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NOTE

From: Presidency
To: Delegations
Subject: EMPACT Joint Communication Strategy



Delegations will find below a revised version of the EMPACT Joint Communication Strategy, based upon the comments provided at the COSI Support Group on 17 November 2021 as well as additional written comments.

No substantial comments were submitted to the Presidency (Marko.Becan@gov.si) and the Council Secretariat (cosi@consilium.europa.eu) by **10 December 2021 cob** following distribution of the revised version. Minor technical changes have been introduced¹, the strategy is now considered as approved.

¹ Changes can be seen in **bold, underlined** and ~~strikethrough~~.

EMPACT Joint Communication Strategy

The European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) Joint Communication Strategy (strategy) aims to set out the main elements for a **joint communication approach** to raise awareness of EU efforts to fight organised and serious international crime and to strengthen the visibility of EMPACT as the flagship instrument to achieve this. It follows the recommendations from the independent evaluation of EMPACT (11993/20), builds upon the Communication Blueprint (12302/20) and the EMPACT Terms of Reference (9921/21), and is the basis for communication activities for all stakeholders.

The joint approach will foster better coordination, sharing and timing of key communication activities as well as the exchange of communication materials and best practices. It will also help reach broader audiences, while ensuring a more impactful targeting of communication activities, including at national level, thanks to the participation of all stakeholders throughout the cycle. Finally, by identifying common objectives and **simple and objectively verifiable** indicators², the approach will establish a framework for better evaluating such communication efforts.

Detailed information on the responsibilities of stakeholders is available in Annex 1.

General objectives

1. Improve communication on and raise awareness of EMPACT activities³, its contribution to fighting crime and its results
2. Strengthen the identity of EMPACT as the EU flagship instrument against serious and organised crime threats to EU security
3. Support active involvement of stakeholders in EMPACT activities

² Indicators will be defined by the communicator's network and following agreement will be introduced into the strategy as an Annex.

³ EMPACT activities include all activities that are directly associated with EMPACT Operational Action Plans, that derive from/fall within EMPACT Operational action plans and that are funded by EMPACT grants.

Specific objectives

1. **Improve communication on and raise awareness of EMPACT activities, its contribution to fighting crime and its results**
 - a. Scale up digital communication presence and engagement
 - b. Increase media awareness and coverage
 - c. Reinforce outreach activities for specialised communities as well as broader audiences
2. **Strengthen the identity of EMPACT as the EU flagship instrument against serious and organised crime threats to EU security**
 - a. **Ensure general EMPACT information** is available on the websites, **or other outlets**, of all stakeholders
 - b. Ensure consistency in the use of the existing branding (logo and graphic elements from the EMPACT branding guide), coordinated social media activities including the use of the #EMPACT hashtag and messaging (Annex IV)
 - c. Strengthen coordination on messaging and timing for specific communication activities, including operational results, Joint Action Days (JADs), annual results
 - d. Communicate on non-operational aspects of EMPACT, including preventative measures, training and how these aspects also contribute to the fight against organised and serious international crime.
3. **Support active involvement of stakeholders in EMPACT activities**
 - a. Encourage participation of law enforcement and judicial authorities in EMPACT activities, including the exchange of good practices, operational actions, training, networking and capacity-building activities.
 - b. Raise general awareness of financial opportunities
 - c. Encourage cooperation with the private sector, academia and non-EU countries

Overall approach

The approach can be summarised in five pillars: coordination, consistency, language, focus on impact and human stories⁴.

1) Coordination and sharing

Communication contact points will be appointed for each EU Member State, agency and institution. This will form the EMPACT Communicators' Network and, within this network, they will be responsible for:

- coordinating communication activities with other stakeholders
- establishing a shared annual communication plan/calendar
- sharing materials and best practices, as well as upcoming communication opportunities
- implementing the strategy in their country/organisation
- monitoring and reporting to the Communicators' Network on implementation in their country/organisation

2) Consistency

EMPACT communication will use a common set of messages, and include references and links to information about the role of all stakeholders involved. All stakeholders will always use a single brand name ('EMPACT') and logo, including for the JADs, as well as the hashtag #EMPACT, where appropriate. These elements have to be used consistently in all relevant materials to promote and illustrate the impact of EMPACT.

3) Language: accessibility and multilingualism

EMPACT communication should use accessible language, avoiding jargon and abbreviations, and, wherever possible, be multilingual. When content is produced in one language, the producer of the material should be able to make the files available to others for translation, wherever appropriate.

⁴ **In accordance with national rules and practices regarding ongoing cases.**

4) Focus on impact

In general, communication activities should highlight the contribution of EMPACT activities in the fight against organised and serious international crime. The focus should be on the impact, both quantitative and qualitative, of such activities, not on procedures and administrative milestones.

5) Human stories

Communication activities should use, when possible, real testimonials and stories to show the human side of EMPACT activities delivered by operational actors and agencies. Beyond the numbers and the results, communication should show the tangible benefits that EMPACT delivers ~~both~~ for the security community at large (e.g. access to resources and international networks), for citizens in terms of a secure EU, including victims and people who have been prevented from engaging in criminal activities including recidivism.

Communication activities

Based on this joint approach, communication activities will be developed by each stakeholder for its specific audiences, and jointly for key EMPACT communication opportunities.

Each stakeholder at EU and national level, will devise their own communication planning with reference to this strategy, taking into account their level of activities in EMPACT and main audiences.

A list of possible communication activities is detailed below and further segmented by stakeholder in Annex I.

Coordination

- Communicators' network composed of the contact points from EU Member States, agencies and institutions
- Product-sharing hub
- Establish a shared annual communication plan/calendar (see Annex III)
- Nomination of a chair of the Communicators' Network

Digital

Websites

- EMPACT information on the websites of all stakeholders, with common messaging⁵
- Internal communication websites/newsletters

Social media

- Use of relevant hashtags for social media including #EMPACT and hashtags for individual priorities (see relevant English hashtags in Annex II for reference)
- Production of social media content/campaigns on specific milestones/events (including annual results, joint action days, operational results, international days)
- Twitter moment⁶
- Production of social media content / campaigns on crime prevention

Press

- Common background paragraph (boilerplate) to be added at the end of all press releases on EMPACT, including a link to the EMPACT website of the relevant stakeholder(s)
- Press releases and/or press conferences following operational results, coordinated between key stakeholders
- Field trips for journalists
- Interviews by key stakeholders and experts

⁵ As above.

⁶ Twitter moment curated by European Commission's DG Home:
<https://twitter.com/i/events/1410165020294529025>

Audiovisual

- Production of audiovisual content for targeted audiences/events
- Production of raw audiovisual material of EMPACT activities which can be used by media

Outreach and events

- Specialised fairs, forums and conferences
- Europe Day events
- National (law enforcement) open days
- Publications and factsheets aimed at specialised audiences
- Promotional printed items ('goodies') with the EMPACT logo (from mugs to notebooks)
- Events organised by JHA agencies, for example EBCG days
- Extend use of branding to all areas of EMPACT activity, including intelligence, prevention and training

EMPACT stakeholders

- EU Member States acting as drivers and co-drivers, as well as those participating in specific activities and operations
- General Secretariat of the Council
- European Commission
- JHA agencies
- Other EU agencies

- European External Action Service (EEAS)
- EU Member States not directly involved in a specific action or priority
- European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)
- Non-EU countries
- International organisations
- Academia, private sector

Target audiences

- Law enforcement, judicial and other relevant authorities
- Policy makers and senior ministerial officials
- EU institutions, agencies and other bodies
- Justice and Home Affairs Agencies Network (JHAAN)
- Networks of practitioners
- National and international media
- Academia
- Young professionals and students (e.g. police academies, forensics schools, etc.)
- Private sector
- NGOs
- General public

Annex 1 proposes a more detailed breakdown of objectives, actions, stakeholders and audiences.

Evaluation

The strategy will be evaluated:

- annually within the Communicators' Network, and brought via the NEC meeting to the COSI Support Group;
- at the end of each EMPACT cycle within the framework of the EMPACT independent evaluation.

The methodology and common indicators for each specific objective should be defined by the Communicators' Network and following the agreement attached to this strategy in an Annex.

The representatives of the General Secretariat of the Council (GSC) will gather this information annually from each stakeholder and consolidate it in a joint report to be presented to the NEC meeting every April. Each stakeholder is free to establish other indicators in line with the reporting requirements of their own organisation.

ANNEX I – Overview of objectives, actions, stakeholders and audiences

Objectives	Actions	Stakeholders	Target audience
1. <u>Improve communication on and raise awareness of EMPACT activities, its contribution to fighting crime and its results</u>			
a. Scale up digital communication presence and engagement	Dedicated EMPACT webpages	All core stakeholders	General public, academia, private sector
	Production of social media content/campaigns on specific milestones/events	All core stakeholders	
	Production of social media content/campaigns on crime prevention	Europol, drivers, co-drivers, participating Member States	
	Twitter moment	European Commission	
	Product-sharing hub	All stakeholders	
b. Increase media awareness and coverage	Common background paragraph (boilerplate) to be added at the end of all press releases on EMPACT, including a link to the EMPACT website of the relevant stakeholder(s)	All stakeholders	Media
	Press releases and/or press conferences following operational results, coordinated between key stakeholders and localised	Europol, Eurojust, Frontex, drivers, co-drivers, participating Member States	
	Field trips for journalists	Europol, Frontex, Eurojust, drivers	
	Interviews by key stakeholders and experts	Europol, Eurojust, Frontex, drivers, co-drivers,	
	Raw audiovisual material for media use	Drivers, co-drivers, participating member states	
c. Reinforce outreach activities addressing specialised communities as well as broader audiences the general public	Specialised fairs, forums and conferences	All core stakeholders	Private sector, academia, law enforcement and judicial authorities
	Europe Day events	European Commission,	General public

		GSC, Europol, Eurojust, Frontex	
	National (law enforcement) open days	Drivers, co-drivers, participating Member States	General public
	Publications and factsheets aimed at specialised audiences	European Commission, GSC, Europol, Eurojust, Frontex	Private sector, academia, law enforcement and judicial authorities
	Production of audiovisual content for targeted audiences	Core stakeholders	Law enforcement and judicial authorities, interior ministers
2. Strengthen the identity of EMPACT as the EU flagship instrument against <u>serious and organised crime threats</u> the most dangerous threats to EU security			
a. Ensure general EMPACT information is available on the websites of all stakeholders with appropriate links	Dedicated EMPACT webpages	All core stakeholders	All audiences
	Information on EMPACT on websites	Other stakeholders	All audiences
b. Ensure consistency in branding	Single EMPACT logo	All stakeholders	All audiences
	Relevant hashtags for social media <u>including the use of the #EMPACT hashtag and messaging</u>		
	Common boilerplate		
c. Strengthen coordination on messaging and timing for specific communication activities, <u>including operational results, Joint Action Days (JADs), annual results</u>	Communicators' Network	All core stakeholders	Media, general public
	Product-sharing hub		
d. <u>Communicate on non-operational aspects of EMPACT, including preventative measures, training and how these aspects also contribute to the fight against organised and serious international crime</u>	<u>Production of communication material.</u>	<u>All core stakeholders</u>	<u>Private sector, academia, law enforcement and judicial authorities</u>

3. Support Foster active involvement of stakeholders in EMPACT activities			
a. Encourage participation <u>of law enforcement and judicial authorities in EMPACT activities, including the exchange of good practices, operational actions, training, networking and capacity-building activities</u> in CEPOL and Eurojust training and networking events	Internal communication websites/newsletters of relevant authorities	CEPOL, Eurojust, all Member States	Law enforcement and judicial authorities
b. Raise general awareness of financial opportunities (tbc and to be specified)		Europol, European Commission	Law enforcement and judicial authorities
c. Encourage future cooperation with private sector, <u>academia and non-EU countries</u> / academia	Specialised fairs, forums and conferences	All core stakeholders	Private sector, academia
	Publications and factsheets aimed at specialised audiences	European Commission, GSC, Europol, Eurojust, Frontex	

ANNEX II – Relevant hashtags

This is a non-exhaustive list providing an overview of some of the most used hashtags in English.

GENERAL

#EMPACT⁷#FightingCrimeTogether

SPECIFIC

1. High-risk criminal networks

#criminalnetworks #organisedcrime #crime

2. Cyberattacks

#cybercrime #cybersecurity #cyberthreats #cyberspace #cyberattacks

3. Trafficking in human beings

#EUagainstTHB #EndHumanTrafficking #humantrafficking

4. Child sexual exploitation

#childsexualexploitation #childsexualabuse #childsexualabuseprevention #CSA #EUagainstCSA

⁷ EMPACT is the mandatory hashtag for all EMPACT communication

5. Migrant smuggling

#migrantsmuggling #migrantsmugglers #migrationEU

6. Drug trafficking

#drugmarket #drugtrafficking #drugproduction #drugsmuggling #drugpolicy #drugseizures
#darknet

7. Fraud, economic and financial crimes

#fraud #onlinefraud #financialcrime #counterfeit #moneylaundering #IPcrime

8. Organised property crime

#propertycrime #theft #robbery #burglary #seizures #culturalgoods

9. Environmental crime

#environmentalcrime #illegaltrade #illegaltradeinanimals #wildlifetrade

10. Firearms trafficking

#armstrafficking

ANNEX III – Communication opportunities

Type	Hook	Day
Policy development and policy setting	Publication of the EU Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment (EU SOCTA)	May-June (every four years)
	Adoption of Council conclusions setting the EU's priorities for EMPACT	May-June (every four years)
	Relevant sectoral reports such as the EMCDDA-Europol EU Drug Markets Report	Tbc
Implementation and monitoring	Joint actions/operations	
	Joint Action Days	
	Training activities / conferences / capacity-building programmes / etc.	
	Annual operational results	May-June
Review and assessment	EMPACT 4-year cycle operational results	
International and EU days		
	Data Protection Day	28/01
	World Art Day	15/04
	World Environment Day	05/06
	International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking	26/06
	World Day against Trafficking in Persons	30/07
	EU cybersecurity month	October
	EU Anti-Trafficking Day	18/10
	EU day of justice	25/10
	European Day on the Protection of Children against Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation	18/11
	International Migrants Day	18/12

Annex IV – Key messages and boilerplate

Key messages⁸

- EMPACT tackles the biggest / major threats posed by organised and serious international crime to the EU in a coordinated manner.
- EMPACT brings together stakeholders from different fields to address organised and serious international crime together through intelligence, strategic and operational cooperation.
- EMPACT strengthens cooperation between police, border and coast guards, customs, judicial, administrative and tax authorities, as well as with EU institutions, bodies, agencies and relevant EU networks. It also involves non-EU countries, international organisations, as well as the private sector, when relevant.

Boilerplate

The European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) tackles the most important threats posed by organised and serious international crime affecting the EU. EMPACT strengthens intelligence, strategic and operational cooperation between national authorities, EU institutions and bodies, and international partners. EMPACT runs in four-year cycles focusing on common EU crime priorities. **###relevant priority###** is one of the priorities for the 2021-2025 cycle.

⁸ Based on the key messages from the Communication Blueprint (12302/20)