



**Brussels, 28 January 2026
(OR. en)**

5797/26

**COPEN 25
EUROJUST 4
JAI 120**

NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

No. prev. doc.: 16822/24

Subject: Joint Investigation Teams (JITs)
- Highlights of the 21st Annual Meeting of the Network of National
Experts on Joint Investigation Teams
(5 and 6 November 2025, Eurojust, The Hague)

Delegations will find attached “Highlights of the Annual Meeting of the Network of National Experts on Joint Investigation Teams” (5 and 6 November 2025, Eurojust, The Hague).



Highlights of the Annual Meeting of the Network of National Experts on Joint Investigation Teams

5 and 6 November 2025, Eurojust, The Hague

The 21st Annual Meeting of the Network of National Experts on Joint Investigation Teams (JITs) was organised by the JITs Network Secretariat in close cooperation with Eurojust and Europol on 5 and 6 November 2025. The meeting brought together JIT National Experts from EU Member States and Observer States, alongside representatives of EU institutions, agencies and Associate Partners.

This year's meeting focused on two topics: the JITs Collaboration Platform (JITs CP), and "From detection to prosecution: Customs and JITs in Cross-Border Investigations". Participants discussed how the upcoming launch of the JITs CP aims to simplify and secure information exchange, evidence sharing and coordination within JITs. The second topic explored how customs authorities play a key role from the first detection of illicit activity through to prosecution.

Opening Remarks

The new Head of the JITs Network Secretariat (JNS) chaired and opened the meeting. The President of Eurojust and the Europol Deputy Executive Director of Operations both offered welcoming remarks.

The President of Eurojust emphasised that JITs remain one of the most powerful instruments for cross-border judicial cooperation; so far in 2025, Eurojust and the JITs Network Secretariat supported 367 JITs, and the number of JITs funding requests increased by 18% compared to 2024.

He expressed strong confidence in the JITs CP as a cornerstone for modern, fast, and traceable judicial cooperation, highlighting the close cooperation between Member States, the European Commission, eu-LISA and the JNS in its development.

He further stressed that action against cross-border crime often begins well before judicial proceedings — frequently at a border, port or airport — making the customs dimension highly relevant.

The Deputy Executive Director Operations at Europol welcomed participants and congratulated the new Head of the JNS on her appointment.

He emphasised that the success of JITs is jointly achieved by Europol and Eurojust, and underlined Europol's support for the JITs CP with a need for cooperation to find synergy with the existing tools.

He emphasised the important role of customs authorities in investigating transnational crime and underlined Europol's advanced cooperation with customs authorities. He highlighted the benefits of linking JITs and Operation Task Forces (OTFs) to maximise operational impact.

JITs Collaboration Platform

Update from eu-LISA

The Head of Justice Programme Sector at eu-LISA provided an update on the development of the JITs Collaboration Platform. He highlighted the importance of the Platform in supporting administrative processes within a JIT.

Key functionalities of the Platform will include:

- secure upload/ download of large files;
- traceability of evidence through an advanced logging mechanism;
- secure communication features (instant messaging, audio/video conferencing);
- management of the JIT (calendar, notifications, task management);
- connection with existing JIT IT tools managed by the JNS.

The JITs CP Regulation foresees a launch date of 7 December 2025, but the eu-LISA representative announced that this date will not be met. The new target date is Q1 2026, supported by the European Commission. Testing of the JITs CP by eu-LISA is ongoing and priority is currently given to functionalities to be used in upcoming trainings. The selection of a secure open-source communications application is ongoing.

The representative of eu-LISA also presented the JITs CP training strategy. eu-LISA will first provide training to the JNS, which will then train representatives from the EU Member States, who will subsequently train national practitioners. A training session for eu-LISA's internal staff is planned for early January.

Update from the European Commission

The Commission confirmed that it has fulfilled its obligations under the JITs CP Implementing Act and will continue to support the JNS and eu-LISA.

The Commission acknowledged that the JITs CP will not be launched within the statutory deadline. It was explained that stakeholders expressed a preference for the roll-out of a fully functional and secure Platform at launch rather than a partially operational system.

Update from Eurojust

The JITs CP Project Management Officer at Eurojust presented the ongoing legal and technical work conducted within the framework of the Eurojust JITs CP Project, including the ICT Security Assessment and the Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA).

One of the Project's key tasks is to enable the connection between the JITs CP and the JITs Funding System for the transfer and display of JIT funding-related data inside the Platform. The Eurojust Project has made the technical adaptations to the JITs Funding System to establish this connection. It was noted that the JITs CP will not be used for the submission of JITs funding applications and reimbursement claims.

Update from the JITs Network Secretariat

Update on the JIT Model Agreement

The JNS presented the updated draft provisions to the JIT Model Agreement, which reflect the requirements of the JITs CP Regulation.

The process of drafting commenced in early 2025 alongside the European Commission. The Judicial Cooperation Instruments Team (JCIT) and its Working Group on JITs were consulted. Subsequently, the JNS submitted a proposal to the Network for consultation; and after revisions, most comments from the Network supported the adoption of the provisions.

Therefore, the JNS proposed the draft provisions during the Annual Meeting for formal adoption. It was explained that they have to be adopted by the Network and by the Council, be submitted for translation, and subsequently be published in the Official Journal. The presentation by the JNS was followed by a Plenary discussion. The Plenary agreed on a short extension of the deadline for the adoption of the provisions through a written procedure. The JNS will send another email to the JITs Network to ask them for feedback on the draft provisions, mentioning the new deadline.

Update on the JITs Network Guidelines

The JNS presented the proposed update of the JITs Network Guidelines. The Guidelines were published in July 2018 and since then, there have been several practical and legal developments affecting the activities of the JITs Network. To ensure that these are properly reflected in the Guidelines, the JITs Network Secretariat prepared a draft update, which was sent to the JITs National Experts for their review.

The updated Guidelines were now presented to the Network for final comments and adoption. The Plenary adopted the proposed updated Guidelines, which will be published as a council document.

Update on the JITs CP Training Strategy

The JNS presented upcoming activities linked to training on the JITs CP.

In accordance with the JITs CP Regulation, the JNS is responsible for providing training to practitioners on the JITs CP. eu-LISA will train the staff of the JNS in order to be able to deliver such trainings; these are tentatively scheduled for January 2026. This will ensure that the Secretariat itself has the necessary technical knowledge to support practitioners.

Following on from this, the JNS will then organise “Train the Trainer” sessions in February or March 2026, alongside “hands-on” trainings for JIT National Experts, relevant EU bodies, and International Judicial Authorities.

JITs Network Activities and Projects

New Observer and Associate Partner to the JITs Network

The Head of the JNS announced that, after a written procedure, the Network welcomed Iceland as the newest Observer to the Network. With this valuable addition, the Network now includes nine States with Observer status.

Following another written procedure, the Ibero-American Association of Public Prosecutors (AIAMP) also joined the Network as an Associate Partner.

Cooperation with the European Public Prosecutor’s Office (EPPO)

The Head of the JNS announced that the College of Eurojust took note of the working document developed by the Eurojust-EPPO Liaison Team. The working document is to be used as a reference for future JIT agreements between the EPPO and national authorities of non-participating Member States and/ or third countries. In addition, the document will be made available via the JITs Restricted Area and the Intranet pages of Eurojust and the EPPO.

It was further announced that the College agreed to extend the funding available via the Eurojust JIJs Funding Programme to JIJs involving the EPPO. The College stressed the importance of avoiding double funding.

Data Protection Guidelines for JIJs involving third countries or international organisations

The Head of the JNS announced that the JNS, together with Eurojust's Data Protection Officer, is finalising the Data Protection Guidelines for JIJs with third countries and international organisations. The document will undergo final consultation with Eurojust and the JIJs National Experts and be adopted through written procedure.

OTF Factsheet

The Head of the JNS updated the Network on the state of play of the Operational Task Forces (OTF) Factsheet, which is being co-developed by the JNS and Europol. The factsheet aims to provide a clear and practical explanation of OTFs and their complementarities with JIJs.

Significant progress has been made, and the content is expected to be finalised by the end of the year. Once completed, the document will be professionally designed and published to allow for wide dissemination among practitioners and partners.

Fiches Espagnoles

The JNS presented an update on the state of play of the Fiches Espagnoles. Two new countries (Moldova and Bosnia and Herzegovina) have provided national legislation to be included in the Fiches Espagnoles. These have been published on the JIJs Restricted Area and the Eurojust Intranet. A contribution of Kosovo is also being prepared.

The JNS recalls that, two years ago during the 19th Annual Meeting of the Network, it was agreed that provisions on victims' rights would be included in the Fiches Espagnoles. The Secretariat is grateful to the Member States which responded to this proposal.

Trainings

The JNS provided the Plenary with an update on trainings organised by partners including CEPOL, EJTN, ERA and WBCJ.

The JNS presented the JIT Simulation as a successful tool that helps practitioners transfer real JIT cases into interactive simulations. This is also a very effective learning tool which bridges theory and practice.

JITs Evaluation Project

The JNS shared updates on the JITs Evaluation Project. Over the past year, 19 evaluation forms were received and six joint evaluation meetings took place.

The first JIT evaluation between Brazil and Italy was completed. The JIT parties underlined the importance of starting cooperation as early as possible, being in direct contact, and building trust in making a JIT successful. Other important elements for successful cooperation included the need for experienced JIT leadership, a coordinated media strategy, multi-authority participation, and procedural alignment from the start of the investigation.

Update on JITs funding

The JNS presented the identified successes and challenges, the expected changes in 2026, and the most recent statistical data for JITs funding. In comparison with 2024, 17% more funding applications have been submitted so far in 2025, both within the standard and the urgent funding schemes. The number of JITs supported financially by Eurojust has increased by 6%. Within funding Calls 1 to 6, 264 funding applications were awarded and it is estimated that the JNS will receive 350 applications in total this year, compared to 314 awarded grants in 2024.

Identified challenges include insufficient justification in the JIT funding applications of the low-value IT/electronic equipment to be purchased, and possible (technical) problems with the submission of funding applications through the JITs Portal on the last day before the deadline.

Expected changes in 2026 were touched upon; including the mandatory use of the JITs Portal for online submission of claims, and changes to the deadline for submission of funding applications with a Call.

From Detection to Prosecution: Customs and JITs in Cross-Border Investigations

Eurojust: The Cross-border Narcotic Haulage Company

A Senior Public Prosecutor representing the Swedish Prosecution Authority shared his experience in JITs, including cases involving customs authorities. He presented a drug-trafficking case that began when prosecutors realised that five different cases should be linked and pursued as one.

All of the cases involved truck drivers convicted in Sweden for smuggling various types of drugs. Several Serbian citizens were identified as suspects and believed to have directed the drivers. A clear need for international cooperation was identified. Coordination meetings were held at Eurojust, a JIT was set up among Sweden, Serbia, Denmark and Finland, followed by Norway at a later stage.

This cooperation resulted in several seizures of drugs and other assets. Arrests of drivers and receivers were also made during the operational phase of the case. Several persons have been convicted in Sweden. The JIT received funding for activities including coordination meetings, the purchase of technical equipment to support surveillance, and translation services.

The Liaison Prosecutor for Serbia at Eurojust also presented her experience in working in this JIT. She highlighted the unique spirit of Eurojust and the importance of the support it provides.

The cooperation within the JIT led to effective coordination, indictments and convictions. This case serves as an excellent example of how the support of Eurojust and the involvement of National Members and Liaison Prosecutors can strengthen cooperation, overcome legal challenges and speed up joint activities. Eurojust and the JITs Network Secretariat provided logistical and financial support. The WBCJ project also provided financial support for operational meetings and translation of documentation. Several challenges were identified, including the need for sufficient funding for the JIT, and the need for translation of large volumes of documentation.

Overall, the presence of Liaison Prosecutors from third countries at Eurojust provided significant support to the JIT. Raising awareness of agencies such as Eurojust and their available instruments enhances cooperation, improves coordination and ultimately leads to a more effective response to crime.

The Benefits of Cooperation with Customs – Europol’s Experience

Europol shared its experience regarding the benefits of cooperating with customs authorities. Customs have access to vital intelligence such as databases, records on shipments entering or leaving the EU, VAT data, and pre-arrival data. Their expertise is crucial in fighting cross-border crime with their knowledge that extends to specific commodities, technical equipment and risk analysis.

Twenty-one customs authorities within the EU have certain investigative powers; with some even holding full police and investigative powers. In the year 2023-2024, the EU recorded that one fraudulent cash infraction occurred approximately every hour. A good practice identified was the close cooperation between customs and police, working together within joint units such as drug-enforcement teams.

The representative of Europol also presented a real-life case involving suspicious shipments from Latin America destined for Germany. The investigation led to German citizens who established companies to import shipments from drug-sensitive countries in Latin America. Customs risk analysis and the joint investigation between police authorities and Customs resulted in drug seizures in German ports and abroad. The investigation ultimately disrupted criminal logistics networks.

Case presentation (1)

The Head of Customs and Drug Crime Department in Brno, Czech Republic presented the experience of Czech customs authorities in working with JITs. The competence of customs authorities in drug-related cases extends to crimes with a cross-border element; if no such element is present, customs authorities have no mandate to investigate.

The representative of Czech Customs presented an active case concerning drug trafficking via postal parcels. An OCG was sending shipments of drugs while misusing legitimate Czech companies as the declared shippers. The perpetrators used prepaid SIM cards and fake identities, and they typically declared the parcels as cosmetics.

The Czech authorities began searching for partners, and coordination meetings were arranged by Eurojust. Eurojust assisted in involving additional countries in the JIT. It was challenging to determine which country should investigate which suspect due to the non-participation of some states. The investigation led to the arrest of suspects and seizure of significant amounts of drugs in several countries.

Case presentation (2)

A Senior Customs Officer at Customs and Monopolies Agency in Italy gave a presentation on a large and complex operation involving customs authorities, supported by Eurojust. The investigation identified an OCG involved in the smuggling of undervalued goods.

The case started when customs requested the Customs Chemical Laboratory in Italy to analyze seized goods declared as cosmetics and electrical devices. The results showed that the shipment contained goods that were in violation of European safety standards.

Customs also found that the declared value of some goods was unrealistically low and the mandatory CE certification was missing. It was discovered that the criminals created several shell companies, based in different countries, to import and trade various types of goods. Together with the Public Prosecutor, the support from OLAF was requested. Customs immediately established contact with OLAF and held meetings with colleagues from different countries.

Given the scale of the criminal activity, several meetings at Eurojust were organised and a JIT was set up among Italy, Slovenia and Hungary. Thanks to the ability to quickly cross-check evidence, the investigations led to the identification of the perpetrators, who were searched during an action day coordinated by Eurojust.

The operation received widespread media coverage. The discovery of such a large-scale fraud, involving numerous tools and extensive international cooperation, encouraged and motivated other colleagues to follow this example, strengthening international collaboration to prevent criminals from profiting from a lack of coordination.

Practical experience from a Customs Officer

A Senior Customs Officer and JIT National Expert for Finland gave a presentation on the experience of Finnish Customs working with JITs. He explained the competences of the Finnish Customs Authorities in relation to criminal investigations.

Finnish Customs' competence is limited to infringement of the national Customs Act, disobedience or aggressive action against customs officers or property, interference with illegally imported goods, and any crime involving the import, export or transit of goods. In 2002, Finland adopted the Act on Joint Investigation Teams. A JIT is usually set up by a law enforcement authority.

Some of the challenges identified include strict privacy laws in certain third countries. Experience in Finland also demonstrates the positive impact of close cooperation between customs and police.

Latest developments in JITs

New Observer to the Network: Iceland

The Plenary warmly welcomed Iceland as a new Observer to the Network. Iceland was represented at the meeting by the Liaison Prosecutor for Iceland at Eurojust, who is also the JIT Contact Point for Iceland. She highlighted Iceland's commitment to tackling drug-trafficking offenses. The first two JITs involving Iceland were set up this year; both are bilateral and have applied for funding through the Eurojust JITs Funding Programme.

Iceland also expressed its willingness to participate in training activities provided by the JNS and announced plans to host a JIT training in Iceland.

Update from the ICC-OTP

A Magistrate Judicial Cooperation Advisor at the International Criminal Court - Office of the Prosecutor (ICC-OTP) and Contact Point to the JITs Network provided an update on ICC-OTP activities related to cooperation and joint investigations. She highlighted the importance of being part of the JITs Network in facilitating contact with Eurojust and Member States on operational matters. Since the ICC deals with international crimes, cooperation with other institutions and Member States is essential. She also presented the concept of a Joint Team.

In-House Study Visit: Customs Port of Rotterdam

On the second day of the Annual Meeting, JIT National Experts visited the Port of Rotterdam to gain first-hand insights into the Dutch Customs Authorities' role in detecting and combating cross-border crime.

Representatives of the Dutch Customs Authority provided a presentation on the scale of the operations of the Port of Rotterdam and the means by which Customs fights against smuggling, in particular drug smuggling. A representative of the Sea Police also presented how they contribute to the fight against drug-trafficking.

The tour concluded with a visit to the State Inspection Terminal and the Practical Training Centre.

Summary of the Main Meeting Highlights:

- Representatives of eu-LISA, the European Commission and Eurojust provided **updates on the development status of the JITs Collaboration Platform.**
- The JITs Network welcomed **Iceland as an Observer State and AIAMP as an Associate Partner.**
- JNS representatives shared **updates on ongoing activities and projects**, including:
 - ***The updated JIT Model Agreement*** was presented to the JIT National Experts. The JIT Model Agreement will contain clauses related to the JITs Collaboration Platform.
 - ***The JITs Network Guidelines were updated*** and adopted by the Plenary in their amended form.
 - ***The Training strategy*** concerning the **JITs Collaboration Platform** was presented.
 - ***An update was provided on cooperation with the EPPO*** as well as on a working document to be used in JITs with the EPPO and on funding of JITs involving the EPPO.
 - ***The state of play of the Guidelines on Data Protection*** in JITs with third countries was presented.
 - ***The state of play of the factsheet on OTF and JITs*** was presented.
 - ***Fiches Espagnoles*** for Bosnia and Herzegovina and Moldova are now available. JIT National Experts were asked to regularly review their national legislation on JITs – including legislation on victims' rights – and duly inform the JNS of any updates.
 - The JNS shared **updates** on the ***JITs Evaluation Project***. The ***first JIT evaluation between Brazil and Italy*** was completed.

- Prosecutors from an EU Member State and an Observer State to the Network shared **experiences from participating in a JIT involving customs** authorities and dealing with drug trafficking.
- A **Europol** representative provided an insight into the value of customs authorities in combatting cross-border crime.
- **Three cases were presented by EU Member State representatives highlighting the importance of involving customs** authorities in cases and the support they provide in cross-border investigations.
- **Iceland's Contact Point to the JITs Network** introduced herself to the Network and briefed the Plenary on Iceland's efforts in tackling drug-trafficking and working in JITs.
- **JITs funding updates focused on changes expected in 2026** and statistics.
- The **ICC-OTP** presented the tool of Joint Teams and highlighted the importance of international cooperation.
- During an **in-house study visit at the Port of Rotterdam**, participants gained insights into the operations of Customs and the Sea Police in combatting drug trafficking.