



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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NOTE

From:	Presidency
To:	Delegations
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Subject:	Outcome of the 2 nd Infopolex Conference held in the Hague on 12 June 2012

The Danish Presidency organised the 2nd Infopolex Conference on 12 June 2012 at the Europol premises in the Hague. This conference aimed principally at exchanging experiences on the different national strategies regarding the secondment of liaison officers (LOs). The conference was attended by representatives of most Member States as well as from Norway, Switzerland, Europol and the General Secretariat of the Council.

Participants discussed and exchanged experiences regarding the following issues:

- The posting of liaison officers

Participants exchanged views and best practices regarding the posting of LOs. Information was given regarding the various indicators that are considered when deciding on the posting of a liaison officer, the preparations, training and challenges as well as possible problems which LOs may encounter on the spot.

Considering the increasing role of Europol as information hub in the field of serious and organised crime within the EU and the increased possibilities to exchange information between Member States, certain Member States have decided to reduce the number of LOs deployed in the Member States and to strengthen their Europol national desks.

The meeting acknowledged the importance of optimising the posting of LOs in third countries which would be a topic to be discussed further at a future Infopolex Conference.

- Pilot project: "placing a common EU LO in a third country"

Member States shared experiences on the common secondment of LOs, which is currently already taking place within the Nordic Police and Customs Cooperation (PTN). The Benelux countries have also a project on the common use of Benelux LOs. Austria has cooperation projects with, for example, Switzerland and Slovenia.

The common secondment of LO was considered as an interesting subject which, however, raised a number of questions to be discussed further, notably regarding possible legal obstacles, costs, division of workload, etc.

The meeting agreed on the need for further discussions regarding the common secondment of LOs and for addressing this item at the forthcoming Infopolex Conference.

- Involvement of EU LOs in the Western Balkans

The Presidency referred to the recent discussions at a meeting of the Western Balkans' LOs held in Tirana on 25-26 April 2012. The meeting was also informed about the developments within the framework of the EU Policy Cycle for combating serious and organised crime. Specific reference was made to the Operational Action Plans (OAPs) that were adopted by COSI and that include actions relating to LOs. Four OAPs were identified that have references to the activities of LOs, i.e. the OAP on the Western Balkans, the OAP on West Africa, the OAP on Illegal Immigration and the OAP on Synthetic Drugs. Reference was made to the mapping of LO capabilities, the feasibility of a third platform in West Africa, improving the LO engagement in the Western Balkans, operational meetings of regional LOs and their contribution to the EU risk analysis.

Participants acknowledged the importance of the EU Policy Cycle and the operational actions that are being developed within the framework of COSI on different EU crime priorities. Since some of these actions refer to LOs, specific attention will be given to these actions and to close cooperation with the respective drivers of the OAPs in order to explore how further progress could be made.

- Mapping of LO capabilities

The meeting took note of a presentation on the mapping of LO capabilities by the UK which is also the driver of the OAP on the West Africa. **Participants agreed that there is an need for a closer coordination of the LO capabilities abroad and welcomed the progress made within the framework of the OAP West Africa and in particular the activities carried out by the Fontanot Group, the regional platforms in Accra and Dakar and the EU matrix. Participants agreed that the mapping of LO capabilities would need to be discussed further at the next Infopolex Conference.**

- Synergies between LOs and ESDP missions

The Presidency presented the concept, instruments and the life cycle of the CSDP missions and invited the meeting to explore how synergies could be developed between LOs and CSDP missions e.g. the participation of Europol in the planning process of CSDP missions. The meeting took note of the recent discussions on these issues within the framework of COSI and PSC where a Joint Staff Working Paper on "Strengthening ties between CSDP and FSJ actors-Proposals for a way ahead"¹ was elaborated together with a draft Roadmap on Strengthening ties between CSDP and FSJ². Various lines of action have been identified in this roadmap that relate to strengthening the involvement of FSJ actors in CSDP missions. The outcome of these discussions within COSI - PSC would be brought to the attention of the forthcoming Infopolex Conference.

¹ 9878/11 PESC 562 JAI 295 COSI 31 COSDP 443.

² 18173/11 COPS 479 CIVCOM 566 COSDP 1181 PESC 1606 CSDP/PSDC 732 JAI 921 RELEX 1295 COSI 121.

The meeting was also informed about the recent Council decision to set up a European Cybercrime Centre at Europol and the Europol information management tools (SIENA, EIS, EAS and EPE).

Conclusion

Various common challenges were identified to be discussed at the forthcoming Infopolex Conference. Participants invited the incoming Cyprus Presidency to consider the feasibility of organising an Infopolex Conference in the second semester 2012.

In order to facilitate the discussions at the future Infopolex Conference(s) the meeting agreed to set up an informal Forerunners' group which would examine proposals for optimising the LO network and better coordinate and use the LO capabilities. This Forerunners' group would examine *inter alia* the common secondment of LOs, sharing capabilities, strengthening practical cooperation and the need to create other platforms in West Africa or in the Western Balkans. The members of this informal Forerunners' group should preferably represent Member States that have a network of bilateral liaison officers and should have decision-making competences.

Member States that wish to take part in the activities of the Forerunners' group were invited to inform the Danish delegation by 15 July 2012 at the following e-mail addresses: ela015@politi.dk and uba001@politi.dk.