget.

The implementation of the budget is performed following the **principles of sound financial management, transparency and segregation of duties**. Arrangements and internal controls are in place for the prevention and management of conflict of interest situations, as well as the identification and reporting of irregular and suspected illegal activity, including instances of financial fraud, supported by ex-ante and ex-post financial controls, next to the safeguarding of records of the underlying financial transactions. The delegations and sub-delegations are not governed by a time limit and are amended/revoked based on business needs. They are subject to an annual validation of user access rights in the Accrual Based Accounting System (ABAC), performed by Europol's Internal Audit Capability (IAC), cross-checking whether these are in line with the delegations, tasks and responsibilities entrusted to staff.

The delegations and sub-delegations are maintained as part of Europol's Financial Model, last revised in December 2024. The financial model delegations, summarised in the "Delegation Matrix" of Europol – approved by the Authorising Officer (AO) and available to all staff for internal transparency, are maintained and updated on a continuous basis, with a view to ensuring efficient, effective and compliant budget implementation.

Monthly, quarterly and yearly financial monitoring and reporting mechanisms are in place. Instances of financial exceptions and non-compliance are logged in a central record and the financial verification approach was updated in 2024.

Concerning the performance of financial delegations for implementing the revenue and expenditure at Europol, there was no information identified which would have led to the initiation of an administrative inquiry by Europol's Internal Investigation Service (IIS) or an internal investigation by OLAF.

2.5. Human Resources management

2.5.1. Staff figures and Establishment Plan

The 2024 Establishment Plan had a total number of 754 Temporary Agents (TA) posts, with 38 additional posts compared to the 2023 Establishment Plan, in line with the adopted Budget 2024. Details on the implementation of the Establishment Plan are included in Annex V.

On 31 December 2024, the total number of staff employed by Europol was 941: 708 staff in Establishment Plan posts (TA posts) and 233 Contract Agents (including 16 funded by grants/agreements); the number of non-Europol staff (Seconded Experts, Liaison Officers and staff of Liaison Bureaus, Interns and Contractors) was 768.

During 2024, 110 new staff joined Europol (79 Temporary Agents and 31 Contract Agents) while 80 staff left the organisation (42 Temporary Agents and 38 Contract Agents).

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2.5.2. Main changes in HR policies

In 2024, the Management Board adopted its revised Decision on the secondment of national experts to Europol. The main changes aimed at formalising the practice of seconding national experts to support regional OTFs, as cost-free SNEs, by introducing a new chapter dedicated to cost-free SNEs. The changes will avoid double-funding of cost-free SNEs supporting OTFs by limiting financial entitlements to daily subsistence allowances as per the Guide to missions.

Additionally, other changes were introduced to reduce the administrative burden for both Europol and the seconding authorities with regard to the secondment of Guest Officers. This was achieved by increasing the periods of the active secondments of Guest Officers to six months in principle. Member States will still have the option for a shorter or longer duration in justified cases.

A revised Decision of the Executive Director was adopted, aiming at introducing a change concerning the publication of a Notice of Secondment ("NoS") for the selection of short-term (costed) SNEs, by only publishing it on the internal website (intranet) as well as forwarding it to the Europol National Units (ENUs) via the LBx.

The Executive Director adopted the revised Decision on the duration of contracts for Temporary Agents under Article 2(f) of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union at Europol. Its main changes aim at increasing the contract duration applicable to staff recruited to occupy a restricted post to 10 years (instead of nine) and laid down the conditions to be met in order to benefit from such longer duration in the transitional provisions.

The Executive Director adopted the revised decision on the internal selection procedure for temporary staff under Article 2(f) of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union. Its main changes aim at (i) removing the requirement that the staff member must be engaged in the relevant type of post. For reasons of consistency; (ii) removing the 2nd eligibility criteria, i.e. "have in principle served at least two years in their current assignment", and replacing it with the successful passing of a 'probationary period'; (iii) including an express reference to the 'additional members without scoring rights' when it comes to the composition of the Selection Committee; (iv) overall aligning the wording of the Decision with that used in the Europol Recruitment Guidelines (external selection procedure)/MB Decision on TA2(f), in order to ensure clarity and enhance quality.

Finally, the Executive Director adopted the revised Decision establishing the Emergency, Support and Crisis Coordination Team and introducing standby duty in this Team. Its main changes aimed at (i) replacing certain offices further to the establishment of the Corporate Security Department within the Governance Directorate and the implementation of the reorganisation effective on 15 January 2022; (ii) increasing the number of staff simultaneously on standby for two specific profiles in the ICT Department (already on standby) and (iii) generally updating the ED Decision by adding the reference to the amendment to the Europol Regulation in its legal basis and reflecting the novelties of the Commission Decision C(2022) 1788 on working time and hybrid working.

2.5.3. Implementing rules adopted in 2024

In 2024, the Management Board agreed with the application by analogy of the following implementing rules of the **Staff Regulations**:

- Commission Decision C (2024) 1038 of 21 February 2024 amending Decision C (2011) 1278 on the general implementing provisions for Articles 11 and 12 of Annex VIII to the Staff Regulations on the transfer of pension rights.

The following **implementing rules of the Europol Regulation** were adopted in 2024 by the Management Board:

- Decision of the Management Board of Europol of 8 October 2024 on the secondment of national experts to Europol;

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- Decision of the Management Board of Europol of 13 September 2024 defining the Europol posts that can be filled only by staff engaged from the competent authorities of the Member States ("restricted posts") (insertion in Annex II of a new middle management post in the list of restricted posts).

2.5.4. Vacancy rate

The **vacancy rate** at the end of 2024 was **1.2%** (708 out of 754 posts were in post and 37 appointment letters had been sent), while the target at year end is a vacancy rate of maximum 2%.

2.5.5. Gender representation

At the end of 2024, **female staff represented 33% of all staff** working at Europol and occupied 30% of established (TA) posts filled.

Women represented 20% of staff in Senior Specialist / Senior Analyst positions (i.e., 43 out of 207 staff in these posts), compared to 17% in 2023. The percentage of female staff members in Head of Unit and equivalent or higher positions was 21% (eight staff members), compared to 22% in the previous year.

The aspect of equal opportunities for women and men is emphasised by Europol in all vacancy notices. This is also highlighted in the Europol Recruitment Guidelines, published on Europol's website.

2.5.6. Member States representation

The countries with the largest representation among staff were the Netherlands, Spain, Romania, Italy, Greece, France, Germany, Portugal and Belgium.

Comparing Europol's staff nationality share to the EU MS population share, Germany, France and Poland are still underrepresented while the Netherlands, Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, Portugal and Spain are overrepresented.

Detailed graphs can be found in Annex V-d.

2.5.7. Annual Assessment and reclassification

The Annual Appraisal Exercise 2024 was launched on 10 January 2024 and closed on 12 April 2024, with a completion rate of 87%, compared to 89% the previous year.

Europol's Reclassification Exercise 2024 was launched through an Administrative Notice published on 15 May 2024, following the closure of the Annual Appraisal Exercise 2024.

The budgetary limit for the Reclassification Exercise 2024 was set at a maximum of 25% of eligible Temporary Agent staff and 20% of eligible Contract Agent staff, taking into account the Staff Establishment Plan, the budgetary resources available and the need to respect the multiplication rates for guiding average career equivalence as regards Temporary Agent staff or the average time spent in the grade for Contract Agent staff.

The exercise was completed on 20 September 2024 and the total number of staff reclassified was 100 (69 Administrators (AD), 3 Assistants (AST) and 28 Contract Agents (CA)) which is 10.6% of the staff population (posts filled at year-end).

2.6. Internal audit management

2.6.1. Internal Audit Capability (IAC)

In accordance with its Work Programme, the IAC completed the following audit engagements in 2024:

- **Audit of Europol's ex-ante and ex-post financial verifications**

The purpose of this engagement was to provide reasonable assurance to the Executive Director and the Management Board regarding the effectiveness of internal controls over ex-ante and ex-post financial verifications. The IAC noted that the verification processes follow a comprehensive checklist, covering all essential controls and sample testing, confirming strict adherence to procedures, with no errors or irregularities identified. In addition, the established framework for managing exceptions and non-compliance events related to financial transactions is consistently followed, and testing on a sample of high-risk deployments to Hotspots did not reveal any irregularities or missing supporting documentation for payments made during these missions. The audit concluded that overall Europol maintains strong financial controls and compliance.

- **Consultancy on the handling of salary-related payments**

The IAC conducted an internal review of the salary and entitlement administration processes for Europol staff and Seconded National Experts (SNEs). The review examined procedures for handling basic salaries, entitlements and allowances for Temporary Agents, Contract Agents and SNEs, as well as the recovery process for salary-related overpayments. Overall, the salary-related payment processes at Europol were found to be well-established and operational. The review highlighted several positive aspects, including: compliance with eligibility requirements for expatriation allowances and family benefit; adequate checks and approvals to ensure accuracy and compliance of the processes; proactive mitigation of identified gaps. Identified areas for improvement included: the need for comprehensive process documentation; automation for reducing manual interventions and the establishment of performance metrics.

- **ISO 17020:2012 Internal audit of Europol's Document Forensics**

The IAC performs an internal audit of Europol's Document Forensics on an annual basis, in accordance with the requirements of the International Standard (ISO) 17020:2012 (Conformity assessment – Requirements for the operation of various types of bodies performing inspection). The objectives of the audit were to determine whether the activities in the Documents Forensics Laboratory are in conformity with 17020:2012, and whether the Laboratory's Quality Management System is adequately maintained. The IAC did not identify any non-conformities with the ISO standard and issued only one observation qualifying as opportunity for improvement.

- **ISO 14001:2015 Internal audit of Europol's Environmental Management System (EMS)**

Europol was certified to operate an Environmental Management System (EMS) complying with the requirements of International Standard ISO 14001:2015 in November 2021, and obtained the EMAS registration from the competent Dutch authority SCCM (Stichting Coordination Certification Management Systems for the Environment and Healthy and Safe Working) in February 2022. In accordance with ISO 14001:2015 requirement 9.2.1, the Agency is required to conduct internal audits at planned intervals, at least annually. To fulfil this obligation, the IAC was tasked with carrying out the audit. Based on the 2024 audit findings, the IAC concluded that EMS-related activities at Europol are conducted in a controlled manner and comply with the requirements of ISO 14001:2015 and the EMAS Regulation. Nevertheless, the IAC identified eight observations highlighting shortcomings that need to be addressed by the Agency.

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- **Validation of user access rights granted in the ABAC and MobileXpense systems**

In accordance with the internal rules on the implementation of the general budget of the EU, the European Commission requested the ED to validate that the user access rights granted in the ABAC (Accrual Based Accounting) system are in line with the delegations entrusted to the staff under her responsibility. The purpose of this audit was to provide reasonable assurance regarding the compatibility between the ABAC authorisations granted under Europol's financial rules and the actual responsibilities entrusted to its users, as well as the adequacy of the financial roles assigned under the *Guide to missions and authorised travel* and the relevant authorisations in the IT system managing the mission expenses of Europol staff (MobileXpense). The IAC concluded that the controls in place for the administration of delegations/nominations under the Europol FR were managed at a strong level. The controls for implementation of delegations (or nominations) in MobileXpense were managed at a strong level while the management of security authorisations in the ABAC system were managed at an adequate level. The IAC issued six recommendations, four categorized as "Important" and two as "Desirable". Furthermore, the IAC reviewed the implementation status of the recommendations issued in 2023.

- **Audit Issue Memo on the identification of non-compliance in Europol's recruitment and selection procedure**

The IAC identified a non-compliance in the Agency's Recruitment and Selection Procedure. Although an audit in this area was not foreseen in the 2024 IAC Audit Plan, the IAC deemed the issue significant enough and requiring immediate attention, therefore issued an Audit Issue Memo that was formally addressed to Management. An assessment of the severity of the issue and its possible implications was conducted and recommendations were provided to mitigate associated risks and enhance the integrity of the recruitment process.

Finally, a consultancy on the "Workforce allocated to Europol's Analysis Projects" was initiated in 2024, and will be completed in Q1 2025.

2.6.2. Data Protection Function (DPF)

In 2024, the major part of DPF activities focussed on **operational data protection matters**. The workload remained high *inter alia* due to prior consultations of the EDPS according to Article 39 of the Europol Regulation (ER) including the implementation of the changes introduced to the process, as a result of the amendment of the ER (2022). In 2024, the DPF saw the highest increase in both case complexity and the number of consultations with the EDPS, resulting in a significantly higher workload in the area of **prior consultations**. In the course of 2024 Europol launched the following four prior consultations with the EDPS, namely:

- Europol's Face Recognition Solution (NEO Face Watch) [EDPS case 2023-1104]
- IVAS BRAIN [EDPS case 2024-0427]
- IVAS GFMS [EDPS case 2024-0425]
- Joint operational analysis case (JOAC) [EDPS case 2024-0841]

In the course of 2024, there were a number of **process and template modifications**. The Article 39 process description was updated to reflect the changes introduced by the amended Europol Regulation. These changes were also respectively reflected in the update of the Data Protection Assessment Form, containing the updated DPIA Questionnaire template. The DPF aims at facilitating the assessment on the side of the data controller in an effective and efficient way, while considering and respecting all applicable data protection rules.

Additionally, in 2024, the DPF provided actionable **guidelines** to data controllers not only when supporting the controller as part of specific processing operations, but also when raising awareness on the scope of application of the prior consultation mechanism at Europol. There

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were two dedicated awareness sessions delivered to staff of Operations Directorate (on 10 April and 23 September 2024) aiming at raising awareness and providing guidance on the scope of the applicable provisions, the legal obligations as well as the requisite documentary requirements.

The DPF experienced a significant increase in workload also within the **administrative domain**, reflecting the growing complexity and volume of data protection obligations imposed by Regulation 2018/1725. In 2024, the European Data Protection Supervisor conducted its first inspection focused exclusively on administrative data processing at Europol. Additionally, the DPF has seen a rise in data subject access requests (DSARs) within the administrative domain, requiring enhanced resources and expertise to respond promptly and effectively. The workload further expanded to include handling inquiries, breach management, and providing necessary support for the review of policies, software renewals and data protection arrangements with data processors.

During 2024, Europol received a total of 483 **data subject access requests**. This represents an increase of 2.9% compared to the previous year when 469¹⁸ requests were received. In 2024, the DPF faced a challenging period in the handling of data subject access requests. On one hand, there was an increase in the number of incoming data subject access requests resulting in full hits in Europol's systems and, on the other, additional workload caused by the follow-up of on-going complaint cases and the overall complexity of data subject access request cases.

In 2024, the DPF continued to foster the data protection culture within the organisation by **training** staff members as well as addressing external stakeholders by sharing knowledge and expertise. The newcomers' induction session reinforces the knowledge acquired with the e-learning module by focusing, among others, on data protection principles and processing purposes, data subject access rights, prior consultation process, personal data breaches, transfer of personal data to third countries and international organisations and data protection supervision. Throughout 2024, the DPF provided the induction programme on data protection to 327 participants.

In 2024, four **Guest Officer (GO) Data Protection training sessions** were provided to 19 Guest Officers deployed at hotspots across Europe. The aim of the training is to provide a comprehensive overview of the main issues at stake concerning the processing of operational personal data in the context of the migration crisis and the hotspots. It focuses on the applicable data protection regime and the specifics of hotspots data by emphasising human rights of asylum seekers and refugees as well as the specifics of the GO role in supporting national competent authorities. The training elaborates inter alia on operational data processing activities in the hotspots including referrals, queries of Europol systems and relevant analysis projects.

The DPF has designated a contact person for the Innovation Lab to provide data protection advice and support effective AI governance, ensuring compliance with the amended Europol Regulation in **research and innovation**. In 2024, data protection consultation was provided for the first research and innovation project, Audio Filtering (set to start in 2025). Additionally, the DPF contributed feedback and expertise to the Innovation Lab's technology monitoring and foresight activities, including reports on Quantum Computing and Quantum Technologies in Law Enforcement, AI and Policing, and AI Biases in Law Enforcement.

The **Europol Data Protection Experts Network** (EDEN), within the Europol Platform for Experts (EPE), is an online collaboration platform which has been developed with the aim of involving stakeholders from various backgrounds including law enforcement as well as representatives of relevant private parties, academia and NGOs. EDEN is used as a channel to present projects, best practices and events linked to data protection in a law enforcement

¹⁸ A different figure was reported in the CAAR 2023 (459). The discrepancy is due to the completion (in 2024) of ten requests received in 2023, but not finalised before the end of 2023 due to missing elements.

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context. It is an "on invitation only" network not suitable for the exchange of operational personal data or classified information and has currently more than 380 active members.

Each year, EDEN organises a conference featuring speakers and participants from law enforcement, the data protection community, private industries, NGOs, academia, and other interested sectors. To date, eight large-scale EDEN events have been held in The Hague (2016, 2018, 2020, 2022, 2024), Copenhagen (2019), Rome (2021), and Madrid (2023). Additionally, EDEN has hosted panels at the International Conference on Computers, Privacy, and Data Protection (CPDP) in Brussels every year since 2020; CPDP is one of the leading data protection and privacy conferences in Europe and around the world.

In 2024, the EDEN conference took place on 16-17 September at Europol's headquarters in The Hague. Co-organised by the Academy of European Law (ERA), the 13th EDEN event addressed the implications of data protection and cybersecurity for law enforcement and beyond. The theme of this year's conference, 'Data Protection & Cyber Security as Law Enforcement Core Business', highlighted the opportunity for law enforcement to leverage advancing technologies while maintaining ethical standards and meeting legal requirements. The event explored topics such as the impact of quantum computing, AI in policing, and strategies to combat disinformation, alongside discussions on balancing security concerns and individual rights.

Through events like the EDEN conference, Europol continuously broadens its understanding of data protection, cybersecurity, law enforcement practices, technology, and fundamental rights, ensuring it remains at the forefront of these critical areas.

2.7. External audit management

2.7.1. Internal Audit Service of the European Commission (IAS)

The IAS **Strategic Internal Audit Plan** (SIAP) for Europol for the period **2022-2024** covers three audit topics: **Coordination and working arrangements** between Europol and the **Directorate General (DG) Migration and Home Affairs** (DG HOME) of the European Commission, key controls in **Europol's Information Management Strategy** and the work of the **Innovation Lab**.

The IAS issued the audit report on the **Information Management Strategy** of Europol in Q4 2024. The report contained **three** audit recommendations (graded as 'important') to strengthen its data quality management, improve the uptake of its key operational ICT tools and applications by its stakeholders and develop specific and relevant indicators to monitor the performance of its activities.

Work continued regarding the implementation of the two 'important' IAS audit recommendations on **coordination and working arrangements with DG HOME**, with one recommendation considered implemented by Europol by the end of 2024.

2.7.2. European Court of Auditors (ECA)

Europol received a **positive audit opinion** on the financial implementation for the financial year 2023, namely on the **reliability of the annual accounts** as well as the **legality** and **regularity** of the underlying financial transactions in all material aspects¹⁹.

For the **financial year 2024**, the ECA carried out the **regular financial audit** in January 2025, including a review of a sample of financial transactions and procurement measures. The report of the ECA on EU agencies for the financial year 2024 is expected to be published by Q4 2025.

¹⁹ https://www.eca.europa.eu/ECAPublications/SAR-AGENCIES-2023/SAR-AGENCIES-2023_EN.pdf

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2.7.3. European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS)

In 2024, the cooperation with the EDPS included a meeting on 23 January at Europol Headquarters on the processing of personal data for **research and innovation** purposes, according to Article 33a ER, and how Europol is approaching the implementation of this legal provision, including a presentation of Europol's related process and projects in the pipeline. In the given context, the EDPS representatives also met Europol's Fundamental Rights Officer (FRO).

Furthermore, a workshop with the EDPS was held on 22 April to further develop Europol's implementation of **joint operational analysis**. This meeting was requested by Europol to obtain a better understanding of the EDPS opinion in regard to the MB Decision implementing Art. 20(2a) ER concerning Joint Operational Analysis. The EDPS was informed in detail of the envisaged process, including the steps preceding the creation of a joint operational analysis project, and the selection of data to be shared within that context. A follow-up meeting was held on 25 October 2024.

On 8 October, a working level meeting was held online with EDPS representatives to discuss the draft **Model Working Arrangement**.

On 10 April, Europol's Executive Director received a letter from the EDPS announcing and outlining the scope of the **annual EDPS inspection** that took place at the premises of Europol on 27-28 May 2024. With regard to the material scope of the supervisory oversight, the inspection focused on the processing of administrative personal data in the context of the functioning of the Europol in-house Medical Service. It should be noted that this was the first inspection by the EDPS ever focussing exclusively on administrative personal data. In addition, the EDPS carried out verification visits related to data subject access requests on 22 January and 18 November, as well as a verification of Europol's handling of the so-called big data challenge the following day.

On 22 July 2024, Europol received the **report on the annual inspection of 2023**, that had been held on 2-3 October 2023. The report contains 23 recommendations, of which nine are indicated as requiring mandatory action by Europol, imperative to ensure compliance with the legal framework.

On 9 August 2024, Europol received the EDPS opinion on the draft Data Protection Officer (DPO) Implementing Rules. The EDPS opinion was very positive for Europol and, in particular, very supportive to the functioning of the DPO. The DPO Implementing Rules, adopted by the MB at its December meeting, address all 16 recommendations included in the EDPS opinion.

The implementation of pending recommendations from annual inspections by the **European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS)** continued in line with the guidance received from the Supervisor.

In 2024, Europol continued its efforts to implement the **recommendations from the period 2017-2019** in regard to data retention and archiving, as well as on the transition in the area of computer forensic processing. Both areas are considered essential, and the EDPS has stressed the importance of implementing the pending recommendations issued in the reports of the annual inspections of those years.

Data review is implemented for all operational data in the operational data environment, including for computer forensic processing. The automation of the notification for review and corresponding erasure processes is progressing. For the actual erasure, Europol has a rollout plan including the key search and analysis platforms. According to this plan, still in the first half of 2025, Europol will enable the automated data retention process. This means that information reaching the maximum retention period will be automatically erased (unless determined otherwise). Stored data files will be erased 30 days after their deletion (thus, not be retrievable).

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for operational processing any longer). Until the erasure is automated, manual review and deletion processes are in place.

As regards computer forensic processing, several tools and features have already been prepared. Moreover, the working environment for the transfer of data to some of the Analysis Projects (APs) have been realised.

The recommendations of the **annual inspection of 2021**, relating to the implementation of prior consultation of the EDPS in accordance with Article 39 of the ER and Europol's access to operational systems of Member States, have mostly been addressed.

The **annual inspection of 2022** was entirely focussed on the processing of personal data from third parties concerning minors below the age of 15 that are qualified as suspects. The work on the 10 recommendations of that inspection was completed in 2024.

On 22 July 2024, Europol received the report on the **annual inspection of 2023**. That inspection was focussed on the participation of Europol in the processing of Passenger Name Records (PNR) data; Europol access to the Visa Information System (VIS); processes in place for Data Subject Categorisation (DSC); and the technical controls and safeguards in place in regard to the processing of large and complex datasets. It contains in total 23 recommendations. While the efforts to implement the recommendations in regard to PNR data and access to VIS have mostly been finalised in 2024, Europol has sought guidance and alignment with the EDPS on the implementation of the remaining recommendations, for further completion in 2025.

The specification of the number of pending recommendations is awaiting the annual review by the EDPS. It is expected that the forthcoming review will result in the official closure of a significant number of recommendations.

2.7.4. Independent external audit of the annual accounts

The aspect of the **reliability of the information provided in the provisional accounts 2024** was audited **by an external auditor** in March 2025, as provided for in Article 104 of the FR applicable to Europol. All audit activities performed in relation to the financial year 2024 serve as input to the ECA audit activities, with a view to expressing a formal opinion on the closure of the financial year 2024, for the final accounts, including the opinion of the MB, to be issued by 1 July 2025.

At the end of 2024, **no issue of a material nature had been identified in relation to the closure of the financial year 2024 by Europol**, and the **provisional annual accounts** were issued on time, before the end of February 2025.

2.8. Follow up of recommendations and action plans for audits

In 2024, Europol diligently responded to the audit findings of the different assurance providers. **No audit findings graded as critical or very important were pending in relation to the IAS**. Concerning the pending IAC recommendations at the end of 2024, further implementation activities were on-going.

Overall, during 2024, good progress was noted in relation to the follow-up of IAC audit recommendations with **89% implementation rate of critical and very important recommendations** that were foreseen for completion in 2024. The pending 'very important' (i.e., five) IAC audit recommendations (see Annex XI), are being implemented in line with the envisaged planning for 2025 onwards. In 2024, the **IAC issued four audit reports containing nine observations and six new recommendations**, none of which were graded as 'very important' or 'critical'. The IAC also issued an audit issue memo on the recruitment process and Europol devised dedicated process improvements to address potential shortcomings.

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As part of the **audit for the financial year 2024**, the ECA also reviewed the actions to respond to the observations made for the previous year, which Europol had duly addressed already in 2023²⁰.

In relation to recommendations issued by the **IAS**, there was one **open recommendation**, from the audit on Coordination with DG HOME, graded as 'important', the implementation of which was ongoing at the end of 2024.

In 2024, there were **no** investigations opened by **OLAF** regarding Europol or its staff.

2.9. Follow up of observations from the discharge authority

The **European Parliament** (EP), based on recommendation by the Council, **granted discharge** in April 2024 to the Executive Director of Europol with respect to the **implementation of the budget for the financial year 2022**. The discharge proceedings in relation to the financial year 2023 were well underway at the end of 2024.

Europol followed-up on the **discharge observations** and implemented actions concerning the observations made on financial performance, EMAS registration, and the ECA's observations made to Europol in the annual report. Further activities concerning, for example gender diversity, talent management and retention, are ongoing. Europol provided an update to the EP concerning the **follow-up actions taken by Europol** in relation to the **EP's discharge decision** for the financial year 2022.

On 16 January 2025, the **Budgetary Control** (CONT) **Committee** adopted the draft resolution accompanying the discharge decision by the European Parliament on the **closure of the financial year 2023, including the proposal to grant discharge to Europol**²¹. On 18 February 2025, the **Council** adopted the recommendation to the EP to grant discharge to Europol in respect of the implementation of the budget for the **financial year 2023**²². The decision was adopted by the **European Parliament Plenary in May 2025**, granting discharge to Europol for the implementation of the financial year 2023.

2.10. Environmental Strategy

In line with Europol's strategic priority²³ of being the model EU organisation for law enforcement cooperation, Europol commits to its **Environmental Policy**. Europol recognises its responsibility for making a positive contribution to sustainable development and is committed to protect the environment, by limiting the environmental impact of its activities and to continuously improve its environmental performance.

Europol implemented an Environmental Management System (EMS) in 2018, which was certified against the ISO 14001: 2015 standard in 2021. The Environmental Management System (EMS) contains the environmental governance structure and process landscape, the environmental performance data, the objectives and action plan, which give Europol the reliable and consistent methodology to measure and continuously improve the environmental performance of the Agency.

²⁰ Annex XII. European Court of Auditors (ECA) observations and follow-up

²¹ Draft Report on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Union Agencies for the financial year 2023 (2024/2030(DEC)), 16 January 2025, published at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CONT-PR-765000_EN.html

²² Council recommendation on the discharge to be given to the bodies set up under the TFEU and the Euratom Treaty in respect of the implementation of the budget for the financial year 2023, 13 February 2025, Council Secretariat file no. FIN 113 PE-L 6 5755/25 + ADD 1 REV 1 (adopted by the Economic and Financial Affairs Council on 18 February 2025)

²³ Europol Strategy "Delivering security in partnership", Strategic Priority 6: Be the model EU organisation for law enforcement cooperation.

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In February 2022, Europol obtained the **Eco-management and Audit Scheme** (EMAS) registration to further support Europol in its commitment to contribute to the EU Green Deal's main objective of a climate neutral Europe by 2050.

In 2024, a new, improved Environmental Statement was developed and endorsed by the external verifier. Following a successful external audit by the certification body in October 2024, and the verification of Europol's updated Environmental Statement, Europol was recommended for re-certification for the EMAS and ISO14001 standards.

During 2024, EMAS process descriptions and the EMS documentation were updated as deemed appropriate. In addition, the annual activities of the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle of Europol EMS were duly performed, e.g., update of the register of applicable environmental legislation, the management review, and the internal and external audits. Both the environmental performance data collection for 2023 and the environmental performance evaluation were completed.

Furthermore, following the approval of Europol's Environmental Vision 2030 by Europol management and the Management Board in July 2023, a set of measures were developed and implemented in 2024 to support its implementation and to support the EMAS perspective 2023-2025. The most prominent ones include:

- **Carbon Emissions Management Policy** – The draft policy provides a framework for the management and reduction of Europol's carbon emissions associated with business travel in order to adhere to the decarbonisation pathway (i.e., the gradual annual reduction of the GHG emissions) and to achieve the decarbonisation target by 2030 as described in Europol's Environmental Vision 2030 (reduce 55% Europol's carbon emissions). The policy introduces, amongst other measures, carbon budgeting, which serves the purpose of integrating carbon footprint considerations into the financial business travel planning and management.
- **Monthly reporting on Business Travel for all Directorates** to support the monitoring of the carbon emissions and future annual carbon budget allocation, once the policy has been finalised. The monthly reporting serves as a tool to provide information on Europol's progress against the target of achieving the adopted Environmental Vision 2030.
- Introduction of a **new Mid-Year Performance evaluation** – In 2024, a new interim performance evaluation was conducted to address the carbon emissions management policy requirement and provide information on Europol's progress against agreed carbon budgets and, most importantly, against the target of achieving the adopted Environmental Vision 2030. The mid-year evaluation presented an evaluation of the business travel performance for the first half of 2024.

2.10.1. Environmental performance

Europol has implemented a systematic approach for monitoring and reviewing its environmental performance on an annual basis. The Agency focuses on its performance in the following key environmental areas reflecting the scope of its activities, defined in line with the EMAS Regulation:

- Emissions (carbon footprint);
- Energy (energy efficiency);
- Water (water consumption);
- Waste (waste generation);
- Material (paper consumption); and
- Land use respecting biodiversity (biodiversity).

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In addition to the environmental areas identified under the EMAS Regulation, Europol defined environmental performance indicators related to **green public procurement**, to fully cover the areas of its environmental impact.

In 2024, the EMAS actors reported the environmental data for 2023 and the Evaluation of Environmental Performance 2023 report was developed. The evaluation of Europol's environmental performance demonstrated that the Agency, in the majority of the environmental areas, successfully achieved the targeted performance, in some cases ahead of schedule. However, in terms of materiality, the key target, resulting from the decarbonisation strategy, was not met in 2023. Europol aims to achieve a 55% reduction in absolute emissions by 2030 compared to baseline emissions in 2018. The targeted level for 2023 was exceeded by over 8%. The surpassing of the target was primarily due to a substantial increase in the Agency's operational scale, including a higher growth in employment compared to what was originally considered for setting the decarbonisation target. Nevertheless, although total emissions were higher than the targeted emissions for 2023, emissions per employee decreased by over 36% compared to 2018, highlighting improvements in business travel management. The reduction of absolute emissions is not visible though, as the number of employees, staff and non-staff (i.e., Seconded National Experts, Liaison Officers and staff of Liaison Bureaus, Interns and Contractors) increased by over 30% between 2018 and 2023.

Considering the increased carbon footprint, mainly due to substantial employment growth, it was recommended to consider analysing and potentially setting an intensity target (emission reduction per employee) according to the approach aligned with the science-based guidelines (Science-Based Targets initiative²⁴). This approach is particularly recommended for organisations experiencing significant organic growth. The recommendation was endorsed by Europol management.

The results of the environmental performance are presented in Annex IX.

2.10.2. Actions to improve and communicate Environmental Performance

During the course of 2024, the following activities and products were finalised and/or initiated:

- EMAS and ISO14001:2015 certification activities:
 - o EMS Internal Audit 2024 (by Europol's Internal Audit Capability);
 - o Certification audit by the accreditation body (BSI) – ISO14001:2015;
 - o EMAS registration audit by the accreditation body (BSI);
 - o Renewal of EMAS Registration with the Dutch national body;
 - o Europol's 3rd (updated) Environmental Statement (performance 2022) published and available for public on Europol website (in English and Dutch);
 - o EMAS and ISO14001:2015 certification audit.
- Update of compliance register of applicable environmental legislation.
- Annual environmental performance reporting by EMAS Actors.
- Environmental Performance Evaluation – performance 2023.
- Environmental Review 2024:
 - o Context and Stakeholders Analysis – review 2024;
 - o Environmental Aspects Analysis – review 2024;

²⁴ The Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) is a globally recognised initiative of organisations which provides the guidelines for setting greenhouse gas reduction targets aligned with the Paris Agreement goals to limit global warming.

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- EMS Manual - review and update 2024.
- Integration of EMAS requirements into SHR Projects.
- Improvement Actions (EMAS Actors):
 - Energy efficiency
 - Insulation of central heating fittings and boilers;
 - Replacement of all light fixtures to LED lighting;
 - Limiting air flow in kitchen extraction system;
 - New Office spaces
 - inclusion of environmental considerations in the functional requirements documentation of all the buildings, amongst others following the trends in circular economy and sustainable use of resources, energy monitoring system of the main consumables for the buildings, support of waste separation and collection process and consider the energy savings measures;
 - Waste separation
 - on-site physical scan of generic waste followed by a waste separation campaign to ensure better waste separation;
 - installation of information stands in both HQ and TSB;
 - Sustainable Events & Catering
 - reusing compostable plates, cups and cutlery from previous events, disposing of them in the correct containers, and distributing water in cans (instead of plastic bottles);
 - updates on food waste management and improvement measures.

Part III. Assessment of the effectiveness of the internal control systems

3.1. Effectiveness of internal control systems

3.1.1. Europol Internal Control System

Europol assesses the effectiveness of its **Internal Control System** (ICS) in line with the Internal Control Framework (ICF). The assessment of the Europol ICS is based on **continuous monitoring** and an annual assessment, using both quantitative and qualitative measurements. The assessment is carried out at principle and component level and the ICS as a whole. Based on the analysis of the results at component level, Europol assesses whether the components are operating together in an integrated manner.

The **quantitative measurements** cover 76 internal control indicators and identified instances of non-compliance and/or deficiencies. A self-assessment is conducted for the selected internal control indicators by comparing actual performance against defined targets, which are set for each of the 17 principles. The monitoring of the internal control indicators is logged in the quarterly corporate performance reporting as an integral part of the annual planning and performance reporting cycle and the set of indicators was reviewed in 2024.

Qualitative aspects comprise of strengths and weaknesses reported internally, reporting on potential internal control deficiencies, including qualitative information resulting from the application of Europol's whistle-blowing and management of potential conflicts of interest arrangements, ongoing monitoring of the implementation of the Anti-Fraud Strategy, audit findings and recommendations, and identified internal control weaknesses and strengths, including the aspect of cost and benefit of controls.

The **assessment of the 17 internal control principles shows** that the **principles are present and functioning well with some or minor improvements needed**. Actions to address identified weaknesses were devised through monitoring and implementation of dedicated measures, including the mitigation of risks, under the lead of senior management.

3.1.2. Risk management

At Europol, a risk is defined as an uncertain event or set of events that, should it occur, would have an effect on the achievement of objectives related to the annual business planning (i.e., Programming Document, Work Programme) and the Europol Strategy from an overall perspective²⁵. Europol's risk management policy sets out **principles for corporate risk management**, with a view to identifying and managing risks in a continuous and systematic manner across the organisation. To facilitate risk management, the **corporate risk management process** provides practical guidance for managing risks, describes the roles and responsibilities, as well as the workflow for assessing and reporting risks across the organisation, which represents an integral part of Europol's quarterly performance reporting cycle. In addition to the risk reporting on a quarterly basis, Europol's corporate risk management approach also addresses corporate risks with an organisational-wide impact which are identified and reported.

In **2024, Europol's corporate risk profile** was in particular characterised by the following **key risk categories**.

- **Effects of geo-political developments and security threats:** Geo-political conflicts and uncertainty result in a complex risk profile for the EU, including in relation to the **cyber space, critical infrastructure**, acts of **sabotage** in Member States, as well as **infiltration** threats by **adversary actors** and **terrorism** activities affecting the security interests of the EU. Europol's **risk response** includes pro-active **monitoring** of the

²⁵ Risks have two dimensions: Threats (expected negative effect on a business objective) or opportunities (expected positive effect on a business objective)

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situation, **strengthening** of **physical** and **cyber/information security measures**, responding to **requests** from the **European Commission** and **Member States** within the confines of available resources;

- **Expanding regulatory mandate and increasing demand from Member States: Regulatory expansion** such as the Digital Services Act (**DSA**) and Directive for Information Exchange (**IED**) adds new tasks, leading to an **increased operational demand** and **expectations** from **Member States** and **partners**, posing the **risk of implementation delays** of service and non-compliance (lead time of implementation post entry into force). In addition, Europol is approached by various key stakeholders, including at the political level, to implement **ad hoc requests not part of the Programming Document**. Europol's **risk response** options include **increased automation** (ICT, AI) coupled with **transparent prioritisation, flexible planning** and **robust performance monitoring**.
- **Increasing demand on ICT delivery:** The **increase in data volume and complexity of requests** drives operational demand for high quality, advanced **ICT tools** and **automation** of manual tasks. The complexity of change requires highly efficient implementation processes and regular monitoring of compliance. The organisation faces **the risk of a dilatory translation of regulatory change** as well as **underlying priority setting**. **Responding** to the **risk**, the agency will **strengthen** its **change management capabilities**, including **change** the **business processes, compliance monitoring** and optimising **ICT implementation reporting**.
- **Shortage of financial, human, physical and IT resources: Inadequate resources** have been reported throughout 2024, particularly linked to providing operational support and meeting ICT demand (requiring specialised expertise), but also lacking office space. **Budget and staff resources** foreseen for the **existing demand**, such as for guest officer deployments, are **not sufficient** to cover for all of the **existing** and **new tasks**²⁶. Continually rising ICT costs – **software licences, hardware** – are consuming an increasing share of budget, leaving less room for development. Regarding **physical resources**, the **uncertain delivery** of the **Temporary Satellite Buildings** and **adaptation** of the **current HQ1** in 2024 (and beyond), as well as long-term for a **HQ2**, constitutes a **risk** into maintaining adequate work place level for staff across the organisation, which also carries risk to uphold the current **security levels**, including from a **physical** and **information security** perspective. **Responding** to these different aspects of resource shortage related risks, the **agency is working externally with its stakeholders and partners** (European Commission, European Parliament, Europol's Host State) and internally to **secure** and **allocate** the necessary expertise, and to **automate** processes in order to **scale up capabilities** and **reduce bottle necks**.
- **Increasing supervisory and governance arrangements** generate a risk profile which impacts operational responsiveness and available resources, delaying innovation opportunities and affecting reputational aspects (e.g., due to the complexity of prior consultation under the Article 39 of the Europol Regulation, the timeliness of related actionable guidance, increasing Data Subject Access Requests (DSARs) and reporting requirements overall). **Responding** to the **risk**, the agency is exploring options to propose the **streamlining of governance** and **oversight provisions** (e.g., concerning prior consultation with the EDPS, reporting requirements).

On the side of **opportunities**, there is an enhanced public awareness of the **added value of Europol in times of crises**, in view of:

- Security, representing a connecting and **cohesion factor** for **citizens** in Member States;

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- Europol (and other JHA Agencies) directly contributing to the **expectations of citizens**;
- Demonstrating **cooperation and synergies** with Justice & Home Affairs (JHA) Agencies.

From an overall perspective, **Europol's corporate risk profile concurs** with the outcome of the **Home Affairs Agencies peer review risk assessment exercise** (chaired by Europol in Q4 2024 for the Home Affairs Agencies), concerning which **Europol's response actions** have been taken forward from 2024²⁷ into 2025²⁸.

3.1.3. Anti-fraud strategy

The **Anti-Fraud Strategy** for the period 2022-2024, adopted by the MB in 2022, continued to be implemented in 2024, to expand the anti-fraud culture, manage sensitive positions and fraud risk scenario process improvements. A next revision of the Anti-Fraud Strategy is being prepared for MB adoption in 2025.

To coordinate issues related to fraud or irregularities, Europol has an Internal Investigations Service (IIS) in place, which also serves as a contact point for OLAF. In 2024, there were **no instances of financial fraud** confirmed by Europol, OLAF or the ECA.

Europol has policies and procedures in place for the management of conflict of interest, including for recruitment, procurement and grant related procedures. No conflict of interest situations materialised during 2024.

3.2. Conclusions of the assessment of internal control systems

Based on the analysis of the **five internal control components and 17 principles**, monitored in the course of 2024 using both quantitative and qualitative elements and including a set of 76 internal control indicators, it is assessed that **the components of the internal control framework were present and functioning in an integrated manner across the organisation**. The assessment concluded that the internal control system effectively reduced, to an acceptable level, the risk of not achieving the (multi-) annual objectives – relating to operations, reporting, and compliance – of the organisation.

²⁷ Europol Programming Document 2024-2026, Annex XIV: Risks 2024 (EDOC-#1258316)

²⁸ Europol Programming Document 2025-2027, Annex XIV: Risks 2025 (EDOC-#1340002)

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3.3. Statement of the Deputy Director in charge of risk management and internal control.

I, the undersigned, Deputy Executive Director in charge of risk management and internal control, declare that with reference to the Europol Internal Control Framework, adopted by the Management Board of Europol at the end of 2018, my assessment – on the basis of internal management reporting available to me and my professional judgement – is that the elements of the Europol Internal Control System (ICS), seen as whole, are effective to enable Europol to achieve its objectives. On the basis of the annual assessment of the ICS on the financial year 2023, I have reported my advice and recommendations on the overall state of internal control in Europol to the Executive Director.

I hereby certify that the information provided in the present Consolidated Annual Activity Report of Europol, and in its annexes, for the financial year 2024 is, to the best of my knowledge, accurate, reliable and complete.



Jürgen Ebner

Deputy Executive Director

25 June 2025

Part IV. Management assurance

4.1. Review of the elements supporting assurance

Europol's building **blocks of assurance** are founded on six key elements:

1. A **strong financial model**, integrating the principles of sound financial management, segregation of duties and transparency with: (a) up-to-date appointment authorisations of financial actors, (b) a charter for authorising officers which promotes accountability, transparency and informed decision-making, (c) a central financial initiation function, (d) a central financial verification function and (e) clear guidance to all staff on the expected behaviour (Code of Conduct etc.).
2. A robust **planning and performance monitoring capability** at corporate level, covering all aspects of Europol's delivery, including core business performance and the related stakeholder management, with regular reporting and management supervision at Directorate level.
3. A **central contact point** for ensuring that the guidance by **external assurance providers** (in particular the ECA and the IAS, as well as the EDPS) and the discharge authority are communicated and followed up within the organisation.
4. A **Data Protection Function** which upholds the highest standards of data protection, in particular in view of Europol's role as a law enforcement agency, alongside the **Europol Security Committee** in terms of information security assurance.
5. An experienced **Accounting Officer** who is functionally independent to perform the respective duties foreseen by the Financial Regulation applicable to Europol.
6. An **Internal Audit Capability**, which provides an additional element of assurance to the Authorising Officer of Europol throughout the year.

Europol's overall assessment is that **Europol's building blocks of assurance**, next to Europol's **Internal Control Framework (ICF)** and the related assessment of the **Internal Control System (ICS)** provide sufficient input for the **Executive Director's statement of assurance** as well as the **statement of assurance of the Deputy Executive Director in charge of risk management and internal control** as contained in this consolidated activity report.

4.2. Reservations

No issues requiring a reservation were identified by the end of the financial year 2024.

Part V. Declaration of Assurance

Declaration of Assurance of the Authorising Officer (AO)

I, the undersigned, Executive Director of European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol), in my capacity as Authorising Officer for Europol, as defined in the Financial Regulation applicable to Europol,

- Declare that the information contained in this report gives a true and fair view;²⁹
- State that I have reasonable assurance that the resources assigned to the activities described in this report have been used for their intended purpose and in accordance with the principles of sound financial management, and that the Europol Internal Control System (ICS), including the control procedures put in place, gives the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions;
- Confirm that I am not aware of anything not reported here which could harm the interests of Europol.

This reasonable assurance is based on my own judgement and on the information at my disposal, such as the results of the assessment of the Europol Internal Control System, performance monitoring including financial verification controls, the work of the Internal Audit Service, the Internal Audit Capability of Europol, the annual accounts for the financial year 2024 and the reporting of the European Court of Auditors, including for years prior to the year of this declaration.

I hereby certify that the information provided in the present Consolidated Annual Activity Report of Europol, and in its annexes, for the financial year 2024 is, to the best of my knowledge, and on the basis of the assurance given to me, accurate and complete.



Catherine De Bolle

Executive Director

25 June 2025

²⁹ True and fair in this context means a reliable, complete and correct view of the state of affairs in Europol.

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Annex I. Key Performance Indicators

The following set of indicators³⁰ is used to monitor the multi-annual performance of Europol:

Indicators	Definitions	Source	2023	2024	TARGET 2024
Number of searches through EIS and QUEST	Count of automated (through the web service Querying Europol Systems - QUEST) and manual searches in the Europol Information System (EIS)	EIS & QUEST	14,238,667	12,795,330	15,500,000
Number of SIENA messages exchanged	Count of all message types (requests, answers, for information messages, cancellation messages and no information available answers) sent and received in SIENA	SIENA	1,798,810	2,004,956	1,800,000
Number of Operations Supported by Europol	Count of unique cases supported with Europol products and/or services	Internal Overview	3,155	3,324	2,350
Number of Operational Task Forces supported by Europol	Count of unique OTFs supported with Europol products and/or services	Internal Overview	n/a	65	31
Number of Accepted Contributions by Europol	Count of SIENA messages received by Europol and accepted for further processing	SIENA	107,856	114,459	101,000
Number of Action Days organised/supported by Europol	Count of Action Days organised and/or supported by Europol with products and services	Internal Overview	453	432	310
Number of Operational Analysis Reports produced by Europol	Count of Operational Analysis Reports produced by Europol	SIENA	275	366	260
Number of Cross Match Reports and SIENA hit notifications produced by Europol	Count of Cross Match Reports and SIENA hit notifications produced by Europol	SIENA	14,407	13,409	15,000
Number of Strategic Analysis Reports produced by Europol	Count of Strategic Analysis Reports produced by Europol	SIENA	34	29	30
Satisfaction with Operational Support delivered by Europol	Average satisfaction with Europol products and services provided during operational cases, as expressed by investigators through the User Survey	User Survey	9.5	9.4	8.5
Satisfaction with Strategic Analysis Reports produced by Europol	Average satisfaction with the Strategic Analysis Reports produced by Europol, as expressed by recipients of the reports through the User Survey	User Survey	8.6	8.5	8.5

³⁰ It should be noted that some of these indicators are also used as Annual Work Programme Indicators

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Indicators	Definitions	Source	2023	2024	TARGET 2024
Satisfaction with Operational Training delivered by Europol	Average satisfaction with the Operational Training delivered by Europol, as expressed by training participants through the User Survey	User Survey	9.4	9.4	8.5
Emissions (tonnes CO2)	Total carbon dioxide equivalent (CO2eq) footprint (measured in tonnes CO2eq)	EMAS	3,455	n/a	2,993
Vacancy Rate	Percentage of unfilled posts relative to the total number of posts in the Europol Establishment Plan	Internal Overview	1.7%	1.2%	2%
% of Female Staff	Percentage of female staff* relative to the total of all staff working at Europol	SYSPER	34%	33%	35%
Budget Commitment Rate	Percentage of the implemented commitment appropriations	ABAC	99.8%	99.9%	95%
Implementation of Audit Recommendations	Percentage of the pending critical/very important audit recommendations implemented relative to the total number of recommendations planned for implementation during the observed period	ABAC	86%	89%	85%

* TAs, CAs, and SNEs (all categories)

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Annex II. Work Programme Indicators

The following set of indicators are used to measure the achievement of annual performance objectives set in the Programming Document 2024-2026 – Section III. Work Programme 2024. The indicators are grouped per Work Programme Activity³¹:

A.1. Development of information technology and information management capabilities

Indicators	Definitions	Source	2023	2024	TARGET 2024
Core Business Project Delivery	Percentage of ICT Work Plan implemented, as measured through ICT business value points methodology	Internal Overview	78.5% (83.5% vs. rebaseline)	89% (85% vs Q4 rebaseline)	75%
Operational Stability - Uptime of Core systems	Percentage of the time the Europol Core systems** remained operational and accessible to users (relative to the total period observed)	ICT monitoring tools	99.6%	99.6%	98%
Number of Searches through EIS and QUEST	Count of searches performed in the Europol Information System (EIS) or through the web service Querying Europol Systems (QUEST)	EIS & QUEST	14,238,667	12,795,330	15,500,000
Number of SIENA Messages Exchanged	Count of all message types (requests, answers, for information messages, cancellation messages and no information available answers) sent and received in SIENA	SIENA	1,798,810	2,004,956	1,800,000
Number of SIENA Cases Initiated	Count of new cases launched via SIENA during the observed period of time	SIENA	151,318	169,498	150,000
% of Active EPE Users	Percentage of the users connected at least once during the observed period relative to the total number of users.	EPE	38%	39.0%	45%

** Europol Core systems include: SIENA, PERCI, Europol Analysis System (EAS), Check-the-Web (CTW), Europol Information System (EIS), Europol Platform for Experts (EPE), Operations Network Experts Platform (ONEP), Unified Search Engine (USE), Large Files Exchange (LFE), Sirene.

³¹ Europol has defined a total of eight activities (A.1. to A.8.) to cluster the delivery of its operational and administrative tasks.

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A.2. Operational Coordination

Indicators	Definitions	Source	2023	2024	TARGET 2024
Speed of first-line response to MS requests (SLA 80% in days)	Average time between the receipt of requests from MS and Europol answers, measured in days, for 80% of the requests received	SIENA	4.2	3.2	5
Number of Accepted contributions by OAC	Count of SIENA messages received by Europol and accepted for further processing by OAC	SIENA	35,993	35,962	n/a
Number of deployments of Guest Officers (Number of deployment months)	Count of the number of months of Guest Officers deployments during the period observed	Internal Overview	838	691	650

A.3. Combating Serious and Organised Crime

Indicators	Definitions	Source	2023	2024	TARGET 2024
Number of Accepted contributions by ESOCC	Count of SIENA messages received by Europol and accepted for further processing by ESOCC	SIENA	40,060	31,226	n/a
Number of Operations supported by ESOCC	Count of unique cases supported with Europol products and/or services, by ESOCC	Internal Overview	1,324	1,187	600
Number of Operational Task Forces supported by ESOCC (where ESOCC is in the lead)	Count of unique OTFs supported with Europol products and/or services, by ESOCC, where ESOCC is in the lead	Internal Overview	15	44	15
Number of Operational Reports delivered by ESOCC	Count of operational reports (e.g., SIENA hit notifications, intelligence packages, Cross-match reports, Operational Analysis Reports, Financial Intelligence Reports, etc.) delivered by ESOCC	SIENA	5,685	4,854	4,250
Number of Action Days coordinated/supported by ESOCC	Count of Action Days organised and/or supported with products and services by ESOCC	Internal Overview	266	247	150
Satisfaction with Operational Support and Analysis provided by ESOCC	Average satisfaction with the Europol products and services, including analysis, provided by ESOCC during operational cases, as expressed by investigators through the User Survey	User Survey	9.4	9.0	8.5
Number of Operations supported by EMSC	Count of unique cases supported with Europol products and/or services, by EMSC	Internal Overview	223	384	170
Number of Operational Reports delivered by EMSC	Count of operational reports (e.g., SIENA hit notifications, intelligence packages, Cross-match reports, Operational Analysis Reports, Financial Intelligence Reports, etc.) delivered by EMSC	SIENA	1,231	1,044	1,300
Number of Action Days coordinated/supported by EMSC	Count of Action Days organised and/or supported with products and services by EMSC	Internal Overview	68	73	40
Satisfaction with Operational Support and Analysis provided by EMSC	Average satisfaction with the Europol products and services, including analysis, provided by EMSC during operational cases, as expressed by investigators through the User Survey	User Survey	9.6	9.5	8.5

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A.4. Combating Cyber Crime

Indicators	Definitions	Source	2023	2024	TARGET 2024
Number of Accepted contributions by EC3	Count of SIENA messages received by Europol and accepted for further processing by EC3	SIENA	8,426	8,333	n/a
Number of Operations supported by EC3	Count of unique cases supported with Europol products and/or services, by EC3	Internal Overview	451	535	430
Number of Operational Task Forces supported by EC3 (where EC3 is in the lead)	Count of unique OTFs supported with Europol products and/or services, by EC3, where EC3 is in the lead	Internal Overview	3	3	2
Number of Operational Reports delivered by EC3	Count of operational reports (e.g., SIENA hit notifications, intelligence packages, Cross-match reports, Operational Analysis Reports, Financial Intelligence Reports, etc.) delivered by EC3	SIENA	3,983	3,846	3,200
Number of Action Days coordinated/supported by EC3	Count of Action Days organised and/or supported with products and services by EC3	Internal Overview	43	31	30
Satisfaction with Operational Support and Analysis provided by EC3	Average satisfaction with the Europol products and services, including analysis, provided by EC3 during operational cases, as expressed by investigators through the User Survey	User Survey	9.6	9.6	8.5
Number of Decryption platform successes	Count of instances when the Decryption platform was successfully used in support of operational cases	Internal Overview	37	42	25

A.5. Counter-Terrorism

Indicators	Definitions	Source	2023	2024	TARGET 2024
Number of Accepted contributions by ECTC	Count of SIENA messages received by Europol and accepted for further processing by ECTC	SIENA	4,557	7,646	n/a
Number of Operations supported by ECTC	Count of unique cases supported with Europol products and/or services, by ECTC	Internal Overview	1,012	1,255	900
Number of Operational Task Forces supported by ECTC (where ECTC is in the lead)	Count of unique OTFs supported with Europol products and/or services, by ECTC, where ECTC is in the lead	Internal Overview	6	8	8
Number of Operational Reports delivered by ECTC	Count of operational reports (e.g., SIENA hit notifications, intelligence packages, Cross-match reports, Operational Analysis Reports, Financial Intelligence Reports, etc.) delivered by ECTC	SIENA	2,012	2,383	1,900
Number of Action Days coordinated/supported by ECTC	Count of Action Days organised and/or supported with products and services by ECTC	Internal Overview	39	44	32
Satisfaction with Operational Support and Analysis provided by ECTC	Average satisfaction with the Europol products and services, including analysis, provided by ECTC during operational cases, as expressed by investigators through the User Survey	User Survey	9.2	9.4	8.5
Volume of content assessed by EUJRU related to terrorism and violent extremism	Count of pieces of digital content related to terrorism and violent extremism assessed by EUJRU	IRMa	20,054	27,275	20,000

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A.6. Combatting Financial and Economic Crime

Indicators	Definitions	Source	2023	2024	TARGET 2024
Number of Accepted contributions by EFECC	Count of SIENA messages received by Europol and accepted for further processing by EFECC	SIENA	18,825	21,124	n/a
Number of Operations supported by EFECC	Count of unique cases supported with Europol products and/or services, by EFECC	Internal Overview	421	400	400
Number of Operational Task Forces supported by EFECC (where EFECC is in the lead)	Count of unique OTFs supported with Europol products and/or services, by EFECC, where EFECC is in the lead	Internal Overview	3	10	6
Number of Operational Reports delivered by EFECC	Count of operational reports (e.g., SIENA hit notifications, intelligence packages, Cross-match reports, Operational Analysis Reports, Financial Intelligence Reports, etc.) delivered by EFECC	SIENA	2,477	2,585	1,900
Number of Action Days coordinated/supported by EFECC	Count of Action Days organised and/or supported with products and services by EFECC	Internal Overview	107	119	83
Satisfaction with Operational Support and Analysis provided by EFECC	Average satisfaction with the Europol products and services, including analysis, provided by EFECC during operational cases, as expressed by investigators through the User Survey	User Survey	9.7	9.6	8.5

A.7. Strategic and Analysis Coordination

Indicators	Definitions	Source	2023	2024	TARGET 2024
Number of Strategic Analysis Reports	Count of Strategic Analysis Reports produced by Europol	SIENA	34	29	30
Satisfaction with Strategic Analysis Reports produced by Europol	Average satisfaction with the Strategic Analysis Reports produced by Europol, as expressed by recipients of the reports through the User Survey	User Survey	8.6	8.5	8.5
Satisfaction with Operational Analysis	Average satisfaction with the analysis services provided by Europol during operational cases, as expressed by investigators through the User Survey	User Survey	9.4	9.4	8.5
Satisfaction with Operational Training delivered to MS/TP	Average satisfaction with the Operational Training delivered by Europol, as expressed by training participants through the User Survey	User Survey	9.4	9.4	8.5
Number of SIENA messages exchanged by Third Parties	Count of all message types (requests, answers, for information messages, cancellation messages and no information available answers) sent and received in SIENA by Third Parties	SIENA	258,662	304,709	230,000

A.8. Governance, support and administration

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Indicators	Definitions	Source	2023	2024	TARGET 2024
Budget Outturn rate	Percentage of the implemented budget for the financial year relative to the total budget	ABAC	1.8%	1.4%	5%
Budget Commitment Rate	Percentage of the implemented commitment appropriations	ABAC	99.8%	99.9%	95%
Budget Payment Rate	Percentage of the implemented payment appropriations	ABAC	88.6%	89.4%	90%
% Late Payments (in value)	Percentage of the monetary value of payments made after the legal payment terms have been exceeded, relative to the value of all payments	ABAC	2.2%	0.6%	5%
Vacancy rate	Percentage of unfilled posts relative to the total number of posts in the Europol Establishment Plan	Internal Overview	1.7%	1.2%	2%
% of Female Staff	Percentage of female staff* relative to the total of all staff working at Europol	SYSPER	34%	33%	35%
Emissions (tonnes CO2)	Total carbon dioxide equivalent (CO2eq) footprint (measured in tonnes CO2eq)	EMAS	3,455	n/a	2,993
Total number of news articles mentioning Europol (high-impact web-based media)	Count of news articles mentioning Europol, in high-impact web-based media***	Internal Overview	6,459	8,429	4,800
User Satisfaction	Average overall satisfaction with Europol, as expressed by all types of users (investigators, report recipients, general public, training participants, visitors) across all components of the User Survey (operational support, Europol added value, strategic reports, operational reports, training, visits to Europol premises)	User Survey	90%	89%	85%
% of pending critical/very important audit recommendations implemented within the timeline committed to by Europol and agreed with the auditing body	Percentage of the pending critical/very important audit recommendations implemented relative to the total number of recommendations planned for implementation during the observed period	Internal Overview	86%	89%	85%

*** A list of the most relevant media in different countries has been established using criteria such as highest reputation, most readers, most outreach, etc.

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Annex III. Budget implementation 2024

Revenue 2024

	Initially adopted	Amending budget	Established revenue	Cashed revenue	Open amount
A-9000 IC1 – European Union contribution	215,719,505	2,002,895	217,722,400	217,722,400	-
A-9200 IC4 - Internal assigned revenue			2,323,987	2,171,965	152,022
A-9200 IC41 - Internal assigned revenue carry-over			599,446	194,019	405,427
A-9010 IR1 - External assigned revenue (Grants)		2,200,000	6,814,367	6,707,746	106,621
A-9010 IR11 - External assigned revenue carry-over					
A-9101 IR1 - External assigned revenue (contribution from Denmark)		5,305,657	5,305,657	5,305,657	-
A-9200 IR1/IR11 - Other external assigned revenue (Europol Pension Fund)			58,285	58,285	-
Total Revenue	215,719,505	9,508,552	232,824,142	232,160,072	664,070

Expenditure 2024 (C1)

	Initial budget 2024	Budget (CA)	Commitments	Comm rate (com/bud CA)	Available budget	Budget (PA)	Payments	Paym rate (pay/bud PA)	CF to 2025
Title 1: Staff	117,817,323	125,070,972	125,050,799	100.0%	20,173	125,070,972	124,018,489	99.2%	1,032,311
Title 2: Other Administrative Expenditure	15,105,338	12,889,401	12,849,848	99.7%	39,553	12,889,401	8,890,128	69.0%	3,959,720
Title 3: Operational Activities	85,305,044	82,270,227	82,132,415	99.8%	137,812	79,762,027	61,839,310	77.5%	20,293,104
Total	218,227,705	220,230,600	220,033,062	99.9%	197,538	217,722,400	194,747,927	89.4%	25,285,135
Difference previous year		13,054,388	13,311,701	0.1%			13,093,513	0.9%	

Implementation of carry over to 2024 (C8)

	Carry Over	Payments	Payment rate (pay/CO budget)	Lapsed C8
Title 1: Staff	1,161,642	1,007,382	86.7%	154,260
Title 2: Other Administrative Expenditure	4,629,539	4,524,316	97.7%	105,223
Title 3: Operational Expenditure	17,196,247	15,740,561	91.5%	1,455,686
Total	22,987,428	21,272,259	92.5%	1,715,169
Difference to previous year	-10,015,449	-7,993,148	3.9%	-2,022,301

Implementation of assigned revenue (C4, C5 and R0)

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Internal revenue

	Carry Over	New budget (AB/other rev)	Budget CA	Budget PA	Commitments	Payments	Comm rate (com/bud)	Paym rate (pay/bud PA)	Open Comm	Available CA	Available PA
C4 Re-funds current year	0	2,365,984	2,365,984	2,365,984	208,373	2,202	8.8%	0.1%	206,171	2,157,611	2,363,782
C5 Re-funds carried forward	2,050,559	0	2,050,559	2,472,717	2,050,559	2,469,598	100.0%	99.9%	-419,039	0	3,119
R0 External assigned revenue	5,294,586	12,071,688	17,366,274	17,366,274	11,966,140	9,045,497	68.9%	52.1%	2,920,643	5,400,134	8,320,777
TOTAL	7,345,144	14,437,672	21,782,816	22,204,974	14,225,071	11,517,296	65.3%	51.9%	2,707,775	7,557,745	10,687,678

External revenue

	Carry over from N-1	Actual budget 2024	Commitments	Payments	Comm rate	Paym rate	CO to 2025	Grant value	Duration	
									From	To
EUIPO - Fraud	63,029	143,029	141,029	131,838	98.6%	92.2%	2,000	80,000	01/01/2024	31/12/2024
EUIPO - IPC	350,755	1,300,755	1,300,755	1,200,737	100.0%	92.3%	0	950,000	01/01/2024	31/12/2024
SIRIUS Phase 2	888,905	888,905	758,965	555,912	85.4%	62.5%	129,940	3,491,892	01/01/2021	31/12/2024
SIRIUS Phase 3		1,200,607	888,849	0	74.0%	0.0%	311,758	3,500,000	01/01/2025	31/12/2027
Horizon 2020 - INFINITY	225,430	225,430	225,430	0	100.0%	0.0%	0	481,100	01/06/2020	31/05/2023
Horizon 2020 - GRACE	10,246	217,062	217,062	217,062	100.0%	100.0%	0	747,550	01/06/2020	30/11/2023
Horizon 2020 - STARLIGHT	347,234	347,234	317,785	310,946	91.5%	89.5%	29,449	891,200	01/10/2021	30/09/2025
EMPACT -EAP	1,550,322	1,610,645	1,187,298	845,056	73.7%	52.5%	423,348	2,500,000	01/07/2020	31/12/2024
EMPACT - EAP2		1,800,000					1,800,000	1,800,000	01/01/2025	31/12/2028
CEPOL EUROMED	97,026	97,026	97,026	97,026	100.0%	100.0%	0	320,000	01/04/2020	31/03/2024
CEPOL EUROMED2		390,000	370,000	20,395	94.9%	5.2%	20,000	390,000	01/10/2024	31/09/2028
CEPOL WBPACT	11,272	11,272	11,272	11,272	100.0%	100.0%	0	140,000	20/10/2020	19/10/2023
CEPOL WBPACT2		390,000	375,000	74,078	96.2%	19.0%	15,000	390,000	01/04/2024	31/03/2028
CEPOL TOPCOP	67,961	67,961	67,961	67,961	100.0%	100.0%	0	390,000	01/07/2020	30/06/2024
CEPOL TOPCOP2		390,000	375,000	12,807	96.2%	3.3%	15,000	390,000	01/07/2024	30/06/2028
PERCI		1,240,000					1,240,000	1,240,000	01/01/2025	31/12/2026
Total Grants (R0)	3,612,179	10,319,925	6,333,430	3,545,089	61.4%	34.4%	3,986,495	17,701,742		

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Annex IV. Activity Based Costing (ABC)

Activity-based costing (ABC) provides in-depth analysis on how the resources (staff and budget) are used per activity as defined in the Europol Programming Document 2024-2026³².

The ABC methodology assigns all direct and non-direct expenses, such as staff and overhead expenses, to Work Programme (WP) activities where costs actually incurred. It positions Europol as a more operational organisation because of the cost transparency approach, which allocates all costs per activity, regardless of budget title and budget holder. As such, according to the ABC methodology³³, 82.4% of the 2024 budget was assigned for operational activities (Activity 1 – Activity 7) and only the remaining 17.6% for governance, support and administrative activities of Europol (Activity 8).

	Planned posts	In post	% in total	Staff impl.	Budget (in M)	Impl. (in M)	% in total	Impl. rate	
A.1	Development of operational ICT and IM capabilities	220	212	21.7%	96.4%	80.18	80.12	36.4%	99.9%
A.2	Operational coordination	108	83	8.5%	76.9%	17.73	17.40	7.9%	98.2%
A.3	Combating Serious and Organised Crime	138	126	12.9%	91.3%	30.17	28.96	13.2%	96.0%
A.4	Combating cybercrime	105	86	8.8%	81.9%	15.64	15.59	7.1%	99.7%
A.5	Counter-Terrorism	107	93	9.5%	86.9%	17.30	18.11	8.2%	104.7%
A.6	Combating Financial and Economic Crime	68	58	5.9%	85.3%	10.95	11.34	5.2%	103.6%
A.7	Strategic and analysis coordination	64	57	5.8%	89.1%	9.57	9.86	4.5%	103.1%
	Total operational activities	810	715	73.2%	88.3%	181.53	181.38	82.4%	99.9%
A.8	Governance, support and administration	251	245	25.1%	97.6%	34.90	34.87	15.8%	99.9%
MBF	Management Board Functions	19	17	1.7%	89.5%	3.80	3.78	1.7%	99.5%
	Total Governance, Support and Administration, including MBF	270	262	26.8%	97.0%	38.70	38.65	17.6%	99.9%
	Total	1,080	977	100.0%	90.5%	220.23	220.03	100.0%	99.9%

³² EDOC #1258316, Europol Programming Document 2024-2026.

³³ Only resources from the Community subsidies are included (no external assigned revenue)

Annex V. Establishment Plan and Human Resources Management

Annex V-a. Establishment Plan

Temporary Agents

Grade	Establishment Plan 2024	Posts filled 31/12/2024 ³⁴	Posts vacant ³⁵	TOTAL ³⁶
AD 16	1	1		1
AD 15	1	1		1
AD 14	2	2		2
AD 13	3	1		1
AD 12	11	13		13
AD 11	11	6		6
AD 10	24	22		22
AD 09	51	47	1	48
AD 08	105	92	1	93
AD 07	239	235	5	240
AD 06	276	293	5	298
AD 05	7	9		9
AST 08	1	1		1
AST 07	3	1		1
AST 06	5	8		8
AST 05	3	1		1
AST 04	3	3		3
AST 03	3	3		3
AST 02	5	6		6
TOTAL	754	745	12	757

Contract Agents

Grade	Budget 2024	Headcount 31.12.2024	Headcount funded by Grants/Agreements	Total Headcount 31.12.2024
FG IV	79	65	11	76
FG III	118	104	5	109
FG II	58	48		48
TOTAL	255	217	16	233

³⁴ Offer letters sent counted as posts filled. Includes 37 vacant posts for which selections had been completed and appointment letters sent.

³⁵ Vacant posts are shown in the grade allocated to the vacancy or the grade allocated to the previous post holder in cases when a decision on recruitment has not been made yet.

³⁶ Discrepancies between the grades in the Establishment Plan and the grades actually filled result from the general approach to replace those staff members that leave in lower (entry) grades. Three additional TA posts are presented (the Establishment Plan 2024 includes 754 TA posts) as job quota assigned in excess for a limited period to keep the number of vacant posts to a minimum.

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Seconded National Experts	Authorised Budget 2024	Headcount 31.12.2024
SNE costed	121	90
SNE funded by Grants		7
SNE Guest Officers		50
SNE cost free		33
TOTAL	121	180

Annex V-b. Information on the entry level for each type of post

Types of post

Type of post	Function group / Grade	Post title
Director-General ³⁷	AD 15 – AD 16	Executive Director
Director ³⁸	AD 14 – AD 15	Deputy Executive Director Principal Adviser
Adviser or equivalent	AD 13 – AD 14	Adviser Senior Expert
Head of Unit or equivalent	AD 9 – AD 14	Head of Department ³⁹ Head of Unit
Administrator	AD 5 – AD 12	Senior Specialist/Senior Analyst ⁴⁰ Specialist/Analyst ⁴¹
Senior Assistant	AST 10 – AST 11	Senior Assistant
Assistant	AST 1 – AST 9	Officer ⁴² Support Officer ⁴³
Secretary/Clerk	SC 1 – SC 6	Secretary/Clerk

Transitional types of post

³⁷ This is without prejudice to a different classification of the head of the agency according to the founding regulation and/or the establishment plan.

³⁸ This is without prejudice to a different classification of the deputy head of the agency according to the founding regulation and/or the establishment plan.

³⁹ Posts of Head of Department are filled from grades AD 12 to AD 14.

⁴⁰ Posts of Senior Specialists/Senior Analysts are filled from grades AD 7 to AD 12.

⁴¹ Posts of Specialists/Analysts are filled from grades AD 5 to AD 6.

⁴² Posts of Officer are filled from grades AST 4 to AST 9.

⁴³ Posts of Support Officer are filled from grades AST 1 to AST 3.

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Type of post	Function group / Grade	Post title
Assistant in transition	AST 1 – AST 9	Officer in transition Support Officer in transition Technical Officer in transition
Administrative Assistant in transition	AST 1 – AST 7	Administrative Assistant in transition

Annex V-c. Benchmarking exercise

Europol continues to strive towards being a more operational EU Agency. In 2024, the results of the job screening exercise showed a stabilisation in all categories, with marginal deviations compared to the previous year.

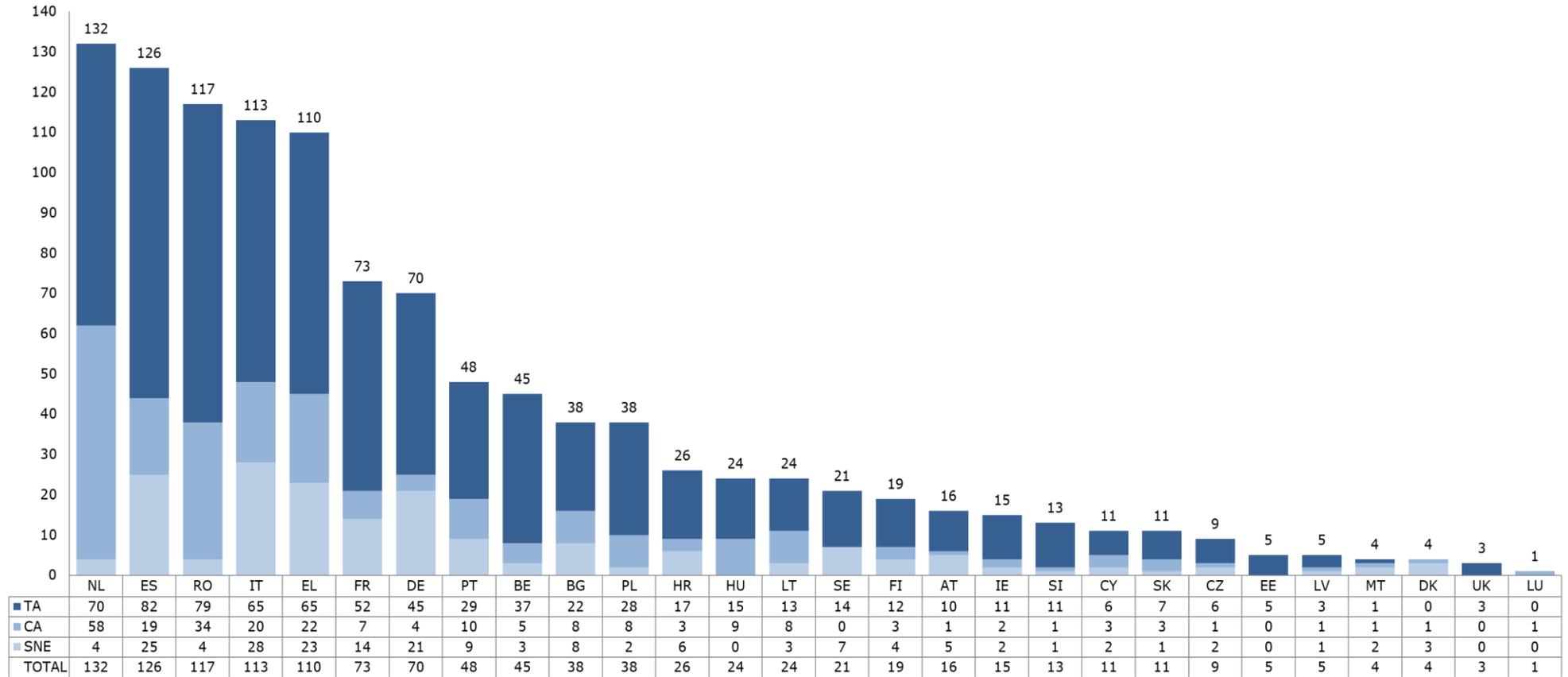
The job screening exercise was performed in December 2024, according to the guidelines defined by the EU Agencies Network and based on all personnel working at the Europol premises on 15 December 2024. This not only includes Temporary Agents, Contract Agents and SNEs but also Liaison Officers, Interns, Law Enforcement Trainees and external service providers based at Europol's premises.

Job Type category	2023 Jobs	2023 (%)	2024 Jobs	2024 (%)	Δ 2024
Administrative support and Coordination	243	16%	259	15%	-0.3%
Administrative support	182	12%	198	12%	0.0%
Coordination	61	4%	61	4%	-0.3%
Operational	1245	80%	1357	80%	0.5%
General Operational	902	58%	927	55%	-3.0%
Programme Management	298	19%	386	23%	3.7%
Top level Operational Coordination	45	3%	44	3%	-0.3%
Neutral	68	4%	70	4%	-0.2%
Finance	68	4%	70	4%	-0.2%
	1556		1686		

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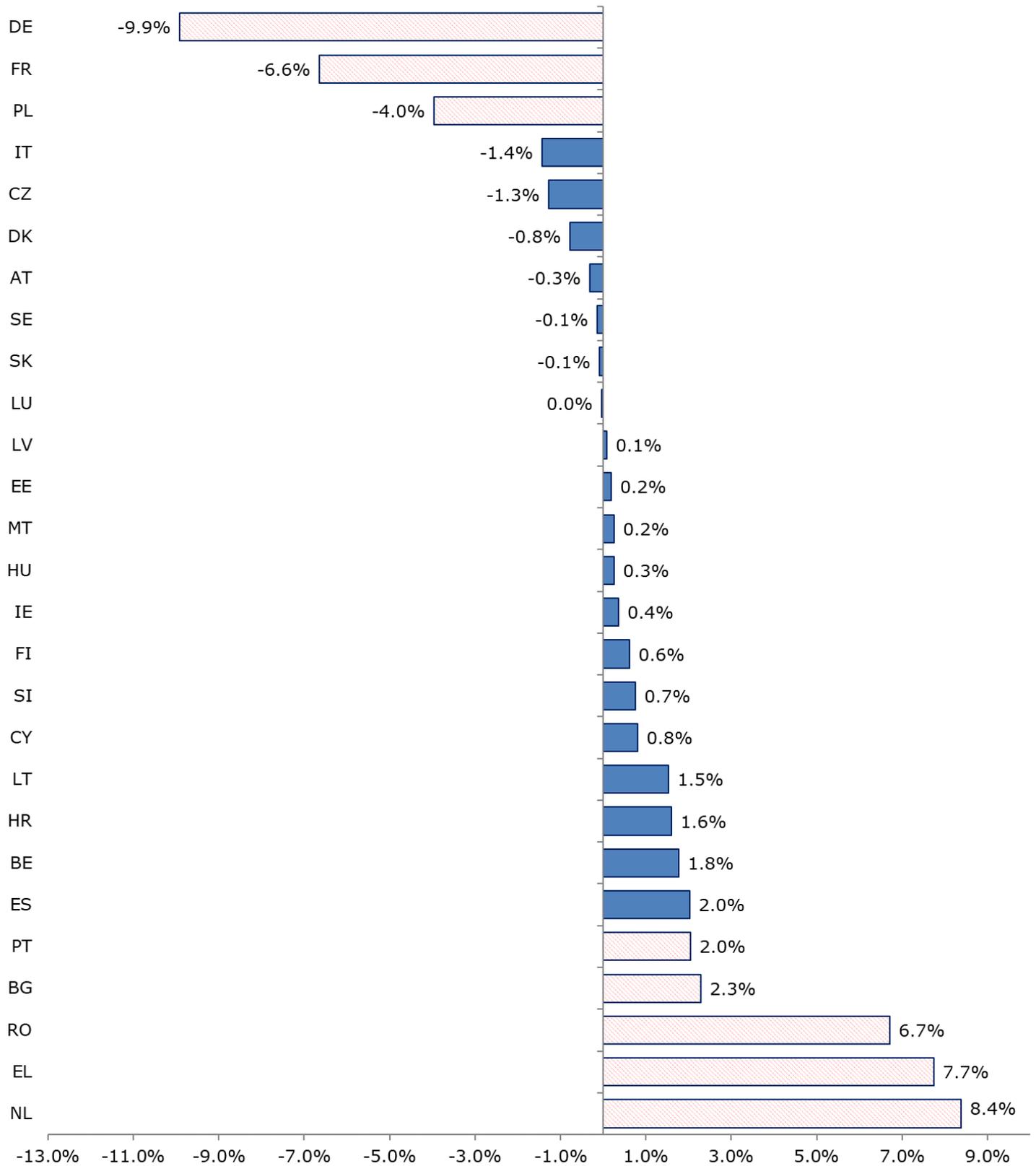
Annex V-d. Member States representation at Europol

A - Europol staff (in post) per nationality (27 Member States + UK) and type of contract



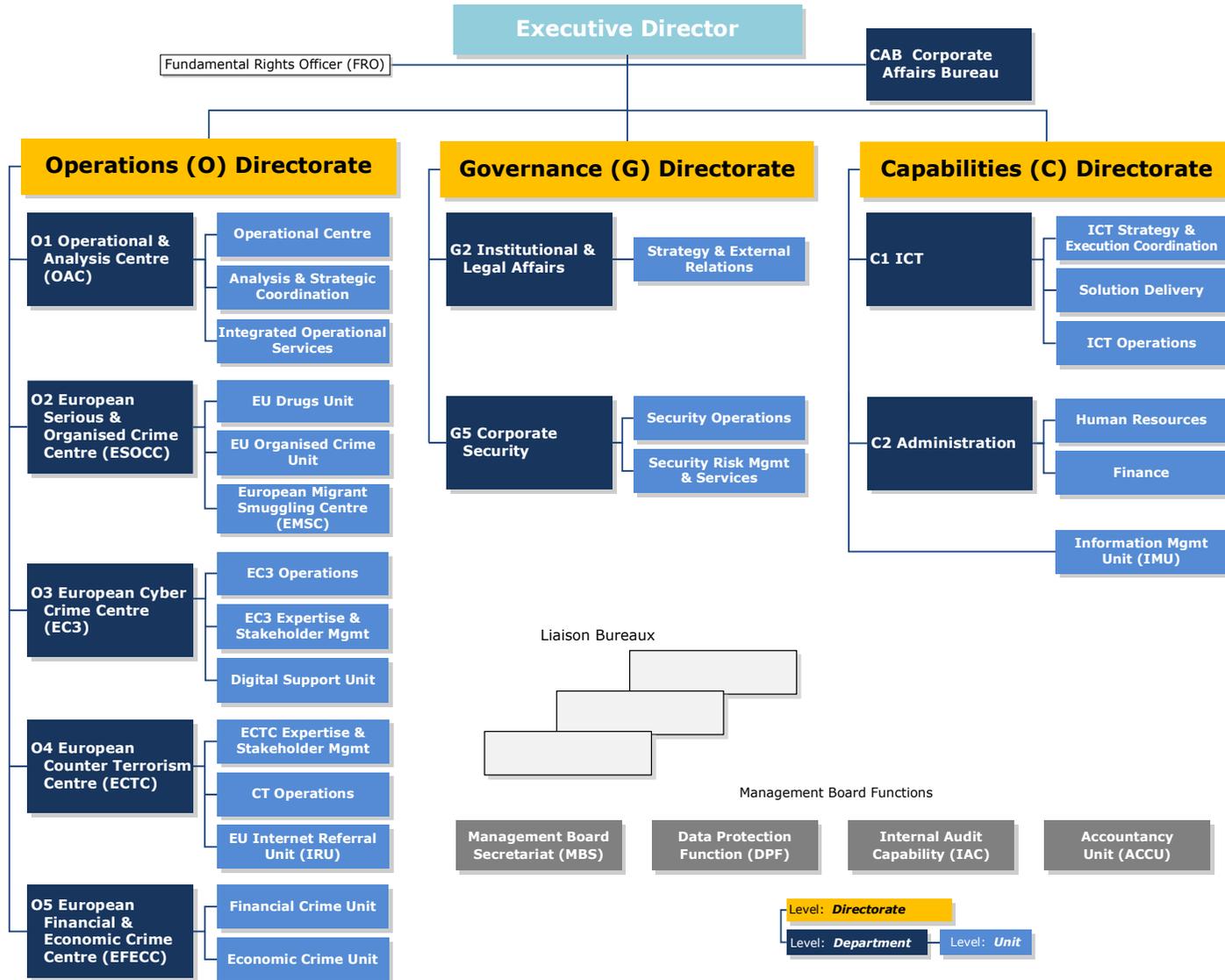
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B- Europol staff (in post) vs. EU population share per country



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Annex VI. Organisational Chart 2024



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Annex VII. Grant and Service Level Agreements

	General information					Financial and HR impacts				
	Date of signature	Total amount	Duration	Counterpart	Short description	N-1 (2023)		N (2024)		
Grant agreements										
1. H2020 - GRACE 883341 - part of consortium coordinated by Vicom, ES	18/05/2020 (starting date 1/6/2020)	6,823,512.50 for the consortium of which 747,550 for Europol	42 months	European Commission Research Executive Agency	Global Response Against Child Exploitation based on big-data technologies supported by advanced AI powered algorithms	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
							195,787	195,787	-	-
						Number of CAs	3		0	
						Number of SNEs	0		0	
2. H2020 - INFINITY 883293 - part of consortium coordinated by Airbus, FR	11/05/2020 (starting date 1/6/2020)	6,866,503.75 for the consortium of which 481,100 for Europol	39 months	European Commission Research Executive Agency	A project that revolutionises how LEAs view, analyse and share information to combat crime and terrorism	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
							98,687	98,687	-	-
						Number of CAs	1		0	
						Number of SNEs	0		0	
3. H2020 - AIDA 883596 - part of consortium coordinated by Ingegneria Informatica, IT	20/05/2020 (starting date 1/9/2020)	7,690,272.50 for the consortium of which 935,800 for Europol	30 months	European Commission Research Executive Agency	Artificial Intelligence and advanced Data Analytics for Law Enforcement Agencies	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
							62,387	62,387	-	-
						Number of CAs	5		0	
						Number of SNEs	0		0	
4. H2020 - STARLIGHT 101021797 - part of consortium coordinated by CEA, FR	05/05/2021 (starting date 1/10/2021)	17,000,000 for the consortium of which 891,200 for Europol	48 months	European Commission Research Executive Agency	Sustainable Autonomy and Resilience for LEAs using AI against High priority Threats	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
							222,800	222,800	222,800	222,800
						Number of CAs	3		3	
						Number of SNEs	0		0	
Total grant agreements						Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
							579,661	579,661	222,800	222,800
						Number of CAs	12		3	
						Number of SNEs	0		0	
Contribution agreements										
1. EaP EMPACT ENI/2020 / 416-376	11/06/2020 (starting date 1/7/2020)	2,500,000	54 months (extension of 6 months)	European Commission DG Near	Fighting organised crime in the EaP region	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
							555,556	555,556	555,556	555,556
						Number of CAs	2		2	
						Number of SNEs	0		0	
2. SIRIUS phase 2 New Agreement	21/12/2020 (starting date 1/1/2021)	3,491,891.50 (2,160,441.25 Europol, 1,331,450.25 Eurojust)	48 months (6 months extension)	European Commission Service for Foreign Policy Instruments	International Digital Cooperation - Cross border access to electronic evidence	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
							540,110	540,110	540,110	540,110
						Number of CAs	7		7	
						Number of SNEs	0		0	
Total contribution agreements						Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
							1,095,666	1,095,666	1,095,666	1,095,666
						Number of CAs	9		9	
						Number of SNEs	0		0	

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Service-level agreements										
1. EUIPO - IP Crime	07/11/2019 (starting date 1/1/2020)	maximum 3,800,000	48 months	The European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO)	To support law enforcement authorities preventing crime related to Intellectual Property Rights	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
						950,000	950,000	-	-	
						Number of CAs	2		0	
						Number of SNEs	7		0	
2. EUIPO - Fraud	13/08/2019 (starting date 1/1/2020)	80,000 per year	48 months	The European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO)	Preventing fraud against users of the European Union Intellectual Property Systems	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
						80,000	80,000	-	-	
						Number of CAs	0		0	
						Number of SNEs	1		0	
3. EUIPO - IP Crime and Fraud	26/07/2023 (starting date 1/1/2024)	maximum 4,120,000 (1,030,000 per year)	48 months	The European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO)	To support law enforcement authorities preventing crime and fraud related to Intellectual Property Rights	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
						-	-	1,030,000	1,030,000	
						Number of CAs	0		2	
						Number of SNEs	0		8	
4. The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (funded via Contribution Agreement with DG Near)	05/08/2020	850,000	Maximum duration until 30/9/2024	The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training	EUROMED POLICE V (Contract No. ENI/2020/414-940), WB PaCT (Contract No. 2019/ 413-822) and TOPCOP (Contract No. ENI/2020/415-941) projects	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
						180,000	180,000	100,000	100,000	
						Number of CAs	3		2	
						Number of SNEs	0		0	
5. The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (funded via Contribution Agreement with DG Near)	01/04/2024	390,000	48 months	The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training	Western Balkans Partnership Against Crime and Terrorism - WB PACT II (Contract No. 700001863)	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
								73,125	73,125	
						Number of CAs	0		1	
						Number of SNEs	0		0	
6. The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (funded via Contribution Agreement with DG Near)	01/07/2024	390,000	48 months	The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training	Training and Operational Partnership against Organised Crime (TOPCOP) II (Contract No. 700001970)	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
								48,750	48,750	
						Number of CAs	0		1	
						Number of SNEs	0		0	
7. The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (funded via Contribution Agreement with DG Near)	01/10/2024	390,000	48 months	The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training	EUROMED Police VI (Contract No. 700002160)	Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
								24,375	24,375	
						Number of CAs	0		1	
						Number of SNEs	0		0	
Total service-level agreements						Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
						1,210,000	1,210,000	1,276,250	1,276,250	
						Number of CAs	5		7	
						Number of SNEs	8		8	
TOTAL AGREEMENTS						Amount	CA	PA	CA	PA
						2,885,327	2,885,327	2,594,716	2,594,716	
						Number of CAs	26		19	
						Number of SNEs	8		8	

Annex VIII. Extract from annual accounts

BALANCE SHEET

ASSETS	31.12.2024	31.12.2023
NON-CURRENT ASSETS	91,963,960	80,287,799
Intangible assets	65,605,389	53,426,406
Computer software	27,538,727	25,975,964
Computer software under financial lease	-	-
Under construction	38,066,662	27,450,441
Tangible assets	26,334,951	26,816,827
Land and buildings	5,588,634	6,073,078
Plant and equipment	301,579	342,985
Computer hardware	14,964,961	14,542,001
Furniture and vehicles	2,501,371	2,629,454
Other fixtures and fittings	2,834,488	3,136,400
Assets under financial lease	143,918	92,909
Non-current receivables and recoverables	23,620	44,566
Long-term receivables	23,620	44,566
CURRENT ASSETS	50,093,264	50,308,497
Short-term pre-financing paid	4,917,911	3,703,650
EMPACT and other grant beneficiaries	4,856,569	3,316,672
Consolidated entities	61,342	386,978
Short-term Receivables	43,628,571	44,920,574
Current receivables	33,314,231	35,419,026
Sundry receivables	283,739	289,078
Other receivables: Accrued exchange income ⁴⁴	4,712	1,506
Accrued non-exchange income	303	210,816
Deferred charges ⁴⁵	10,025,586	9,000,148
Receivables with consolidated EU entities	-	-
Cash and cash equivalents	1,546,782	1,684,273
TOTAL ASSETS	142,057,224	130,596,296
LIABILITIES		
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	5,834,377	2,591,103
Pensions and other employee benefits	2,183,174	2,236,957
Pre-financing received from consolidated EU entities	3,529,587	-
Other liabilities	121,616	354,146
CURRENT LIABILITIES	15,372,886	19,479,927

⁴⁴ Includes accrued exchange income with consolidated EU entities.

⁴⁵ Includes deferred charges with consolidated EU entities.

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Provisions for risks and charges	-	-
Financial liabilities	129,375	43,826
Payables	15,243,511	19,436,101
Current payables	-546,364 ⁴⁶	40,292
Sundry payables	512,530	632,863
Other payables:		
Accrued charges	8,398,173	8,786,589
Deferred income	48,000	-
Accrued charges with consolidated EU entities	183,697	318,246
Accounts payable with consolidated EU entities	6,647,475	9,658,112
NET ASSETS	120,849,961	108,525,266
Accumulated surplus/deficit	109,052,419	103,956,080
Accumulated re-measurements of employee benefits	-668,121	-527,153
Economic result of the year	12,465,663	5,096,339
TOTAL LIABILITIES	142,057,224	130,596,296

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

	31.12.2024	31.12.2023
REVENUE	224,378,478	209,768,797
Non-exchange revenue	214,908,272	201,536,106
European Union Contribution	214,271,880	200,892,815
Grants/agreements with non-consolidated entities	548,568	547,027
Other	58,929	95,491
Income taxes	-	-
Recovery of operating expenditure	28,895	773
Exchange revenue	9,470,205	8,232,692
Contribution from Denmark	5,305,657	4,719,597
Revenue from consolidated EU entities	3,893,133	3,024,716
Other	270,954	415,238
Sales revenue	-	52,024
Fixed asset-related	-	20,238
Exchange rate gains	461	878
EXPENDITURE	211,912,814	204,672,458
Operational expenditure	49,941,003	51,843,811
Administrative expenditure	161,971,812	152,828,648
Staff expenses	111,899,004	102,366,355
Finance expenses	12,386	20,190

⁴⁶ Negative amount explained in note 2.14.

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Fixed asset-related	21,570,629	18,618,782
Expenses with consolidated EU entities	8,049,811	9,409,050
Other: Administrative and IT expenses	10,200,361	11,656,631
External service provider (non-IT)	4,144,803	3,672,083
Rent and IT operating lease	293,861	293,180
Building – maintenance, insurance and security	5,800,267	6,791,471
Exchange rate losses	690	906
SURPLUS/DEFICIT FROM ORDINARY ACTIVITIES	12,465,663	5,096,339
Extraordinary gains	-	-
Extraordinary losses	-	-
SURPLUS/DEFICIT FROM EXTRAORDINARY ITEMS	-	-
ECONOMIC RESULT OF THE YEAR	12,465,663	5,096,339

CASH FLOW STATEMENT

	31.12.2024	31.12.2023
Economic result of the year	12,465,663	5,096,339
Operational activities		
Amortisation (intangible assets)	10,710,953	8,067,600
Depreciation (tangible assets)	10,767,845	10,475,788
Increase (-)/Decrease in provisions for risks and charges	-	-
Increase (-)/Decrease in short-term pre-financing	-1,539,897	841,556
Increase (-)/Decrease in long-term receivables	20,946	-44,566
Increase (-)/Decrease in short-term receivables	1,292,003	13,031,119
Increase (-)/Decrease in receivables related to consolidated EU entities	325,636	-76,172
Increase (-)/Decrease in other long-term liabilities	-232,530	-125,220
Increase (-)/Decrease in accounts payable	-1,181,953	-3,404,002
Increase (-)/Decrease in liabilities related to consolidated EU entities	518,951	-4,040,915
Other non-cash movements ⁴⁷	85,548	-311,921
Net cash-flow from operational activities	33,233,165	29,509,604
Investing activities		
Increase (-) of tangible and intangible assets	-33,267,736	-29,565,323
Proceeds from tangible and intangible assets	91,832	75,394
Net cash-flow from investing activities	-33,175,904	-29,489,929

⁴⁷ Financial liability for short-term leasing.

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Increase/decrease (-) in pension and employee benefits liability	-194,751	-123,013
Net increase/decrease (-) in cash and cash equivalents	-137,490	-103,337
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	1,684,273	1,787,610
Cash and cash equivalents at year-end	1,546,782	1,684,273

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS

	Accumulated Surplus/ Deficit	Economic result of the year	Net Assets (Total)
Balance as at 31 December 2023	103,428,927	5,096,339	108,525,266
Changes in accounting policies	-	-	-
Balance as at 1 January 2024	103,428,927	5,096,339	108,525,266
Re-measurements of employee benefit liabilities ⁴⁸	-140,968	-	-140,968
Allocation of the economic result of previous year	5,096,339	-5,096,339	-
Economic result of the year 2024	-	12,465,663	12,465,663
Balance as at 31 December 2024	108,384,298	12,465,663	120,849,961

RECONCILIATION BETWEEN STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE AND BUDGET RESULT

Description	Amount
Economic result (Statement of Financial Performance) 2024	12,465,663
Accruals/deferrals 2024	2,356,387
Accruals/deferrals reversed from 2023	-5,536,535
Adjustment for 2023 carry-over appropriations assigned revenue	7,767,303
Adjustment to employee benefit liability	-194,751
Cancellation of unused payment appropriations from 2023	1,715,169
Cashed balance sheet recovery orders issued in 2024 ⁴⁹	1,460,690
Cashed recovery orders issued before 2024	11,892
Depreciation and amortisation of fixed assets	21,558,745
Fixed Asset acquisitions (excluding unpaid amounts at 31.12.2024)	-9,978,946
Internally-generated fixed assets	-22,938,431

⁴⁸ This is the net result of changes to actuarial demographic and financial assumptions in accordance with EU Accounting Rule 12 (Employee benefits).

⁴⁹ Classed as revenue in the budget result, but booked to the balance sheet rather than the statement of financial performance. For example, grant-related pre-financing claims.

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Open pre-financing paid in 2024	-10,989,867
Open pre-financing received in 2024	9,891,127
Pre-financing received surpluses paid back	-328,163
Payment appropriations carried over to 2025	-31,926,572
Payments 2024 in Statement of Financial Performance 2023	-418,460
Payments made in 2024 from 2025 budget	823,830
Payments made from carry-over 2023	21,272,259
Pre-financing paid in 2023 and cleared in 2024	7,875,748
Pre-financing received before 2024 and cleared in 2024	-1,446,687
Uncashed revenue recovery orders issued in 2024	-1,963
Unpaid invoices at 31.12.2024	197
Value reductions (impact of the year)	11,884
Total = Budget result 2024	3,450,520

BUDGET RESULT

REVENUE

European Union contribution, cashed

Other revenue, cashed

TOTAL REVENUE (a)

EXPENDITURE

Title 1: Staff

Payments current year

Appropriations carried over to next year

Title 2: Administrative

Payments current year

Appropriations carried over to next year

Title 3: Operational

Payments current year

Appropriations carried over to next year

TOTAL EXPENDITURE (b)

RESULT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR (a-b)

Cancellation of unused PA carried over from the previous year

Adjustment for carry-over from the previous year – assigned revenue

Exchange rate differences

FINAL BUDGET RESULT

	2024	2023
	217,722,400	207,176,212
	14,437,672	9,989,810
	232,160,072	217,166,022
	129,520,137	117,919,305
	3,274,930	2,845,289
	9,008,189	10,815,187
	4,140,860	4,748,517
	67,736,898	62,606,189
	24,510,782	23,160,925
	238,191,795	222,095,411
	-6,031,723	-4,929,389
	1,715,169	3,737,470
	7,767,303	7,475,344
	-229	-28
	3,450,520	6,283,397

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Annex IX. Environmental indicators

The yearly collection of performance data for 2024 will be completed in 2025. The table below shows Europol's environmental indicators for the years 2018-2023, the performance variation (expressed in %) from 2018 (baseline year) to 2023 and the performance target for 2025 (EMAS perspective 2023-2025, with the targets set for the end of the period).

Core Indicator (Description and unit)	2018	2023	Δ 2018-2023 (%)	Target 2025	
				Δ 2018	Value
Total carbon footprint (tonnes CO₂eq)	4,128.7	3,455.3	-16.3	-32.1%	2,804
Total carbon footprint (tonnes CO ₂ eq/FTE)	3.37	2.16	-36.0		
CO ₂ eq buildings (kg CO ₂ eq/FTE)	54.86	0.00	-100.0		
Total energy building (MWh)	9,147	9,224	0.8		
Energy buildings (kWh/m ²)	281	284	0.8		
Energy buildings (MWh/FTE)	7.47	5.76	-22.9		
Non-renewable energy use (buildings) %	3.42	1.92%	-43.8		
Implement recommendations from the energy audit	-	in progress	-		
Total water consumption (m³)	14,250	9,865	-30.8		
Water consumption (m ³ /FTE)	11.63	6.2	-47.1	-17.5%	9.60
Total waste generation (tonnes)	91.30	107.10	17.3		
Waste generation (kg/FTE)	74.53	66.85	-25.7		≤ 90
Separated waste (%)	44.1	53.57	+9.5 p.p.	+8.8 p.p.	52.9%
Total paper consumption (tonnes)	11.70	7.19	-38.5		
Paper consumption (kg/FTE)	9.55	4.49	-53.0		
Daily paper consumption (sheets/FTE/day)	9.12	4.46	-51.1	-50.0%	4.56
Tenders/contracts >15k with GPP/environmental considerations	√	√	n/a	-	-
The proportion of total land that is nature-oriented (%)	76.4	76.4	n/a	-	≥ 66.4
Total land (m ²)	9,970	9,970	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total land per FTE (m ² /FTE)	8.1	6.2	n/a	n/a	n/a

In 2023, Europol had an overall positive environmental performance, meeting or exceeding its yearly targets in most areas besides the one of reducing its carbon footprint. Despite reducing the footprint per employee by 36% compared to 2018, total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in 2023 were 8.6% higher than the interim target level for 2023 resulting from the decarbonisation pathway (3,182.6tCO₂@eq).

Annex X. Main issues discussed and decisions taken by the MB

135th MB Meeting | 26 January 2024

Main decisions

- **Planning matters:** the MB endorsed Europol's draft Programming Document 2025-2027.

136th MB Meeting | 19-20 March 2024

Main decisions

- **Strategic and corporate matters:** the MB adopted the amendments to its Decision on restricted posts, enabling Europol to open specific profiles to a wider pool of candidates.
- **Information Management:** the Board endorsed Europol's Strategic Roadmap on Biometrics, and a set of Guiding Principles for the preparation of national law enforcement information management strategies.
- **Operational matters:** the MB adopted revised quantitative and qualitative criteria for Europol's reports on the information provided by Member States, in accordance with Article 7(11) of Europol Regulation. In addition, the Board endorsed Europol's proposal for the reorganisation of the European Financial and Economic Crime Centre, aimed to further enhance the strategic and operational capabilities of the Centre.

The MB received an update on the implementation of Europol's Environmental Vision 2030, commending the Agency for the efforts undertaken towards the achievement of its decarbonisation targets.

Further, the MB took positive note of the steadily increasing number of competent authorities connected to the Europol Secure Information Exchange Network Application (SIENA), bound to become the 'by-default' channel for the exchange of law enforcement information in the EU.

137th MB Meeting | 18-19 June 2024

Main decisions

- **Consolidated Annual Activity Report (CAAR):** the MB adopted the CAAR 2023 and its own assessment thereof. The document was published on Europol's website following its transmission to the relevant EU Institutions and the JPSG.
- **Other strategic and corporate matters:** the Board updated the mandate of its Working Group on Corporate Matters to reflect the evolution of Europol's legal framework and the parallel expansion of the Group's tasks.
- **External relations and partnerships:** the MB approved the Working Arrangement between Singapore and Europol.

The Board discussed the first Europol report on *De-coding EU's most threatening criminal networks*, a new flagship product of major operational relevance acknowledged by the 13-14 June 2024 Justice and Home Affairs Council.

The MB received an update on Europol's activities and achievements in the area of Information Management, in particular concerning the implementation of EU Interoperability, the Information Exchange Directive, and the new Prüm II Regulation.

Further, the MB welcomed the 2023 Annual Report of the Europol Data Protection Officer (DPO), appreciating the DPO's and the Data Protection Function's efforts in enhancing the Agency's profound data protection awareness and compliance culture.

138th MB Meeting | 8 October 2024

Main decisions

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- **Strategic and corporate matters:** the MB endorsed Europol's six-month activity report, commending the Agency for the progress achieved in all areas.
- **Personnel-related matters:** the Board updated its Decision concerning seconded national experts with a view to streamlining current funding and administrative processes.
- **External relations and partnerships:** the MB adopted the new Europol External Strategy, aimed at intensifying cooperation with key external partners to support EU Member States in preventing and combating serious organised crime and terrorism, while pursuing compliance with fundamental rights, including data protection, in all strategic and operational exchanges. Further, on 9 October 2024, the MB of Europol and the College of Eurojust met to discuss synergies and close cooperation between the two Agencies.

The MB was presented with the conclusions of the European Police Chiefs Convention, held in September 2024, focusing on collaborative strategies to combat emerging criminal threats and enhance international cooperation.

The MB discussed the findings of Europol's report on *Tackling threats, addressing challenges – Europol's response to migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings in 2023 and onwards*. The Board praised the support provided by Europol's European Migrant Smuggling Centre to the Member States in facing the challenges of an increasing, complex and dynamic criminal landscape in this area.

139th MB Meeting | 26 November 2024

[Cancelled]

140th MB Meeting | 10-11 December 2024

Main decisions

- **Strategic and corporate matters:** the MB elected its Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson for the 18-month period running from 1 January 2025 to 30 June 2026, and appointed the Chairpersons of the MB WGCM and WGIM for the same period.
- **Planning and budget matters:** the Board adopted Europol's Programming Document 2025-2027, along with the final Europol Budget for 2025.
- **External relations and partnerships:** the MB approved the Working Arrangement with Egypt in accordance with Article 11(1)(r) of Europol Regulation.
- **Data protection-related matters:** the MB adopted implementing rules concerning the Data Protection Officer of Europol.
- **Auditing matters:** the MB approved the Work Programme of the Internal Audit Capability for 2025.

The MB discussed the preliminary draft Europol Programming Document 2026-2028.

The Board was presented with the Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) priorities of the Commission's Political Guidelines, in particular the envisioned preparation of the new EU Internal Security Strategy and the further reinforcement of Europol's capabilities and resources. Further, the MB took note of the JHA priorities of the incoming Polish Presidency of the Council of the EU.

Further, the MB discussed Europol's report on *AI and policing: The benefits and challenges of artificial intelligence for law enforcement*, noting the growing relevance of this dynamically developing domain, as well as the importance of an effective and compliant use of AI-based operational tools.

Written procedures

Through written procedures held in 2024, the MB:

- Authorised a Budget Transfer and approved six Amending Budgets.
- Approved the Summaries of its meetings held during the year and agreed to their publication on Europol's external website in accordance with Article 65(4) of Europol Regulation.

Europol Public Information

Annex XI. Implementation overview of critical and very important audit recommendations⁵⁰ issued by the IAC

Year	Audit report	Total critical and very important			Addressed up to end 2024			To be addressed in full in 2025 and onwards		
		Total	C	VI	Total	C	VI	Total	C	VI
2015	Consultancy engagement on review of systems laid down by the Authorising Officer 2015 – 1st Report Accountancy: 2014 consolidation process	2		2	2		2	0		
2016	Review of the implementation of recommendations issued by the IAF in the period 2010-2014	13		13	11		11	0 ⁵¹		
2016	Report on the review and assessment of the implementation of (ICS) at Europol	22	1	21	22	1	21	0		
2016	Review and assessment of the operational support provided by EC3	5		5	5		5	0		
2016	Audit on Europol Sports and Social Association (ESSA) regarding its accounts for the years 2012 to 2015	3		3	3		3	0		
2016	Validation of user access rights granted in ABAC	4		4	4		4	0		
2017	New operational support capabilities EU Internet Referral Unit (EU IRU)	1	1		1	1		0		
2017	Strategic analysis products and their alignment with the EU policy cycle	3	1	2	3	1	2	0		
2017	Missions' administration process audit	10		10	9		9	0 ⁵²		
2018	Information Communication Technology (ICT) project planning, management and change	4		4	4		4	0		
2018	Audit Report Learning, Training and Development	23	4	19	22	4	18	1		1
2018	Audit Report Operational support on-the-spot	1		1	0		0	1		1
2018	Validation of user access rights granted in ABAC	2		2	2		2	0 ⁵³		
2019	Audit report on operational analysis	14	2	12	12	2	10	2		2
2019	Audit Report Grants Management Process	7		7	7		7	0		
2020	Audit Report Contract renewal process	1		1	1		1	0		
2021	Audit report Asset Management	20	5	15	20	5	15	0 ⁵⁴		
2021	Audit Report Diversity, equality and inclusion practices at Europol	3		3	3		3	0		
2021	Validation of user access rights granted in ABAC and MobileXpense	3	2	1	3	2	1	0		
2021	Audit report on Europol's 24/7 Operational Support	1		1	1		1	0		
2022	Validation of user access rights granted in ABAC and MobileXpense	2	1	1	2	1	1	0		
2023	Audit Report Audit of Europol's budget processes	7	1	6	6	1	5	1		1
2023	Validation of user access rights granted in ABAC and MobileXpense	1		1	1		1	0		
	Total	152	18	134	142	18	126	5⁵⁵	0	5

⁵⁰ Grading of recommendations, as per the table, follows these codes: C=Critical, VI=Very Important.

⁵¹ Of the 13 'very important' recommendations, two recommendations were assessed as "not intended for implementation".

⁵² Of the 10 'very important' recommendations, one recommendation was assessed as "no longer applicable".

⁵³ Of the 2 'very important' recommendations, one recommendation was assessed as "no longer applicable".

⁵⁴ Of the 5 'critical' and 15 'very important' recommendations, two recommendations (one 'critical' and one 'very important') were assessed as "no longer applicable".

⁵⁵ Three 'very important' recommendations were assessed by the IAC as "not intended for implementation" (2 recommendations) or 'no longer applicable' (1 recommendation).

Annex XII. Extract from the European Court of Auditors (ECA) report

ECA observations on the legality and regularity of transactions on the financial year 2023

3.33.8. In our 2022 report (paragraph 3.33.9), we concluded that Europol had irregularly reimbursed VAT through grants whose beneficiaries (such as police forces) were public authorities governed by public law and engaging in activities in that capacity. In 2023, Europol paid a grant of €2.4 million, including VAT and a 7 % provision for associated overheads, to fund the activities of a national police force in a member state. However, under Article 186(4)(c) of the Financial Regulation the grants should not have included VAT, because the beneficiary was a public authority governed by public law and acting in that capacity. We conclude, therefore, that €230.8 thousand of the grant, corresponding to the ineligible VAT and the related portion of overheads, was irregular. At our request, Europol identified other grants through which VAT was reimbursed

The Agency's reply

3.33.8. In relation to the ECA's observations on the eligibility of VAT, Europol considered that, under Article 186(4)(c) of the Financial Regulation 2018/1046 and the corresponding specific implementation guidance of the European Commission on grant administration, Value Added Tax (VAT) was an eligible cost in the respective operational grants initiated by Europol.

This notwithstanding, as a follow-up to the ECA's observations on the financial year 2022 which were published in October 2023, Europol decided that VAT will no longer be considered as an eligible cost for new operational grants initiated as of 1 November 2023. Accordingly, Europol reimburses expensed VAT for operational grants that were ongoing by 31 October 2023.

In the financial year 2023, the corresponding VAT amounts reimbursed in operational grants came to 279,900 Euros (rounded) in total, as per the information presented in the ECA's observations following Europol's disclosure during the audit by the ECA.

Follow-up of previous years' observations

Year	The ECA's observations	Corrective action taken and / or other relevant developments (summary)	Follow-up status
2022	Between 2020 and 2022, Europol paid the daily subsistence allowance to three Dutch nationals employed as seconded national experts. Europol is located in the Netherlands, and its internal rules do not entitle Dutch seconded national experts to this allowance.	After re-examining its internal controls on the establishment and review of financial entitlements and the financial verification of established amounts, Europol introduced further preventive measures. No Dutch seconded national experts received a subsistence allowance in 2023.	Closed ⁵⁶
2022	In 2022, Europol paid grants to fund the activities of national police forces, including an element to reimburse VAT. Under Article 186(4)(c) of the Financial Regulation the grants should not have included VAT, because the beneficiaries were public authorities governed by public law and acting in that capacity.	Between 1 November 2023 and the end of the grants, VAT was no longer an eligible cost. As a transitional measure, Europol continued to accept and reimburse VAT for activities under an ongoing procurement procedure and covered by purchase orders issued no later than 30 October 2023. VAT is not an eligible cost under any grant calls issued after 1 November 2023. In 2023, the total amount of irregular VAT reimbursements was €280 thousand (see paragraph 3.33.8).	Corrective action taken – closure subject to validation by the ECA

⁵⁶ As reported in the ECA report on the financial year 2023 (https://www.eca.europa.eu/ECAPublications/SAR-AGENCIES-2023/SAR-AGENCIES-2023_EN.pdf)