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Establishing a European Law Enforcement Training Scheme

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**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN
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1. Introduction

Transnational crime can only be countered by cross-border cooperation, with police, customs, border guards and other authorities working together. Unless those authorities are properly trained, and unless there is sufficient mutual trust, such cooperation will not be effective.

There has already been considerable progress in implementing training on cross-border matters in the EU. For instance, common curricula and exchange programmes for law enforcement officers have been developed and implemented for a number of years. Member States are involved in this joint effort with EU agencies such as the European Police College (CEPOL), the European Police Office (Europol) and the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (Frontex). In 2012, more than 300 exchange programmes between law enforcement officers across the EU were organised. New learning methods, such as CEPOL's 'webinars' were used by more than 3 000 participants in 2012. Participation in EU training is growing, with more than 5 000 enrolled at CEPOL and 3 000 at Frontex last year.

However, more needs to be done, for instance, to raise the profile of EU instruments for police cooperation and the role of EU agencies created to support law enforcement services in fighting crime. More officials should use the resources available to reach their full potential. Training should adequately respond to training needs and more firmly support priorities such as fighting cybercrime¹ and trafficking in drugs and in human beings, agreed at EU level for operational cooperation. Effective coordination between Member States and EU agencies, taking into account the work by international organisations such as Interpol and the United Nations, is needed to ensure a coherent approach to training to the highest quality standards at EU level.

That is why this Communication proposes a *European Law Enforcement Training Scheme* (hereafter '*LETS*', or 'the Training Scheme') to equip law enforcement officers with the knowledge and skills they need to prevent and combat cross-border crime effectively through efficient cooperation with their EU colleagues. The Training Scheme aims to make the EU's response to common security challenges more effective, to raise the standard of policing across the EU and to stimulate the development of a common law enforcement culture as a means of enhancing mutual trust and cooperation. It seeks to identify and address gaps in existing law enforcement training on cross-border matters by supporting and, where appropriate, by coordinating the delivery of training by European and national centres of excellence.

¹ Taking into account the EU cyber security strategy; Joint communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions; Cyber security Strategy of the European Union: An Open, Safe and Secure Cyberspace. 7.2.2013 JOIN (2013) 1final.

The Training Scheme responds to the European Council's call, in the Stockholm Programme², to step up training on EU-related issues and to make them systematically accessible for all relevant law enforcement professionals, and to requests from the European Parliament for a stronger EU framework for judicial and police training³. It seeks to ensure that:

- **law enforcement cooperation instruments** that the EU has developed over time, such as Prüm information exchange⁴ and Europol's criminal intelligence data bases, are better known and used both in bilateral and multilateral contacts between Member States.
- EU law enforcement officials are equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to tackle **transnational crimes causing the greatest harm** to victims and society as a whole.
- law enforcement officials cooperating with third countries or taking part in EU civilian missions there are properly trained.

The Training Scheme proposed in this Communication applies to **law enforcement officials of all ranks**, from police officers to border guards and customs officers, as well as, where appropriate, other state officials, such as prosecutors⁵. Learning facilitated by the Training Scheme or provided under it should build upon existing training at national and EU level and should be based on regular assessments of training needs. Training should be offered through modern, effective learning tools, such as specialised courses, common curricula, web-based learning materials, and exchange programmes.

To implement the training effort envisaged in this Communication, an EU agency with the appropriate legal mandate and the necessary resources is needed. In parallel with this Communication, the Commission therefore proposes a new legal framework for Europol, granting it powers to work on training which exceed those of CEPOL — presently the only EU agency responsible exclusively for law enforcement training. By simultaneously closing CEPOL, synergies will be created, as training will be close to operational work and embedded in a bigger structure, and administrative costs will go down, freeing up resources to deliver more output under the Training Scheme.

² The Stockholm Programme — An open and secure Europe serving and protecting citizens, OJ C115, 4.5.2010, p. 1.

³ See e.g. European Parliament resolution of 14 December 2011 on the EU Counter-Terrorism Policy: main achievements and future challenges (2010/2311(INI)).

⁴ Council Decision 2008/615/JHA and Council Decision 2008/616/JHA, OJ L 210, 6.8.2008, p. 1 and p.12.

⁵ It thereby complements the EU's policy for judicial training, see Building trust in EU-wide justice: a new dimension to European judicial training, COM(2011) 551 final.

A new training directorate at Europol, *the Europol Academy*, will therefore be expected to implement the Training Scheme, with a focus on quality standards. Pending adoption of the proposed merger by the Council and European Parliament and its entry into force, CEPOL will assume this role as far as possible. Implementing the scheme will require a joint effort on the part of the network of national training academies, national border guard and customs academies (hereafter ‘the network of national training academies’) the Europol Academy other JHA agencies — Frontex in particular. The Commission’s role will mainly be to monitor progress in the implementation.

This Communication draws on a mapping of training needs and delivery conducted by CEPOL⁶, consultations with Member States’ experts and JHA agencies in four expert meetings and three conferences in which members of the European Parliament took part, held in 2011 and 2012.

The Europol Academy will be the coordinating EU entity for law enforcement training. However, Frontex will remain responsible for training border guards, in accordance with its legal framework.

2. EU strategic priorities on crime and security and the training gap

2.1. Current EU training context

There are structures for training law enforcement officials in all Member States, as well as systematic cooperation with EU agencies in the JHA domain. At **EU level**, the following agencies are active in training law enforcement officials.

CEPOL works closely with the network of national training academies. In 2012, it organised 86 classroom courses for 2059 participants on a range of topics, including specific law enforcement techniques, such as police interviews and techniques for murder investigations, training on economic crime, such as asset recovery and money laundering, and crisis management. CEPOL has also developed expertise in ‘training the trainers’, implemented the ‘Exchange Programme for police officers inspired by Erasmus’⁷, and established online learning modules on topics such as cybercrime, joint investigation teams and mobile organised crime groups. However, such training is only made available to senior police officers because of limitations in CEPOL’s legal mandate, and budgetary constraints limit the number of courses.

⁶ European Training Scheme — Mapping of Law Enforcement Training in the EU, CEPOL 2012.

⁷ 8309/1/10 REV 1 ENFOPOL 93.

Europol works closely with CEPOL in providing courses under CEPOL's framework and has developed several courses related to crime analysis and specific types of crime, such as cybercrime. **Frontex** has a specific mandate to train border guards⁸ and has developed common curricula implemented by Member States, including a quality framework for guarding borders⁹. The European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) runs two specific programmes dealing with training on fighting euro counterfeiting and on protecting the financial interest of the EU. The **Fundamental Rights Agency** (FRA) offers fundamental rights training tools for police trainers. The **European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction** (EMCDDA) and the **European Asylum Support Office** (EASO) are both involved in training on specific topics relevant to their mandates.

At **national level**, where most training of law enforcement officials continues to take place, specialised issues such as drug trafficking, cybercrime, financial crime and money laundering, cross-border organised crime investigations, and EU legal issues, are generally covered, and often implemented as part of bilateral cooperation between Member States. Still, consultations with experts point to a clear need for more training, with EU support, in these areas.

Internationally, organisations such as Interpol and the United Nations (UN) offer training on law enforcement, anti-terrorism and crisis management. **Interpol** provides e-learning on various topics such as drug investigation, interrogation and terrorism-related topics. The **UN** offers a variety of courses on crisis management. While valuable for EU law enforcement authorities in complementing other training, such courses rarely cover specific EU instruments and are not generally designed with EU policing standards in mind.

2.2. The need for training in EU internal and external priority areas

Effective cross-border law enforcement cooperation starts with equipping officials with basic knowledge on the EU policing context and on available tools, such as Europol and Eurojust, or instruments for information exchange, such as the Prüm Decisions¹⁰. Knowledge and understanding of cross-border policing is an indispensable starting point for officers to be involved in cross-border cooperation, both bilaterally and multilaterally, and for building mutual trust.

The EU has defined priorities for action against common threats in the areas of serious and organised crime, terrorism, cybercrime, border security and crisis management. These priorities will be kept under regular review, based on the Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment (SOCTA) produced by Europol every four years (as from 2013). To reduce the harm that these threats cause and to support operational priorities agreed at EU level to tackle them, specialised training should be provided where needed.

⁸ Article 5 of Regulation No 1168/2011 amending Council Regulation No 2007/2004 establishing a European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the external borders of the Member States of the European Union of 25 October 2011, OJ L304, 22.11.2011, p. 1.

⁹ Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Border Guards; www.frontex.europa.eu/training.

¹⁰ Council Decision 2008/615/JHA and Council Decision 2008/616/JHA, OJ L 210, 6.8.2008, p. 1 and p.12.

The EU takes responsibility for supporting capacity-building in third countries by providing mentoring and advice and by helping to establish sustainable civilian police structures run in accordance with international standards. Civilian missions take place in third countries under the coordination of the European External Action Service (EEAS). Over 1000 EU law enforcement officials are deployed in missions each year to places such as (in 2012) South Sudan, Kosovo, Niger and Iraq. The role of law enforcement in these missions focuses on policing, the rule of law, civilian administration, and civil protection. Member States also work with third countries bilaterally to assist in building law enforcement capacity where the EU is involved, for instance, in the emerging democracies in North Africa.

2.3. Training gaps

Despite the efforts of national, EU and international actors and cooperation between them, there are still significant gaps between training needs and training currently available in the EU¹¹.

Member States' training programmes usually cover basic knowledge of EU instruments and the EU dimension of day-to-day policing, but not necessarily to a consistent standard.

Law enforcement authorities and EU agencies have pointed to a lack of qualified trainers and consistent learning materials on cross-border investigations. Training organised by EU agencies on specialised policing themes, such as financial crime, money laundering, human trafficking and drug trafficking are in high demand. If the Europol Academy coordinates and delivers such training, this will reduce costs by reducing the need for each Member State to invest in similar programmes.

Exchange programmes for police, border guards and customs officers with investigative powers are already helping to spread good practice and to build trust. Subject to availability of funds, such programmes should be made available more widely, in principle for all ranks and between all agencies within the scope of the Training Scheme.

More generally, language skills, including English, which is increasingly used in cross-border cooperation, are a crucial competence for all law enforcement officials involved in cross-border cooperation. However, there are still too few officials available with language skills of a sufficiently high standard in many Member States.

Pre-deployment training for civilian missions often lacks coordination and standardisation, leading to unacceptable differences in the level of preparedness of staff deployed.

There is, moreover, scope for more consistent and efficient help to third countries requesting assistance in law enforcement capacity-building by offering training, or sharing knowledge and good practices.

In general, the EU lacks a transparent quality framework for trainers operating at EU level and a systematic process for identifying and addressing strategic training needs, which are constantly evolving.

¹¹ Source: CEPOL's exercise, cited in footnote 6.

3. Four EU training strands

To step up the development, delivery and evaluation of the training and learning opportunities needed to meet the EU's cross-border law enforcement challenges, the Training Scheme should focus on improving knowledge, skills and competence¹² across four strands. These range from generic knowledge to highly specialised competencies, and all build upon existing training at national, EU and international level.

3.1. Strand 1: Basic knowledge of the EU dimension of Law Enforcement

Any of the EU's 1.9 million law enforcement officials¹³ might have to deal with cross-border crime at some point in their working lives. Knowledge of EU and cross-border aspects of policing is a core competence in terms of operational effectiveness and career development. This knowledge should include principles of effective law enforcement cooperation, fundamental rights, the role of Europol, Frontex and Eurojust and the use of EU information management tools and channels such as the 'Swedish Initiative'¹⁴ and the Schengen Information System¹⁵. Without this, there is a risk of serious inefficiencies in cross-border policing.

Therefore, a standard minimum level of knowledge and skills on the EU context of law enforcement should be developed for all law enforcement officials at all ranks. This should contribute to developing a common law enforcement culture.

The Commission will encourage Member States to implement this competence into their initial and vocational training for officials, and on training days for officials already on the job. The Europol Academy will monitor and evaluate its follow-up and the outcomes will be included in a Commission report every three years (see section 5.4).

In the first semester of 2014, CEPOL, in cooperation with Member States and Frontex, will propose a standard EU level of knowledge and skills for all law enforcement officials on the EU dimension of law enforcement.

¹² Learning outcomes in conformity with the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF) contain knowledge, skills and competences.

¹³ Eurostat — estimate 1.9 m.

¹⁴ Council Framework Decision 2006/960/JHA, OJ L 386, 29.12.2006, p. 89.

¹⁵ Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement of 14 June 1985, OJ L 239, 22.9.2000, p. 19.

3.2. Strand 2: Effective bilateral and regional cooperation

The success of cross-border police operations depends, in part, on law enforcement officials' ability to apply EU and international instruments such as the European Arrest Warrant¹⁶, rogatory letters¹⁷ and readmission procedures¹⁸. Law enforcement officials should also have more specific knowledge of bilateral arrangements between Member States and the ability to communicate in relevant languages, with an awareness of cultural differences and sensitivities.

Member States will be encouraged to provide appropriate national training at a more in-depth level than the standard competence for strand 1, while further developing bilateral and regional training projects for cross-border cooperation. The Europol Academy will support Member States where requested, by providing learning tools and collecting and disseminating best practices.

By the end of 2013, CEPOL should present to the Standing Committee on Internal Security (COSI) a work plan to support bilateral and regional training. In 2014, CEPOL should present an updated overview of bilateral training activities and training needs in Member States and subsequently pro-actively offer available best practices meeting those needs. On request by Member States, CEPOL could make available appropriate learning tools.

3.3. Strand 3: EU thematic policing specialism

The EU's priorities for cross-border law enforcement cooperation are defined in the Internal Security Strategy¹⁹ and the EU policy cycle on serious and organised crime²⁰, which is based on Europol's Organised Crime Threat Assessment (OCTA) and as from 2013, on Serious Organised Crime Threat Assessment (SOCTA). Each of those priorities points to a need for an efficient, targeted approach to training on a specialised, thematic level for a limited group of officials. Training on specific themes such as trafficking in drugs, human beings and firearms, cybercrime, corruption, confiscation of criminal assets, and financial investigations will bring together experts from Member States who will exchange best practices in addition to receiving the training itself, and also network, which will enhance mutual trust. Such training could also, when particularly relevant for the priority in question, cover interagency cooperation at national or European level between different law enforcement agencies such as police, border guards and customs.

¹⁶ Council Framework Decision 2002/584/JHA of 13 June 2002 on the European arrest warrant and the surrender procedures between Member States, OJ L 190, 18.7.2002, p. 1.

¹⁷ A rogatory letter is a formal request from a court in one country to 'the appropriate judicial authorities' in another country requesting compulsion of testimony, documentary or other evidence, or effect of service of process.

¹⁸ A readmission agreement regulates the return and readmission of persons between two or more states in a treaty of international law.

¹⁹ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council of 22 November 2010, The EU Internal Security Strategy in Action: Five steps towards a more secure Europe, COM(2010) 673 final.

²⁰ Council conclusions on setting the EU's priorities for the fight against organised crime between 2011 and 2013, 11050/11, 6 June 2011.

In close cooperation with the network of national training academies, the Europol Academy should analyse training needs to identify gaps between existing specialist Member State-level and international training and the skills and knowledge required in these areas. Training should be delivered through the network of national training academies or, where appropriate, directly by the Europol Academy. It should typically take the form of classroom courses, supplemented by e-learning tools. This strand will eventually require certification of specialised training according to agreed quality standards to be recognised by all Member States (see section 4.2). The Europol Academy's annual budget, as part of Europol's overall budget, should be primarily devoted to implementing this strand.

Once the priorities for the 'EU policy cycle on serious and organised crime' for the period 2013-2017 are set, CEPOL should carry out, and submit to COSI by the end of 2013, a gap analysis. On this basis, training under Strand 3 can be developed by CEPOL and the network of national police academies as from 2014.

3.4. Strand 4: Civilian missions and capacity-building in third countries

All law enforcement officials who take part in EU civilian missions in third countries should have pre-deployment training as a precondition for deployment. Member States and the Europol Academy should recognise, support and build on existing training initiatives such as Europe's New Training Initiative for Civilian Crisis Management²¹, an EU-funded programme drawing together expertise from across the EU, the United Nations and other international bodies to prepare personnel participating in civilian missions. Training institutes for crisis management in Member States that provide training for deployment on a civilian mission could operate as centres of excellence for implementing Strand 4 and train officials from Member States that do not have such centres, coordinated by the Europol Academy.

In the interest of a consistent EU approach, the Europol Academy should also provide guidance and expertise to EU-funded assistance programmes related to law enforcement.

Finally, the Europol Academy should liaise with Member States and Frontex on requests from third countries for assistance on law enforcement capacity-building. It should ensure that responses to requests for training and knowledge-sharing are as effective as possible and avoid duplication among the parties involved.

The Europol Academy (coordinating) and the EEAS in cooperation with Frontex should devise a common curriculum for pre-deployment training and for other mission-specific training to be implemented in 2015.

Building upon CEPOL's 2012 mapping exercise, CEPOL and the Europol Academy should include training on Strand 4 in future (strategic) training needs analyses.

²¹ <http://www.entriforccm.eu>.

4. An efficient approach to training in line with EU priorities

For each of the four strands above, the Training Scheme should be implemented according to four guiding principles.

4.1. Identifying needs

All EU-level law enforcement training should adapt to changing needs. Every four years, the Europol Academy should conduct a coordinated **strategic EU law enforcement training needs analysis** in close cooperation with Member States, Frontex, Eurojust, the EEAS, EASO the FRA and the Commission. It should address long-term competence developments for law enforcement, improvements in the quality of learning (see section 4.2) and gaps in training linked to the JHA strategies and policies. In this respect, statistical data should be made available every year to provide an overview, in particular as regards number of police officials trained and type of training received. This will inform the Commission, Member States, and the EEAS in determining how to deploy resources and which officials should be targeted for specialised training. Within this strategic framework, the Europol Academy and Frontex should, on an annual basis, do a **regular training need analysis** to determine what training to offer within their respective mandates. The annual analysis should be aligned with the EU policy cycle on serious and organised crime priorities, once this is defined in 2013. All analyses should identify:

1. New learning outcomes to be developed;
2. Performance gaps and how they can be closed through high-quality training which complements existing EU or national programmes; and
3. Resources required.

A first coordinated strategic EU law enforcement training needs analysis should be presented in 2014. It should be presented to COSI and endorsed by the Council.

4.2. High quality delivery

There is a need for mutual recognition of law enforcement-related skills and knowledge. Member States are already taking advantage of existing general academic initiatives such as the Bologna and Copenhagen processes²², which develop comparable and equivalent standards for degrees and other qualifications at various levels (based on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning²³) and vocational education and training, through a system of cumulative study points recognised throughout Europe (ECTS)²⁴.

²² The Bologna Declaration of 19 June 1999; the Copenhagen Declaration convened on 29 and 30 November 2002.

²³ EQF provides a common reference framework which assists in comparing the national qualifications systems, frameworks and their levels by making qualifications more readable and understandable across different countries and systems in Europe.

²⁴ The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) provides generally valid and accepted procedures for the recognition of study qualifications gained by students on courses outside their home country.

The Training Scheme should build on these quality-recognition initiatives, placing an emphasis on lifelong learning principles. The Commission considers that comparable qualifications at EU level for law enforcement training (i.e. a sectorial qualifications framework) should be established and implemented by 2020. This would apply to strands 3 and 4. As a first step, the Europol Academy should ensure that EU level training modules and courses are designed in accordance with the ECTS points system and in terms of clear learning outcomes. Member States are also encouraged to take steps to apply the ECTS points system to their national training modules.

In addition, there should be a specific profile for trainers acting at EU level under the Training Scheme. This should contain a definition of teaching skills, specialist knowledge and language proficiency. If necessary, trainers should be offered training to optimise these skills. The Europol Academy, in close cooperation with Member States and Frontex, should develop such a profile and implement a mechanism for final selection, monitoring and evaluation of trainers by the first semester of 2014.

To enhance quality of training provided under the Scheme, CEPOL and other actors involved will be encouraged to draw on the expertise of, and develop partnership with, private parties such as financial institutions and IT companies.

CEPOL should present an action plan in consultation with Member States and JHA agencies in 2014 on the establishment of a common quality framework for law enforcement learning to be implemented by 2020 and present it to COSI.

4.3. Enhancing career development for law enforcement officials

With reference to the development of quality frameworks described in section 4.2, Member States should recognise the EU portfolio of skills, knowledge and competences acquired under the Training Scheme as forming part of the portfolio that officials build up at national level. Training offered under the Scheme should become a natural component of a law enforcement official's training portfolio, in line with the principles of lifelong learning. Member States should make full use of training tools such as e-learning, common curricula and exchange programmes or using the train-the-trainer concept. Training under strand 3 of the Scheme will, in particular, help fill gaps between training needs and training currently available at national and international level.

4.4. Efficient use of resources

The Training Scheme aims to deliver efficiencies through greater specialisation, more effective coordination, exploiting synergies and eliminating duplication, and by aligning training needs more closely with delivery. The Europol Academy and the national police academies should exploit the most efficient training methods to achieve learning outcomes, using e-learning tools, for instance.

According to an external study undertaken on behalf of the Commission, the overall direct costs of implementing and administering the Training Scheme are estimated at €3.4 million (in current prices) for the period 2013–2020. This would include the costs of the new Scientific Committee (€ 90 000 per year) set up as an advisory body for the Executive Director and the Management Board. According to the same study annual efficiency savings could reach €23 million for policing in the EU²⁵ compared to maintaining the status quo.

The Commission's proposal for the Internal Security Fund²⁶ (ISF) 2014–2020 includes implementing training schemes on EU training policies as an objective. Member States should report to the Commission about the number of law enforcement officials trained on cross-border-related topics with the help of the Fund. Opportunities to support the training of law enforcement personnel through the European Social Fund²⁷ under certain conditions should also be used.

5. Implementing the Training Scheme: Roles and responsibilities

The Training Scheme will be jointly implemented by the Commission, Europol, the JHA agencies and Member States.

5.1. The European Academy at Europol

The Europol Academy will be the driving force and coordinator for implementing the Training Scheme, in close cooperation with other EU agencies and the network of national training academies. Six key tasks are proposed:

1. The Europol Academy should itself seek to develop into the EU centre of excellence for law enforcement (cross-border) learning. It should aim to become the authority for professionals in this field and act as a broker for exchanging best practice. The Europol Academy should seek to act as coordinator on EU strategic law enforcement learning issues and provide support to other EU agencies where needed, including by coordinating strategic training needs analysis for law enforcement at EU level.
2. In consultation with its stakeholders, the Europol Academy should define a package of basic knowledge, including learning outcomes for strand 1. CEPOL should present a first version of this in the first semester of 2014.
3. The Europol Academy should provide support to Member States implementing strand 2 by disseminating best practices on cross-border cooperation and provide learning tools when needed.

²⁵ Study on the amendment of the Council Decision 2005/681/JHA setting up CEPOL activity, GHK, 10 April 2012. This cost figure includes a new Scientific Committee (€ 90 000 per year) to advise the Executive director and the Management Board of Europol, see the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation and Training (Europol).

²⁶ Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament of the Council establishing, as part of the Internal Security Fund, the instrument for financial support for police cooperation, preventing and combating crime, and crisis management.

²⁷ www.ec.europa.eu/esf

4. The Europol Academy, together with the other centres of excellence in the network of national training academies, should deliver EU-level training for officials as well as the trainers themselves. As part of strands 3 and 4, the Europol Academy should state the level for each course with reference to the European Qualification framework, in cooperation with the network of national training academies. The Europol Academy should ensure that courses are well planned and that trainers are supported, evaluated and remunerated appropriately.
5. The Europol Academy should devise procedures and guidance for defining training priorities, roles and responsibilities to coordinate and support the delivery of all strands of the Training Scheme.
6. Together with its stakeholders, the Europol Academy should follow up the action plan to implement the framework of quality assurance proposed by CEPOL in 2014, as described in section 4.2.

5.2. National academies as centres of excellence

Specialised training under the Scheme should be provided by the most qualified body within the network of national training academies or, where appropriate, by the Europol Academy. National law enforcement academies specialised in specific priority policing themes under strands 3 or 4, such as money laundering, pre-deployment training for civilian missions or specific border guarding issues, could be granted the status of ‘centre of excellence’ for an agreed period of time and provide training for the whole of the EU on behalf of the Europol Academy. Centres of excellence should operate in line with the common quality assurance developed under the Training Scheme and described in 4.2. National academies should be able to second experts or trainers to the Europol Academy.

5.3. Member States

Member States will be responsible for implementation of strands 1 and 2 in curricula for initial and promotional training and are encouraged to use EU funding for this purpose²⁸. With regard to strand 2, Member States are encouraged to start up training-related bilateral projects for improving cross-border cooperation across a wide range of issues, such as surveillance, hot pursuit and sharing of information through Police and Customs Cooperation Centres. Member States will also be responsible for selecting officials qualified to participate in civilian missions, and for nominating officials qualified to be trainers teaching courses on strands 3 and 4 at EU level.

²⁸ See above, footnote 26 on the proposal for the Internal Security Fund.

5.4. European Commission

The Commission will regularly evaluate progress in implementing the Training Scheme, including the actions defined in this Communication. It will in particular evaluate measures developed to provide quality assurance and the effectiveness of the Europol Academy's coordination. It will report every three years to the Council and the European Parliament, with a first report in 2016.

5.5. EU agencies

Frontex, the EMCDDA, the FRA and the EASO also have an important role in contributing their unique expertise to high-quality training and learning outcomes for law enforcement officials. All agencies should liaise regularly and work to increase efficiency and identify synergies in cross-cutting areas. For example, police officers, border guards and customs officers should work together to combat trafficking in human beings. The Europol Academy will have an overall coordinating role as described in section 5.1.

5.6. European External Action Service

The EEAS, the European Commission and EU agencies work hand-in-hand to enhance cooperation, with a special focus on capabilities and training²⁹. When planned EU civilian missions include the participation of law enforcement officials, the Europol Academy should contribute with regard to training aspects at an early stage and should be poised to facilitate additional specific training to ensure participants in these missions have a common level of expertise. The EEAS should be actively involved in this process and existing initiatives such as from the Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (CivCom) should be taken into account.

6. Conclusion

Full and constructive participation of Member States, the JHA agencies and other stakeholders within the EU would enhance the effectiveness of the EU's response to common security challenges, making the most of limited budgetary resources. It would raise awareness of EU and cross-border policing issues, ensure recognition of specialised training in priority areas, raise the overall standard of policing across the EU, enhance trust between law enforcement agencies and stimulate the emergence of a common law enforcement culture. This would strengthen EU law enforcement's operational capacity to combat organised and serious cross-border crime and terrorism.

The Commission will follow up this Communication in close cooperation with, notably, the European Parliament, Member States and the JHA agencies.

²⁹ On 30 November 2011, COSI issued an opinion on Strengthening Ties between CSDP and FSJ actors, Doc. 17884/11 JAI 906 COSI 112.