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NOTE

From: Presidency
To: Law Enforcement Working Party
Subject: Overview LEWP Networks/Expert Groups – Strategic Objectives

I. Introduction

In this note, the Presidency aims at providing a first overview of the strategic objectives of some of the networks and at indicating to which extent these objectives are in line with the EU Policy Cycle and/or the relevant findings of the Serious and Organised Threat Assessment (SOCTA).

In December 2015, the LEWP adopted the revised guidelines on the relations between the LEWP and its related expert groups and networks (12915/2/15 REV 2). In this document, under the heading A- Good practices for the LEWP in monitoring and steering the networks, the following is mentioned under the subheading *Monitoring* (points 5 and 6):

"5) Bearing in mind the priorities of the renewed ISS, **the LEWP should, in order to guide the networks in fulfilling their mission, set periodically the strategic objectives for the networks in accordance with the EU Policy Cycle for organised and serious international crime and taking into consideration where relevant the findings of the SOCTA.**

- 6) **The LEWP should discuss and approve at the latest by the end of December the annual work programmes of the networks while ensuring that they are in line with the aforementioned strategic priorities.** The LEWP should ensure coherence and that there are no overlaps in the strategic and operational objectives and the planned activities of the different networks."

Under the heading B - Good practices for networks and expert groups, subheading *Planning of the work of the network*, it is mentioned that the networks/expert groups should:

"(5) **Translate the strategic objectives set by the LEWP into annual operational objectives to be included in the draft annual work programme.** That draft annual work programme for the following year based on the template set out in the Annex should be submitted to the LEWP for approval by the end of October of each year."

And under the subheading *Reporting*:

"(20) (The networks should) **submit an annual report to the LEWP based on the template set out in the Annex** at the latest by the end of March of the following year **in order to inform the LEWP about the progress made towards achieving the strategic and operational objectives.**"

In January, the Netherlands Presidency requested, via the Council Secretariat, the networks/expert groups to provide the LEWP with input on: a) an indication of the extent to which the networks already have one (or more) objectives, b) to provide the LEWP a copy of it and c) in so far as possible, an indication to which extent the objective(s) the EU Policy Cycle and relevant findings of the SOCTA are taken into account.

To date, input was received from the following networks/expert groups: @ON, ATLAS, CARPOL, EFE, ENFAST, ENLETS, ENVICRIMENET and the RCEG. Thus, contributions from the following networks/expert groups **are still awaited**: Experts for major sport events, CULTNET, ENPPF, KYNOPOL, EMPEN, AIRPOL and TISPOL.

Based on the information received from the networks/expert groups, this overview provides brief information on the network/expert group itself and its (legal) basis, on its (strategic) objectives including a conclusion on whether or not the objectives are in line with the Policy Cycle and/or the relevant findings of the SOCTA. The Presidency wishes to stress that this overview and its conclusions are preliminary. However, once the contributions from all the networks/expert groups are received and this overview is completed, the LEWP, on the basis of the aforementioned guidelines, could decide to either agree with the enclosed objectives or ~~decide~~ suggest to set new ones.

II. Overview of current networks/expert groups related to the LEWP

Until 2015, 19 networks/expert groups existed related to the LEWP. However, meanwhile, a **number of changes has occurred:**

- **RAILPOL** has informed the Presidency that it is not a LEWP related network, but an independent operational network, although it remains open to cooperate with other agencies/bodies such as the LEWP;
- the **Liaison Officers Management Services** have indicated to no longer consider themselves as a network/expert group related to the LEWP;
- **AQUAPOL** has withdrawn from the LEWP networks (at its own request), and
- **e-MOBIDIG** has become a subgroup under ENLETS.

Consequently, **the following 15 networks** related to the LEWP **remain today:**

1. EU contact points for tackling cross-border vehicle crime (**CARPOL**)
2. Experts for major sports events
3. European Network of Protection of Public Figures (**ENPPF**)
4. Radio communications experts (**RCEG**)
5. European Network of Law Enforcement Technology Services (**ENLETS**)
6. European Network on Fugitive Active Search Teams (**ENFAST**)

7. European Firearms Experts (**EFE**)
8. Informal network for countering environmental crime (**EnviCrimeNet**)
9. Network of police dog professionals in Europe (**KYNOPOL**)
10. European medical and psychological experts' network for law enforcement (**EMPEN**)
11. European network of airport law enforcement services (**AIRPOL**)
12. **ATLAS**
13. Law Enforcement authorities and expertise competent in the field of cultural goods (**CULTNET**)
14. European Traffic Police Network (**TISPOL**)
15. Operational network to counter mafia-style serious and organised crime groups (**@ON**)

III. Input/contributions received

1. @ON - The operational network to counter serious, organised and mafia-style crime

@ON is based on the Council Resolution of 4-5 December 2014 on the creation of an operational network - @ON - to counter mafia-style serious and organised crime groups. The Resolution (14929/1/14 REV 1 ENFOPOL 342 COSI 105 of 4 December 2014) states that the SOCTA of March 2013 is taken into account, as well as the EU Policy Cycle and the Commission Communication of 20 June 2014, “The final implementation report of the EU Internal Security Strategy 2010-2014”.

As regards its activities, the work of the @ON network will be focused on EU organised crime priorities as outlined in the EU Policy Cycle (12095/13) and updated periodically, the core group will prepare the work programme and regularly report to the LEWP (as it did in November 2015) and finally, the network aims to ensure that its complete work programme complements the work of the EU Policy Cycle. Last but not least, it is foreseen in the Resolution that after two years, the competent Council bodies will evaluate the network’s activities and objectives and assess whether it is still needed.

(Strategic) objectives:

- To strengthen and further develop the cooperation and communication between law enforcement authorities of Member States to counter mafia-style serious and organised crime groups through:
 - Making available on-site specialised investigators with a consulting capacity regarding the specific investigated OCG;
 - Improving information exchange, through the SIENA channel, to develop a more accurate intelligence picture of organised crime, in cooperation with Europol;
- To support the existing initiatives to improve the administrative approach in the fight against mafia-style serious and organised crime groups, in coordination with the Network on Administrative Approach to Prevent and Fight Organised Crime, including the recovery of the assets illegally acquired by criminal organisations;

- To make efforts to strengthen cooperation to prevent criminal infiltration into public procurement procedures;
- To cooperate with CEPOL as regards training on specific investigative methods in the fight against such crime, and the European Network of Law Enforcement Technology Services (ENLETS) in identifying the necessary improvements regarding the technological equipment used by specialised units.

(Preliminary) conclusion: the objectives of the network are in line with the EU Policy Cycle and the (relevant findings of the) SOCTA and an evaluation of the network and its activities should take place at the end of 2016.

2. ATLAS

In 1996, the Council of the European Union decided to establish a network which would increase the skills, knowledge and expertise about counter-terrorism among the law enforcement agencies of the Member States. After the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, the ATLAS Network was formed in order to prevent similar attacks in Europe. ATLAS is an informal association consisting of the special police units of the 28 Member States. The goal of ATLAS is to improve cooperation among the police units and to enhance skills by training with the other units.

(Strategic) objectives:

- To establish close cooperation in EU Member States trans-border areas in order to increase the proficiency and expertise of all ATLAS Special Intervention Units (SIU) and benefit public security;
- To establish common platform for training and tactics;
- To support special theme groups (aviation, maritime, mass transit, building) and focus on developing training and operational tactics;
- To support joint training operations among EU Member States;
- To develop certain SIU-equipment and special tools, to share equipment;
- To develop cross utilization and joint training programs and build on it to establish EU training centres similar to the CBRN Centres of Excellence.

Following the Paris attacks in 2015 and the continuing terrorist threat, and given that terrorist continually change their attack strategies and therefore the ATLAS SIUs have to anticipate future attacks and adjust their CT strategies, the purpose of the ATLAS project in 2016 is to take the most recent and future developments in the area of terrorism into account and to develop practical procedures to counter terrorist threats.

The cooperation of Special Intervention Units as realised by ATLAS is based on the Council Decision (2008/615/JHA) on the stepping up of cross-border cooperation, particularly in combating terrorism and cross-border crime.

(Preliminary) conclusion: the objectives of ATLAS comply to the EU Policy Cycle and SOCTA in the sense that terrorism is mentioned in the Policy Cycle as one of the main challenges for the European Union as identified by the Internal Security Strategy of 2010 as well as in the Renewed European Union Internal Security 2015-2020 (“further reinforce action against terrorist threats”).

3. CARPOL – EU contact points for tackling cross-border vehicle crime

The EU has created a police network for the exchange of knowledge and mutual understanding about vehicle crime, called CARPOL. One of the tasks given to members of CARPOL by EU Council Decision 919/2004 is to create public-private cooperation for the fight against vehicle crime in each of their home countries. CARPOL has put the creation of such a platform on EU level on their strategic agenda.

Furthermore, CARPOL is currently trying to upgrade its grip in vehicle crime area as a whole, to assess the phenomenon as typical kind of crime. Furthermore, it intends to formulate a policy and a strategy and to define concrete countermeasures. It is providing input to Europol’s SOCTA 2017. According to CARPOL, vehicle crime is not only car theft but also fraud, falsifying vehicle identity (cloning) and documents etc. This also refers to components/parts of the vehicle. Last but not least, vehicle crime is also about direct related crime such as car jacking and home jacking.

(Strategic) objectives (for 2016):

- a) The Netherlands Presidency intends to focus on various themes such as financial crime, the future car and crime control. Moreover, increased cooperation is searched and conditions for PPP are analysed. Concrete topics are the evaluation of the Council Decision 919/2004 and a first step to a SOCTA in the field of car crime as input for Europol's general SOCTA.
- b) The Slovak Presidency intends to send out a Handbook regarding CARPOL activities. The CARPOL Plenary meeting will take place from 10 to 12 October 2016 in Bratislava. The Carpol Joint Police Operation will take place on 6 and 7 September 2016. It will focus on illegal trade in spare parts and the improvement of online cooperation with cloned car identification.
- c) Preparatory meetings for the Maltese Presidency have started. Some ideas, such as training in Athens in cooperation with IAATI, are being developed.

(Preliminary) conclusion: the (strategic) objectives of CARPOL comply with the Internal Security Strategy of 2010 as well as with the EU SOCTA of 2013.

4. CULTNET - informal network of law enforcement authorities and experts competent in the domain of preventing and combatting crime against cultural goods (NO RECENT INPUT RECEIVED)

EU CULTNET, set up by Draft Council Resolution 14232/12 ENFOPOL 292 CULT 116 ENFOCUSTOM 93 + COR 1, aims at strengthening coordination between law enforcement and cultural authorities and private organizations (e.g. antique shops, auction houses, online auctions), by identifying and sharing, in compliance with data protection rules, information on criminal networks suspected of being involved in illicit trafficking of stolen cultural goods, in order to determine the links between such networks and other forms of (organized) crime and to identify routes, destinations, modus operandi and types of criminal activities, in close cooperation with relevant international organizations, such as UNESCO, Interpol, Eurojust and Europol.

(Preliminary) conclusion: -

5. EFE - European Firearms Experts

The European Firearms Experts was formed in 2004 as an informal working group during the Netherlands Presidency of the Council of the EU, because it had become clear that firearms were being trafficked across Member States, that the latter experienced similar firearms related issues, and that the EFE could provide a mechanism to share best practice and increase cooperation.

Today, the EFE includes all the 28 Member States as well as the Associated Countries including Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. Other regular members and attendees at EFE meetings are the European Commission, Europol, Frontex, and Interpol and, since 2012, a representative of the Law Enforcement Working Party (LEWP). The EFE has representatives from Member States law enforcement authorities, including police, customs and forensics and is open to all partners at a practitioner level with similar goals and tasks as below:

- Supporting the LEWP and the Firearms EMPACT in combating illegal trafficking of firearms and their use in crime;
- Strengthening international police cooperation in the investigation of firearms crime;
- Exchange of experiences and identified ‘best practices’;
- Assisting to coordinate law enforcement operational activity in the fight against firearms trafficking;
- Informal enquiries amongst members and participants within the group.

On the basis of Europol’s SOCTA 2013, the Member States and Commission have made “the disruption of illicit manufacturing and trafficking of firearms” one of the EU’s nine law enforcement priorities for 2014-2017. The response to the changing priorities lead to the setting up of a Task Force and the setting of strategic goals under a Multi-Annual Strategic Plan (MASP) and the drafting of yearly Operational Action Plans (OAPs). EFE members have emphasised the importance of the EFE as a continuous framework of firearms expertise, and wish to contribute as much as possible to the outcomes of the EU Policy Cycle and the OAPs.

(Strategic) objectives (for 2016):

- Continue to maintain and update the Glossary of Firearms Terminology as a living document;
- In support of OA1.1 continue to improve the collection, gathering and production of intelligence related to firearms by raising awareness at national level of the importance of investigations against firearms trafficking;
- In support of OA 1.3 feasibility study into the creation of National Focal Points (NFPs) to better identify intelligence and disseminate that intelligence into the Firearms Focal Point at Europol;
- In support of OA 2.1 continue to develop the cooperation between participants MS and Western Balkan Countries with special attention to operational cooperation including further Joint Action Days (JADs);
- In support of OA 2.4 improve the tracking and traceability of firearms within the EU and with third parties and to produce a handbook in relation to firearms tracing;
- In support of OA 3.5 support transnational investigations targeting Organised Crime Groups who are smuggling firearms into across the EU the EFE will produce a ‘best practice’ guide in relations to firearms purchased over the Internet/Dark net;
- Arrange and hold joint meeting between EFE and experts from South-Eastern Europe countries –SEEFN to discuss topics of common interest in the fight against firearms trafficking.

(Preliminary) conclusion: the strategic objectives of the EFE are in line with the EU Policy Cycle, Europol’s SOCTA 2013 as well as the Renewed European Union Internal Security 2015-2020 (“fight against illicit trafficking of firearms”).

6. ENFAST – European Network on Fugitive Active Search Teams

ENFAST, based on Resolution 15382/10 ENFOPOL 300 COPEN 233 CRIMORG, is a network of highly specialised fugitive units and was set up to constitute an ideal forum for the exchange throughout the EU of non-operational information and experiences and to facilitate the establishment and active maintenance of contacts between its members.

(Strategic) objectives:

- Strengthening of and closer cooperation within the ENFAST network;
- Further expansion of joint investigations by national FAST teams;
- Organisation of international meetings in terms of exchanges of experience, best practices and the elaboration of an overview about difficulties and limits of international cooperation in target search cases;
- Technical connection of national ENFAST services at SIENA in regard to a secure and rapid exchange of information;
- Evaluation of the previous project in order to pursue not actionable objectives such as the establishment of a European Most Wanted List or to bring them to a conclusion;
- Expansion and improvement of education and training (basic and advanced) between the services of the ENFAST network.

(Preliminary) conclusion: The search for wanted persons within the ENFAST network is open to all types of crimes, thus all present exceptional serious crimes are the basis for an ENFAST case and cross border cooperation. Hence, ENFAST is not directly involved in the investigative objectives of the EU Policy Cycle, but takes these into consideration for the selection of wanted persons and in its work. However, it is important to mention that ENFAST is playing an important role in the fight against terrorism, which is in line with one of the main objectives of the Renewed European Union Internal Security 2015-2020.

7. ENLETS – European Network of Law Enforcement Technology Services

The European Network of Law Enforcement Technology Services (ENLETS) is an informal network for exchange of information on needs, problems and solutions concerning special equipment, technology or methods that are used by the law enforcement agencies (mainly police). Most Member States (27) have appointed a national contact point to participate in the network.

The idea is that an organisation which has identified a need, should be able to ask the other countries informally if they know of any solution to the problem or if they also see a need for development in this area. The informal nature of the cooperation aims to facilitate a straightforward and honest discussion of problems and the advantages and disadvantages of existing solutions. In both cases there is a strong interest on the part of the organisations concerned that no outside attention is drawn to the discussion.

(Strategic) objectives:

ENLETS invites end users and experts from the Member States' law enforcement authorities to meet in interest groups to connect and share their operational expertise. Technology cuts across all operations from front line policing to serious and organised crime, from pan European EMPACT priorities to local operational challenges. ENLETS offers Member States' law enforcement authorities the possibility to learn and exchange information on technology used in daily operations, to find synergies and to cooperate in finding best practices, co-creation and research.

In 2013, the Council has tasked ENLETS Core Group to establish a Technology Watch in the Security domain. Its aim is to ensure a better and effective involvement of the end users of the internal security authorities.

The ENLETS work program 2014-2020 describes how ENLETS various tasks will be met in short, mid and long term objectives.

Short term:

- Executing the ENLETS Disseminates Best Practices Program (EDBP);
- NCP's mapping their environment;
- Exchange of technology (knowledge);
- Actively coordinating and monitoring end user needs and emerging technologies;
- Exploring funding opportunities.

Medium term:

- Building a relationship with industry;
- Overview of ongoing developments;
- Supporting other European Enforcement Expert groups (E-Mobidig).

Long term:

- Matching research to end user perspective;
- Technology radar;
- Establish structural resources (funding and personel).

(Preliminary) conclusion: the objectives of ENLETS are in line with the EU Policy Cycle as well as with the Internal Security Strategy of 2010 which contained a commitment to innovation as one of the strategic guidelines for action and underlined the need to work together to promote and develop new technologies through a common approach as well as cutting costs and increasing efficiency.

8. ENVICRIMENET – the Environmental Crime Network

EnviCrimeNet, which was created on the basis of the EU Council Resolution of 9-10 June 2011 (10291/11), is an informal network connecting police officers and other crime fighters in the field of environmental crime and aims to improve the results of the fight against environmental crime.

The network also delivers strategic products, such as the Intelligence Project on Environmental Crime (IPEC), a joint EnviCrimNet/Europol project. At operational level, EnviCrimeNet played a crucial role in the EU delivery to the wildlife crime Operation COBRA III in 2015. Furthermore, it supported the Italian Joint Police Operation on waste trafficking in 2014 and will continue its support for the Italian waste trafficking project TECUM in 2016-2017. In addition, the network gives access to agencies which are not always easily reached through the conventional Europol channel or not directly linked to the Europol National Units.

(Strategic) objectives:

- Ensuring that Member States become aware of the fight against environmental crime at the strategic level;
- Mutual sharing of expertise;
- Establishing relevant risk assessments that can be exchanged amongst the participants;
- Learning from one another in the fields of risk assessments and intervention strategies;
- Establishing tactical analyses of particular forms of environmental crime;
- Establishing joint investigations into environmental crime;
- Exchanging investigation methods;
- Exchanging information prior to initiating the operational phase;

Creating the right training and schooling possibilities in cooperation with Cefpol.

Following its annual meeting in October 2015, which covered wildlife-related crimes with a particular focus on illegal waste trade, criminal behaviour in relation to safety and industrial plants and illegal logging, a number of projects and further recommendations for law enforcement and other stakeholders were proposed, amongst which:

- The Italian Carabinieri will continue the EU-wide waste trafficking project TECUM;
- France (represented by OCLAESP) intends to further increase its activities in relation to environmental crimes;
- In the first half of 2016, Dutch law enforcement authorities will put a focus on financial investigations related to environmental crimes;
- In the second half of 2016, environmental crime will be an important topic for the Slovak Presidency.

(Preliminary) conclusion: The scope of the network is in line with the Council Conclusions of 6 - 7 June 2013 (12095/13) on setting the EU's priorities for the fight against serious and organised crime between 2014 and 2017, in which is mentioned that "all actors involved must retain a margin of flexibility to address unexpected or emerging threats to EU internal security, in particular regarding environmental crime". EnviCrimeNet itself has indicated to be very much aware of the positive effects and the downsides of the EU Policy Cycle and the SOCTA Methodology, which, according to the network, makes recognition at an appropriate level difficult for under-reported threats posed by victimless control crimes, such as environmental crimes, where the detection rate is directly linked to efficient controls. It has further mentioned that although good contacts have been established with the national LEWP/COSI delegates, it would appreciate to receive feedback and ideas on possible deliverables. The LEWP is invited to take account of this request and to make some viable suggestions.

9. RCEG – Radio Communication Expert Group

With Council Decision 2008/615/JHA of 23 June 2008 on the stepping up of cross-border cooperation, particularly in combating terrorism and cross-border crime, Member States intended to improve direct cross-border cooperation. To achieve this, it was deemed necessary to improve radio communication between operational units in border areas.

The RCEG was established based on the Council Recommendation of 4 and 5 June 2009 on improving radio communication between operational units in border areas (10141/09) for the purpose of coping with the growing need for mission -critical communication by examining the issues involved in the development of intersystem interfaces, including cost and funding opportunities. The RCEG contains technical representatives from the Ministries of Law, Order, Justice, Interior and Home Offices of all 28 Member States, but also from Schengen Associated countries focusing on improving radio communications.

(Strategic) objectives:

The RCEG aims to prepare the creation of an EU-interoperable broadband radio communication solution for public safety and security, providing better services to first responders and police agencies and to support the LEWP with an advice for secure and mission oriented mobile communication development.

Its objectives from 2016-2020 are as follows:

Short term:

- Member States with common borders should work together, using local solutions to improve communications.

Medium term (2016-2018):

- Current law-enforcement and public-safety mobile communications systems need to be connected to provide a more effective solution for cross-border communications and to facilitate roaming;
- European standardisation bodies should be invited to start producing a law-enforcement and public-safety services' operational requirements regarding high-speed data communication and roaming functionality in the medium term, in compliance with European standards.

Long term (2018-2020+):

- A solution for mobile broadband data is required. A common standard operation in a harmonised frequency band will make this possible;
- After the life cycle of current TETRA and TETRAPOL systems has ended, voice and all data functionalities (high and low speed) should be incorporated in a tightly integrated solution that provides a migration path including interoperability from existing law enforcement and public-safety systems to the new solution;
- Law-enforcement and public-safety radio communication systems will need to support and be able to exchange high-speed mobile data information and satisfy the need for roaming possibilities as well; current law-enforcement, public-safety and commercial networks may not be able to do so;
- The RCEG should facilitate the future mobile broadband secure communication solutions through:
 - close contact with the end users and thus the ability to develop realistic future broadband communication scenarios to support the law enforcement authorities; and
 - communicate the law enforcement needs for harmonised frequencies to the political level both in the EU and also the Member States' top management.

(Preliminary) conclusion: The aims of the RCEG are line with one of the main aims of the EU Policy Cycle of 2010, that is to ensure that in the fight against serious international and organised crime there is effective cooperation between Member States law enforcement agencies.

IV. Preliminary conclusions

Based on the contributions received so far, the objectives of @ON, ATLAS, CARPOL, EFE, ENFAST, ENLETS and the RCEG overall appear to be in line with the EU Policy Cycle and/or the findings of the SOCTA, bearing in mind the objectives of the renewed Internal Security Strategy 2015-2020. As regards EnviCrimeNet, the LEWP is invited to reflect upon possible, supplementary deliverables for the years to come.
