



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 30 March 2009

8131/09

EUROPOL 19

COVER NOTE

from: Europol
to: Article 36 Committee
Subject: Europol Annual Report 2008

1. Article 28 (10) of the Europol Convention as replaced by the 2003 Protocol ¹, reads:

"Taking into account the priorities as set out by the Council in accordance with Article 2 (2) and the update by the Director of Europol as referred to in point 6 of Article 29 (3), the Management Board shall adopt unanimously each year:

- (1) a general report on Europol's activities during the previous year;*
- (2) a report on Europol's future activities taking into account Member States' operational requirements and budgetary and staffing implications for Europol.*

Such reports shall be submitted to the Council to take note and endorse. They shall also be forwarded by the Council to the European Parliament for information."

¹ OJ C 2, 6.1.2004, p. 3.

2. Recently, the Management Board unanimously adopted the Annual Report 2008 and submitted it to the Council in accordance with the procedure laid down in Title VI of the Treaty on European Union. The report is set out in Annex.

3. On this basis the Article 36 Committee is requested to forward the Annual Report 2008 to COREPER / Council for it to be taken note of and endorsed by Council and to be forwarded by the Council to the European Parliament for information.



The Hague, 17 March 2009

File no. 1423-61

Europol Annual Report 2008

Europol
Corporate Communications
P.O. Box 90850
2509 LW The Hague
The Netherlands
www.europol.europa.eu

Tel.: +31-70 302 50 00
Fax: +31-70 345 58 96
E-mail: Corporate.Communications@europol.europa.eu

© European Police Office, 2009

Photographs: Europol

Special thanks to all EU law enforcement authorities, Europol partner countries, Europol Liaison Bureaux and Liaison Officers who contributed to this report

Contents

Foreword

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Priority crime areas in 2008
- 1.2 Organisational chart of Europol Headquarters

2. Serious organised crime, terrorism and analysis

- 2.1 Organised crime groups
- 2.2 Drugs
- 2.3 Crimes against persons
- 2.4 Financial and property crime
- 2.5 Terrorism
- 2.6 Forgery of money and other means of payment
- 2.7 Analysis
- 2.8 General achievements

3. Information management and technology

- 3.1 Overview
- 3.2 Information and communication technology
- 3.3 Information management

4. Corporate governance

- 4.1 Legal framework
- 4.2 Budget
- 4.3 Human resources
- 4.4 Public relations
- 4.5 New Europol headquarters

5. Cooperation with third parties

6. Liaison bureaux activities

6.1 Introduction by the Heads of Europol National Units' Chairman

6.2 EU member states' liaison bureaux activities

6.3 Third parties' liaison bureaux activities

Foreword

Welcome to this Annual Report, which reviews Europol's activities during 2008. It offers an overview of the most important products and services that Europol has provided to the European Union member states and its cooperation partners, and summarises the activities of the Europol Liaison Bureaux.

2008 saw an intensification of work under the umbrella of the Europol Council Decision Programme. These activities aim to transform Europol into an agency of the European Union. Europol is looking forward to this important change, which is expected to be completed in 2010.

Another development worth noting in 2008 was the signing of strategic agreements with Serbia and Montenegro. This means that Europol has now established formal cooperation mechanisms with all the countries of the Western Balkans.

In April, at the request of the Council, Europol drafted a Threat Assessment on the Impact on the EU Member States of Russian Organised Crime (ROCTA). The ROCTA represents a further step in the application of the European Criminal Intelligence Model. Under this model Europol drafts specific threat assessments which can then be translated into operational projects.

In the area of operational support to the member and partner states, I would like to mention Europol's support to Austria and Switzerland in providing threat assessments and analysis relating to the UEFA European Football championships, which both countries hosted in 2008.

You can read about these and other Europol activities in the following pages. If you would like to know more about Europol's work and products, please consult the Europol website (www.europol.europa.eu) or contact the Europol Corporate Communications Unit.

Max-Peter Ratzel
Director of Europol

1. Introduction

1.1 Priority crime areas in 2008

The priorities for Europol were determined in the Annual Work Programme 2008 approved by the Council of the European Union, and focused on those forms of serious and organised crime and terrorism contained in Europol's mandate.

In relation to serious and organised crime, the Council defined the following priorities:

- Drugs trafficking, especially in synthetic drugs
- Smuggling and trafficking in human beings
- Fraud, especially in the area of highly taxed goods and Value Added Tax carousels
- Euro counterfeiting
- Commodity counterfeiting and intellectual property theft
- Money laundering

These priorities are based on the EU Organised Crime Threat Assessment (OCTA) 2007.

Within its mandate on terrorism, Europol continued to place the emphasis on supporting member states' actions against networks of Islamist terrorists.

In respect of the regionally-based criminal hubs identified by the OCTA 2007,¹ the Council considers that the following types of organised crime should be specific commitments within the criminal markets designated as EU priorities for 2007:

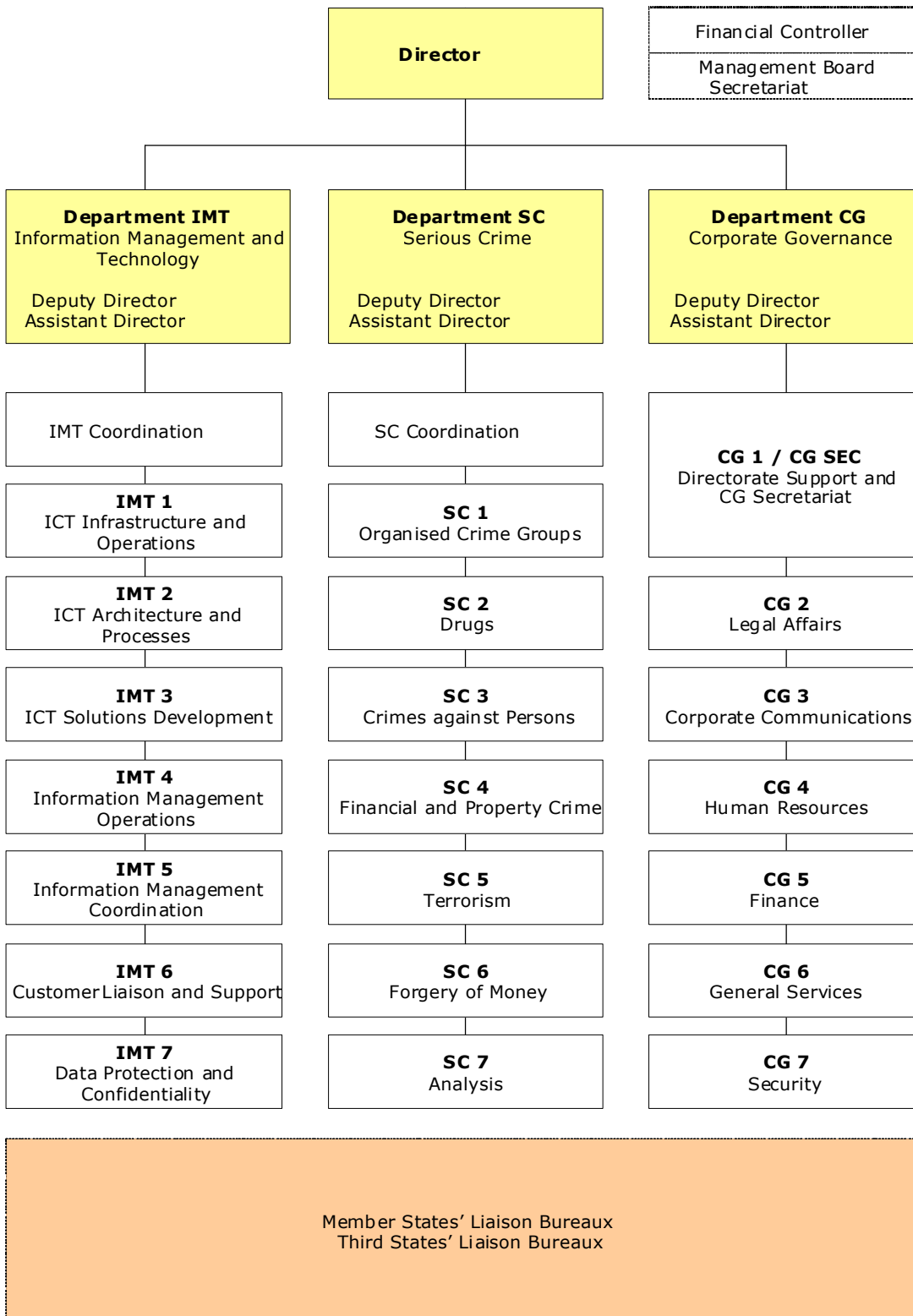
- The North-West criminal hub: cocaine, heroin and cannabis trafficking, and the production of, and trafficking in, synthetic drugs

¹ EU Organised Crime Threat Assessment 2007, Europol, The Hague, 2007, pp. 23-27.

- The South-West criminal hub: trafficking in cannabis and cocaine, destination trafficking for stolen vehicles and smuggling of human beings related to illegal immigration
- The North-West and the South-West criminal hubs: organised crime committed by indigenous, Turkish and Moroccan groups and the external influence of South and Central American groups
- The North-East criminal hub: organised crime committed by Lithuanian and Polish groups, both active in the supply of cigarettes, synthetic drug precursors, cocaine and hashish, and in illegal trafficking in highly-taxed goods
- The South-East, especially the Black Sea criminal hub: organised crime committed by groups from Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey and Ukraine, plus Italian and Hungarian groups also active in the region.

Furthermore, in response to the identified need to enhance cooperation in the Western Balkans, a road map was agreed and drawn up to better tackle the organised crime threat originating from the region.

1.2 Organisational chart of Europol Headquarters



2. Serious organised crime, terrorism and analysis

One of the main themes for Europol in 2008 was to widen its network of partners. In a broad sense, this was achieved by concluding strategic cooperation agreements with Serbia and with Montenegro and initiating negotiations with several existing strategic partners on operational cooperation agreements.

In a narrower sense, Europol has extended its network in the analytical field by associating third states to analysis work files (AWFs). The Third (Danish) Protocol of 2007 allowed for third states with an operational cooperation agreement with Europol to become associated to AWFs. In 2008 a total of 36 association agreements were concluded. As a result, third states are now active in all but one of the AWFs.

Work has begun to ensure that previously unaddressed crime areas within the working priorities defined by the Council now receive appropriate attention. In the areas of carousel fraud and intellectual property crime, Europol has met member states' demand for operational support. Expert group meetings have led to the creation of analysis work files which are now supporting member states' investigations of these high-profit crimes.

In the area of training and awareness for law enforcement officers, Europol provided presentations and training courses in various member states. The Europol training curriculum, which was developed together with the European Police College (CEPOL), was further improved and its main components translated into several EU languages.

2.1 Organised crime groups

In 2008, no significant changes were detected compared to the previous year in the key areas of interest of the major criminal groups and individuals acting within, or impacting upon, EU member states in all serious crime areas.

Particularly worth mentioning is the level of specialisation of these groups and individuals as well as the use that they make of legitimate business structures. They employ the latest communication technologies to maintain and expand their national and international links and to avoid being traced by law enforcement agencies.

The continuous collection of intelligence enabled Europol to identify indigenous and non-EU criminal groups assessed as most dangerous and thereby given priority.

In the field of specific investigation techniques, such as witness protection, informant handling, controlled deliveries and cross-border surveillance, existing networks of experts were further widened to ensure that all expertise available worldwide is accessible to law enforcement agencies in the EU member states. Moreover, the EU Network of Advisory Teams (EuNAT) in the area of kidnapping, hostage-taking and extortion continued to promote the sharing of expertise in this particular field.

In the area of high-tech crime, Europol initiated a process to set up a 'cyber crime platform'. This entails creating a common online reporting system at European level, opening an AWF on cyber crime and establishing a knowledge management platform. In addition, a number of new participants have joined the working group on cyber crime and several projects are running. The relationship with the private sector has been further strengthened, and the benefits of this are particularly visible in the area of training.

2.2 Drugs

The production and trafficking of synthetic drugs, including the acquisition of related precursors, essential chemicals and equipment is driven by both demand from existing markets and the exploitation of new markets. It involves cooperation within multilateral criminal coalitions, the exploitation of various facilitative trades and the use of specialists. This may also involve the exchange of chemicals for drugs and drugs for chemicals.

This illicit business generates enormous profits which are clearly a critical factor in widening the influence and scope of serious organised crime groups. The profits are used by criminal enterprises not only to fund other criminal activities, but also to make substantial investments and acquire considerable assets. All this demands the successful the laundering of profits.

The Europol project on synthetic drugs continues to support and initiate major investigations. Both member states and third parties consider its operational and strategic intelligence role as increasingly important in law enforcement cooperation. In 2008, Europol also remained active in supporting implementation of the synthetic drug and precursor-related supply-reduction objectives of the EU Action Plan on Drugs 2005-2008, and by contributing to the new Action Plan 2009-2012.

Although the overall abuse of illicit drugs in the European Union appears to have stabilised for the first time in a decade, cocaine abuse and cocaine trafficking continue to increase. There is increased diversification of trafficking routes and entry points for cocaine entering the European Union. In this respect, the use of Western African states by Latin American and indigenous organised crime groups for transiting and stockpiling cocaine continues to cause concern.

In 2008, the Europol project on cocaine trafficking primarily supported member states' investigations into criminal organisations. Additionally, support is also now given to regional initiatives like the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre (MAOC-N) based in Lisbon. This particular regional initiative has been responsible for the interception of more than 27 tonnes of cocaine in the past year.

Although the heroin market is stabilising or even decreasing slightly in some member states, an increase in consumption is being seen in others, particularly in Eastern Europe. The Europol heroin project assists member states in combating organised crime groups operating towards and within the EU and engaged in the trafficking and production of

heroin and other related criminal activities. The project gives operational support to live investigations in participating member states. It also seeks to enhance the strategic intelligence picture by providing insight into the activities of organised crime groups whose activities impact upon the production and trafficking of heroin. This includes activities relating to precursor chemicals and cutting agents as well as expertise and knowledge in this area. Investigative teams in the member states use the project as an important supplementary tool to enhance their intelligence position.

2.3 Crimes against persons

Europol's work in this area is divided into three distinct crime areas:

- facilitated illegal immigration
- trafficking of human beings
- organised child abuse.

2.3.1 Facilitated illegal immigration

In 2008, Europol provided member states with support on a number of large operations. At the start of the year, Operation Greensea led to the arrest of a number of facilitators in France and the UK. The operation targeted a Turkish and a Chinese network facilitating the illegal immigration of Chinese nationals into the UK. Some of the criminal networks were also involved in other forms of serious offences and organised crime, such as money laundering and drug smuggling.

In June, Europol supported Operation Baghdad, which was initiated by the French authorities. The operation was one of the largest ever coordinated actions against people smugglers, involving more than 1,300 police officers. Investigations and arrests took place in Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Norway, the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK. The operation resulted in the identification and dismantling of a large network, primarily of Iraqi origin, which was facilitating the illegal immigration of migrants from Afghanistan, China, Turkey, Bangladesh and Iraq into and within Europe.

In November 2008, Europol supported Operation Trufas, conducted by the Spanish National Police, which resulted in the arrest of more than 60 persons suspected of being part of a people-smuggling network. The investigations and arrests took place in Spain, Portugal, Italy, Hungary, the Slovak Republic and Poland. This network was estimated to be responsible for the transportation of at least 3,500 illegal immigrants, mainly from Ukraine and Moldova, into and within Europe.

In 2008, Europol became a key partner in two major international projects:

- The IMPACT project of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), which is working in North and West Africa to strengthen the criminal justice system's response to the smuggling of migrants to the EU.
- The Mediterranean Transit Migration (MTM) project being run by the International Centre for Migration and Policy Development (ICMPD) which will map irregular migration routes in Africa and the Mediterranean. MTM will provide a visualisation of the current situation, the threats and risks faced by the partner states, and changes in the flows and routes.

2.3.2 Trafficking in human beings

Trafficking in human beings (THB) remains a growth crime in the sense that there is no apparent or evident reduction in the level of involvement of professional criminals who are intent on exploiting vulnerable persons. The extent of trafficking across the EU remains as serious as in 2007 and it is unlikely that there is any EU member state that is not affected in some way.

Nevertheless, it is clear that the law enforcement response to THB across the EU is becoming more effective, with more cases being identified and referred to Europol for support and assistance. There is, however, still work to be done in the area of victim identification, the development of transnational trafficking investigations, and the seizure and confiscation of profits and assets linked to trafficking. In particular there

needs to be a greater willingness to look ‘beyond the borders’ to ensure that the principal organisers of these crimes are identified, apprehended and prosecuted. Europol has continued to play its part in raising the awareness of these issues.

The analysis work file within which Europol supports THB investigations is supported by 21 member states and two third states. In 2008, the AWF focused on member states’ investigations of Romanian and Nigerian trafficking networks, child trafficking and labour exploitation, and provided significant support to a wide range of investigations and enquiries.

The trafficking of children in the EU is perhaps the most serious aspect of THB, with one enquiry in particular being the subject of a joint investigation team (JIT). Europol is a partner in this JIT with Eurojust and a number of EU member states.

Europol has also supported the North West Hub initiative, which is investigating the activities of Chinese traffickers active in the EU. It supports live investigations in an area covering Germany, France, Ireland, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Belgium. A COSPOL project is currently being developed to serve the new operational needs of the participants in the North West Hub THB initiative and Europol will continue to provide support for this.

In 2008, Europol supported a number of international initiatives involving a number of agencies, including UNODC, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the International Centre for Migration and Policy Development.

2.3.3 Child abuse (including child sexual abuse on the internet)

Crimes related to the sexual abuse of children require a special approach as they have different dynamics and characteristics than other forms of crime against persons – particularly the vulnerability of the victims.

The internet features prominently in the distribution of child sexual abuse. Within the framework of the COSPOL Internet Related Child Abuse Material Project (CIRCAMP) initiative, Europol is supporting the EU member states in implementing filtering technology that enables internet service providers to block users' access to child abuse websites contained in a list prepared and updated by the national competent authorities.

Regarding international cooperation at a strategic level, Europol continues to support the Council of Europe and its member states in raising awareness about the recently approved Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. Europol also supports the European Commission's efforts to improve cooperation between public institutions and the private sector by promoting specific initiatives and projects in this area of crime.

In 2008, Europol organised its 9th annual training course on Combating the Sexual Exploitation of Children on the Internet in Selm, Germany. The course, which is open to EU member states and other interested countries, provides hands-on training to law enforcement agencies and the judiciary, to enhance their technical knowledge in conducting investigations on the internet. The trainers, all of whom have expert knowledge from their work in member states, work under the leadership of Europol officers. The course is very successful and this year included participants from overseas countries such as Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

2.4 Financial and property crime

Europol's mandate covers a wide array of financial and property crimes. Though the impact of these crimes has been felt for several decades, the current global financial crisis has contributed to changing general perceptions of them. Globally, law enforcement is refocusing and shifting its capacity towards financial crime. Europol has followed this trend and doubled the number of AWFs targeting this area of crime. This is in line with the priorities set by the EU Council, on the basis of the past three EU Organised Crime Threat Assessments.

Financial crime continues to be one of the main poles of attraction for organised crime groups within the EU. It manifests itself in many forms, varying from large-scale organised VAT fraud to counterfeit and industrial piracy, not forgetting money laundering as a cross-cutting activity connected to all profit-oriented criminality. In 2008 Europol consolidated the results achieved by the implementation of the Money Laundering Protocol which substantially expanded its mandate to all money laundering offences, regardless of the predicate offence. Europol has therefore created a more efficient network for detecting and seizing assets and interrupting criminal networks.

In April, a project on Missing Trader Intra-Community (MTIC) fraud was launched. The AWF on MTIC aims to enhance coordination and information exchange in relation to ongoing pan-European criminal investigations on VAT fraud. The project has been enthusiastically received by a growing list of participants. Real-time support has already been provided through the deployment of the mobile office during the arrest phase of VAT fraud operations run by two member states.

The extension of its mandate has allowed Europol to more effectively drive and coordinate member states' operational initiatives in the area of money laundering. Analytical support and expert assistance has helped the development of financial intelligence-led policing which drives the full exploitation of financial data from different sources. Specific sub-projects have been set up to enhance the gathering and exploitation of intelligence on Russian organised crime related money laundering, shell companies and bulk cash smuggling. All of these initiatives resulted in improved and intensified cooperation.

The Asset Seizure Centre at Europol assists major investigations in member states by identifying, tracing and seizing criminal assets. In 2008, the centre was transformed into the Europol Criminal Assets Bureau (ECAB) with the aim of improving the provision of in-house operational, technical and strategic support for all Europol operational projects. One early achievement was the support that ECAB, together with the European Commission, provided to member states in implementing the 2007 Council Decision on the designation of national Asset Recovery Offices in all 27 member states. This will undoubtedly lead to even more effective criminal asset seizure. As an immediate result, the Commission recommended that ECAB should play a pivotal role in coordinating and supporting the EU Asset Recovery Offices network.

Europol continues to support the Camden Asset Recovery Inter-agency Network (CARIN), functioning as its secretariat. This informal network consists of judicial and law enforcement experts from over 50 states, jurisdictions and international organisations. Through the introduction of Associated Membership, the network is now open to institutions like the World Bank and the IMF, which are important stakeholders in the area of Criminal Asset Recovery.

Europol is active in improving and coordinating customs cooperation to combat organised criminal networks.

In response to a French initiative on environmental crime and illegal traffic in toxic wastes, Europol assisted the preparation of a European seminar, which took place in Paris in October 2008. Criminal involvement in this traffic reinforced the need to enhance strategic and operational communication between specialised units through secured networks. Europol's facilities are perfectly suited to this need. The conclusions of the seminar will be submitted to the Multidisciplinary Group in Brussels.

In the field of horizontal fraud, the Europol unit further developed its participation in the STOP payment project, initiated in 2007, and actively contributed to the creation of a first threat assessment especially dedicated to mass-marketing fraud. This crime includes 'Nigerian letters' and other types of scams. At the request of a core group of four member states, an experts' meeting has been organised to discuss the feasibility of an AWF on the topic.

In January 2008, an AWF was launched to focus on product piracy and intellectual property rights (IPR) infringements. It has already achieved good operational results, providing analytical support to five ongoing investigations, deploying the mobile office on one occasion to assist investigators on the ground, and contributing to the success of a recent controlled delivery operation. In response to the 2006 and 2007 Europol surveys on IPR and counterfeiting, the IPR threat assessment has been updated in coordination with OCTA. The IPR Expert Working Group, bringing together over 50 experts in the field from all over the world, was hosted for the fifth consecutive time by Europol and continues its strategic and training activities.

Europol annually updates and disseminates the European Vehicle Identification Database (EUVID),¹ which was developed in cooperation with member states' law enforcement agencies. EUVID is an advanced operational tool to assist investigators in identifying vehicles and related documents. In addition, Europol developed and delivered training on motor vehicle crime and the identification of vehicles in Bulgaria. An updated assessment on motor vehicle crime was drafted and disseminated to the member states.²

¹ European Vehicle Identification Database 2007, CD-ROM edition, Europol, The Hague 2008.

² Assessment on Motor Vehicle Crime Update 2008, Europol, The Hague 2008.

2.5 Terrorism

Despite the fact that there were no Islamist terrorist attacks in the European Union in 2008, terrorism remains a high priority. The absence of such attacks can in part be attributed to the vigilance and effectiveness of law enforcement counter-terrorism activities. Europol continues to support and enhance these activities.

With the second edition of the Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT 2008), Europol presented the European Parliament with another valuable product on the current terrorism situation in Europe. The TE-SAT is widely distributed within the European law enforcement community. This, combined with the improved quality of the contributions from member states, makes the report a valuable operational tool in combating terrorism.

In 2008, Europol did a lot of work on capacity building. The support of the Slovenian and French EU Presidencies was particularly valuable. The Check-the-Web portal was further developed and enhanced with additional functionalities, to serve the needs of member states' experts in their day-to-day work. An additional facility was added to Europol's Information System, allowing the storage and exchange of information on explosives.

In due course, the European Bomb Data System (EBDS) will be developed to cater to future needs. The system requirements of the EBDS were drawn up with the advice of the European Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EEODC) Network, which was founded in 2008 on the basis of the EU Action Plan on Enhancing the Security of Explosives. The EBDS should be implemented within the next two years and will allow the competent authorities in member states to exchange detailed information not only on explosives, but also on chemical, biological, radioactive and nuclear material.

At the end of the year, Europol supported a high impact operation codenamed Diligence, which focused on the trafficking of small arms and light weapons, under the leadership of the French Presidency. More than 20 member states participated in the operation, demonstrating the ability to exchange information gathered on-the-spot quickly and share it immediately with operational counterparts in other countries.

As Europol aims to be a world class centre of excellence in combating serious crime and terrorism, additional efforts were undertaken to enhance cooperation with third partners. Initial contacts were made with the Russian Federation, where Europol delivered a training course on the methods of financing terrorism.

With regard to crisis management, the First Response Network (FRN) conducted training sessions to practice and update the procedures to be followed in the event of a major terrorist incident in the European Union. Since it was established in July 2007, no member state has yet called for the FRN to be activated. This can be seen as another indicator of the successful cooperation between all those involved in preserving the EU as an area of freedom, security and justice.

2.6 Forgery of money and other means of payment

2.6.1. Currency counterfeiting

Europol has been designated as the European Union's central office for combating euro counterfeiting.¹ This legal status qualifies Europol as the worldwide contact point for combating euro counterfeiting. To fulfil this mandate, Europol cooperates closely with EU member states, the European Central Bank (ECB), ICPO-Interpol and other relevant partners.

Since its introduction, the euro has become the second most important global currency after the US dollar. Its economic value, high denomination bank notes and wide level of acceptance make the euro attractive for counterfeiters and internationally operating criminal groups.

¹ Council Decision 2005/511/JHA of 12 July 2005 on protecting the euro against counterfeiting, by designating Europol as the central office for combating euro counterfeiting.

In its function as central office, Europol facilitates the exchange of information relating to euro counterfeiting, and provides expertise to assist investigations, criminal and forensic analysis, training, and financial and technical support.

In 2008 Colombia continued to be a major threat as a source country for counterfeit euro banknotes. Europol therefore focused specifically on this problem, and was able to rely on close cooperation with the Spanish police. At the end of August 2008 this resulted in the seizure of more than 11 million counterfeit euros, the highest single operational seizure to date. The counterfeits were intended for distribution in south-west Europe.

2.6.2. Payment card fraud

Payment card fraud, and especially its connections with other types of serious crime, is still an underestimated problem. As a means of both raising the awareness of this type of crime and combating it, Europol will continue the current projects on skimming and carding.

In 2008 members of the Europol project team working on payment card fraud successfully provided on-the-spot support to four ongoing skimming cases being investigated in Spain, France, Bulgaria and Belgium. This support included the deployment of the mobile office and specialised forensic examinations.

In its efforts to combat payment card fraud, Europol has continued to cooperate closely with the private sector. In 2008, a total of seven meetings were held at Europol with private and semi-private companies, including the European ATM Security Team (EAST), the Fuel Industry Card Fraud Investigation Bureau (FICFIB) and the main payment card companies (AmEx, Master Card and Visa). Europol staff members also participated in external meetings and conferences aimed at improving security and cooperation in these crime areas.

Europol also provided training in methods of tackling card fraud to law enforcement officers from various member states. Again, close cooperation with representatives of the different payment card schemes was important. Iceland, Slovakia and Hungary benefited from an intensive three-day training course on payment card fraud delivered in their own countries. Other awareness and training sessions were also provided at Europol for representatives from EU and non-EU states.

Europol successfully organised and hosted the 1st expert meeting on forensic analysis of devices related to payment card fraud. This event focused on ways to examine technical equipment seized during investigations. The success of these events means that Europol will host this forum again in 2009.

2.7 Analysis

Analysis is one of the key means by which Europol aims to meet its objectives and is specifically referred to as such in the Europol Convention and the future Council Decision.

2.7.1 Analysis work files

Europol has placed much emphasis on improving its analytical capabilities by using advanced information technology. The OASIS project to achieve full implementation of the Europol analysis system was brought to a successful conclusion by the end of 2008. The project, aimed at enhancing analytical support to member states and partners, added technological methods commonly used in the private sector to the traditional intelligence analysis tools and made them work in synergy.

At its December meeting, the Europol Management Board acknowledged that, since the system was implemented, it now takes only two minutes to enter an entity in the system and 30 more to carry out a complete check of all entities using the text mining tool. Pre-processing work has thus been reduced from 40 hours to an average of four hours – a 90% reduction. The resulting efficiency gains will greatly increase Europol's capacity to provide analytical support to member states.

In recognition of the results obtained with the OASIS project Europol received the Professional Service Award 2008 from the International Association for Law Enforcement Intelligence Analysts (IALEIA). This award is given to ‘the organisation making the most significant progress utilising intelligence analytical techniques to support law enforcement objectives’. Several member states and third parties, including Interpol, the US National Security Agency and the New York Police Department, have already shown an interest in emulating the OASIS approach and consultations are under way on sharing best practices.

All analysis work files now use the new technology and a programme is being developed to allow member states and partners to share in the benefits. All analysts have received Change Management training and the existing New Analysis System Concept (NASC) training has been replaced by Operational Integrated Analysis Training (OIAT), which enhances the best practices of the previous training programmes with new methods and technologies. Requests from member states and partners for analysis training have by far exceeded Europol’s capacity to provide them. A ‘train-the-trainers’ course has therefore been developed for local trainers from member states and partners.

2.7.2 Organised Crime Threat Assessment

The third European Union Organised Crime Threat Assessment (OCTA 2008) was approved by the European Council in July 2008.¹ The OCTA is a core product of the intelligence-led law enforcement concept and drafting it is one of Europol’s top priorities.

The OCTA is a threat assessment of current and expected new trends in organised crime across the EU. The assessment is based on existing knowledge and expertise and is drawn up to enable decision-makers to take the appropriate action to counter the anticipated threat.

¹ EU Organised Crime Threat Assessment 2008, Europol, The Hague, 2008.

The OCTA marks a new approach to the way in which Europol and the member states operate and is a first step towards a paradigm change in policing. It fits in firmly with the aim of The Hague Programme,¹ to provide a forward-looking approach to fighting organised crime in a manner which is more pro-active than reactive. The OCTA allows the EU to develop complementary measures to counter organised crime, linking measures at the ministerial and political levels with those of practitioners and law enforcement agencies which operate on the front line.

The OCTA and the ensuing Council Conclusions based on the OCTAs from 2006 and 2007 have had a significant impact on the law enforcement community throughout Europe in terms of practices and priorities. This is the case, for instance, through the European Police Chief Task Force (EPCTF/COSPOL) framework at EU level, the Baltic Sea Task Force, the Operational Inter-organisational Action Plan to Fight Human Trafficking in Greece (ILAEIRA), the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre – Narcotics (MAOC-N) in Lisbon, at Europol and within the individual member states.

2.7.3 Russian Organised Crime Threat Assessment

In April 2008, in line with the findings of the Organised Crime Threat Assessment (OCTA), the Council called upon Europol to draft a Threat Assessment on the Impact on the EU Member States of Russian Organised Crime (now referred to as the ROCTA).² The Council decided that, in addition to EU member states, Europol should also ask for input from the law enforcement authorities of the Russian Federation.

The ROCTA follows the approach and methodology of the OCTA. It assesses current and expected trends in Russian organised crime across the EU, based upon existing information and expert knowledge. It is drafted to enable decision-makers to act to counter the impact of Russian organised crime in the EU.

¹ The Hague Programme: Strengthening Freedom, Security and Justice in the European Union, OJ 2005/C53/01.

² Russian Organised Crime Threat Assessment, Europol Restricted, The Hague, 2008.

The ROCTA represents a further step towards application of the European Criminal Intelligence Model (ECIM). Under this model Europol will draft specific threat assessments on topics which the OCTA identifies as critical. The findings of the specific threat assessments can then be translated into operational projects, both under the auspices of the European Police Chief Task Force (EPCTF/COSPOL) and within national law enforcement frameworks. Furthermore, the ROCTA can be used to support the concept of intelligence-led law enforcement and its implementation in the Russian Federation law enforcement agencies.

The ROCTA, like the OCTA, is a product that serves various purposes. It supports political decision-making in the EU by identifying specific issues for prioritisation in the fight against organised crime in Russia. It will thus also contribute to the further development of the common area of freedom, security and justice in the EU. Furthermore, the ROCTA links the political and ministerial levels with practitioners and law enforcement agencies in the member states which can draw on its findings and implement those that are relevant, whether locally, nationally or through regional cooperation instruments like the Baltic Sea Task Force and SECI.

2.8 General achievements

Euro 2008

One major sporting event this year was the UEFA European Football Championships held in Switzerland and Austria (Euro 2008). Europol supported the police operation which provided security at the championships. It prepared an overall threat assessment and provided threat assessment training to Austrian and Swiss officers, and Europol Liaison Officers were on the spot to facilitate information exchange with Europol HQ. Europol also established an information centre to give tailor-made support to the Austrian and Swiss organisers and back up the Europol officers on-site.

Annual JIT expert meeting

The 4th Joint Investigation Team (JIT) expert meeting, jointly organised by Eurojust and Europol, was held at Europol in mid-December. All member states supported the meeting, which aimed to further enhance cooperation and to raise awareness of the benefits of JITs. A major element of the meeting was two workshops which reviewed ideas and past experiences relating to awareness-raising and evidence-gathering. Discussion in the workshops was facilitated by presentations by practitioners from the member states. Overall feedback indicated that the meeting would contribute positively to the future development of JIT activity.

HENU secretariat

The Heads of Europol National Units (HENUs) is a grouping of senior police officers who are responsible for managing the relationship between Europol and their own member states. They meet regularly and give advice to Europol on its operational activities. A secretariat provides organisational and administrative support to these meetings and related activities and initiatives. In December 2008, the HENU secretariat moved from the Corporate Governance Department to the Serious Crime Department. Given that the HENUs are the main operational advisor to Europol, it is logical that there should be a closer relationship between the two bodies, and the relocation reflects this.

Exchange programmes

Europol has to work ever more closely with partner agencies like Interpol and the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF). Productive cooperation of this nature requires familiarity and trust. To enhance these aspects, an exchange programme has been developed. Through the programme, a number of Europol officers have spent time at Interpol and OLAF, and officers from those agencies have in turn come to Europol. During the visits, the officers have had hands-on opportunities to contribute to the work, see the detailed application of working methods and meet counterparts of the other agency. All visits have been received with great enthusiasm by both sides, and it is anticipated that this will lead to a tangible enhancement of cooperation between the agencies.

3. Information management and technology

3.1 Overview

Europol's main task in the area of information management and technology (ICT) is to maximise the added value of information and intelligence by implementing and maintaining information systems. The information systems facilitate the collection, processing and exchange of information and intelligence in accordance with the Europol Convention. This task is performed through the development and maintenance of ICT solutions, specialised support and consultancy, information management coordination and the enforcement of data protection and confidentiality rules.

3.2 Information and communication technology

In 2008, Europol's ICT function focused its efforts in three main directions:

- 1) Development of new and improved business applications to support member states and Europol serious crime units in their core mission
- 2) Improvements in the technical infrastructure to enhance the security of information processing operations, support new business requirements and improve manageability
- 3) Further improvements in ICT governance and management processes to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the Europol ICT function in fulfilling its tasks. This included the development of an ICT Strategy to improve alignment between ICT and business.

3.2.1 ICT support for Europol's core mission

In 2008 the following main business applications were significantly upgraded or developed:

- The Secure Information Exchange Network Application (SIENA), Europol's new collaboration and information exchange platform, was designed and is currently being implemented.
- A new solution for Identity and Access Management, integrated with all main Europol information systems and with delegated administration capabilities, was procured and is being implemented.
- Three new versions of the Europol Information System and data loaders were released, containing several functional enhancements, including improved usability, automatic deletion of expired data, batch upload of data by means of a spreadsheet, adding of new objects in the cross-border crime check (CBCC) functionality and manual insertion/deletion of attachments to data entered by a data loader.
- Improvements were made to the Europol mobile office capability, offering remote access to the Europol analysis system in support of field operations by member states, and more improvements are being explored for implementation in 2009. The improvements relate to the flexibility and usability of the solution in various operating conditions.
- A new portal, Europol Library for Meeting Documents (ELMO), was implemented and deployed. The portal provides access to different types of meeting documents for Europol National Units, Liaison Bureaux and Europol users.
- A new version of the 'Check the Web' knowledge management platform was implemented and released on testing for validation, containing functional and technical improvements.

The following new technical capabilities were also offered to business users in 2008:

- A solution was implemented to enable the exchange of large images and videos for the fight against the exploitation of children.
- Two-factor authentication was implemented for the ATLAS system.¹
- The Crime Scene Web Site, supporting cooperation and information exchange between forensic institutes in the EU, was confirmed for continued hosting and support by Europol.

3.2.2 Enhancing the security of information processing

In 2008 the Europol Network was accredited to process classified information up to the level of 'EU restricted'. The network transformation agenda has progressed through implementation of the development network and the secure extranet for member state access. Substantial progress has been made in virtualising the server infrastructure, to improve the flexibility and cost-effectiveness of the server park. Detailed planning has also been carried out regarding the move to the new headquarters building from an ICT perspective.

In the first half of 2008, the Wide Area Network between the member states and Europol Headquarters was successfully migrated from one service contract with limited redundancy to the sTesta contract under the European Commission with a fully resilient configuration. At the same time substantial cost savings were achieved.

3.2.3 ICT management and governance

In 2008 a strategy for Europol's ICT function was developed and approved by the Management Board. The strategy covers technology, governance, resourcing and sourcing. The strategy definition process included benchmarking ICT performance against comparable external organisations. Resource management is now fully operational within the IMT department.

¹ The ATLAS project aims to help EU member states' counter terrorism units to collaborate and exchange their technical information.

The ICT Infrastructure and operations unit has been reorganised to improve the level of service and increase the efficiency of resource utilisation. The programme for ITIL compliance has progressed, in particular in the areas of service management and ICT demand management, which are now operational processes. Enterprise architecture driven application and infrastructure planning and development also further matured as a discipline in 2008.

Europol has expanded its involvement in a number of R&D initiatives, including a project to define a messaging standard to exchange crime-related information and a project to develop a ballistics analysis platform.

3.3 Information management

3.3.1 Strategic developments

Under the Slovenian Presidency the Ad Hoc Group on Information Exchange was reinstated to deal with the implementation of information management initiatives like the Swedish Initiative (2006/960/JHA) and the Prüm Decisions (2008/615/JHA and 2008/616/JHA). Europol actively participated in this Council Working Group to ensure it has a prominent role in the exchange of information, in accordance with the Swedish Initiative.

In addition, Europol invested in defining its role in implementing the principle of availability, the Prüm decisions and the Swedish Initiative in close cooperation with the member states, in particular the HENUs. The general concepts for Europol involvement will be elaborated in further detail in 2009 for informed decision-making by the stakeholders.

2008 also saw the establishment of the product management forum, consisting of the product managers of the Information System (IS), representing both the member states and Europol. It is intended to reinforce the concept of shared responsibility for the use and management of the system and ensure the alignment of business processes.

As the result of collaboration with the Scene of Crime Working Group of the European Network of Forensic Science Institutes (ENFSI), the Crime Scene Website was launched. The website facilitates the sharing of knowledge related to scene of crime investigation amongst law enforcement authorities and the forensic science community. By supporting this project, Europol plays an active role in the very first phase of the forensic process, ultimately enhancing the quality of forensic data and as such improving the quality and effectiveness of international law enforcement cooperation.

Furthermore, the availability of forensic expertise at Europol has contributed to the first steps in using DNA in analysis processes as a result of successful interdepartmental cooperation. This is expected to develop further in 2009.

3.3.2 Information exchange

The following statistics show the overall activity (sent and received messages) and the operational cases (to which the exchanged messages are related) initiated by member states, Europol units, non-EU states and international organisations, for the period from January to December 2008.

Year	Number of messages
2007	260,463
2008	283,820

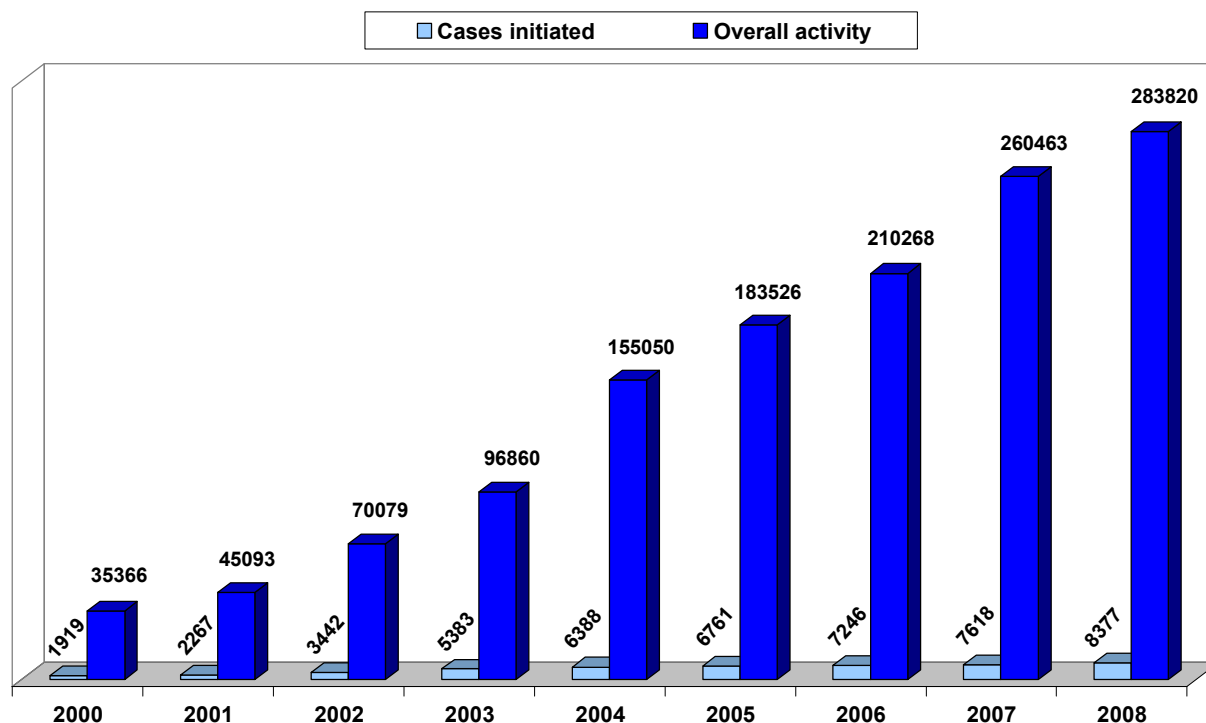
Year	Cases initiated
2007	7,618
2008	8,377

The number of cases initiated showed an increase of 9.96%.

Illicit drugs trafficking remained the crime area with most cases initiated (25%).

The following chart shows the progression of the exchange of operational information using Info-Ex from 2000 until 2008.

Progression of information exchange from 2000 until 2008



The existing tool for the exchange of information (Info-Ex) will shortly be replaced by the Secure Information Exchange Network Application (SIENA). Europol started developing SIENA in 2008 to enable delivery by mid-2009. This first release will support the exchange of information in accordance with the Swedish Initiative. For this reason, too, the application will be available to the Europol national units as well as to the existing users in the liaison bureaux and Europol units.

In addition, preparations were made for the design of future releases that extend the application with additional functionalities, including automated cross-matching, collaboration and advanced case management.

3.3.3 Information System

Europol's Information System (IS) continued to provide information sharing and searching services to member states and Europol effectively and efficiently throughout 2008. The system was available to all member states through their Liaison Officers, and their Europol national units.

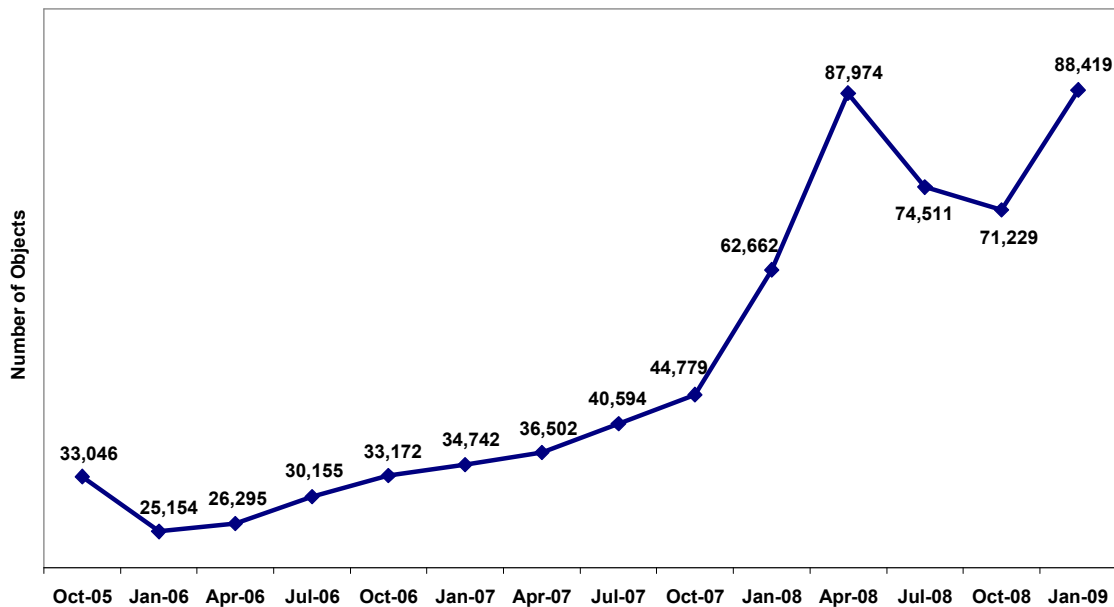
In terms of further evolution of the system, the focus in 2008 was on consolidation, with more attention to business practices and getting more information in the system. To achieve this, improvements were made to the product governance structures. This was done to increase the influence of the stakeholders and to establish the role of product management in the Europol national units in the member states. The first product management forum, replacing the user forum, was held in October.

An IS improvement project was launched in August, together with the member states, to enhance the usage and benefits of the system by establishing the following: the agreed role of the IS, revised governance, business documentation, data quality improvement, enhanced data loader support, IS version 1.5 re-accreditation, enhanced audit activities, an online user forum, an IS promotion plan and an IS communication plan. The project will run until the end of 2009.

The information system was technically improved in 2008 with new functionalities added to enhance auditing, translations (including Bulgarian in the Cyrillic alphabet), data-loaders, statistical facilities, automatic deletion of expired data, financial transactions, bomb objects, and searching. The new version 1.5, released in December, introduced a new functionality for batch loading, the possibility of manually inputting attachments to data entered by data loaders, and an increase from four to nine in the number of objects used for cross-border crime checking.

In 2008, 124,397 searches were performed in the Information System and, at the end of 2008, it contained 88,419 objects. The progression of the system's content is shown in the following chart presenting the situation since October 2005.

Quarterly progression of the Information System content from 2005 until 2008



The figures for the Information System show a steady increase in data content until May 2008. In May the first data that had been entered into the IS in 2005 became subject to the three-year deletion rule. This automated deletion caused an initial decrease in the content of the IS, which was followed by an increase from September 2008, when data input began to outstrip data deletion. With the future development and implementation of further automatic data loaders (the number of member states using a data loader increased from five to eight in 2008), the rate at which input exceeds deletions is expected to show a significant increase in 2009.

The primary purpose of the Information System is to detect hits between data inserted by the member states and third parties (via Europol). While, at the end of 2007, the IS identified 84 possible matches, this number had increased to 140 by the end of 2008.

3.3.4 Europol Knowledge Management Centre

The Europol Knowledge Management Centre (KMC) is an international search facility which stores information on uncommon and rarely used forms of investigative expertise and provides easy access to law enforcement agencies in the member states. In 2008, the KMC continued to support member states and Europol staff members. A project was initiated to create a common portal to websites where knowledge and expertise can be shared with Europol's partners on various topics related to crime. In the future, the Knowledge Management Centre will be accessible through this portal.

3.3.5 Liaison support

In 2008, liaison support coordination at Europol focused mainly on information management issues related to cooperation with the liaison bureaux and national units.

Coordination and support was also provided to improve and promote the communication and cooperation between Europol, the liaison bureaux, Europol national units and other cooperation partners. To this end, a series of meetings were conducted to discuss specific topics including customs cooperation, analysis work files and the use of handling codes. The update training for Liaison Officers was once again successfully delivered and the preparations for the new headquarters were coordinated with the liaison bureaux. Preparations were made to facilitate the opening of liaison bureaux for the US Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF, part of the US Department of Justice) and Croatia, as well as for the liaison bureau of Albania which will open in 2009. In addition, support was given with the rotation of approximately 90 Liaison Officers.

3.3.6 Data protection and confidentiality

In 2008, Europol's data protection and confidentiality unit concentrated its activities on consolidating and improving the level of assurance of the proper and secure handling and processing of personal data and classified information. The unit has been heavily involved in the preparation of the Council Decision establishing Europol's future legal framework and its implementing instruments in the area of data protection and confidentiality.

Progress was made in the following areas in 2008:

- Implementation of a new security accreditation process which has significantly improved the way in which information risks are managed and systems are accredited in Europol.
- Initiation of the process to establish an Information Security Management System compliant with ISO 27001.
- Implementation of a model confidentiality agreement to be concluded with cooperation partners. The model agreement has already been used in negotiations with Serbia, Montenegro and Ukraine.
- Implementation of a process to establish security equivalency between Europol and cooperation partners in accordance with EU and NATO standards, to allow the exchange of higher classified information.
- Implementation of a process investigating how to use results achieved by the Council of the EU relating to the exchange of classified information with cooperation partners.
- Successful coordination of the inspection visit by the Joint Supervisory Body and the Council Security Office.
- Initiation of a framework for protective monitoring and internal compliance auditing of IT systems. The first compliance audit programme was launched in 2008.
- Implementation of a secure communications link between Europol and Eurojust to allow exchange of information in a more secure environment.
- Championship for the implementation of JSB recommendations, including those made in previous years.
- Development and implementation of an overall data protection audit policy for Europol's computerised systems.
- Data protection study visits in relation to envisaged cooperation agreements to Russia, Israel, Colombia and elsewhere.

- The first European Data Protection Day organised at Europol, focusing on a variety of relevant issues, including protection of personal administrative information.

4. Corporate governance

4.1 Legal framework

4.1.1 Legal basis and the amending protocols

The Europol Convention of 1995, which came into force on 1 October 1998, provides the legal basis for Europol, together with various legal acts implementing the Convention. Although the establishment of Europol was foreseen in the Treaty on European Union of 7 February 1992 (the ‘Maastricht Treaty’), Europol is not a ‘classic’ EU agency. It is an international organisation with its own legal *acquis*, funded directly by contributions from the EU member states. The Convention has been amended three times by means of protocols that had to be ratified in all EU member states.¹ These three amending protocols were signed in 2000, 2002 and 2003 respectively and all entered into force in 2007.

¹ Council Act of 30 November 2000 drawing up, on the basis of Article 43 (1) of the Convention on the establishment of a European Police Office (Europol Convention), a Protocol amending Article 2 and the Annex to that Convention, OJ C 358 of 13.12.2000, p. 1 (‘Money Laundering Protocol’); Council Act of 28 November 2002 drawing up a Protocol amending the Convention on the establishment of a European Police Office (Europol Convention) and the Protocol on the privileges and immunities of Europol, the members of its organs, the deputy directors and the employees of Europol, OJ.C 312 of 16.12.2002, p.1. (‘JIT Protocol’); Council Act of 27 November 2003 drawing up, on the basis of Article 43 (1) of the Convention on the Establishment of a European Police Office (Europol Convention), a Protocol amending that Convention, OJ C 2 of 06.01.2004, p. 1 (‘Danish Protocol’).

4.1.2 Draft Council Decision

In 2007, the Justice and Home Affairs Council agreed in principle that the Europol Convention will be replaced by a Council Decision. The text of the new Europol Council Decision received political approval on 24 June 2008. It will lead to improvements in Europol's mandate and tasks, and in the area of data processing and protection. Moreover, Europol will be financed from the Community budget, making it subject to the EC Financial and Staff Regulations. This will align Europol's functioning with that of other bodies and agencies in the third pillar.

To ensure that the Council Decision is implemented in the best possible way the Europol Council Decision (ECD) Programme has been established internally. The ECD's strategic aim is to implement the Council Decision correctly while safeguarding Europol's operational and strategic capabilities. This entails major changes to Europol's administration and a complete restructuring of its legal *acquis*.

Europol's new legal framework is intended to be applicable as of 1 January 2010.

4.2 Budget

Europol is funded by contributions from the member states according to their Gross National Income (GNI), and by the host state, which covers security-related costs.

The budget for 2008 was €66.61 million. Of this, €2.52 million was covered by a contribution from the host state (part C) and €160,281 was granted to Europol by the European Commission. The remainder was covered by the member states. €62.66 million of the budget was called up.

Development of the Europol budget from 2000 to 2008

(excluding part C, host state)

Financial year	Adopted budget	Called-up budget	Implemented budget
2000	28,446,000	28,446,000	26,699,581
2001	36,611,800	36,611,800	35,573,298
2002	53,164,000	53,164,000	48,126,845
2003	57,833,859	57,833,859	53,409,311
2004	58,759,000	58,759,000	47,812,128
2005	63,472,610	60,220,610	51,346,913
2006	63,550,000	60,810,000	52,591,623
2007	67,894,000	64,864,000	58,940,367
2008	64,081,282	62,659,782	60,736,758

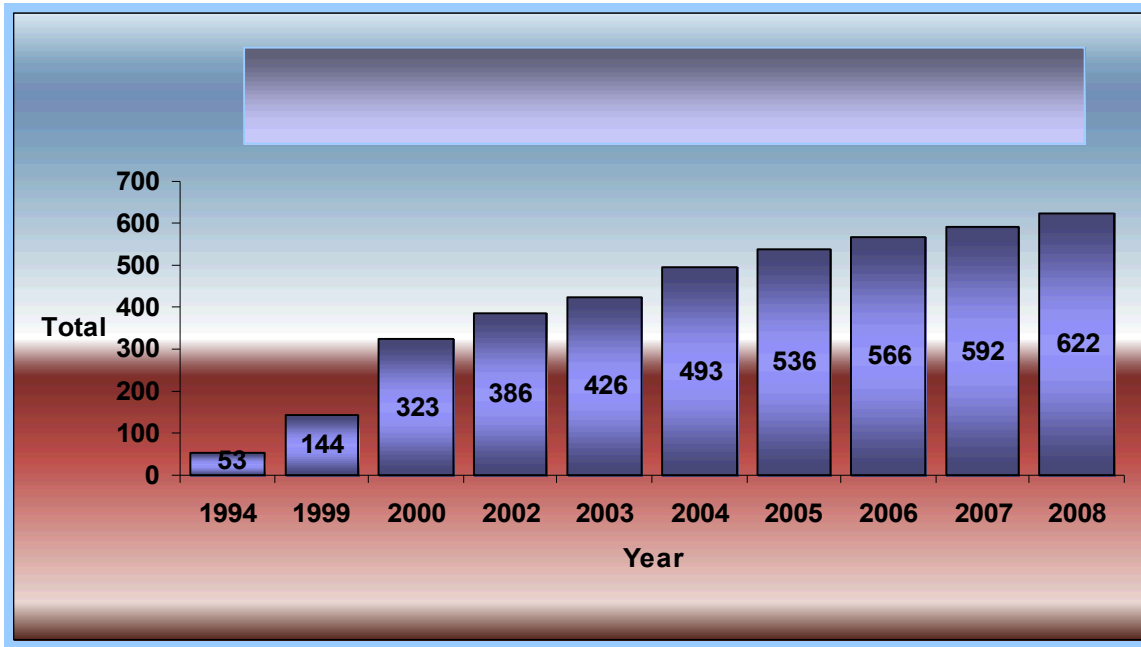
4.3 Human Resources

4.3.1 Personnel

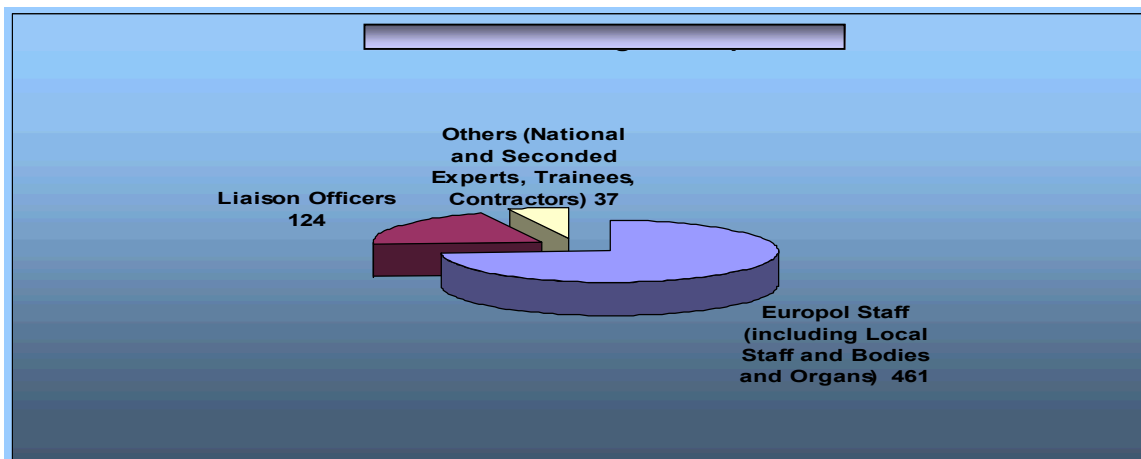
The total number of personnel working at Europol in December 2008 was 622. This includes 461 Europol staff and 124 Europol Liaison Officers appointed by the Europol National Units of the EU member states and other states and organisations with cooperation agreements with Europol. It also includes 37 persons working at Europol in other categories (seconded and national experts, trainees and contractors). This does not include ongoing recruitment procedures for 27 vacant posts. Taking these into consideration, the total number of Europol personnel would amount to 649.

In December 2008, 37% of officials employed by Europol were female. This is an increase of 1% compared to 2007.

Development of number of personnel working at Europol 1994-2008

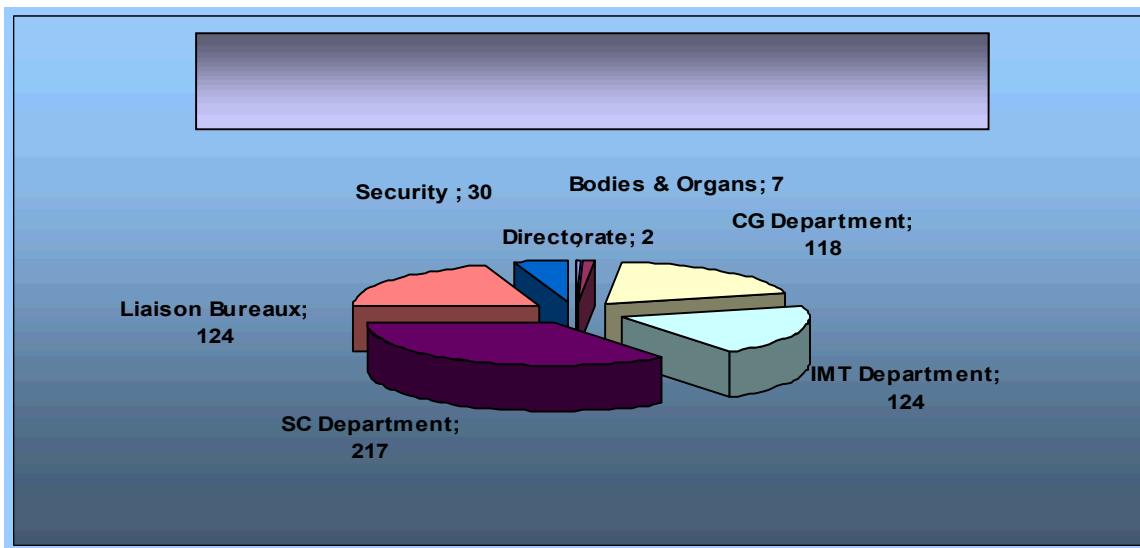


Personnel working at Europol, December 2008

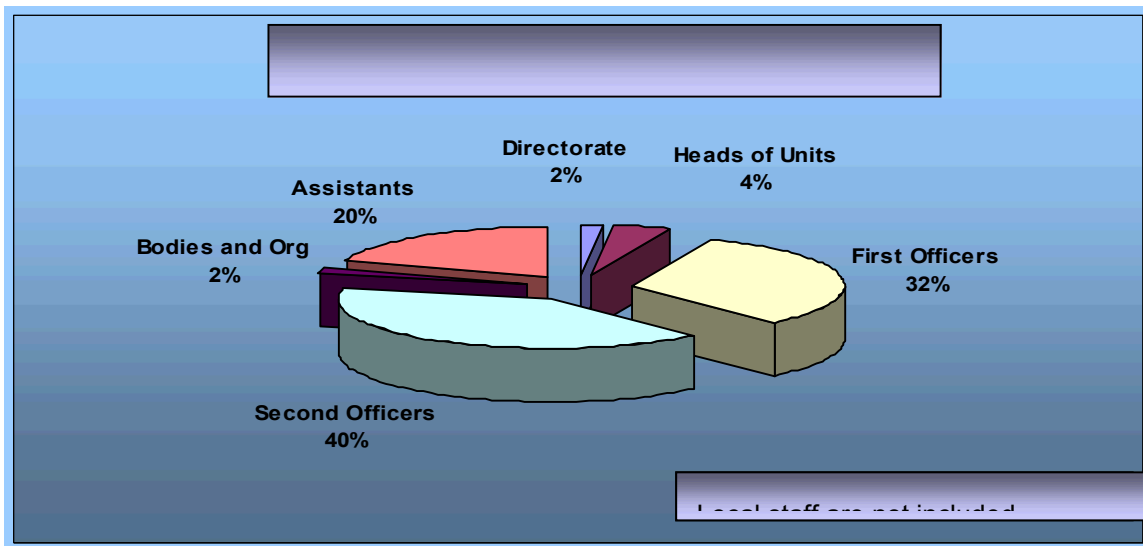


Personnel categories include Europol officials, local staff employed on the basis of permanent or temporary contracts, staff employed to assist Europol bodies and organs (i.e. the Management Board and the Financial Controller), national experts (working within the framework of the European Joint Unit on Precursors), seconded experts (working side by side with Europol officials in Europol departments but delegated by the member states), Europol Liaison Officers (working for and under the authority of the member states or third states and organisations with an cooperation agreement signed with Europol), trainees, temporary personnel (i.e. consultants employed on temporary contracts) and security officers.

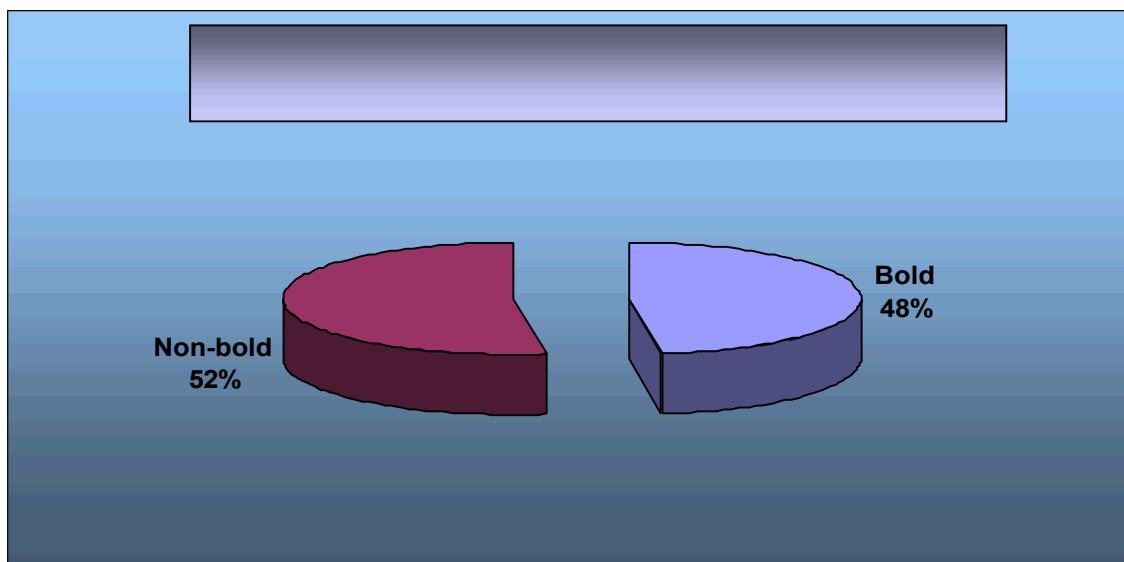
Liaison Bureaux and Europol staff by department, December 2008



Europol officials by rank, December 2008



Europol officials by post type, December 2008



In general, the distribution between bold posts and non-bold posts is almost equal.¹

Bold posts are held by staff employed in serious crime units and experts employed in some strategic posts in the corporate governance units.

¹ Bold posts are posts occupied only by law enforcement officers coming from the competent authorities in the EU member states.

Personnel at Europol by nationality and category, December 2008

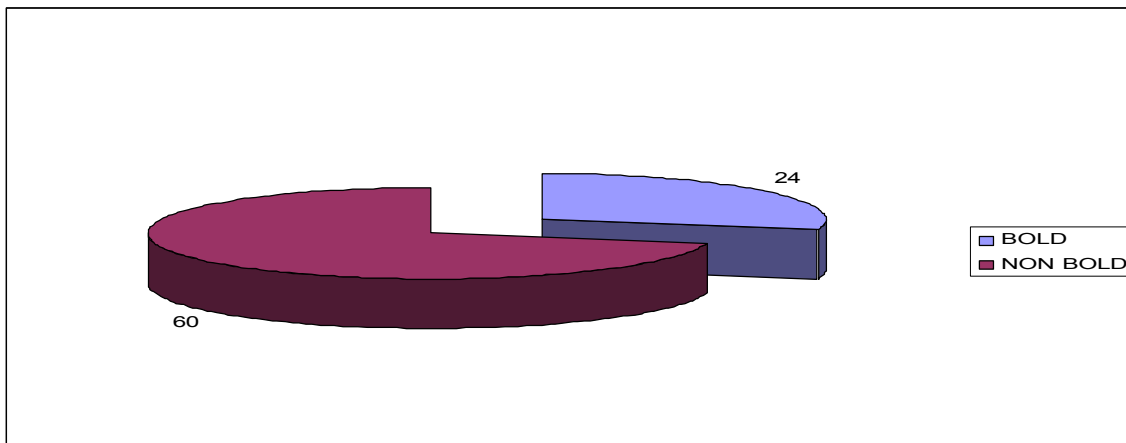
STATE / ORGANISATION	CATEGORIES										TOTAL
	Europol officials	Local staff (excluding security)	Bodies and organs	Security	Temporary local staff	Liaison Officers	National and seconded experts	Contractors	Trainees		
Austria	9					4	2				15
Belgium	40		1		1	5	1				48
Bulgaria	2					2					4
Cyprus						2					2
Czech Republic	9				1	5					15
Denmark	6					4					10
Estonia	3					3					6
Finland	12					3					15
France	31	1			2	8	1				43
Germany	40					7	10		2		59
Greece	13		1			4					18
Hungary	11				1	6	1				19
Ireland	9				1	2					12
Italy	35		1		1	5	1				43
Latvia	1		1			1					3
Lithuania	6					3					9
Luxembourg	1					2					3
Malta						1					1
Netherlands	63	7	1	29	7	9	2	7	2		127
Poland	17		1		3	1			1		23
Portugal	9					3					12
Romania	2				1	2					5
Slovakia	3					2					5
Slovenia	2				1	3					6
Spain	16		1	1		6	3				27
Sweden	13					4			1		18
United Kingdom	41				1	10	1	1	1		55
Australia						1					1
Canada					1	3					4
Colombia						2					2
Croatia						2					1
Iceland						1					1
Norway						2					2
Russia					1						1
Switzerland						2					2
USA (US agencies)						4					4
Interpol						1					1
TOTAL	394	8	7	30	22	124	22	8	7		622

4.3.2 Recruitment and selection

In 2008, 103 selection procedures for Europol officials and local staff were conducted.

Europol received 2,719 applications, with the largest number of candidates from Italy, Germany and the Netherlands. As a result of the recruitment procedures, and after assessing 458 short-listed candidates, 111 new staff members were recruited.

Selected candidates in 2008 by post type



4.3.3 Training and development

In 2008 Europol conducted almost 200 training sessions for Europol staff and 100 for the member states and third states, with more than 3,000 participants. It also gave 27 persons (12 law enforcement officers and 15 non-law enforcement interns) the opportunity to do an internship.

4.4 Public Relations

The main achievement in 2008 was the creation and implementation of the first Communication and Marketing Strategy for Europol. The purpose of the strategy is to:

- Improve awareness and acceptance of the services Europol provides to the member states;
- Create a precedent for Europol being a source of high-quality information and publications and thereby enhance public trust in Europol's work;
- Foster communication between Europol staff, including Europol Liaison Officers, and increase staff motivation in general.

One of the first outcomes of the Communication and Marketing Strategy was the creation of the Europol Law Enforcement Magazines' Editors Network (ELEMENT). ELEMENT is a platform hosted and supported by Europol which enables the law enforcement editors of the different member states to exchange ideas and articles. At present 16 states and 19 law enforcement magazines are part of the network. One positive effect of ELEMENT is increased knowledge about Europol, because of the many different articles published in the magazines of the network partners.

Two other initiatives were implemented in cooperation with member states. Together with Austria, a project was started using Europol material to provide language training for law enforcement officers that also improves their knowledge of Europol. Secondly, a pilot project was started, together with Denmark, to invite law enforcement decision-makers to Europol to participate in a tailor-made seminar and workshop. Both projects will be starting points for further initiatives together with other member states.

In 2008 visits to Europol became an increasingly important tool in promoting Europol's services. To guarantee the highest possible standards for all visits, a new visits policy was created. More than 200 visits to Europol headquarters were organised, including meetings and general presentations for ministers, ambassadors, politicians, and representatives of law enforcement agencies and media. Europol also participated in external information campaigns promoting European and international police cooperation in Berlin, Brussels, Brasov, Lisbon and elsewhere. In addition, the Director gave 44 presentations and speeches at meetings in Brussels and in EU member and partner states.

The increased interest in Europol was also illustrated by many requests from the worldwide media and the public, and a large number of interviews were arranged. Throughout the year, 40 press releases were issued. Media interest focused mainly on child sexual abuse, but areas such as euro counterfeiting, the protection of the euro and the importance of asset recovery were also highlighted. Corporate Communications hosted its 5th Annual PR and Awareness Conference. The main topic of the conference was how to work with scriptwriters and producers who wish to depict law enforcement work.

A variety of publications were produced and distributed, including general information leaflets and flyers for the member states and cooperation partners' law enforcement agencies. Europol published 'The Strategy for Europol' which was translated into 20 EU languages and distributed via the Europol Liaison Bureaux.

As in other years, Europol produced its Annual Report 2007, the EU Organised Crime Threat Assessment (OCTA) 2008 and the EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT) 2008.

The preparation of these operational and strategic reports, as well as the daily work of the serious crime units, was facilitated by the information services of the open sources team. In 2008, over 12,000 news articles were collated and distributed to the whole organisation. In addition more in-depth open source reports were put together on topical events such as the launch of the TE-SAT.

Selected information publications were translated into 30 languages of both EU member states and Europol partner states.

Europol's internet site received almost 1.7 million hits in 2008 (6.5% more than in 2007).

4.5 New Europol Headquarters

In 2008 major steps were taken in the development of the new Europol headquarters. The contract with the construction company was signed in April and building started in May. At a hearing in September related to the new zoning plan based on the Europol Building Permit, the Raad van State (Council of State) ruled in favour of Europol, so building was able to proceed. The Directorate approved the draft design for the office layout in August 2008.

As the current housing capacity will not be sufficient until the new headquarters are ready, the Directorate has decided upon an interim solution to create additional workplaces and meeting facilities for the intervening period. This solution has yet to be fully implemented.

5. External cooperation

5.1 Introduction

In order to fight international organised crime effectively, Europol cooperates with a number of EU partners, and with third countries and organisations. The exchange of information with these partners takes place on the basis of cooperation agreements concluded in accordance with the Europol Convention and the relevant implementing rules.

Two types of agreement determine the nature of cooperation with third parties. Strategic agreements make it possible for the two parties involved to exchange all information with the exception of personal data, while operational agreements also allow the exchange of personal data.

5.2 Europol External Strategy

The Europol External Strategy defines the framework within which Europol develops its activities with regard to third partners and in compliance with general guidelines agreed at EU level. The Strategy mainly provides an overview and specifies Europol's strategic orientations for its external activities.

The Europol External Strategy 2006-2008 was endorsed by the Management Board in 2006. In September 2008 the Management Board decided to extend it until the end of 2009. The Strategy will therefore be revised in the course of 2009, taking into account new strategic guidelines stemming from the renewal of several strategic policy documents in the European Union. It will also take into consideration any future changes such as the new Europol legal framework, which will be applicable as of 1 January 2010.

5.3 Cooperation with Eurojust

One of Europol's most important EU partners is Eurojust. In 2008, special efforts were made to further enhance the possibilities for the exchange of information between the two organisations. In this context, negotiations on amendments to the existing operational cooperation agreement from 2004 started in 2008.

In 2008, Eurojust was associated to the activities of six additional analysis work files, which means that it is now associated with 12 of the existing 18 AWFs. It also contributed to the European Organised Crime Threat Assessment (OCTA) and the EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT), two major Europol products.

In September 2008, a Memorandum of Understanding on a Table of Equivalence regarding the confidentiality and security standards of both organisations was concluded that accommodates operational differences in handling the formal exchange of classified information.

Europol and Eurojust continued their combined efforts to promote the concept and use of joint investigation teams (JITs). In this context, they jointly organised the fourth meeting of national experts on joint investigation teams held on 15 and 16 December at Europol in The Hague. At the meeting a JIT Manual to show practitioners how to set up a JIT was presented. The manual was jointly produced by Europol and Eurojust.

At strategic level, cooperation between Europol and Eurojust is mainly guided by a joint Steering Committee. This Committee met twice in 2008 and discussed important topics of mutual interest and concern. In addition, regular bilateral meetings took place between the Director of Europol and the President of Eurojust.

5.4 Cooperation with other EU partners

In March 2008, a strategic agreement between the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States (Frontex) and Europol was signed and entered into force. Europol and Frontex's exchange of strategic information for use in intelligence products increased. In 2008 Frontex contributed to the EU Organised Crime Threat Assessment. Europol, in turn, contributed to the Frontex Annual Risk Assessment.¹

Europol also signed an administrative arrangement with the General Secretariat of the Council on the exchange of information in the context of civilian aspects in the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) missions. Under the agreement, only non-personal data can be exchanged with all ESDP missions. This takes place via the General Secretariat of the Council. The possibility of exchanging personal data with EULEX-Kosovo via the Europol National Units is also being investigated.

5.5 Cooperation with third states and organisations

In March 2008, Europol was notified by the authorities of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia that the ratification process for the strategic agreement concluded with Europol had been completed. In addition, Europol signed strategic agreements with Serbia and with Montenegro which are currently pending national ratification. The signing of these two agreements in September 2008 means that Europol has now established formal cooperation mechanisms with all the countries of the Western Balkans.

¹ Annual Risk Assessment 2008, Frontex Restricted, Warsaw, June 2008.

Overview of cooperation agreements in place as of 31 December 2008

Operational agreements	
3 rd States	Organisations
Australia*	Eurojust
Canada*	Interpol*
Croatia	
Iceland*	
Norway*	
Switzerland*	
USA*	

Strategic agreements	
3 rd States	Organisations
Albania	European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)
Bosnia and Herzegovina	European Central Bank (ECB)
Colombia*	European Commission
Moldova	European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA)
Russian Federation	European Police College (Cepol)
Turkey	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
FYROM	World Customs Organisation (WCO)
	European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States (Frontex)

* Liaison Officers stationed at Europol's premises in The Hague.

6. Liaison Bureaux activities

6.1 Introduction by the Heads of Europol National Units' Chairman

The liaison bureaux network at Europol consists of one bureau for each of the 27 EU member states and additional bureaux representing countries and international organisations with which Europol has signed cooperation agreements, namely Australia, Canada, Croatia, Colombia, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, Interpol and the USA. The USA is represented by various law enforcement agencies.

The Liaison Officers at Europol play a crucial role in supporting member states' investigations and in maintaining cooperation between Europol National Units (ENUs) in the member states and third countries, and also with Europol headquarters in The Hague.

The Heads of Europol National Units (HENUs) held six meetings in 2008, to discuss various operational and coordination issues, and in order to provide advice to Europol on strategic and operational matters. The representatives of Eurojust, Interpol, the European Commission, Croatia, Norway, Iceland, Canada and Australia were granted observer status at these meetings. In 2008, the process was also initiated to include the USA into the HENU Group with observer status.

As with previous years, in 2008 the HENU Group maintained its primary focus on operational cooperation and related Europol activities. The HENUs continued their work on the further development of the evaluation methods of the analysis work files (AWFs), and also strived to seek ways of improving the quality and content of the HENU meetings themselves.

At the same time, the HENU Group also actively participated in the establishment of a benchmarking framework related to the EUROPOL strategy. In 2008, the HENUs also embarked on work related to the implementation of the Europol Council Decision, the Prüm Treaty, the Principle of Availability and the Swedish Initiative.

The HENUs also assisted Europol in the various phases leading to the production of the Organised Crime Threat Assessment (OCTA) 2009 and the Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT) 2009. The HENU group also provided feedback, leading to the exploration of a possible AWF initiative focused on ICT-related crimes, in line with the conclusions and recommendations of the EPCTF.

The HENUs devoted special attention to improving the use and content of the Europol Information System. Moreover they continued to participate in the development of the new platform for information exchange between member states and Europol (SIENA). The HENUs also contributed to the work of Europol by providing information and advice regarding other tools of law enforcement cooperation, such as the Check the Web portal, and the proposed European Bomb Database System.

Various workshops have been organised within the structures of the HENU Group, dealing with different themes including the Establishment of a Policy for the Choice of Channel, the Development of Products to Improve the Relationship of Europol to the Law Enforcement Community, the Identification of a Common Concept of the IS Functionalities and the Investigation of the Main Problems Encountered in the AWF Process.

As in previous years, the HENUs again acknowledged the crucial role fulfilled by the liaison bureaux in the effective exchange of information between the member states and Europol, and between the member states themselves.

6.2 EU member states' liaison bureaux activities

Austria

Capital:	Vienna
Population:	8.3 million
Area:	83,858 km ²
Bordering countries:	Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Liechtenstein, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland
Coastline:	None
Competent authorities:	Federal Ministry of the Interior Criminal Intelligence Service Federal Agency for State Protection and Counter Terrorism Federal Police Federal Ministry of Finance/Customs Administration

Liaison Bureau Austria

Europol National Unit:	Criminal Intelligence Service, Vienna
Representation at Europol:	Federal Ministry of the Interior (4 ELOs): Criminal Intelligence Service (2) Federal Agency for State Protection and Counter Terrorism (1) Federal Police (1)

Major achievements in 2008:

In 2008 one of the largest successful operations was in the field of forgery of money. As a result the Austrian police disrupted an organised crime group and dismantled an illegal mint shop.

It started with intelligence data collected by the Austrian police suggesting that an organised crime group was preparing to set up an illegal mint shop capable of producing at least 500,000 counterfeit 50 eurocent coins. The Austrian criminal intelligence service started investigations, suspects were identified and the allegations were confirmed. Once the location was identified, it was placed under surveillance. When the members of the crime group started production the police raided the mint shop and caught the offenders red-handed. The mint shop was dismantled before the counterfeit coins could be circulated. During house searches several devices used to produce counterfeit coins were seized, including a cutting press, a mortising machine linked to a computer and equipment for producing embossing stamps. Europol supported this through the exchange of information on suspects, telephone numbers, etc., while the forgery of money unit provided knowledge, analysis, and technical and financial support.

Belgium

Capital:	Brussels
Population:	10.7 million
Area:	30,528 km ²
Bordering countries:	France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands
Coastline:	North Sea (73.1 km)
Competent authorities:	Integrated Police Service, structured on two levels Customs and Excises Administration Intelligence Service

Liaison Bureau Belgium

Europol National Unit:	Operational Police Information Directorate and International Police Cooperation Directorate, both in Brussels
Representation at Europol:	Integrated Police Service, structured on two levels (2 ELOs) Customs and Excises Administration (1 ELO) Intelligence Service (1 ELO)

Major achievements in 2008:

Thanks to the cooperation of other member states and third parties and active Europol analysis work file (AWF) support, Belgium again achieved a number of significant operational results. Operation Fjord, initiated by Belgium, grew into a worldwide network of data exchange on child abuse. Based on the information a website/chat room was discovered which had been set up by a Belgian national with a server hosted in Denmark. More than 130 up-loaders were identified in 16 countries.

A dedicated Europol AWF has actively supported an investigation into a Serbian criminal organisation committing large-scale burglaries, armed attacks, receiving, drugs trafficking and money laundering since November 2007. Recently, within the AWF a new sub-project was started to support a Belgian investigation into itinerant Moldovan organised crime groups with bases in major Belgian cities.

Another AWF supported Operation Swet Huss and other related investigations targeting the import of heroin from Turkey into the UK and the export of XTC from Belgium to Turkey.

Europol AWF support for Operation Decan, investigating the large-scale skimming activities of a Romanian organised crime group, resulted in a successful coordinated action day, which was prepared at Europol.

At the request of Germany a target group (Storm) was opened in a dedicated AWF to investigate the facilitation of illegal immigration of Iraqi nationals to EU states. Belgium decided to join this project, contributing with Operation Snijder. In the same AWF, Belgium actively contributed to Operation Baghdad, which led to a successful and widely publicised common action day. Parallel to that investigation, the Belgian Operation Lekoerdi targets Kurdish groups organising illegal immigration.

Throughout the year a dedicated AWF continued supporting the French-Belgian Joint Investigation Team Artigat-Nougaro into the recruitment of Jihadi. Belgium also actively contributed to the analytical results of the sub-project in the AWF on East-European organised crime targeting Russian-Estonian criminal groups committing armed robberies from jewellery shops. Finally, Belgium joined the two new analytical projects started in 2008.

Bulgaria

Capital:	Sofia
Population:	7.45 million
Area:	110,994 km ²
Bordering countries:	Romania, Serbia, FYROM, Greece, Turkey
Coastline:	Black Sea (378 km)

Competent authorities: General Directorate of Criminal Police
General Directorate of Border Police
Pre-Trial Proceedings General Directorate
National Investigation Service
National Security State Agency
National Customs Agency

Liaison Bureau Bulgaria

Europol National Unit: International Operational Police Cooperation Directorate,
Ministry of the Interior, Sofia

Representation at Europol: Ministry of the Interior, 2 ELOs

Major achievements in 2008:

In 2008 cooperation on payment card fraud, counterfeit currency, drug trafficking and other priority areas was further enhanced and deepened. These, together with the other spheres of intensified cooperation – the fight against terrorism, money laundering, trafficking in human beings and illegal migration – have been the main focus in the work of the competent Bulgarian law enforcement authorities during the year.

In the field of euro counterfeiting Bulgaria participated in a Joint Investigation Team together with Germany and Europol. The team's work led to the detection of a large number of counterfeit notes of the most dangerous class (200P3a) stored in the territory of Bulgaria, and the detection and prosecution of the perpetrators. As a result of the JIT's activities there was a significant decrease in the registered counterfeits of this kind detected in Europe.

A successful operation was carried out in early November with the participation of Bulgarian and French law enforcement authorities and the active support of Europol, including on-the-spot expertise and a mobile office. The operation resulted in the dismantling of a criminal network engaged in credit-card fraud, the detention of three Bulgarian citizens and the seizure of more than 400 'white plastic cards' and other criminal assets.

Bulgaria has furthermore widened its participation in the work of the AWFs, including formal accession to the AWFs in illicit drugs trafficking, payment card fraud and the trafficking of tobacco products.

Cyprus

Capital:	Nicosia
Population:	788,500
Area:	9,251 km ²
Bordering countries:	None
Coastline:	Mediterranean Sea (735 km)

Competent authorities:	Cyprus Police Department of Customs & Excise Unit for Combating Money Laundering
-------------------------------	--

Liaison Bureau Cyprus

Europol National Unit:	European Union and International Cooperation Directorate, Nicosia (Cyprus Police Headquarters)
Representation at Europol:	Cyprus Police, 2 ELOs

Major achievements in 2008:

One of the main priorities for the Cypriot Liaison Bureau in 2008 was to move closer to the 'Ideal Liaison Bureau', as debated and approved by the HENUs. One of the major issues is the time taken to respond to requests. In cooperation with its National Unit, the Cypriot Liaison Bureau succeeded in achieving the approved response time: 30 days for normal requests. Delivering prompt replies will remain a high priority in 2009.

Greater awareness and the promotion of Europol and its services to the competent Cypriot authorities resulted in an increase in the volume of information exchange cases that the Liaison Bureau dealt with in 2008. The total amount rose from 7,200 in 2007 to around 9,700 in 2008 – a 35% increase. The main cases were in the fields of illegal immigration, drugs and other means of payment.

Cyprus is a member of nine AWFs, and the Cypriot Liaison Bureau is actively involved in all of them by participating in meetings or giving assistance to the national experts who attend them. In 2008, the Liaison Officers of the Cypriot Bureau participated in almost 45 meetings.

In 2008, the Cypriot Liaison Bureau remained deeply involved in the development of Europol activities. The support from the Europol National Unit and in general from the Directorate of European Union and International Police Cooperation of the Cypriot Police will help the Cypriot bureau to achieve the standards of the Ideal Liaison Bureau model.

Czech Republic

Capital:	Prague
Population:	10.5 million
Area:	78,866 km ²
Bordering countries:	Austria, Germany, Poland, Slovakia
Coastline:	None

Competent authorities:	Czech National Police Czech Customs Administration
-------------------------------	---

Liaison Bureau Czech Republic

Europol National Unit:	Police Presidium of the Czech Republic, Bureau of the Criminal Investigation Service, Prague
-------------------------------	--

Representation at Europol:	Czech National Police, 5 ELOs
-----------------------------------	-------------------------------

Major achievements in 2008:

The Czech law enforcement authorities actively participated in operational information exchange and initiated several cases with support from the Czech ENU and Liaison Bureau. Most of the information related to forging of money, other means of payment and trafficking in human beings. The Czech LEAs used the Europol channel in a number of operations (e.g. Montenegro, Hit). Successes included meetings where the Czech ENU and Liaison Bureau were involved (Operation Hrbac) and the training of Czech Europol experts in the Czech Republic. The Czech Republic is currently a full member of 14 open AWFs.

Denmark

Capital:	Copenhagen
Population:	5.5 million (including Greenland and the Faroe Islands)
Area:	44,000 km ²
Bordering countries:	Germany
Coastline:	Baltic Sea, Kattegat, North Sea and Skagerak (total coastline: 7,300 km)
Competent authorities:	Danish Police Danish Tax and Customs Authorities

Liaison Bureau Denmark

Europol National Unit: Danish Police, National Centre of Investigation, Copenhagen

Representation at Europol: Danish Police, National Centre of Investigation, 4 ELOs

Major achievements in 2008:

Throughout the year Denmark has witnessed some extremely violent and professional robberies carried out by large organised crime groups groups. A total of approximately DKK 150 million (EUR 20 million) has been stolen. Some of the perpetrators are suspected to be foreign nationals and the Danish Bureau has initiated close cooperation with Europol and the member states to identify them.

Like many other member states, Denmark has experienced a rise in robberies targeting jewellery, especially valuable wristwatches. Arrests in Denmark have identified Eastern Europeans as perpetrators.

Denmark currently has several investigations aimed at outlaw motorcycle gangs. One had links to UK and the Netherlands as well as Germany. With effective assistance from these countries, the investigation led to arrests and the seizure of 30 kg of amphetamines. The arrests were made in Denmark and the Netherlands, followed by the extradition of a UK subject to be prosecuted in Denmark.

In recent months Denmark has experienced an increase in armed clashes between Hells Angels and violent street gangs predominantly comprised of second and third generation immigrants. An estimated 20-25 shootings have been recorded and an alarming number of weapons have been seized. Based on previous experiences (the Nordic Biker war) the Danish authorities are currently alerting the member states, via Europol, of this development. By collecting intelligence from ongoing investigations in the member states we hope to gather enough information to prevent a repeat of the full scale conflict of the mid-1990s. With the intention of investigating the weapons route to the criminal market, Denmark has requested specific member states to investigate the origins of weapons produced in their countries.

Parallel to the operational work, the Danish Liaison Officers are designated to respective AWFs as national coordinators. In order to maintain qualitative input the Danish desk seeks to maintain a close contact with the AWFs and conveys feedback to the Danish National Unit.

Estonia

Capital:	Tallinn
Population:	1.3 million
Area:	45,227 km ²
Bordering countries:	Russia, Latvia
Coastline:	Baltic Sea (3,794 km)

Competent authorities:	Estonian Police
	Border Guard
	Tax and Customs Board
	Security Police Board

Liaison Bureau Estonia

Europol National Unit:	Central Criminal Police, Tallinn
Representation at Europol:	Estonian Police
	Tax and Customs Board, 3 ELOs

Major achievements in 2008:

In 2008 the Estonian Liaison Bureau was involved in various international investigations and operations. As in previous years, operations were carried out mainly in the field of drugs trafficking, cigarette smuggling and violent armed robberies at high class jewellery shops in Europe committed by various members of Estonian organised crime groups. Collaboration with Europol is improving every year.

The Estonian competent authorities used the Europol channel and AWF to support an investigation against young Estonian cocaine couriers recruited by Estonian middlemen and Nigerian organisers living in the Netherlands.

Estonian law enforcement authorities actively participated in the sub-project Traktor, which was coordinated by Europol. Traktor focused on thefts of luxury cars and heavy building machinery by professional Latvian-Estonian thieves.

Successful operations involving cooperation between several countries and Europol (AWF) were carried out in the field of armed robberies. Excellent cooperation with Finland and United Kingdom led to the arrests of several Estonian national perpetrators. Operation Dana, in close cooperation with the UK, Europol and Eurojust, was a particular success. Cooperation with French colleagues targeting Estonian jewellery robbers is currently in progress.

From the Estonian point of view, it is very much appreciated that Europol focuses increasingly on ongoing cases and has become an operational organisation.

Finland

Capital:	Helsinki
Population:	5.3 million
Area:	338,145 km ²
Bordering countries:	Sweden, Norway, Russia
Coastline:	Baltic Sea, Gulf of Finland, Gulf of Bothnia (approx. 1,126 km)
Competent authorities:	Finnish Police Finnish Customs Finnish Border Guard

Liaison Bureau Finland

Europol National Unit: National Bureau of Investigation (Police), Vantaa, Finland

Representation at Europol: National Bureau of Investigation, 2 ELOs
Finnish Customs, 1 ELO

Major achievements in 2008:

The active and efficient exchange of operational information increased the number of new cases initiated in 2008. The major part of the information exchange and the contributions delivered to Europol's analysis work files have been in the areas of drug trafficking, forgery of money, money laundering, other means of payment, particularly skimming, illegal immigration, property crime and cigarette smuggling.

Although Finland had the lowest number of euro counterfeits of the euro zone countries in 2008, members of two separate dissemination cells have been arrested in Finland during the past 12 months. In both cases efficient national investigation, use of Europol AWF and information exchange between various member states and other liaison bureaux have been the key elements in assessing the international scale of this organised criminal activity and in identifying the perpetrators and the criminal organisations involved. Since these organised crime groups originate from other European countries, one of our main objectives is to help combat counterfeiting by delivering high quality intelligence and pre-trial investigation information for the use of Europol and member states.

The majority of illegal cigarettes are smuggled into Finland through its eastern border, which is also the external border of the EU. During the first six months of this year the Finnish Customs seized approximately 10.2 million illegal cigarettes. Many of these separate cases had links to other member states. The Finnish Liaison Bureau has therefore been an active channel of information exchange with several member states and a dedicated AWF. The results have been encouraging.

During this year over ten Finnish interest groups and cooperating partners have visited Liaison Bureau Finland and Europol and have acquainted themselves with Europol's activities and possibilities through arranged awareness sessions.

France

Capital:	Paris
Population:	64 million
Area:	675,417 km ² (551,500 km ² France Metro)
Bordering countries:	Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Andorra, Monaco and Spain
Coastline:	North Sea, English Channel, Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea (3,427 km; Corsica 1,000 km)
Competent authorities:	French National Police National Gendarmerie Directorate-General of Customs and Indirect Taxes

Liaison Bureau France

Europol National Unit: Unité Nationale Europol (UNE), Direction Centrale de la Police Judiciaire, Direction des Relations Internationales (DCPJ-DRI), Nanterre (92 – France)

Representation at Europol: French National Police, 5 ELOs (including 1 ELO assigned to the Support Unit of the European Police Chief Task Force)
National Gendarmerie, 2 ELOs
Customs, 1 ELO

Major achievements in 2008:

The French National Police successfully conducted an investigation, with support from Europol and Eurojust, against a criminal network primarily consisting of Iraqi nationals facilitating illegal immigration into and within Europe. This operation, code-named Baghdad, was one of the largest ever coordinated actions against people smugglers. It involved more than 1,300 police officers in several countries and resulted in 75 arrests.

The French Gendarmerie's investigation team 'Bac-skimming 18' dismantled a group of criminals active in payment card fraud. Several Romanian, Moldovan and Bulgarian nationals were arrested in early 2008 in France. Europol's AWF analysts helped identify the targets and supported the French Gendarmerie on the spot.

A criminal network engaged in credit card fraud at automated petrol stations in France was dismantled in November 2008. The Bulgarian and French law enforcement authorities and Europol participated in this successful operation. It resulted in the arrest of three Bulgarian citizens, and the seizure of more than 400 'white plastics', computers and other criminal assets.

After the French Customs seized 1,250 kg of cigarettes at Cherbourg in 2007, Europol's analysts helped establish links with other seizures and a money laundering investigation in Poland. With the help of Eurojust, the criminal network was dismantled in both countries in May 2008.

In September, with the support of one of AWFs, the French customs led a major international operation code-named Athena, targeting cash couriers. Over 45 million euros were checked and 37 investigations on money laundering were initiated as a result

On 30 November, with the support of Europol (Counter Proliferation Programme), the French police led an international high impact operation code-named Diligence. The operation targeted weapons and explosives, and involved law enforcement authorities from 20 countries.

In October 2008, the Interdepartmental Central Detachment (DCI) organised a seminar on combating chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear terrorism. It was decided that Europol would support the development of a European CBRN database.

During the French Presidency of the EU in the second half of 2008, the French National Police proposed setting up a European alert platform for reporting offences noted on the internet. This proposition was adopted by the European Council on 24 October 2008 and Europol was invited to establish and host this European platform.

Germany

Capital:	Berlin
Population:	82.3 million
Area:	357,092 km ²
Bordering countries:	Denmark, Poland, the Czech Republic, Austria, Switzerland, France, Luxembourg, Belgium, the Netherlands
Coastline:	North Sea (1,760 km) Baltic Sea (1,489 km)
Competent authorities:	Federal Criminal Police Office Federal Police 16 State Police Agencies Central Customs Investigation Office 8 Regional Customs Investigation Offices Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution 16 State Offices for the Protection of the Constitution

Liaison Bureau Germany

Europol National Unit:	Federal Criminal Police Office
Representation at Europol:	Federal Criminal Police Office, 3 ELOs Federal Police, 1 ELO Central Customs Investigation Office, 1 ELO Hamburg State Criminal Police Office, 1 ELO Baden-Wuerttemberg State Criminal Police Office, 1 ELO

Major achievements in 2008:

The increasing exchange of operational information with the other 35 liaison bureaux shows again the essential role played by the German Liaison Bureau in cross-border law enforcement investigations and operations.

Besides the involvement in cross-border surveillances and controlled deliveries, the Liaison Bureau participated in high impact operations and action days in France and Belgium and hosted several operational meetings with the relevant investigation teams from different member states.

The fight against international terrorism is still the focal point of the security policy in the EU. This is reflected in the work of the German Liaison Bureau. With the aim of optimising the information exchange of law enforcement in ongoing investigations, Germany initiated a sub-project within the operational crime analysis on terrorism.

The high workload of the German Liaison Bureau is particularly illustrated by the growing number of cases of international drug trafficking, payment card fraud, facilitation of illegal immigration and other areas of organised crime, that have been dealt with in 2008.

Greece

Capital:	Athens
Population:	10.9 million
Area:	131,957 km ²
Bordering countries:	Albania, FYROM, Bulgaria, Turkey
Coastline:	15,021 km
Competent authorities:	Hellenic Police Hellenic Customs Service Special Financial Investigation Service Hellenic Coastguard

Liaison Bureau Greece

Europol National Unit: Greek Europol National Unit, Athens
Representation at Europol: Hellenic Police, 2 ELOs
Hellenic Customs, 1 ELO
Hellenic Coastguard, 1 ELO

Major achievements in 2008:

In 2008, the Liaison Bureau pursued the objectives set for this year, at both operational and strategic level. A large number of serious international organised crime investigations in Greece, involving more than two member states, were successfully completed. Operations related to drugs, illegal immigration, forgery of money and trafficking in human beings were successfully carried out.

There was also an increase in the exchange of operational information in all forms of organised crime with the other 34 liaison bureaux. The Greek Bureau continued to actively support the analysis work files and other Europol projects, and the number of contributions increased significantly.

Hungary

Capital:	Budapest
Population:	10.4 million
Area:	93,000 km ²
Bordering countries:	Austria, Croatia, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine
Coastline:	None
Competent authorities:	Hungarian National Police Hungarian Customs and Finance Guard

Liaison Bureau Hungary

Europol National Unit:	International Law Enforcement Cooperation Centre, Hungarian National Police HQ, Budapest
Representation at Europol:	Hungarian National Police – 2 ELOs Hungarian Customs and Finance Guard - 1 ELO

Main achievements in 2008:

Continuing the trend of previous years, the number of cases dealt with by the Hungarian Liaison Bureau and the number of international operations organised and coordinated via Europol further increased in 2008. The total number of processed cases reached more than 1,400 files. Since 2005 the Liaison Bureau has received temporary liaison officers within the framework of a training programme on a 3-month rotation basis. The aim of this programme is for the trainees to learn about Europol procedures and its working environment, and to participate in everyday activities. In 2008 all of the Hungarian law enforcement services benefited from the training programme by sending 11 officers to the Liaison Bureau. The rotation programme will continue in 2009 and serves as best practice for other liaison bureaux.

The operational priorities of the work carried out by the Liaison Bureau were similar to those in previous years. The main areas of information exchange were drugs, illegal immigration, forgery of money, fraud (including carousel fraud) and product piracy. The Hungarian Customs and Finance Guard has become an active participant in the MTIC and Copy project at Europol, and the National Police continued its leading role in the COSPOL project on facilitated illegal immigration.

With the support of the Europol mobile office an international organised crime group involved in carousel fraud across Europe was dismantled by the Hungarian Customs and Finance Guard. During the operation eight people were arrested.

The Hungarian Liaison Bureau continued to organise and participate actively in awareness and training programmes, both at Europol and in Hungary, to promote cooperation. In 2008 several operational training programmes, study visits and seminars were held in Hungary on money laundering, facilitated illegal migration, MTIC fraud, cigarette smuggling and non-cash payment crimes.

Ireland

Capital:	Dublin
Population:	4.24 million (2006 Census)
Area:	84,412 km ²
Bordering countries:	United Kingdom
Coastline:	Atlantic Ocean, Celtic Sea and Irish Sea 3,172 km
Competent authorities:	Irish National Police Customs Service

Liaison Bureau Ireland

Europol National Unit: Liaison Section, National Police HQ, Dublin

Representation at Europol: Irish National Police 2 ELOs

Customs Service 1 ELO

Major achievements in 2008:

There was a 26% increase in information exchanged between Ireland and the Europol Information Exchange system from 2007 to 2008. This is an excellent indication of the increase in the level of cooperation between the Irish Liaison Bureau and other liaison bureaux and serious crime units based at Europol (45% increase from 2006 to 2007).

The Irish Bureau has been involved in several international crime initiatives including Operation Storm (Iraqi illegal immigration networks), Operation Pipas (Romanian/Bulgarian ATM fraud OCGs), Operation Koolvis (THB initiative involving Nigerians trafficking children into Europe for the sex industry), and with the Serious Crime Group 5-coordinated Operation Diligence (Counter Proliferation Programme operation against illegal shipments of firearms across European borders).

These operations have significantly advanced the level of cooperation between European member states and Europol against organised crime groups operating in Europe and beyond and have led to many successes, in which Ireland has shared. The Bureau has recently taken the lead role in an AWF on suspicious financial transactions which is directed against a particular organised crime network operating between the Netherlands, Belgium, the UK, Spain and Ireland. This initiative is targeting the assets and money laundering activities of this network.

In addition, the Bureau has cooperated with Europol on Internet organised crime networks dealing in child abuse material and has achieved several successful detections and convictions. Many interesting cases evolved through cooperation with other Europol Liaison Bureaux. Cooperation between member states and non-member states also increased with successful profiling and targeting of ‘Ant’ cigarette smuggling organised crime networks operating between Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Ireland. This led to several controlled deliveries culminating in arrests, seizures and disruption of the smuggling channels.

Ireland is also participating in the North West Regional Hub initiative focused on targeting illegal immigration networks operating between member states located along the north western frontier of Europe.

Italy

Capital:	Rome
Population:	58 million
Area:	301,338 km ²
Bordering countries:	France, Switzerland, Austria, Slovenia, Republic of San Marino, State of the Vatican City
Coastline:	Mediterranean Sea (7,500 km)
Competent authorities:	National Police Carabinieri Corps Finance Corps Penitentiary Police Corps Corps of National Foresters

Liaison Bureau Italy

Europol National Unit: Direzione Centrale Polizia Criminale, Servizio per la Cooperazione Internazionale di Polizia, Rome

Representation at Europol: 3 ELOs:
National Police (1)
Carabinieri Corps (1)
Finance Corps (1)

Major achievements in 2008:

In 2008, the Carabinieri Corps concluded Operation Plastik targeting credit-card cloning by a criminal group made up mainly of Italian nationals, which had operational bases in various European countries, including the UK, Greece and France. A dedicated Europol AWF also contributed to this operation.

In the field of money laundering, the Italian ELO supported Operation Athena, conducted from 10 to 17 September, to combat illicit cross-border money transfers and money laundering. This operation was carried out in Italy by the Finance Corps and involved 19 member states, a candidate country (Norway) and a number of North African countries.

In the fight against drug trafficking, the Italian ELO supported successful operations coordinated in Italy by the Central Drug Enforcement Directorate. The first, Operation Oro Albanese, was carried out by the Finance Corps and resulted in the dismantling of a criminal organisation made up of Albanian, Italian and South American nationals, which ran the trafficking in heroin from Albania and in cocaine from Belgium, and from the Netherlands to Italy. This operation resulted in the arrest of 42 people and the seizure of large quantities of drugs, as well as vehicles, weapons, telephone equipment, money and certificates of credit. The second operation, Black Shoes, was initiated by the State Police in 2002 against a Camorra-type criminal organisation, linked to Nigerian nationals and the Di Lauro clan, and resulted in 54 arrests and the seizure of large quantities of cocaine and heroin.

Latvia

Capital:	Riga
Population:	2.27 million
Area:	64,589 km ²
Bordering countries:	Estonia, Lithuania, Russia, Belarus, Lithuania
Coastline:	Baltic Sea (494 km)
Competent authorities:	State Police Financial Police Department Customs Criminal Board Security Police State Border Guard

Liaison Bureau Latvia

Europol National Unit: Europol National Bureau, Riga

Representation at Europol: State Police, 1 ELO

Major achievements in 2008:

The work of the Latvian Liaison Bureau in 2008 was typified by an increase in operational information exchange and intensified international cooperation. During the year, the Liaison Bureau maintained its primary focus on operational cooperation and related Europol activities. Latvia is also an active member of nine AWFs with the Liaison Bureau either participating in meetings or giving assistance to national experts who attend them.

With the support of the Liaison Officer and the ENU, Latvian law enforcement authorities actively participated in operational information exchange and initiated several cases within the Europol mandate. Most of the information was in the mandated crime areas of child pornography, drugs trafficking, vehicles crimes, fraud and swindling, other means of payment and money laundering.

The excellent cooperation between Europol and Latvia is illustrated by Operation Koala, which started in 2006 and combats child pornography on the Internet. One of the major successes of this activity in 2008 was the Latvian operation Groom, a joint operation with Europol a dedicated AWF, which led to the arrest of the administrator running the website and forum on which the pornographic materials were kept, distributed and advertised worldwide among thousands of members. At the moment, cooperation with Europol is ongoing to further dismantle the worldwide child abuse network involving relevant member states and third states.

In 2008, the competent Latvian authorities successfully used the Europol platform in a number of joint operations.

Lithuania

Capital:	Vilnius
Population:	3.36 million
Area:	65,300 km ²
Bordering countries:	Latvia, Belarus, Poland, Russia
Coastline:	Baltic Sea (90 km)
Competent authorities:	Police Department State Border Guard Service Customs Department State Security Department Financial Crime Investigation Service Special Investigation Service

Liaison Bureau Lithuania

Europol National Unit:	Lithuanian Criminal Police Bureau (LCPB)
Representation at Europol:	Police Department, 2 ELOs Customs Department, 1 ELO

Major achievements in 2008:

In 2008, Lithuanian organised crime groups were internationally active mainly in the fields of illicit production and trafficking in drugs, smuggling of cigarettes, distribution of counterfeit euros, other means of payment and thefts in Scandinavian countries (mostly Norway, Sweden), the United Kingdom, France and Germany. There were a number of successful operations in which the Police, Border Guard and Customs assisted other countries with surveillance in Lithuania.

The main task of the Lithuanian Liaison Bureau was to provide assistance to both national and foreign competent authorities and Europol, and to exchange intelligence and coordinate joint operations in the fight against organised crime. A large number of serious international organised crime investigations in EU and non-EU countries, involving more than two member states, were successfully completed due to the efficient operation of the liaison officers' network at Europol.

An awareness seminar was organised for heads of district prosecutors' offices and heads of the Lithuanian Criminal Police Bureau.

Luxembourg

Capital:	Luxembourg (City)
Population:	470,000
Area:	2,586 km ²
Bordering countries:	Germany, France, Belgium
Coastline:	None
Competent authorities:	Grand-Ducale Police Customs Administration

Liaison Bureau Luxembourg

Europol National Unit: Judicial Police
Representation at Europol: Judicial Police, 2 ELOs

Major achievements in 2008:

In 2008 the Luxembourg Liaison Bureau experienced a slight decrease of about 3% in requests received and replies sent out. There was an increase of 23% in requests sent out by Luxembourg.

The Bureau's main activities took place in relation to the AWF on trafficking in human beings and outlaw motorcycle gangs. Luxembourg participates in seven AWFs.

Luxembourg also participated in the two COSPOL projects Cocaine and Trafficking in Human Beings.

In 2008, the Luxembourg National Unit started to input data into the Information System.

Malta

Capital: Valletta
Population: 410,000
Area: 316 km²
Bordering countries: None
Coastline: 136 km (Malta)
43 km (Gozo)
Competent authorities: Maltese Police Force
Customs Department
Maltese Armed Forces

Liaison Bureau Malta

Europol National Unit: Maltese Police, Floriana

Representation at Europol: Maltese Police, 1 ELO (also represents other Maltese agencies)

Major achievements in 2008:

In 2008, the Maltese Liaison Bureau was involved in a number of international investigations, mostly related to drugs trafficking, fraud, forgery of money, money laundering and trafficking in human beings.

Malta has continued to participate in seven Europol AWFs on terrorism, payment card fraud, money laundering, networks involved in the distribution over the internet of material depicting the sexual abuse of children, the counterfeiting of the euro currency, and cigarette smuggling. In July 2008, Malta also took up the chairmanship of the HENU group for a period of one year, thereby contributing tangibly to the general coordination of operational matters within the Europol framework. The work related to this chairmanship is being undertaken mostly through the Liaison Bureau. Throughout 2008, the Bureau also participated in a number of strategic and operational meetings concerning Europol, fulfilling its role as a proactive interface between the organisation and the competent authorities in Malta. In November and December, the Liaison Bureau participated in the high impact operation Diligence, involving the Maltese Police, Customs and Armed Forces.

The Netherlands

Capital: Amsterdam
Population: 16.5 million (European part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands)
Area: 41,526 km²
Bordering countries: Germany, Belgium
Coastline: North Sea (415 km)

Competent authorities: Dutch Police
Fiscal and Economical Crime Squad
Royal Marechaussee (military police)
Special law enforcement agencies

Liaison Bureau of the Netherlands

Europol National Unit: KLPD, Dinpol (International police cooperation unit),
Zoetermeer

Representation at Europol: Police (national and regional), 5 ELOs
(including the head of the liaison bureau)
Fiscal and Economical Crime Squad,
1 ELO
Royal Marechaussee, 1 ELO

Major achievements in 2008:

In 2008 the volume of information exchange cases once again increased. The majority of these cases were in the area of drug trafficking, and almost 75% of the information exchange was within the unique liaison network at Europol. The Dutch Liaison Bureau has supported a large number of controlled deliveries, cross-border surveillances, etc.

The Dutch Police Academy started a large-scale awareness and promotion program of Europol and its services and the liaison bureau and the Dutch Europol National Unit are actively involved in this.

Europol, and particularly the dedicated AWF, support the initiative of the member states in the North West region, as mentioned in the OCTA (the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Ireland, Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands) to perform extra and in-depth investigations on trafficking in human beings and exploitation.

The highly labour-intensive investigation Malachiet into a suspected terrorist attack in the Netherlands was supported by Europol with staff and a mobile office.

The various COSPOL projects in which the Netherlands is the driver (synthetic drugs), co-driver (cocaine) or forerunner (e.g. heroin and trafficking of human beings) have proved to be effective in promoting the further and better use of Europol and its services.

The Liaison Bureau was actively involved in several high-impact operations and action days.

Poland

Capital:	Warsaw
Population:	38.1 million
Area:	312,680 km ²
Bordering countries:	Germany, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania, Russia (Kaliningrad Region)
Coastline:	Baltic Sea (528 km)
Competent authorities:	National Police Border Guard Internal Security Agency Customs Service Central Anticorruption Bureau

Liaison Bureau Poland

Europol National Unit:	General Headquarters of the Polish National Police, Warsaw
Representation at Europol:	National Police, 3 ELOs

Major achievements in 2008:

In 2008, the Polish Liaison Bureau provided continuous assistance to both national and foreign competent authorities and Europol. Most of the information exchange concerned fraud with use of electronic means of payment, forgery of money and drug trafficking. The Liaison Bureau was also involved in organising a number of awareness sessions, in particular for the Heads of Unit of the Central Bureau of Investigation of the Polish National Police, which took place in April.

Portugal

Capital:	Lisbon
Population:	10.6 million
Area:	92,400 km ²
Bordering countries:	Spain
Coastline:	Atlantic Ocean (1,793 km)
Competent authorities:	Judicial Police Public Security Police National Republican Guard Aliens and Borders Service Portuguese Customs

Liaison Bureau Portugal

Europol National Unit:	Judicial Police, Central Department of International Cooperation
Representation at Europol:	Judicial Police, 2 ELOs

Major achievements in 2008:

In 2008, the Portuguese Liaison Bureau was involved in the exchange of information related to major ongoing investigations in all fields of organised crime, with a special emphasis on drug trafficking, terrorism, child pornography, cybercrime and bank card fraud.

The Portuguese Judicial Police provided information to a dedicated AWF related to a major case of credit-card skimming. The cards were cloned in Portuguese ATM machines and the counterfeits used in the London area. The Liaison Bureau continues to support the investigators in their efforts to conclude the case successfully and dismantle this criminal organisation.

The Liaison Bureau also participated in the planning and coordination stages of an operation conducted by the Spanish Police involving several member states and which relied on the support of Europol and Eurojust. This operation led to the dismantling of a network of traffickers of human beings operating from Ukraine. The Portuguese Aliens and Borders Service participated in the operation and several suspects were arrested in Portugal.

In addition the Bureau supported another important EU joint operation targeting firearms trafficking across the external borders of the European Union and the illegal movement of firearms within the EU.

The Liaison Bureau and the Head of the Portuguese Europol National Unit ensured that cooperation with our national member at Eurojust remained at an optimum level. Through the ENU, close cooperation has also been maintained between Portugal's competent national law enforcement authorities and Europol, the other member states and third states.

In 2008 our national experts improved the quantity and quality of the data supplied to the analysis work files in which Portugal participates.

The competent departments of the Judicial Police are deeply committed to implementing the national data loader that is now in its final stage and is expected to increase significantly the input of information in the Europol Information System.

Romania

Capital:	Bucharest
Population:	22.3 million
Area:	238,390 km ²
Bordering countries:	Hungary, Ukraine, Moldova, Bulgaria, Serbia
Coastline:	Black Sea (193.5 km)
Competent authorities:	General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police General Inspectorate of the Romanian Border Police National Customs Authority Romanian Gendarmerie Romanian Intelligence Service General Prosecutor's Office General Directorate for Intelligence and Internal Protection

Liaison Bureau Romania

Europol National Unit:	Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reform, International Police Cooperation Centre, Bucharest
Representation at Europol:	Romanian Police, 2 ELOs

Major achievements in 2008:

In 2008, the Romanian Liaison Bureau focused on both strategic and operational activities.

Strategically, the Liaison Bureau's activities centred on achieving the commitments assumed under the Europol Enlargement Project and supporting the Romanian authorities in completing the statute of a full member of Europol. The Bureau also constantly supported the Romanian delegates to the Management Board and the activities of the Romanian representatives in different JHA Council fora.

Operationally, the Romanian Liaison Bureau continued to support the Romanian law enforcement authorities and Europol. The main crime areas supported were payment card fraud, fraud and swindling, drugs trafficking and trafficking in human beings. The Bureau was also actively involved in the AWFs, being one of the main contributors to the AWFs on payment card fraud and networks involved in heroin trafficking and making valuable contributions to other AWFs such as those on euro counterfeiting, illicit tobacco smoke and facilitated illegal immigration.

Slovakia

Capital:	Bratislava
Population:	5.4 million
Area:	49,034 km ²
Bordering countries:	Austria, Czech Republic, Poland, Ukraine, Hungary
Coastline:	None
Competent authorities:	Police Force of the Slovak Republic Customs Administration of the Slovak Republic

Liaison Bureau Slovakia

Europol National Unit: Slovak Police, Bratislava

Representation at Europol: Slovak Police – Police Force Presidium, 2 ELOs

Major achievements in 2008:

Slovakia's participation in joint operations like Trufas (fight against illegal immigration) and the high impact operation Diligence (a multi-agency operation focused on illegal arms and ammunition) has shown its team spirit and willingness to cooperate effectively.

A tailor-made awareness meeting on the AWF MTIC (missing trader intra community fraud) was organised in Bratislava in December. This will encourage the relevant Slovak authorities to make use of the AWF. A similar session on another AWF is in the pipeline for the beginning of 2009.

A variety of positive impacts are expected from the ENU staff visit to Europol in December. ENU police officers enjoyed direct contact with experts from a number of serious crime units and AWFs.

In addition to operational activities the Slovak Liaison Bureau has brought Europol closer to the competent Slovak authorities. The visits to Europol by decision-makers from the Organised Crime Bureau, Anti-Corruption Bureau and Criminal Police and Investigation Bureau were viewed very positively.

Together with the Forgery of Money Unit we have concentrated our efforts on activities relating to the introduction of the euro in Slovakia as of 1 January 2009. Three activities were presented to a wide audience in Slovakia: presentation of a Risk Assessment on the introduction of the euro, training on the fight against euro forgery, and an awareness session dedicated to activities related to other means of payment.

Furthermore, we have taken a major step forward in developing of our national data loader. We expect to be able to supply the Information System automatically with Slovak data from 2009.

To promote Europol in the law enforcement environment and ensure higher quality applications from Slovakia a human resources session was organised in Bratislava in October. Thanks to the trainers from Europol, Slovakia is ready to contribute more effectively to the pool of potential candidates for Europol staff.

With the aim of using opportunity to second a national expert to Europol, the Slovak Liaison Bureau has collected information and experience on this topic. The preparation could be finalised in 2009, including the necessary human and financial resources.

Slovenia

Capital:	Ljubljana
Population:	2 million
Area:	20,273 km ²
Bordering countries:	Austria, Hungary, Croatia and Italy
Coastline:	Adriatic Sea (43 km)
Competent authorities:	National Police Customs Administration Office for Money Laundering Prevention

Liaison Bureau Slovenia

Europol National Unit: General Police Directorate
Criminal Police Directorate, Ljubljana

Representation at Europol: National Police

Major achievements in 2008:

During the Slovenian Presidency of the EU, the Slovenian police enhanced cooperation with Europol. We began to take an active part in implementing the proposal for gradual introduction of South East Europe Organised Crime Threat Assessment (SEE OCTA). Within the framework of cooperation with Europol, professional training was organised for SECI analysts who will participate in the process of framing the SEE OCTA.

Also in 2008, Europol continued to provide operational and analytical support to the Slovenian investigation of the SKB Banka robbery, including a high quality and extensive intelligence analysis report. The report and the meeting of AWF analysts with Slovenian investigators and analysts in the middle of the year, represent an important contribution by Europol in investigating the biggest bank robbery in Slovenian history.

In accordance with the conclusions of the chairman adopted at the February meeting of the Terrorism Working Group, within the framework of the dossier on Transfer of EU good practices regarding the area of combating terrorism to the Western Balkans, the Slovenian Police organised a two-day meeting of counter-terrorism experts in March 2008 in Slovenia, jointly with Europol.

The Slovenian Criminal Police, in close cooperation with Europol organised a seminar for high level experts on property crime for competent authorities from the countries of former Yugoslavia, which was held in Slovenia in November 2008. The seminar aimed to monitor and process data on perpetrators of property crimes in the Balkan region and to monitor other major organised groups carrying out property crimes in the EU.

Spain

Capital:	Madrid
Population:	46 million
Area:	504,645 km ²
Bordering countries:	France, Portugal, Andorra and Morocco
Coastline:	Atlantic Ocean, Mediterranean Sea (7,921 km)
Competent authorities:	National Police Civil Guard Customs Surveillance Directorate Regional Police Forces

Liaison Bureau Spain

Europol National Unit:	National Police, Madrid
Representation at Europol:	National Police, 5 ELOs Civil Guar, 1 ELO

Major achievements in 2008:

The Spanish Liaison Bureau was involved in diverse ongoing investigations during 2008, particularly in the field of forgery of money, fraud, illegal immigration and terrorist activities. Regarding counterfeit currency, Europol's support was decisive in Operations Coca Cola, Francia and Aldaba, carried out in Colombia and resulting in several arrests as well as the seizure of huge amounts of counterfeit euro notes and other currencies.

In 2008 Spain led Operation Pipas, which targeted a transnational organised crime group of Romanian nationals involved in skimming activities. This operation, with the involvement of several member states, resulted in a considerable number of searches and arrests in our country. Spain conducted Operation Nilo, which addressed swindles committed by the 'Nigerian Letters fraudsters', sharing its experience on this field with the British authorities, who are also tackling this type of criminality.

With regard to counterterrorism issues, in general terms Spain has substantially improved both its quantitative and qualitative contributions to Europol, establishing a new procedure to optimise data sent to TE-SAT. In this specific crime field, Spain requested a Europol mobile office twice, both in the frame of Islamic counterterrorism operations (Cantata and Submarino), testing once again the added value of the Europol analytical tools. In the field of illegal immigration Spain successfully developed Operation Trufas, with the solid support of an on-the-spot Europol mobile office, producing a significant number of cross-check results. Eurojust was also involved in its role of judicial coordination.

The Spanish Liaison Bureau has also participated in considerably more information exchanges in general and controlled deliveries in particular, mainly offered by the United Kingdom, most of which were successfully concluded.

Sweden

Capital: Stockholm
Population: 9.2 million
Area: 449,964 km²
Bordering countries: Finland, Norway
Coastline: Baltic Sea (3,218 km)

Competent authorities: National Police
National Economic Crime Authority
Coastguard
Customs Service

Liaison Bureau Sweden

Europol National Unit: National Criminal Police, International Police Cooperation Division, Europol and Intelligence Unit

Representation at Europol: National Criminal Police, 2 ELOs
Customs Service, 1 ELO

Major achievements in 2008:

The positive trend of more cases being opened by the Swedish Liaison Bureau continued in 2008 and operational cooperation with other member states improved. The case flow is continuously increasing and cooperation with Europol is constantly getting better.

The activities of the Liaison Bureau have mainly been focused on the mandated areas of drug trafficking, trafficking in human beings, illegal immigration and other means of payment. There has been a marked change in the area of illegal immigration, where activities have increased noticeably.

Several operations were carried out, which would not have been as successful if the member states concerned had not used Europol's channels. The success of the investigations was also due to the cooperation with Eurojust and the use of bilateral Nordic liaison officers. In addition, a number of other operations took place, where the Swedish police and customs assisted other countries with surveillance in the country.

Cooperation with the Swedish representative at Eurojust is developing positively and takes place at a very high level.

The number of information visits to Europol and the Swedish Liaison Bureau is still very high. The competent authorities in Sweden are encouraged to use Europol's resources. A part of this is the trainee programme for regional police authorities in Sweden. The programme has turned out so well that there are plans of making it permanent.

In 2008, to make the transfer of information to Europol more effective Sweden activated the automatic transfer of data to the Europol Information System. The Criminal Intelligence Service in Sweden can now search and automatically transfer information to the EIS. The internal work at the Swedish Liaison Bureau has been adapted to improving the quality of the flow and exchange of information.

United Kingdom

Capital:	London
Population:	61 million
Area:	244,820 km ²
Bordering countries:	Republic of Ireland
Coastline:	North Sea, English Channel, Irish Sea and Atlantic Ocean (12,500 km)
Competent authorities:	Police services of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland Serious Organised Crime Agency Scottish Crime and Drugs Enforcement Agency UK Border Agency HM Revenue and Customs

Liaison Bureau United Kingdom

Europol National Unit:	Serious Organised Crime Agency, London
Representation at Europol:	Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) 1 Head of Unit, 3 ELOs, 2 support staff Metropolitan Police Service 2 ELOs HM Revenue and Customs 1 ELO Scottish Crime and Drugs Enforcement Agency 1 ELO

Major achievements in 2008:

The UK now has the largest Liaison Bureau in Europol, with a staff of ten.

The UK was instrumental in supporting the opening of the new AWF on MTIC with 13 countries. This followed on from the successful conclusion of Operation Tangelo, an HMRC investigation into MTIC fraud. As a result of the investigation, 23 persons were arrested, approx £850,000 cash seized, £5.5 million of assets restrained and VAT assessments totalling £11 million raised against two principals.

In February 2008, the Liaison Bureau facilitated intelligence exchange to Operation Greensea, a Metropolitan Police Service-led operation in close cooperation with France and Belgium targeting a Turkish / Chinese criminal network involved in illegal immigration. Thirteen arrests were made.

Operation Eaglewood was an MPS investigation into drug trafficking and money laundering activities of a major organised crime group. The UK Bureau provided support involving bilateral exchanges with the Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, Ireland and Belgium. There were 22 arrests in February with 125 kg of cocaine, two firearms and £0.5 million in cash recovered. During the investigation it emerged that Bureaux de Change were being utilised to obtain high denomination euros for transfer to the Netherlands and Spain. €220,000 was subsequently seized in Spain and there was a further arrest and the seizure of £1.5 million, a handgun and 50 rounds of ammunition in the UK.

In March during Operation Rival, seven kilograms of cocaine and £25,000 in cash were seized and seven persons arrested. The cocaine was sourced from the Netherlands/Belgium.

In May Operation Crunk resulted in the seizure of 260 kg of amphetamines and the arrest of two UK nationals in the Netherlands. In the UK there were four further arrests and the seizure of four kilograms of cocaine.

In July Operation Fizz, a SOCA-led operation involving surveillance in the Netherlands and Belgium, resulted in the seizure of 109 kg of amphetamines and three arrests.

Cooperation between the UK and EU partners led to 29 controlled deliveries of contraband detected in transit through UK airports and resulted in the seizure of over 77 kg of drugs, the recovery of a handgun, 35 arrests and the discovery of a cocaine-processing facility in Spain.

6.3 Third parties' liaison bureaux activities

Australia

Capital:	Canberra
Population:	21.4 million
Area:	7,741,200 km ²
Bordering countries:	None
Coastline:	Indian and Pacific Oceans (34,218 km)

Competent authorities: Australian Federal Police
Australian Customs Service
Australian Crime Commission
New South Wales Police
Victoria Police
Queensland Police
Western Australia Police
Northern Territory Police
South Australia Police
Tasmania Police

Liaison Bureau Australia

Europol National Unit: Australian Federal Police, Canberra, ACT, Australia

Representation at Europol: Australian Federal Police, 1 ELO

Major achievements in 2008:

Since commencing its work at Europol in May 2007, Australia has become affiliated to three AWFs and has been approved by the Analysis Group to be affiliated to two more AWFs. Australia continues to provide relevant and significant intelligence to these work files and many others.

As a sign of the continued close cooperation between Europol and Australia, high level meetings took place between the Europol directorate and senior Australian parliamentary ministers and police officials.

During 2008, the Australian Federal Police National Unit also conducted numerous information sessions around Australia explaining the role and advantages of utilising the Europol Australia desk and the Europol analysis work files. In addition, Australia has facilitated the attendance of Europol staff to Australian intelligence colloquia and of Australian Federal Police staff to Europol courses.

These initiatives have significantly contributed to an improvement in awareness amongst Australian law enforcement agencies about the role of Europol in the fight against organised crime and resulted in an increase in intelligence exchange between Europol and Australia.

In relation to specific operational matters, in August 2008, the German *Zollkriminalamt* seized approximately 2.4 kg of cocaine destined for Australia. Both the Australian and German Liaison Bureaux actively assisted in the exchange of intelligence, which resulted in a successful controlled delivery in Australia and the arrest of two suspects. This was the first time that the Australian Liaison Bureau at Europol had been deployed to achieve such a successful result.

Croatia

Capital:	Zagreb
Population:	4.4 million
Area:	56,542 km ²
Bordering countries:	Slovenia, Hungary, Montenegro, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Coastline:	Adriatic Sea (5,835 km)

Competent authorities: National Police
Customs Directorate
Tax Directorate
Office for Combating Money Laundering

Liaison Bureau Croatia

Europol National Unit: Europol Section, International Police Cooperation Department, Ministry of the Interior, Zagreb

Representation at Europol: National Police, 1 ELO

Major achievements in 2008:

The operational agreement between the Republic of Croatia and Europol entered into force in August 2006, and since March 2008 a Croatian Liaison Officer has been posted at Europol headquarters in The Hague.

In operational terms, during 2008 Croatian law enforcement agencies established full cooperation with Europol in information exchange.

Furthermore, they have participated in several successful international investigations conducted in cooperation with Europol by exchanging information.

One activity worth special mention is the joint investigation Operation Optičar on other means of payment, conducted with seven participating countries and with full operational support by Europol.

In the strategic area of cooperation, the Republic of Croatia finalised its activities in relation to participation in two AWFs. In addition, experts from the Croatian General Police Directorate participated regularly in training courses, expert meetings and seminars organised by Europol.

Colombia

Capital:	Bogotá
Population:	41.47 million
Area:	2,070,408 km ² (1,141,748 km ² in the continental area and 928,662 km ² in the maritime area)
Bordering countries:	Venezuela, Brazil, Peru, Ecuador and Panama
Coastline:	Pacific Ocean (1,300 km) and Caribbean Sea (1,600 km)
Competent authorities:	National Police of Colombia General Attorney General Prosecutor Office

Liaison Bureau Colombia

Europol National Unit:	National Police of Colombia, Bogotá
Represented at EUROPOL:	National Police of Colombia, 3 ELOS

Major Achievements in 2008:

In 2008, the Liaison Bureau worked together with Europol on a number of important tasks required to prepare for the signing of the agreement on operational cooperation. Of particular significance were two visits by Europol legal affairs services to the Netherlands and Colombia, during which the bases for the data protection report for implementation of the agreement was obtained.

During the year, Europol trainers supported the competent authorities from Colombia and other Latin American and Caribbean countries by giving an important course on money counterfeiting. The course was given in Bogotá and attended by 39 officials from Colombia and neighbouring countries, united in Ameripol.

In the same period, Europol was visited by the Deputy Colombian Minister of Defence, the new Colombian Ambassador to the Netherlands and high-ranking officers from the Army and the National Police.

Europol supported the first international seminar on Criminal Intelligence developed by Colombia, to construct the vision, concepts and features of this activity from the models applied in other countries of the world.

Despite only having an agreement on strategic cooperation, Colombia contributed to operational tasks by leading, jointly with BIBE (Spain) and Europol, the most important operation against the counterfeit of money, resulting in the seizure of 11 million counterfeit euros.

Finally the contributions of the Liaison Bureau, including analyses, reports and information for the project LOGO, and the system analysis on bombs of Europol and all liaison bureaux, call for greater responsibility in maintaining and providing data and to improving the identification of new tendencies in transnational crime.

Iceland

Capital:	Reykjavik
Population:	313,000
Area:	103,000 km ²
Bordering countries:	None
Coastline:	4,970 km

Competent authorities: National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police, 15 regional police districts

Liaison Bureau Iceland

Europol Contact Point: Europol National Unit, National Police Commissioner

Representation at Europol: National Police Commissioner, 1 ELO

Major achievements in 2008:

The Icelandic law enforcement authorities experienced very positive and fruitful cooperation with Europol and different partners through the Icelandic Liaison Bureau in 2008.

Iceland joined its first Europol analysis work file as a full and formal member and an application process to join another AWF is under way.

A considerable increase in the flow of criminal intelligence between Iceland and Europol's databases and partners revealed numerous organised crime linkages between serious international criminals and Icelandic nationals. As a direct consequence, the Icelandic police authorities participated in a number of cross-border investigations and operations, coordinated through the Liaison Bureau.

Europol provided experts to run two one-week operational courses in Iceland: an Operational Analysis Course and a course on Investigations of Payment Card Fraud.

In December the Icelandic Minister of Justice invited the Director of Europol to visit Iceland in April 2009 to discuss the experience and results of the first two years of the Icelandic Liaison Bureau at Europol and future cooperation.

Since September 2008 Europol experts and analysts have supported the Icelandic police authorities in a very successful investigation into the production of synthetic drugs in Iceland. The investigation, code-named Operation Einstein, resulted in the seizure of a sophisticated drug laboratory in the town of Hafnarfjordur. Considerable quantities of synthetic drugs were seized, the laboratory was dismantled and the key suspects were arrested. Given the laboratory's production capabilities it is suspected that the drugs were intended for the European market.

Norway

Capital:	Oslo
Population:	4.7 million
Area:	386,433 km ²
Bordering countries:	Sweden, Finland, Russia
Coastline:	North Sea, Norwegian Sea, Barents Sea (25,148 km)
Competent authorities:	National Criminal Investigation Service (KRIPOS) National Authority for Investigation and Prosecution of Economic and Environmental Crime (ØKOKRIM) Norwegian Customs Police Security Service Headquarters (PST)

Liaison Bureau Norway

Europol National Unit: Europol National Unit, KRIPOS, Oslo

Representation at Europol: 2 ELOs
Customs (1)
Police (1)

Major achievements in 2008:

In January 2008 three Polish criminals were convicted for forgery of money offences, after excellent cooperation and assistance from specific AWFs at Europol and information exchange with Finland. Several skimming cases were detected as a result of information provided via Europol, also leading to arrests in Ireland. Several cases related to arrests of drugs couriers in Norway prove to be connected after the exchange of information, and investigations on the organisers have been initiated both in Norway and Germany.

Information exchanged with Norway led to a large seizure of cannabis in Sweden. A major THB case relating to Irish and UK nationals being exploited by British asphalt companies (forced labour) was successfully conducted in close cooperation with the UK and concluded with the first conviction in Norway under the section 224 of the Norwegian Penal Code.

Close cooperation with Lithuania in a Norwegian murder case revealed the use of false identities, and a criminal network heavily involved in THB in Norway. Several cases of Latvian couriers smuggling cigarettes to Ireland were detected in Norway, leading to arrests in Ireland.

Switzerland

Capital:	Bern
Population:	7.5 million
Area:	41,285 km ²
Bordering countries:	Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Liechtenstein
Coastline:	None
Competent authorities:	Federal Office of Police (fedpol) Central Commando Border Guard Corps (part of the Federal Customs Administration)

Liaison Bureau Switzerland

Europol National Unit:	Federal Office of Police International Police Cooperation Division / Bern
-------------------------------	--

Representation at Europol:	Federal Office of Police, 2 ELOs
-----------------------------------	----------------------------------

Major achievements in 2008:

In 2008, the UEFA European football championships were co-hosted by Switzerland and Austria. As this event was of Europe-wide importance, there was a strong focus on security leading up to and during the organisation of the competition. There was a special focus on measures to prevent the risk of supporters attending the event and, in this respect, effective cooperation at international level played a key role. In addition to risk supporters, the security operation at this tournament also focused on the fight against forced prostitution. Spectators, as well as the general public, were kept informed of this issue through advertisements and other campaigns. Both host countries were able to count on the support of Europol. Prior to and throughout the event the level of cooperation was excellent. Switzerland welcomes such collaboration for future events.

Further progress was achieved in the field of AWF cooperation. Switzerland is at present a full member of three AWFs. Further associations with other AWFs are currently under review.

An important role of the Swiss Liaison Bureau is to ensure that information exchanged is of high quality. To further enhance and increase information exchange with Europol, Switzerland has undertaken several initiatives including advertising Europol's role and products on the secure Swiss Intranet, which is accessible by Swiss Police officers, and conducting awareness programmes for both the Swiss Federal Police and the Swiss Cantonal Police.

As a result of these initiatives, the information exchange between Europol and Switzerland has expanded substantially. This has led to an increase in cooperation between Europol, member states and Switzerland, particularly in respect of illegal immigration and trafficking of human beings.

In the near future Switzerland and Europol will conclude a confidentiality agreement (table of equivalence) which will further strengthen and simplify the exchange of classified information.

United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)

Headquarters: Arlington, Virginia

Representation at Europol: 1 LO

Major achievements in 2008:

DEA's 'operational' relationship at Europol continued in 2008, and became even stronger with the inclusion of the DEA into the synthetic drug AWF and the cocaine AWF. Europol synthetic drug experts and DEA agents began collaborative efforts in 2008 under DEA Operation Counter-Curse, focusing on the worldwide distribution of synthetic drugs and the precursor chemicals utilised in their production. Intelligence gathered as part of this operation has been successfully contributed to and analysed under the synthetic drug AWF.

In October of this year, Europol synthetic drug experts provided training to 16 US and foreign-based DEA agents, relating to clandestine synthetic drug production. Further, in December, Europol executives joined the DEA management in Quantico, Virginia to dedicate DEA's new clandestine lab training facility. At this dedication, Europol was recognised for its generous efforts in providing the DEA training academy with operational MDMA and amphetamine laboratories, to be utilised in the training of law enforcement partners from agencies around world.

In addition, in late 2008, DEA and Europol dedicated AWF began formally exchanging information relating to the international cocaine trade, focusing on South American drug cartels whose trafficking efforts affect not only the European Union (EU) and the United States (US), but many other areas of the world. This cooperation will continue to grow in 2009 with the foreseen further exchange of information relating to the labelling and packaging of cocaine shipments.

Joint intelligence exchange efforts between the DEA and Europol continued to grow in 2008, with Europol making valuable contributions to ongoing DEA investigations, and DEA being able to supplement intelligence utilised in EU-related investigations. The growing relationship and intelligence exchange between DEA and Europol has proven a mutually valuable asset in attacking the global, illicit drug trade.

United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS)
Global Security and Investigation Division

Headquarters: Washington D.C.

Representation at Europol: 1 LO

Major achievements in 2008:

On 16 June 2008, the first permanent USPIS Liaison Officer arrived at Europol. The central priority in the first year, as a permanent member, was to build and strengthen bases and contacts for future cooperation. Furthermore, USPIS sought to increase the exchange of operational information with all the members of Europol.

USPIS is the federal law enforcement branch of the US Postal Service. The mission of the USPIS is to protect the US Postal Service, its employees, and its customers from criminal attack, and protect the nation's mail system from criminal misuse. USPIS conducts investigations that may adversely affect or fraudulently use the US Postal system or postal employees, including assaults, bombs, burglary, child exploitation, controlled substances, counterfeit stamps, money orders, destruction and obstruction of delay mail, electronic crimes, extortion, identity theft, lotteries, mail fraud, money laundering, robbery, and theft of mail.

Cooperation between USPIS, Europol and EU member states is expected to increase as the networks are strengthened. It is further anticipated that the exchange of operational information with the members of Europol will substantially increase in 2009.

ICPO INTERPOL

General Secretariat: Lyon, France

Representation at Europol: 1 LO

Major achievements in 2008:

In 2008 INTERPOL continued its liaison relationship with Europol and the member states' liaison bureaux with a view to increase and intensify the cooperation.

The Deputy Director of Europol and the Executive Director Police Services of INTERPOL met twice in 2008 to discuss cooperation matters between the two organisations, at Europol Headquarters in The Hague on 17 January and at the INTERPOL Secretariat General in Lyon on 6 June.

The INTERPOL/Europol exchange programme, started in 2007, was continued in 2008. Seven Europol and five INTERPOL officers were given the opportunity to increase their awareness of their counterpart organisation and to promote cooperation.

On 22 July 2008 the Director of Europol and the Secretary General of INTERPOL met in Lyon. On that occasion the SG signed two arrangements making INTERPOL an associate member to two Europol AWFs. INTERPOL is currently associated to four AWFs. Furthermore an amended Memorandum of Understanding on the use and tasks of the INTERPOL and Europol liaison officers was signed by the Director of Europol and the Secretary General of INTERPOL.

INTERPOL and Europol representatives participated in a large number of working meetings at the offices of both organisations and increased the exchange of operational information.

INTERPOL participated as an observer in the Heads of Europol National Unit meetings in The Hague and contributed to the 2009 OCTA and ROCTA.
