



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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**ENFOPOL 175
COMIX 311**

NOTE

From:	Presidency
To:	Law Enforcement Working Party
No. prev. doc.:	10624/14
Subject:	Outcome of the self-evaluation of the Radio Communications Experts' Group (RCEG)

Introduction

1. The Recommendation on improving radio communication between operational units in the border areas was approved by the Council at its meeting on 4 and 5 June 2009 (10141/09 ENFOPOL 143 TELECOM 116 COMIX 421). It recommended, *inter alia*, to establish a group of experts to examine the issues regarding the development of intersystem interfaces, the Radio Communication Expert Group (RCEG). This group also has 2 subgroups - Forerunners (chaired/led by NL) and ISI (chaired/led by BE), which are convened by their chairs upon the need.
2. On 18 June 2013 under the Irish Presidency the LEWP discussed the relationship between the LEWP and 18 LEWP-related expert groups and networks, including RCEG, and agreed on good practice guidelines for these expert groups and networks to follow (doc. 9407/1/13 REV 1). The aforementioned good practices include the following topics: the organisation of the network, the planning of their future work, the organisation of meetings and reporting to the LEWP.

3. The Presidency, in view of the information set out above, at the RCEG meeting which took place on 2 May 2014 in Athens invited the experts to provide their views on the future of RCEG and thus contribute to the evaluation of the group.
4. The feedback provided by RCEG delegations together with the conclusions by the Presidency is set out below.

Overview of contributions by RCEG delegations

Organisation of the group and its meetings

- a) Most delegations suggested to continue with the current organisation of RCEG and its 2 sub-groups with lead countries coordinating the activities of the group.
- b) Most delegations suggested to continue organising meetings without interpretation to allow more flexible scheduling.
- c) Most delegations agreed, when considered necessary, to organise conference calls, video or web conferences or written correspondence (e.g. via the Europol Platform for experts) to discuss issues that do not require personal attendance. Some delegations also suggested that the meetings could be organised either once per semester or when there is a need to do so.

Planning of the work of the group

- d) Most delegations agreed to the need to draw up a work programme for RCEG and submit it to the LEWP so that it can be relayed to the incoming Presidencies. Most delegations also suggested to form in addition to the 2 subgroups a small support group, including the incoming and outgoing Presidencies, to prepare such a work programme. The French delegation indicated its wish to also participate in such a support group.
- e) As to seeking possibilities for a systematic funding of the activities of the RCEG, the opinions diverged: some delegations stated that the possibilities for a systematic funding would be of benefit, some delegations believe that the LEWP should decide upon such a need, others proposed to further discuss this issue at the next RCEG meeting in Rome as administration of funding projects is complex and till now there was no need for funding.

Cooperation with Europol and other LEWP expert groups and networks

- f) As regards the possibility to address Europol to create a virtual platform for experts (EPE) to exchange information/contacts, a few delegations welcomed any possible solution to facilitate the exchange information and contacts. It was stated on the other hand that ENLETS has not managed to use EPE the way it wished, so there were doubts about this possibility.
- g) Most delegations agreed that it would be useful to, where relevant, establish cooperative relations with other LEWP-related expert groups and networks such as ENLETS and eMobidig with a view to profiting from their work, especially in the field of the application of technological accessories that could be introduced into the first line police officers daily work.

General self-evaluation

- h) Most delegations stated that RCEG is successful in achieving the goals set by the Council Recommendation.
- i) Some delegations agreed that RCEG is functioning effectively whereas 1 delegation believes that the organisation and the mandate for the group could be revisited to see if the work could be even more effective.
- j) As for the other possible improvements in the working practices of RCEG, some delegations would find it useful that the General Secretariat of the Council would annually update the list of contact points of RCEG. Some delegations are of the opinion that the work of ISITEP to further facilitate cross-border communication, both voice and later data, as well as to support the design and establishment of the next generation radio-communication system and applications for PPDR is of vital importance in achieving the goals set by the Council Recommendation.

Conclusion

On the basis of the contributions set out above, the Presidency invites the LEWP to:

- take note of the outcome of the self-evaluation of RCEG;
 - agree to setting up an ad-hoc support group within RCEG tasked to draw up a work programme for RCEG;
 - agree to the need to invite the General Secretariat of the Council to keep the list of RCEG contact points updated.
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