

EUROPOL

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ANNUAL REPORT

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Director's Foreword

It is my pleasure to present the Annual Report 2004. Over the last year efforts have been made in order to assist the EU Member States and our co-operation partners in the fight against serious organised crime and terrorism in the best possible way.

In the aftermath of the Madrid attacks in March, the main priority was set on the fight against terrorism. The Counter Terrorism Task Force was reactivated and focused on the organisations involved in the perpetration of terrorist attacks.

The efforts to improve information exchange and intelligence analysis allowed Europol to target criminal organisations involved in criminal areas such as drugs trafficking, illegal immigration, trafficking in human beings and financial crime.

Successful actions against criminal structures are highly dependent on the information exchange between Europol and the Member States through the Europol Liaison Bureaux. Compared to 2003 there was a substantial increase in the information flow through Europol. Around 154,000 operational messages were exchanged.

The enlargement of the European Union has a great and positive impact on Europol's activities. As initially foreseen, nine out of ten new Member States were fully integrated into Europol's structure by the end of 2004.

In the area of Euro currency counterfeiting contributions were made to several successful operations. Europol's role in this area will also be strengthened by the amended Europol Convention, and from the Draft Council Decision of designating Europol as the Central Office of the European Union for Euro counterfeits.

The strategy on external relations has led to new partners. Europol has signed co-operation agreements with Turkey, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and Switzerland. Simultaneously, contacts have been established with other countries with a view to initiating the necessary procedures to sign co-operation agreements.

At the December Management Board Meeting, a decision for the further development of the Europol Information System was taken. The system is expected to be fully operational, including the use of interfaces in all Member States, until the end of 2006.

An important development for the future is the transformation of the EU Organised Crime Report into an Organised Crime Threat Assessment. Another challenge on the way forward is to share responsibilities and information with other EU key institutions such as Eurojust, OLAF, the Border Management Agency and the EU Joint Situation Centre (Sitcen). However, since organised crime does not stop at borders a close co-operation with worldwide organisations such as Interpol and the World Customs Organisation (WCO) is of utmost importance.

The interest of national authorities in Europol has increased as reflected by the growing number of visits to the premises seeking information about Europol's activities. In 2004, Europol welcomed more than 300 delegations from different countries and international organisations. In total we had 9,300 visitors including external participants in operational meetings held in Europol headquarters in The Hague.

Max-Peter Ratzel
Director of Europol



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AWF	Analysis Work Files
BDS	Bomb Disposal System
BSC	Balanced Score Card
CBRN-RAS	Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear Rapid Alert System
COSPOL	Comprehensive Operational Strategic Planning for the Police
CTTF	Counter Terrorism Task Force
DMS	Document Management System
EELS	Europol Ecstasy Logo System
EEOC	East European Organised Crime
EILCS	Europol Illicit Laboratory Comparison System
EIS	Europol Information System
EJUP	European Joint Unit on Precursors
ELO	Europol Liaison Officer
ENUs	Europol National Units
EUVID	European Vehicle Identification Database
EU-OCR	EU Organised Crime Report
EurOPs	Europol Operations Portal system
EU	European Union
EWM	Early Warning Message
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
HENUs	Heads of Europol National Units
ITIL	IT Infrastructure Library
JHA	Justice and Home Affairs
JIT	Joint Investigation Team
LEAs	Law Enforcement Agencies
MSOPES	Member States Operational Project with Europol Support
NGOs	Non Governmental Organisations
OASIS	Overall Analysis System for Intelligence and Support
OC	Organised Crime
OMCG	Outlaw Motorcycle Groups
PCTF	Police Chiefs Task Force
SECI-Centre	Southeast European Co-operative Initiative (SECI) Regional Centre for Organised Crime
TE-SAT	Terrorism Situation and Trend Report
THB	Trafficking in human beings

The aim of Europol is to improve the effectiveness and co-operation between the competent authorities of the Member States in preventing and combating serious international organised crime¹. The mission of Europol is to make a significant contribution to the European Union's lawenforcement action against organised crime, with an emphasis on targeting criminal organisations.

1.1. Crime priority areas in 2004

The priorities for Europol are determined on a yearly basis (by the Member States) through the drafting of the Work Programme. The five priority crime areas identified in the Work Programme 2004 for Europol were based on the dominant trends identified within organised crime¹ at the time of planning and within the framework of Europol's mandate according to the Europol Convention.

The approach focusing on criminal organisations taken by Europol, as in 2003, was target group orientated and successfully implemented across each of the following five priority crime areas:

- Drugs trafficking
- Illegal immigration and trafficking in human beings (THB)
- Counter terrorism
- Forgery of money (Euro)
- Financial and property crimes including money laundering

1.2. Enlargement

Throughout the year, Europol successfully managed the enlargement process with nine out of the ten candidate countries now welcomed and integrated into the Europol framework (Estonia is expected to join in summer 2005). The success of the enlargement project can be measured by reference to the smooth implementation and the satisfaction of the new Member States.



¹ See EU Organised Crime Report dated 19 October 2004 Council ref. 2530-140 (13702/04 CRIMORG 113)

2. General Crime Related Activities and Organised Crime Groups

2.1. General trends

According to the EU Organised Crime Report (EU-OCR) 2004, organised crime is becoming increasingly professional, relying on external expertise in an ever widening international and heterogeneous setting. Organised crime activities resemble a complex industry. For instance, contracts need to be negotiated with (multiple) suppliers and sub-contractors, funds need to be raised, goods need to be transported, stored and distributed, documents need to be produced, and security of the operation needs to be maintained. In some cases organised crime groups are known to exploit the absence of or delay in political initiatives, or the unforeseen, negative consequences of these, as well as judicial change or technological advances.

Specific trends identified by Europol on the basis of information gathered from Member States show that in organised crime:

- Some organised crime groups increasingly have a wider crime portfolio and a wider geographical spread where the profit potential is the prime mover.
- Looser network structures exist within organised crime groups and the roles of facilitators and professionals are becoming increasingly important.
- Organised crime groups are increasingly taking advantage of the benefits of legitimate company structures to conduct or hide their criminal activities.
 - The trend for trafficking in more than one type of drug continues.
 - The quality of counterfeit Euro banknotes is continuously improving.
 - There is a growing problem of illegal immigration in the Member States.
- There is a movement of organised crime into areas of 'petty crime' such as pick-pocketing and shoplifting but also burglaries and theft by deception of individuals, often tourists. This development is in line with the realised trend towards 'high profit-low risk' crime areas (e.g., tobacco and alcohol smuggling).
- Organised crime in most Member States is dominated by indigenous groups however, collaboration with non-indigenous groups has become more common. Ethnic Albanian, Russian and Chinese criminal groups are among the most widespread non-indigenous organised crime groups in the EU.

In 2004, Europol continued to use a horizontal, target group and regional group approach to fighting organised crime. Resources were focused on producing intelligence on targeted criminal organisations in the European Union, which included criminal groups and organisations from East and Southeast Europe, Outlaw Motorcycle Groups (OMCG) and regionally organised crime groups.

In targeting organised crime groups, Europol's priority for all projects and activities continues to be to provide support to live investigations. In addition, some key specific activities were undertaken this year aimed at developing investigative methods linked to criminal investigations targeting organised crime groups.

2.2. Main activities 2004

2.2.1. Eastern European organised crime

In the area of Eastern European organised crime, Europol received ongoing contributions of consistently high-quality data from Member States, which led to the production and dissemination of analytical reports. This enabled Europol to support Member States in the identification of common investigative targets and, in one case, led to the development of new investigative initiatives and the seizure of smuggled cargo and arrest of suspects.



2. General Crime Related Activities and Organised Crime Groups

2.2.2. Organised Motor Cycle Criminal Groups (OMCG)

Organised Motor Cycle Criminal Groups (OMCG) are involved in drugs trafficking, (mainly cocaine and amphetamines), arms trafficking, money laundering, cyber crime, vehicle crime, trafficking in human beings, contract killing, racketeering and extortion².

Europol focused its resources in this area predominantly on two dominant gangs with the remaining effort concentrated on other groups. Analytical support in relation to these gangs resulted in the identification of common targets and multiple arrests of suspects in the Member States.

2.2.3. Ethnic Albanian criminal groups

Ethnic Albanian organised crime groups have established themselves in many Member States and criminal activities are controlled by these groups in Albania, Kosovo and FYROM. They continue to extend their role from facilitators for other organised crime groups to achieving full control in certain crime areas, such as drugs trafficking, illegal immigration and trafficking in human beings, in specific regions. During the year, Europol work in this area benefited from a consistently high quality and quantity of contributions from Member States, resulting in the proposal of a new target group and ongoing support to current investigations in Member States.

2.2.4. High Tech Crime

Increasingly, information technology and other forms of modern high tech equipment are being employed by organised crime groups, for instance to commit new types of crime, to commit traditional forms of crime with greater efficiency (and in new ways) or to avoid law enforcement. During the year, Europol further strengthened co-operation initiated last year with various Member States' National High Tech Crime Units and with the High Tech Crime Unit at Interpol.

2.2.5. Specialist investigation techniques

During the year, Europol was nominated as a permanent member of the Committee of Experts on Specific Investigative Techniques (PC-TI), a Council of Europe committee, the intention of which is to ensure that all the Member States are able to fully utilise the Specialist Investigative Techniques according to EU standards, and to establish appropriate networks of experts in this complex field. Europol has confirmed its prominent role in promoting closer international co-operation in the area of witness protection, since witness protection is essential in the process of investigation, arrest and prosecution of criminals. Through the provision of support and advice from Europol, draft laws on specialist witness protection programmes were presented to, or approved by, national parliaments in Bulgaria, Montenegro and Serbia.



² See EU Organised Crime Report dated 19 October 2004 Council ref. 2530-140 (13702/04 CRIMORG 113)

3. Priority Crime Areas and Analysis

3.1. Counter terrorism

3.1.1. General trends

There is no doubt that the most potent terrorist threat remains Sunni Islam motivated terrorism. Al Qaeda has initiated a tendency towards attacks on soft targets aiming at mass civilian casualties, using in most cases suicide bombers, and attacks on specific individual targets with a well-known position within the society. This strategy has been emulated worldwide and a number of attacks have been staged according to this modus operandi, culminating with the Beslan massacre. Furthermore the success of operations against al Qaeda and the conflict in Iraq have motivated increased support to radical Islam and the emergence of a new generation of terrorists recruited within the European Union, some of whom have already been involved in suicide attacks in Iraq.



3.1.2. Main activities

Following the Madrid attacks on 11 March 2004, Europol was mandated by the European Council Declaration on Combating Terrorism to reactivate the Counter Terrorism Task Force which commenced its activities in October 2004. Whilst the threat of Islamic terrorism was a significant part of Europol's activities, the wider spectrum of terrorism was also covered. This included other groups and organisations active in, and posing a threat to, the European Union. Additional activities were undertaken in intelligence gathering before and during the Olympic Games in Athens.

Throughout the year, Europol provided operational support to Member States and joint team operations initiated in response to Europol produced operational analytical reports (e.g., in relation to extreme Islamic terrorism). Europol was successful in obtaining information and intelligence from all Member States' relevant competent authorities and in identifying Islamic related terrorist networks and/or individuals through increased analytical capacities thereby supporting Member States competent authorities in preventing terrorist attacks. For this purpose 14 additional analytical staff were recruited. Europol supported live investigations in 14 Member States at their request.

A positive outcome of this work also included several successful results obtained in the comparison of false and forged documents recovered from different Member States' investigations.

Operational projects on other active terrorist groups included the elaboration of work related to the incendiary devices sent to high ranking officials at Europol and other EU institutions in December 2003.

Europol at the request of Member States produced regular and incident related threat assessments such as those elaborated in relation to the Olympic Games and the Euro Football Championships 2004, which were well received by Member States.

Member States were kept informed on terrorism trends and developments through a range of strategic documents produced by Europol. This included information related to the financing of terrorism, which was included in threat assessments regularly disseminated to the Member States. A number of other reports were developed in relation to specific aspects of terrorism including, for example, alternative remit systems, the role of NGOs and the profits from the sale of false and stolen documents.

Europol continued to co-operate with key partners and be active in the exchange of information and developing partnerships for technical support and joint training activities, in relation to the criminal use of Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) weapons and substances, use of weapons of mass destruction and bio-terrorism.

3. Priority Crime Areas and Analysis

Another key aspect of Europol's work in this area is the further development of support tools at the EU-Level, for example the Rapid Alert System, the Bomb Disposal System and web-based initiatives.

3.2. Drugs trafficking

3.2.1. General trends

According to the EU-OCR 2004, drugs trafficking remains the most common form of transnational organised crime in the EU. The Member States remain a major consumer market for all types of illicit drugs. Well established organised crime groups in the Member States guarantee the wholesale distribution across the EU. Furthermore, the trend for trafficking in more than one drug type continues. These types of consignments may be destined for different recipients in different Member States, indicating an increased co-operation between organised crime groups involved in drugs trafficking.

In this priority crime area, Europol focused both on combating the production and trafficking of synthetic drugs and precursor chemicals, and on combating the trafficking of heroin and cocaine (and related crimes). Operational support, specialist knowledge, technical expertise and training to law enforcement agencies in the Member States were all provided by Europol to the Member States to aid in combating drugs production and trafficking.

3.2.2. Main activities 2004

3.2.2.1. Traditional drugs

According to the EU-OCR 2004, Turkish organised crime groups still dominate the heroin market and are involved in all aspects of the criminal business from the poppy fields in South West Asia to the markets in Europe. However, the involvement of Albanian organised crime groups is increasing and there is evidence of close co-operation between these two groups developing.

Europol provided analytical support to the activities of Law Enforcement Agencies aimed at the identification and targeting of criminal organisations, in particular Turkish criminal groups, operating towards, and within the European Union, and involved in the trafficking of drugs, primarily heroin, and other related crime. As a result of this support, a number of successful outcomes were achieved in Member States, which included the arrest and imprisonment of suspects, seizure of illegal drugs, and the confiscation of assets and firearms. Furthermore, new investigations were initiated and a greater sense of international co-operation was engendered within the participating investigation teams through Europol's work in this area.

The cocaine supply is still dominated by Colombian organised crime groups who have their networks established in Europe, however organised crime groups within the EU are also in direct contact with suppliers in South America and the Caribbean. It is estimated that each year approximately 250 tonnes of cocaine are transported to the EU by sea³.

Operational activities in Member States, supported by Europol, have resulted in 16 arrests in four Member States, seizures of heroin and cocaine and asset seizures of approximately 10 million Euro.



³ See EU Organised Crime Report dated 19 October 2004 Council ref. 2530-140 (13702/04 CRIMORG 113)

3.2.2.2. Synthetic drugs

The European Union remains a primary source of amphetamine and most of the synthetic drugs production sites dismantled were located in The Netherlands and Belgium. However, investigations in Member States revealed a growing number of synthetic drugs production sites in Estonia (especially for the Finnish market), Serbia, Poland and Germany. There is also an increased involvement in synthetic drugs production of Turkish, Moroccan and Chinese organised crime groups. Chinese organised crime groups are of particular interest as, in the past, they have been mainly responsible for the smuggling and distribution of precursor chemicals⁴.

Europol participated in joint investigations with Member States, targeting criminal groups involved in the production and trafficking of amphetamines and aimed at identifying the suppliers of precursor chemicals for the production of synthetic drugs.



During 2004, operational support was requested by Member States and provided on 23 different occasions resulting in 84 technical investigations. Europol provided this support on a 24 hour, 7 days a week basis. Through the use of the Europol Illicit Laboratory Comparison System (EILCS), 54 tableting machines seized in four Member States were identified as being provided by two suspects who were the subject of an initiated investigation.

3.3. Illegal immigration and trafficking in human beings (THB)

3.3.1. General trends

Facilitated illegal immigration is a growing problem within the EU. The profits that can be made from facilitating illegal immigration, in comparison to the attendant costs and risks make it a business that is attractive for organised crime. The boom in Chinese illegal immigration to the EU is particularly noteworthy. On a global scale, trafficking in human beings is a multi-billion euro per year business⁵. The operational priorities for Europol in this area were to initiate and support investigations in illegal immigration, trafficking in human beings and child sexual exploitation

3.3.2. Major activities in 2004

3.3.2.1. Illegal immigration

As a result of the information provided by Member States, Europol contributed to investigations targeting networks from the Indian sub-continent involved in illegal immigration, and through joint action supported by Europol, multiple arrests in Member States were made. Europol also provided expertise and support to an initiative aimed at combating illegal immigration from China to Europe via airports. This operation involved 21 Member States and 39 airports. The outcome of this operation resulted in the arrest of five perpetrators and the interception of 99 false documents and 273 illegal Chinese migrants.

3.3.2.2. Trafficking in human beings (including child pornography)

In relation to this priority crime area, an action plan to combat trafficking in human beings with Bulgaria as a source and/or transit country was submitted to the Police Chiefs Task Force (PCTF). The action plan was well received and Europol was asked to further develop and implement the plan. An analytical project focusing on Bulgarian perpetrators and victims was progressed, resulting in one known operational result by the years end.

The majority of child pornography images and videos seized in the Member States appear to have been produced in the former Soviet Union states, South Eastern Asian countries (particularly Japan) and, increasingly, South America. The EU-OCR 2004 contends that the proliferation of commercial pay-per-view websites is an increasing threat.

⁴ See EU Organised Crime Report dated 19 October 2004 Council ref. 2530-140 (13702/04 CRIMORG 113)

⁵ See EU Organised Crime Report dated 19 October 2004 Council ref. 2530-140 (13702/04 CRIMORG 113)

3. Priority Crime Areas and Analysis

Europol continued work in this area with an analytical project targeting criminal networks involved in the production, sale or distribution of child pornography. Participation and commitment of the Member States to this analytical project has been high and it has produced significant results over the last two years including, for example, the identification of almost 200 child sex offenders (many of whom were arrested and convicted), numerous house searches, the identification of about 40 suspects and the arrest of a major target. A substantial amount of material was also seized by Member States for forensic examination by Europol.

Training courses provided by Europol on combating the sexual exploitation of children on the internet were well received by Member States and there are increasingly more requests for Europol to assist in the development of training programmes aimed at improving the effectiveness of EU Member States in combating and preventing trafficking in human beings.

3.4. Euro – Forgery of money

3.4.1. General trends

The quality of counterfeit Euro banknotes is continuously improving because of the sophisticated printing facilities and the recruitment of professionals with considerable printing skills. The vast majority of counterfeit Euro banknotes are produced in East and South Europe. Europol continued to be the European Union contact point for the suppression of Euro counterfeiting for Member States for the provision of information regarding investigations and operations relating to counterfeited currencies in general, and for all countries (EU and non-EU) concerning currency counterfeiting with a focus on the Euro. This role is being strengthened further by the amended Europol Convention, and from the Draft Council Decision⁶ of the intention to officially designate Europol as a Central Office of the EU for Euro counterfeits.



3.4.2. Main activities in 2004

The Europol Information System (EIS) was used in relation to forgery of money and it contains the names of 3,686 suspects and 3,957 (January - December 2004) offences. It also contains all information and intelligence resulting from investigations on counterfeiting and combines it with the technical description of the counterfeit banknotes from European Central Bank database. There were approximately up to five to ten requests a day from Member States for searches on this system.

The majority of Europol activities in this area were related to operational support through analysis, the provision of expertise and advice and the co-ordination of investigations and operations carried out by Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) of the Member States and particularly by non-EU Countries. Europol's direct or indirect involvement resulted in significant operational outcomes carried out by the competent Member States LEAs. For example, the identification of a highly active criminal group involved in the counterfeiting of US Dollars and Euro banknotes impacting on several Member States and the dismantling of 35 Euro - counterfeiting print shops within both EU and non-EU countries, of which 16 were operating using conventional methods, offset and 19 operating were using digital methods.

Europol is pleased to have continued close co-operation with the European Central Bank and other partners.

Europol further developed tools which will assist Member States in addressing forgery of money. These included, the Euro Check Website (that will allow protected password access to the site for law enforcement officers to check whether the counterfeit material they have seized is known or unknown) and technical support (set up to provide international co-ordination of

⁶ Council of European Union File n°8380/05 Europol 17

technical-related matters, to provide rapid responses and to avoid duplication of efforts). These products will assist in the development of a standardised approach to better combat the transnational criminal organisations dealing with currency counterfeiting.

Early Warning Messages (EWMs) describe serious counterfeits and new modi operandi. Detailed images together with important information (both operational and technical) are sent via the Europol Liaison Officers to the concerned parties, rapidly disseminating the technical and/or operational data to those concerned in protecting the Euro. 61 EWM reports were disseminated to all Europol partners including Interpol within 24 hours of receiving news.

The Counterfeit Currency Image System (CCIS), though not fully and directly available yet to the European Union partners, has been built up to centralise technical information on counterfeit currency banknotes and equipments recovered during police operations. The CCIS is projected to be inserted on a secure internet in page order to be made available to the Europol partners.

3.5. Financial and property crime

3.5.1. General trends

Money laundering is a core activity for the majority of organised crime groups and financial organised crime is becoming an increasing phenomenon within the EU. The primary focus for Europol in this priority crime area is to support international operational money laundering investigations and fight against forms of property crime.

Money laundering is also central to organised crime as it provides the means for criminal organisations to function. With this in mind, the strategic approach of Europol to increase the focus on horizontal projects and co-operation resulted in financial experts being assigned to a range of analytical projects including illegal immigration, drugs and trafficking in human beings.

3.5.2. Major activities in 2004

3.5.2.1. Financial crime

Europol focused on money laundering and fraud through the provision of analytical support, the support of customs operations, responding to fraud-related requests, the analysis of counterfeit credit cards and the dissemination of Early Warning Messages (EWMs). Europol provided support to an analytical project targeting networks involved in fraudulent activities related to payment cards that significantly resulted in the arrest of 28 suspects throughout Europe, the US and Eastern countries.

Europol further developed the Financial Crime Information Centre that should become a valuable tool for Member States to check forgery details, gather legal and international data and to be a platform for the exchange of information.

In the fourth quarter of the year, Europol was pleased to launch both the Europol Asset Seizure and Asset Knowledge Centres designed to support Member States in reducing financing crime and to freeze the profits arising from criminal activities.

In 2004, Europol received approximately 520 communications related to fraud issues. The majority of these communications concerned West African fraud (e.g., lottery scams and general advanced fee fraud). At the beginning of the year Europol launched the



3. Priority Crime Areas and Analysis

technical analysis of counterfeit payment cards project, related to the Interpol Universal Classification system. Through the endeavours in this project, 106 counterfeit cards were examined and 46 reports subsequently forwarded to Member States.

Europol also delivered training courses in combating money laundering, payment card fraud, the European Vehicle Identification Database (EuVID), cultural property crime and skimming, which were all well attended and appreciated.

3.5.2.2. Crimes against property

The main focus in this area is on motor vehicle crime. In relation to organised criminal networks involved in motor vehicle crime, Europol, on the basis of the information supplied by Member States, identified two main groups of suspects (one in Bulgaria and one in Armenia).

The EuVID is a useful tool for Member States and was updated in CD-ROM form. Translations were completed into three new languages bringing the total number of languages in which it is now available to eight. It now includes identification information related to all models of car (26) and motorcycle manufacturers (10). In addition, for the first time in 2004, this database also contained three small truck and van manufacturers and three lorry manufacturers. Of additional use to Member States is the inclusion of the descriptions of 42 European countries' vehicle registration documents currently in use.



In addition, in relation to strategic products developed, Europol completed a feasibility study on establishing an EU database on stolen cultural goods and information has been collected for the Europol Cultural Property Crime Handbook, containing the best practice guidelines on investigating trafficking in stolen cultural goods (which will be disseminated in 2005).

3.6. Analysis

A substantial amount of operationally related work is now produced with 19 Analysis Work Files (AWF) and 1 MSOPES (see table below). This led to the production of more than 600 analytical reports⁷ during 2004 and the attainment of important operational results within Member States, for example, the identification of targets, the initiation of operational activities in the Member States, arrests and the initiation of new cases in Member States.

Crime area	Number of AWFs 2003	Number of AWFs 2004
Drugs trafficking	4 + 1 MSOPES	4+ 1 MSOPES
Crimes against persons	3	3
Financial and property crime	5	5
Organised crime groups	2	3
Terrorism	2	2
Forgery of money	2	2
Total	18 + 1 MSOPES	19+ 1 MSOPES

⁷ An analytical report is a report displaying analytical findings and resulting recommendations and can be of operational or strategic nature. Analytical reports can differ greatly in format, length and content due to the fact that they are always tailored towards specific needs. They are used to identify specific links and help Member States focus the investigation in a particular direction.

In general, in 2004, Europol experienced an increase in demand for analytical support by investigating units in the Member States including threat and risk assessments prior to short term specific operations, for example the Olympic Games and the European Football championships.

A major strategic product of Europol is the EU Organised Crime Report (EU-OCR) which is compiled on an annual basis. In 2004 it was compiled from information received from Member States (including the new Member States except Malta, Latvia and Czech Republic). This report is in the process of transition from a situation report into a threat assessment. The JHA Council, through the Multi-Disciplinary Group on Organised Crime, is aiming to enhance the role of Europol in the production of the EU-wide threat assessment on organised crime, with the view of making it the tool for intelligence led policing in the EU⁸. As a threat assessment this document will be more future orientated and will allow for greater planning and decision-making both at the EU level and at Europol. Europol is enthusiastic about the transition of the EU-OCR into a threat assessment and work is progressing with the current focus on the first phase of developing a common methodology. A sub-group of Member States has been formed to assist Europol in this process.

Europol is seen as a centre for excellence in providing training in operational and strategic intelligence analysis. This is evidenced by the increased demand for training from Member States and non-EU States and international organisations. During 2004, Member States received five operational analysis and four strategic intelligence analysis courses.



⁸ Intelligence-led policing is the targeting, planning and allocation of police resources based on key intelligence analyses and products such as threat assessments.

4. Information Management and Technology (IMT)

4.1. Operational exchange and liaison

The principal co-ordination task in Europol is to provide operational support to the Europol Liaison Bureaux. Especially important is the provision of effective and efficient means of bi-lateral communication for Member States. The close connection between daily information exchange and the development of better systems is assured by the co-location of business case experts, knowledge management and business analysts. These in turn, connect with the computer people who maintain and improve the systems.

In 2004, the IMT department underwent significant restructuring and a considerable amount of effort was expended in order to organise the different aspects of the department into one coherent force. Thus achieved, work began to focus more on better defining the business outcomes of technology projects by the establishment of the Directorate Programme Board to determine investment priorities for Europol.

Improvements were made to the level of discipline applied to project management in 2004 and this will continue throughout the organisation. Furthermore, the department's projects were more clearly identified and standards and procedures for their delivery more clearly defined. It is anticipated that the development of a basket of strategies will enable the delivery of increased levels of excellence in effectiveness and efficiency over time.

4.1.1. Co-operation with key partners

Strategic co-operation

This year the co-operation agreement between Europol and Eurojust was signed by both parties and the implementation of the agreement is progressing. A working group to develop the necessary steps and areas for co-operation between Europol and Eurojust was established at the end of 2004 and Europol looks forward to establishing a mutually co-operative partnership with Eurojust.

Europol's proposed co-operation with the Southeast European Co-operative Initiative (SECI) was advised against by the Article 36 Committee, as the lack of legal status of SECI prevents any agreement being negotiated with Europol. It was therefore necessary to define Europol's role as a partner for the Western Balkans and a proposal to this end was developed, for which approval will be sought at a political level in 2005.

A two-yearly evaluation of the co-operation agreement between Europol and the US is stipulated within the agreement. A preparatory factfinding mission for the evaluation of Europol's agreement with the US was jointly conducted by Europol and the US Mission to the EU (represented through a delegate from the Department of Justice) and found that Europol's Liaison Bureau posted in Washington/USA has consolidated and expanded its co-operation with US law enforcement authorities. As a preliminary conclusion, it was confirmed that the co-operation agreements between Europol and the US law enforcement authorities have been implemented. The full potential however had not been accomplished due to the US policy of utilising bilateral co-operation with EU Member States as a matter of priority.



Operational co-operation

Europol has two Liaison Officers based in Washington. In order to enable them to be utilised by the Member States, Europol submitted a proposal to the Dutch Presidency recommending the implementation of a single channel policy for information/intelligence requests. It is hoped that this will clarify Europol's position in relation to channelling information/intelligence requests on behalf of EU Member States via external liaison posts of Europol.

Joint projects

Co-operation with Interpol developed further with the Europol Liaison Officer to Interpol being based at the General Secretariat in Lyon from the beginning of the year and being given access to the Interpol I-24/7 system. A joint project to carry out an assessment on illegal immigration in the Eastern Mediterranean was further developed and is due for completion at the beginning of 2005. Initial discussions took place regarding the proposal on the use of joint incident response teams in relation to terrorist incidents within the EU (linked to the Dutch Presidency initiative on contingency planning/crisis management). These two defined common projects did not progress substantially in 2004 due to the reduced capacity to work on joint projects (resulting from difficulties on agreeing on the exchange of some information).

4.2. Heads of Europol National Units (HENUs)⁹

The Heads of Europol National Units met five times in 2004 to advise Europol and, on an ad hoc basis via Europol, the Management Board on issues of both an operational and a strategic nature and also in order to discuss amongst themselves the issues of interest for the HENUs, Member States and Europol.

After the accession to the EU of ten new Member States, an important step in the work of the HENUs was taken, especially concerning the exchange of views on mutual professional experience and on information exchange.

The concentration on more operational issues on the agenda continued throughout 2004. The emphasis has mainly been on Analytical Work Files (AWF) and how they could be used to support the Member States, as well as their multilateral co-operation within Joint Investigative Teams or other cross-border activities in order to fight against serious organised crime. To that extent, the HENUs have been informed about and discussed targets on the Dutch initiative, Comprehensive Operational Strategy Planning (COSPOL) and its relations to the Police Chiefs Task Force (PCTF).

Other important issues in the process of being dealt with are, the implementation of the road map for the Rhodes Vision that mainly deals with questions on how to make Europol more efficient in various aspects, such as information exchange, ideal working models (for Europol National Units and Europol Liaison Officers) and national awareness about Europol and its services.

The overall focus during the HENUs deliberations has been intelligence led policing and the transition of the Organised Crime Report into a threat assessment. The matrix on crime trends will profit from such a change.

⁹ Contribution from the Chairman of the HENUs



4. Information Management and Technology (IMT)

4.2.1. Liaison Bureaux at Europol

By the end of 2004, there were 29 Liaison Bureaux¹⁰ and 82 Liaison Officers based at Europol. As a result of the Enlargement Project all but one of the new Member States were successfully integrated into Europol (Estonia anticipated for Summer 2005). Work to formalise the support given to Liaison Bureaux was undertaken with the proposal to create a Liaison Bureaux Logistics Unit. In September 2004, a proposal was made to the HENUs that would facilitate the development of a formalised structure and process in order for Europol to support the Liaison Bureaux more effectively.

The increase of information exchanged between Europol and Member and non-Member States in 2004 suggests a greater use of the Liaison Officers and greater awareness of the services able to be provided by Europol. There was an overall increase of 32% in information exchanged between 2003 and 2004. The greatest increases were seen in the areas of trafficking in human beings (184%), robbery (89%), weapons and explosives (81%), money laundering and fraud/swindling (each of 53%).

A detailed compilation of the Liaison Bureaux activities can be found in the Annex.

4.3. Information Technology

The Europol Convention states that Europol shall establish and maintain a computerised system to allow the input, access and analysis of data. The Convention also lays down a strict framework for human rights and data protection, control, supervision and security. There are three principal components to the Europol Computer System:

- an information system
- an analysis system
- an index system

In addition to the above mentioned systems the IMT department has provided communications systems and support to the organisation in various areas of expertise (e.g., web-based systems, Document Management System and a new payroll project).

The main achievements of the IMT department included the delivery of two Information Systems, the delivery of a new Index System, a new IT approach on the OASIS system and the launch of a new web-based technical platform (EurOPs).

4.3.1. Web-based systems

A new web-based framework for information exchange systems (EurOPs and Eracles) was launched in January 2004 by using more modular and standardised components. The use of a basic technical framework for all web-based applications has initiated an integration approach for internal applications that is presently ongoing and that will be further expanded in 2005. The building of this general framework enables Europol's IT department to increase its readiness in responding to the ever increasing demands for information exchange through web applications.



¹⁰ 15 former Member States, 10 new Member States and four Third States

4.3.2. Infrastructure

Besides the installation of the secure links with the new Member States within the framework of enlargement, other work was performed in the infrastructure area, such as the increase of the GSM signal for the ELOs, the continuation of the development of the ITIL methodology, the start of implementation of an ITIL compliant tool and the Document Management System. Progress was also made on the preparation of the interconnectivity with the network of the Member States, through bilateral agreements. The day to day continuation of the support to the entire infrastructure has been ensured as well as handling user demands, the renewal of decommissioned equipment and the helpdesk function.

4.3.3. The Information System

At the December (2004) Management Board meeting a decision was made to develop the Information System within Europol. It is estimated that all Member States will have access to the system by the end of 2005. Full implementation of the system, including the use of automatic data loading in all Member States, will occur by autumn 2006. More detailed planning for a new version of the system will continue in 2005.

4.3.4. Europol Analysis System (OASIS)

The development of the Europol Analysis System remained an ongoing activity. The Europol Analysis System is embedded in the OASIS project, which focuses on the development of an overall homogeneous and continuous analytical process from the moment information/intelligence is generated at Member State level, until a final analytical product is disseminated by Europol. The major development for the Europol Analysis System was the upgrade from i-Base3 to i-Base4. The new version allowed Europol to make use of new data base features, which positively impacted upon the analytical working procedures. The upgrade also allowed Europol to build a new, enhanced Index System, which also resulted in the saving of one FTE per month. Currently the development of the Europol Analysis System is focusing on the integration of a data warehouse concept, which will provide a major improvement between the data pre-processing and data analysis phases.

Due to a revision of the overall OASIS Project it was not possible to fulfil all activities which were initially foreseen for 2004, therefore outstanding activities planned for 2004 have to be carried over into 2005.

4.3.5. Index System

The Index System (IxS) 2004 project began with the initial goal of delivering a limited-functionality replacement for the existing system by the start of July 2004, which was achieved. The main motivation behind this development was to be ready for the expected increase in index-search activity arising from the Olympics and the European football championships. Since July work has been carried out on increasing the functionality of the system to include simple searches and batch searches.



4. Information Management and Technology (IMT)

4.3.6. Information management

The "Information Management Group" has given priority to support the business development and implementation activities for the Information System. In addition, the EU enlargement has led to an increase of workload overall and the information exchange arrangements (Info-Ex System) needed adjustments to meet the needs of new Liaison Offices. Furthermore, as Member States did not have the possibility to input data directly into the Information systems, the workload in terms of input and checking of data has consequently increased.

4.3.7. Knowledge management

The "Knowledge Management Centre" at Europol was referred to in a European Commission communication to the European Parliament and Council as, "a concrete step in the research and documentation network on cross-border crime, providing information about the existence of special expertise in the area of law enforcement".

During 2004 the content level of the Knowledge Management Centre database was considerably upgraded with all kinds of uncommon and rarely used forms of investigative expertise. Furthermore, the new Member States have accessed the Knowledge Management Centre which, compared to 2003, has led to a 10% increase of requests. In order to improve awareness of the Knowledge Management Centre a booklet and flyer were created and translated in all Member States' languages and will be distributed to the Member States' competent authorities early in 2005. Furthermore a CD-ROM with the fifth edition of the summary of the Knowledge Management Centre was created and will be distributed in early 2005.



It is to be expected that further development of the EurOPs in the near future will enable Europol National Units to not only carry out searches on the Knowledge Management Centre's database but also to submit details of new developments or initiatives.

4.3.8. Business procedures and process management

The "Business Analysis and Process Management Group" has contributed to the development and functioning of the organisation through the definition of business cases as well as the design and engineering of business processes. In particular, the business analysis component assisted the users in compiling more than twenty business cases, of which one was the OASIS analysis system. The process management function successfully documented numerous processes as well as completed a major work of collecting information related to the data requirement for the Information System. Requests for assistance from the organisation for both functions experienced a steady growth during 2004, providing testament to the organisational orientation toward a more business analysis and process oriented approach.

5. Corporate

5.1. Corporate Governance

Several key decisions were made by the Acting Director impacting upon the organisation including those in relation to the functional allocation of powers and responsibilities, the personal allocation of duties of the authorising officer and delegation of his powers. These decisions were viewed positively and as a solid basis for further development.

Three overlapping frameworks for organisational improvement were combined into one development plan with the aim of ensuring better co-ordination of development activities. This plan was adopted by the Management Board in December 2004. It includes defining Europol in relation to the external context (for example, The Hague Programme) and the development of a business strategy linking the Rhodes Vision to the annual work programme. This will greatly assist in the further development and implementation of corporate objectives.

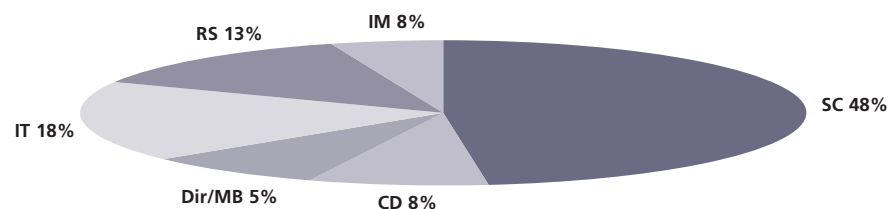
Several improvements were made in the area of financial administration and human resource management. However, the recruitment of staff from new Member States needs to be encouraged as does women in management positions.

An agreement was signed for the transfer of the ground foreseen for the construction of the new Europol's headquarters from the City of The Hague to the Dutch Government. At this stage it is foreseen that Europol will move into the new headquarters mid 2008.

5.2. Human Resources

The total number of staff employed at Europol, as of December 2004 was 494¹¹. With almost exactly the same percentages as 2003, almost half of all staff are employed in the Serious Crime (SC) department of Europol. This is followed by Information Technology (IT), Resources (RS), Corporate Governance & Development (CD), Information Management (IM) and the Directorate/Management Board (Director, Deputy Directors and Management Board Secretariat staff), (Direct./MB), (see figure 1 below).

Figure 1. Distribution of staff across departments



¹¹ This includes: Management Board Secretariat (4), Financial Controller's office (3), Local staff (11), ELOs (82), National and Seconded experts (24), Security (28), Trainees (15) and Temporary staff (13).

5. Corporate

The activity of recruiting and selecting qualified personnel has a huge impact on Europol's activities as in any knowledge-based organisation the personnel is the most important asset. Europol received 3060 applications from which a total of 78 officials were recruited.

A number of initiatives were carried out during the year designed to enhance human resource management for the organisation including the drafting of a Human Resources Strategy (awaiting decision from the Personnel Experts Committee); the further development of recruitment and training policies; the development of a new performance assessment procedure and other work on various policies.

5.3. Finance

With the exception of a few observations, the Joint Audit Committee obtained reasonable assurance that the financial statements of Europol fairly presented the financial position as of December 31, 2003 and that the revenue and expenditure were, "on the whole, legal and regular".

The Europol budget 2004 was Euro 61.12 M. Of this amount Euro 58.76 M was included for the common budget (Part A) and Euro 2.36 M for the host state budget (Part C). It should be noted that from 2004, the Common budget also includes TECS (The Europol Computer System). In the past costs related to TECS were separately recorded under Part B of the budget. The amount for Part C includes a supplementary and amending budget (Euro 86 K) that was adopted in the course of the year after agreement with the host state and relates to additional costs for the building.

In 2003 the total expenditure (including budget and commitments carried over to 2004) for the Common Budget (Part A and Part B) came to Euro 53.4 M. For 2004 this increased to Euro 59.6 M (provisionally). This increase is mainly a result of a rise in the number of staff.

In 2004 improvements have been made in various areas of the financial administration. In particular the following has been achieved:

- The decision on the role of the authorising officer was taken.
- A procurement strategy was developed and submitted to management for agreement.
- The process of business justification for expenditure was piloted.
- Processes related to tender procedures were streamlined.
- Improvements were made to the contract monitoring system.
- Financial awareness was improved throughout the organisation by way of presentations for the authorising officers on their tasks and responsibilities, improved financial reporting and an increase in the number of users with access to the financial system.
- Readjustment of financial responsibilities with business responsibilities.
- The revised version of the Financial Regulation became effective from 30 April, 2004. In addition the Implementing Rules to the Financial Regulation were also revised.
- The new travel policy was adopted by the Management Board on 14 May, 2004.
- The full financial administration (from 1 July 1999) of the pension fund was included in a separate accounting system. This enables the pension fund secretariat to closely monitor the financial developments.
- A new risk insurance scheme (survivors / invalidity) was put in place for the pension fund covering the exact risk that occurs from the Staff Regulations.
- The asset management for the pension fund was spread over two asset managers in order to spread the risk further and to enable the pension fund secretariat to better monitor their performance.



5.4. Corporate Communications

In 2004 the former Public Relations Unit changed its name to Corporate Communications. The unit undertakes almost the same tasks as previously, but the change in name emphasises the need to deal with all aspects of communications. In the second half of 2004 research was conducted in order to find out how to improve the internal communication, and some of the findings will produce results in 2005. The ambition is to improve the internal communication and thereby corporate spirit within a multicultural and multifaceted organisation such as Europol.

Substantial effort was directed in fulfilling the increased awareness needs of the competent authorities from the Member States. Several high level visits were arranged for ministers, police chiefs and other high ranking officials who wished to learn about Europol's role and tasks. The increased focus on Europol has also instigated a large number of visits from public and academic institutions to visit our headquarters in order to obtain detailed information about Europol's activities.

Information brochures, reports, press releases, CD-ROMs and DVDs were published both for the public as well as for law enforcement agencies with an overall circulation in total of more than 100,000 copies. The unit prepared 300 visits and handled approximately 3,500 public information requests communicated mainly via Europol's internet e-mail box. Service was also provided to media from all over the world requesting interviews as well as background information on Europol's activities.

5.5. Legal Issues

At the end of 2004 the three protocols amending the Europol Convention were still awaiting ratification. The foreseen ratification of the EU Constitution on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters, as well as the implementation of the Framework Decision on Joint Investigation Teams will introduce new working methods both for the Member States and Europol with respect to Joint Investigation Teams.

Europol continued to develop strategic agreements with key partners and operational agreements with non-EU countries with the following new agreements being signed in 2004.

- Strategic Agreements: Turkey, UNODC
- Operational Agreements: Malta and the Slovak Republic (now Member States) and Switzerland

In relation to the negotiation of agreements, at the end of the year, operational agreements with Canada and Monaco were under negotiation, and strategic agreements were under negotiation with Morocco. Negotiation of co-operation agreements were also proceeding with Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Former Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro.



(I) Liaison Bureaux Activities - European Union Member States

Below are the contributions submitted by each of the Liaison Bureaux based at Europol (presented in alphabetical order).

(I) Liaison Bureaux Activities - European Union Member States

Austria

There was again an increase of new cases initiated via the Europol channel (440 cases in 2003 in comparison to more than 471 cases in 2004). There was also an increase of contributions to the AWFs running in the "traditional fields" of organised crime such as drugs and counterfeiting of money (530 contributions 2003 in comparison to more than 561 contributions 2004), but also a greater acceptance from the field officers with respect to the new mandated areas, visible in several requests sent to the Austrian Liaison Bureau throughout the year. In total, 4,560 exchanges of information took place between the Austrian Bureau and Europol and/ or respective Member States.

The Austrian Bureau further developed the co-operation with the Austrian member at Eurojust and for the first time organised a controlled delivery via the Eurojust network. In the follow-up meeting organised in Austria further close co-operation was agreed. The common creation of a flyer about the Liaison Bureau and Eurojust is underway.

The Austrian Liaison Bureau model to train Austrian analysts in analysis at Europol proved especially valuable for both sides with the first colleagues from a regional analysis department being trained this year. As a result, the awareness about Europol in general and about analysis in particular, amongst analysts working in Austria has improved. With the experience gained by the trained colleagues a project was set up to enhance the intelligence/information flow from Austria to Europol in a structured way. The prototype will be started in a single AWF beginning of February 2005.

As a result of the positive experience gained by seconding a police officer to Europol, for the first time a temporary ELO was based at the Austrian Bureau in 2004. The so called "temporary ELO" from a regional police/gendarmerie force is seconded for a period of six months to gain experience about the information exchange via Europol. The purpose is for trainees to gain knowledge about working at the Bureau and Europol in general, and to take back their experience to their seconding units. The level of awareness raised will be evaluated throughout 2005. After his secondment he will work as a Europol contact person in his home organisation and enhance the awareness about Europol amongst his colleagues.

The Austrian Bureau held several seminars in Austria to raise awareness about Europol. All of them were well received by the participants and led to an increase of requests. Furthermore, the Austrian Bureau was several times engaged in working groups aimed at improving the workflow between the Member States and Europol, especially in the implementation of the Rhodes Vision.

Within the two twinning projects, Austria supported the Slovak Republic and Romania. The Austrian Bureau also provided substantial input into determining the terms of reference and job descriptions for ENUs and Liaison Bureaux, as well in the preparation of seminars and work shops.

Belgium

The Belgian Liaison Bureau acknowledged a spectacular rise of the number of Info-Ex cases it dealt with in 2004.

This increase is most visible in the number of cases initiated by Belgium which rose from 189 in 2003 to 424 in 2004 (+ 124%). In contrast, the overall number of all Info-Ex transactions (sent + received) only rose from 3772 to 5835 (+ 55%). This difference clearly indicates that the most important factor explaining this increase has to be attributed to changes in Belgium itself.

More importantly, a similar rise can be seen in the Info-Ex traffic from and towards the AWFs. The overall number of AWF related transactions (sent + received) grew from 582 in 2003 to 1440 in 2004 (+ 147%). Unfortunately, it is not possible to assess if this increase is also attributable to a change in the Belgian approach towards Europol in general and to the AWFs in particular as the Info-Ex statistic module does not provide the number of AWF related initiated cases.

One of the most important reasons of this spectacular growth is the awareness effort conducted by the Belgian Bureau in 2004 when several investigative units visited Europol and were informed about its products and services.

Although this assessment is of a mere quantitative nature, there is no reason to assume that the quality of the information exchanged was not guaranteed. One possible indicator of this is the conclusion that one third of all Info-Ex messages are AWF related. In particular, the targeted efforts and focused initiatives in the field of the AWFs relating THB, terrorism, organised crime and synthetic drugs undoubtedly led to a

considerable qualitative and quantitative improvement of the contributions to these AWFs.

A negative factor however is the fact that the direct access of the ELOs to the Belgian criminal database is yet not established due to prioritisation in the IT department of Europol.

Thanks to an internal redistribution of the tasks at the Liaison Bureau, one ELO is now entirely devoted to issues of a strategic nature, including the follow-up of the AWFs. This allowed the Belgian Bureau, amongst other activities, to play an important role in the context of the HENUs' efforts to contribute to the Rhodes vision realisation.

Finally, the specialisation of one ELO in terrorism related matters and the increased contacts between the Belgian and the Europol units dealing with this phenomenon led to the important rise in awareness and confidence of Europol's possibilities and efforts in this respect, including at the level of the competent federal prosecutor. This will eventually lead to the assignment of a Liaison Officer of the Belgian Intelligence Services to the Belgian Liaison Bureau at Europol in 2005.

Cyprus

2004 was the first full year for Cyprus at Europol. During 2004 the Cypriot Liaison Bureau dealt with a growing number of requests which were mostly related to drugs trafficking and illegal immigration. Also a substantial number of requests were sent to Europol and the Member States to do with illegal immigration and forgery of administrative documents. Cyprus dealt with 3260 information exchanges during 2004.

The VPN connection to the Cyprus Liaison Bureau and the Europol National Unit was established shortly after 1 September 2004 when Cyprus became a full member of Europol.

During 2004, Cyprus asked Europol to assist at a national level in the preparation of two Strategic Analysis Courses to which 28 Cypriot police officers participated. National experts participated in meetings at Europol and the Liaison Officer was actively involved in a number of meetings and initiatives of Europol. Cyprus is also a full member of two Analytical Working Files and continues to support others. The Cypriot Bureau initiated and maintained working contacts with the National Member of Cyprus at Eurojust.

In overall 2004 was a progressive year and much valuable co-operation was gained in the area of law enforcement.

Czech Republic

As in 2003, there was a considerable development in the activity of the Czech Bureau during 2004. The accession to Europol in September 2004 became the significant event for the police of the Czech Republic. Being a full member of Europol the volume of exchanged requests, Info-Ex cases especially, has already increased manifold. The Czech Bureau was newly built, organised and empowered by additional staff consisting of skilled and experienced police officers. The areas of drugs and forgery of money as well as terrorism and organised crime groups were the main foci of co-operation. The special units of the Czech Police particularly appreciated the results of analysis provided to the Czech Bureau by Europol. The participation of Czech police experts in AWFs is considered to be very helpful and useful. Currently, they are participating in the work of 13 AWFs as full members. Co-operation with national LEAs in regard to dealing with cases was developed and improved. The Czech Bureau became a recognised and accredited partner in the field of combating organised crime.

The Liaison Bureaux located at Europol HQ are an important instrument for prompt criminal intelligence exchange and a tool for rapid response. The amount of work and educational activities were main reasons for the decision to appoint to Europol a second Czech Liaison Officer due to start work in March 2005.

Denmark

In 2004, the number of cases initiated by Denmark increased from 244 to 279 (14%). Most of this increase comes from the drugs area, where the number of cases increased 16% from 136 to 159. This equals 57% of the total amount of cases initiated by Denmark.

Next to drugs, fraud and swindling (26) and illegal immigration (24) are the most important areas when it comes to the number of initiated cases. The cases in which Denmark is involved are becoming more multilateral and complicated, which is indicated by the number of exchanged messages. The multilateral cases increased from 42% to 56% of the initiated cases. The number of messages exchanged increased by 40% from 4,077 to 5,702.

**(I) Liaison Bureaux
Activities -
European Union
Member States**

The increase described above is not surprising as since 2003, the Danish Europol Liaison Bureau has been the exclusive channel for the exchange of operational intelligence within the Europol mandated areas. This has been achieved through increased awareness raised by the National Danish Unit throughout 2004. Furthermore, we have experienced a considerable increase in the information exchange with the new EU Member States as a natural consequence of the Europol Enlargement Project. The nature of the cases and requests is still on-going and more complicated investigations with many requests in every case, which the increase in the number of requests sent and received clearly indicates.

Due to the development in the information exchange and other tasks for the Danish Bureau, the number of Liaison Officers was in 2004 increased from three to four.

A short term stay at the Danish Bureau is now an option in connection with the supreme training courses for the Danish police. From 2005 arrangements have also been made for receiving trainees from the National Unit at the Danish Bureau.

Estonia

The year 2004 was the second full year for Estonia to be represented at Europol. The steady growth of operational information exchanged continued as in the previous year. The priorities did not change with the highest volume of information exchange being in relation to drug cases.

Tasks connected with different administrative tasks, enlargement issues and meetings in Europol premises were also increased. This led to the situation which was already foreseen in the end of 2003, that it was virtually impossible to run the Liaison Bureau smoothly with just a single ELO. Unfortunately it was not possible always to satisfy clients and partners in the best possible way. Finally, at the end of 2004 it was decided that a second Liaison Officer will be seconded to the Estonian Bureau in 2005.

Despite the considerable workload, Estonia was able, in co-operation with other Liaison Bureaux, to achieve significant results. Several international operations were concluded co-ordinated by Liaison Officers at Europol. These provided good examples for the law enforcement authorities of Estonia which increased confidence in Europol.

However, an unfortunate trend continues to be that about 90% of all the exchanged information is initiated by countries other than Estonia, which

keeps us in the position of serving other countries more than receiving support in our own investigations. This is mainly due to the lack of awareness among Estonian investigators due to our new partner status with Europol. The Liaison Bureau also worked towards increased awareness of Europol and its services among the end users.

Finland

It was foreseen that the enlargement of the European Union and the increase of Europol Member States would affect the activities of the Finnish Liaison Bureau in many positive ways. One of these expectations was an increase of the flow of operational information via the Finnish Bureau. In the beginning of 2004 an assessment was made concerning this and other activities to be carried out during the year.

The volume of operational information exchanged increased by some 27% exceeding expectations. The number of cases initiated increased and several operations were carried out in co-operation with and involving countries across the EU. From the perspective of the Finnish Liaison Bureau the year 2004 was a success.

The number of forgery of money cases and information concerning counterfeited euros continued to increase, but the information exchanged in relation to drugs trafficking continued to dominate in both quantity and quality.

One of the objectives set was to increase the co-operation with the Finnish Eurojust representative. This was also achieved and very much welcomed by both parties.

The close co-operation of the Finnish Police and the Customs was further intensified as the two officers are now sharing the same working space. The process to increase the number of staff at the desk from two to three persons was finalised and the Finnish Liaison Bureau will be staffed by two Police Officers and one Customs Officer, possibly in mid 2005.

France

The French Liaison Bureau is made up of six officers from the three national law enforcement services: Customs, Gendarmerie Nationale and Police Nationale. The main task of the Liaison Bureau is to use and develop Europol's operational capabilities for the benefit of the French national and operational field units.

The following chart shows the substantial increase of the Bureau’s activity in 2004:

	2002	2003	2004
Initiated Cases	174	497	667
Increased %	-	186 %	34 %
Transactions	3,789	4,919	11,087
Increase %	-	30 %	125 %

Information exchange is predominantly multilateral (87%) which demonstrates the will to share intelligence with our European partners and to use the Europol network appropriately.

The Liaison Bureau organised several operational meetings to co-ordinate investigations and intelligence exchange between the units of the Member States involved.

France also participates in most AWFs and strives to provide current intelligence in our main areas of interest: drugs, forgery of money, fraud and money laundering. In these areas, France was one of Europol’s main contributors, and this participation led to significant operational results in our ongoing investigations.

In addition to this, the Liaison Bureau actively promoted Europol by organising specific sessions in France for field investigators and unit managers. Visits were also organised at Europol, notably for our Minister of Interior in September 2004.

Germany

The upward trend of the last four years, as far as quantity and quality of cases and other areas of engagement were concerned, continued again in 2004. The overall number of transactions surpassed 10,000; an increase of more than 100% compared to 2001. The number of initiated cases was 904, representing a 38% increase compared to 2003.

Most of the requests were related to the area of drugs and vehicle crime followed by fraud and swindling as well as forgery of money and illegal immigration. Several operational meetings have been organised as a result of the complexity of the cases. The German Liaison Bureau also took part in a substantial number of successful controlled delivery operations.

It is still the positive “word of mouth” promotion by officers on the ground whose investigations were supported and facilitated by the Europol Liaison Officers network and Europol analysis which lead to these high figures. Again credit has to be given to another successful marketing campaign which further assisted to raise the profile of Europol in Germany. The German Liaison Office and the National Unit contributed to the Europol Awareness Programme through delivering a large number of presentations to specialised officers and high level delegations.

Germany is participating in all Analytical Work Files except for two and is one of the top contributors to all of them with the Liaison Officers taking an active role in this work. On a regular basis as an intermediary and partly as a stand-in for nominated German experts within Analytical Working Group meetings, Liaison Officers have acted and supported Europol. The most successful results of AWFs have been in the areas of illegal immigration, child pornography, precursors (EJUP), counterfeit currency and trafficking in human beings.

In the second half of the year the Head of the Liaison Bureau took over the chair of the Oversight Committee of the EJUP.

Greece

For the most part of 2004, the work of the Hellenic Bureau was based on our National Action Plan for the safe conduction of the Olympic Games "Athens 2004", as it was implemented by our competent law enforcement authorities.

The Hellenic Bureau before and during the Olympic and Para Olympic Games, supported and contributed (as appropriate) in a co-ordination role to the preparation and implementation of several projects and seminars, such as the:

- a) establishment of the "The Olympic Games 2004" project aimed at supporting the Hellenic Police in securing the Olympic Games 2004 by taking advantage and making use of the most of the Europol’s services;
- b) organisation, in Athens, of a training course in “operational analysis” undertaken by Europol;
- c) organisation, in Athens, of an awareness seminar on credit card fraud;

(I) Liaison Bureaux Activities - European Union Member States

d) organisation, in Athens, of a major international conference on "Olympic Games 2004 security".

During 2004, Hellas initiated 128 new cases across all serious crime areas. The Hellenic Bureau was mainly involved in activities related to drugs, illegal immigration, forgery of money and stolen vehicles.

There were a total of 26 illegal immigration cases. This number of cases is smaller than the previous number in 2003. This is a result of the strict and efficient controls and actions taken by our competent authorities which deal with the combating of this kind of phenomenon, both on sea and land borders.

There was a rise in the number of forgery of money cases (31). The increase could be attributed to the position of our country on the "Balkan axis", from where counterfeited Euro banknotes are imported into our country.

Apart from our national experts who regularly attend Europol's meetings, the Hellenic Bureau continued to support Analysis Work Files and other Europol projects by also participating in their works.

Taking into account the multi-disciplinary co-operation within Europol's framework the Hellenic Bureau, in close co-operation with the Spanish and German Bureau exchanged information which resulted in the arrest of two criminals in Athens involved in the trafficking of stolen vehicles.

Furthermore, in close co-operation with the Belgium, Spanish, British, Dutch, Polish, Slovak Republic and German Bureaux, Hellas exchanged information concerning the dismantling of an international Pakistani illegal immigration facilitation network, which resulted in a simultaneous operation in Belgium, U.K and Hellas and to the arrest of the main target.

Hungary

In 2004, significant developments occurred with regard to the work of the Hungarian Liaison Bureau at Europol. The staff of the Bureau was supplemented by a border guard Liaison Officer, thus achieving representation of all Hungarian law enforcement organisations at Europol and with joining Europol as of 1 September the possibilities of co-operation has broadened significantly.

Since 2002, when the Liaison Bureau was opened at Europol, there has

been an increase in the numbers of co-operation cases between Hungary and Europol and the Member States. In 2004, this ongoing co-operation was extended with the participation in 11 Analytical Work Files by Hungarian experts. The above changes resulted in an almost 50% increase in the volume of the operational cases handled by the Liaison Bureau (more than 2,500 Info-Ex messages), thus providing an improved assistance to both national and international requests for co-operation in 719 operational cases. Two thirds of the international co-operation via the Bureau was related to the crime areas of illegal drugs trafficking, forgery of money, illegal immigration and terrorism.

The staff of the Liaison Bureau also actively participated in a number of Europol projects such as the Enlargement Project, the HENUs sub-group and other initiatives.

Ireland

The Irish Liaison Bureau continued to work with two staff members, both from An Garda Síochána (the national police force). Ireland also has one extra officer attached to the National Unit to deal specifically with counter terrorism issues.

The volume of Info-Ex transactions continued to increase when compared with previous years. Current statistics indicate an increase in 2004 over 2003 of approximately 20%. Contributions to the various Analytical Work Files also remained steady during the year with Ireland currently being an active participant in eight work files.

Overall 2004 has been another progressive year with operational successes, particularly in the area of drugs smuggling, and much valuable co-operation in the area of European law enforcement.

Italy

Activities in the fight against organised criminal groups has been characterised by initiatives aimed at strengthening co-operation through the use of the intelligence model, based on monitoring and analysing criminal trends.

The information exchanged in the mandated areas showed, in general a substantial increase, which allowed notable results to be obtained from an operational perspective. For example, concerning the fight against illegal immigration, several successful operations were conducted.

The work done by the Liaison Bureau provided fundamental support to the most important initiatives involving both Europol and Italy. The attention given by the Bureau to the regular exchange of information respected the usual trend and even increased, confirming that Italy is one of the more committed Member States in this activity.

The Italian Bureau also took part in all the projects set up for the improvement and the implementation of the co-operation among the national Liaison Bureaux in Europol and between the Bureaux and Europol itself. The Bureau was also fully involved in all the activities concerning the implementation of the most important AWFs.

Latvia

The co-operational agreement with Europol entered into force on 20 January 2004. Since then the Latvian Liaison Bureau at Europol has been operational. Latvia is represented by one Liaison Officer from the Central Criminal Police Department of the State Police. Latvia has been a full member of Europol since 1 September 2004.

During 2004, the co-operation between the Law Enforcement Agencies of Latvia and European countries significantly increased. Latvia successfully participated in several joint operations with the UK, Germany, Finland, and Estonia. The co-ordination of operational activities through the Europol Liaison Officers' network has shown the advantages of using Europol in Member States joint operations.

The operational information exchange was mostly focused on drug related crimes and trafficking in human beings. By the end of 2004, Latvia had joined four AWF. The Liaison Officer has been nominated as an alternate national expert, which gives the opportunity to co-ordinate all the operational activities and information supply to the AWF.

Latvia is now working on the fulfilment of the Ideal Liaison Bureau Model. With the support of Europol direct access to most of the police databases from the Liaison Bureau has been established. It is expected that a second Liaison Officer will be seconded to the Latvian bureau in the second part of year 2005.

Lithuania

The Lithuanian Liaison Officer arrived at Europol in late December 2003. Secure communications between the Lithuanian Liaison Bureau and its Europol National Unit have been in place since March 2004.

Since that time the Lithuanian Liaison Bureau faced a steady increase of operational information exchange. The highest volume of information exchanged has been in relation to the cases on forgery of money, drugs and trafficking in human beings. Having direct access to national police databases, in approximately 70% of all cases the Lithuanian Liaison Bureau was able to provide answers within one or two days. However, the majority of cases, which were dealt by the Liaison Officer, originated from other Member States, the Serious Crime Department or AWFs.

The Lithuanian Liaison Officer was also directly involved in a great number of non-operational meetings and projects, including the Enlargement project, meetings of the Management Board, HENUs and other experts meetings.

Luxembourg

There was a general increase of 26.66% in requests related to new cases initiated by the Luxembourg National Unit in 2004. This is mainly due to an increase in requests in the area of drugs trafficking. The activities in the other crime areas have been about the same as in 2003. No controlled deliveries were initiated by the Luxembourg National Unit in 2004.

A small increase was realized in the involvement of other Liaison Bureaux by the Luxembourg National Unit.

In 2004 the Luxembourg Liaison Bureau received about 33.27% more requests from other Liaison Bureaux as in 2003. The large majority of those requests were related to drugs, followed by terrorism and forgery of money. An increase of 16.55% in the area of drugs trafficking, 115.87% in terrorism and 31.18% in forgery of money were noted.

Netherlands

Developments and trends

The number of cases initiated via all participants within the Europol framework increased again compared to the previous years. This had partly to do with the extension of the Europol network with ten new Member States and partly with a further growth of awareness of Europol and its services in the initial Member States.

One of the points of extra attention for The Netherlands as a topic during the EU presidency was the setting up of a Joint Investigation Team (JIT)

**(I) Liaison Bureaux
Activities -
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with Europol support. In close co-operation with Eurojust and the European Police Chiefs Task Force, United Kingdom and The Netherlands were able to identify a target group active in both countries to work on in the framework of a JIT. This investigation will start in January 2005. Next to this, as a result of an initiative of a Dutch, German and Europol working group which started in 2001, a target group involved in international drugs crime was identified, on which a parallel investigation started in December 2004 with Europol analysis support (within the framework of an existing AWF).

The Dutch Liaison Bureau at Europol is, and will be involved as the main contact point for the smooth exchange of intelligence between the investigation teams in The Netherlands with Europol and the Liaison Bureaux of the other involved EU countries in both the above-mentioned investigations. The exchange of information in both these investigations is and will be handled with high priority.

Overall evaluation of the work done by the Dutch Liaison Bureau

The number of cases in which the Dutch Bureau was involved increased in 2004 by almost 12% compared to 2003. Overall the Dutch Bureau was involved in over 25% of the total number of cases dealt with within the full Europol network. The number of operational related documents handled by the staff of the Dutch Liaison Bureau rose by 16%.

The number of cases initiated by The Netherlands sent out via the Dutch Liaison Bureau increased by 10% compared to 2003. Around 70% of the total number of cases initiated by The Netherlands was linked to bilateral investigations. Italy (21.5%), Germany (18.2%) and the United Kingdom (17.7%) were the countries approached most frequently from The Netherlands.

The main areas in which The Netherlands was involved in the exchange of operational linked information were drugs, illegal immigration/trafficking in human beings and terrorism. The percentage of cases in which requests were received by the Netherlands were initiated by Germany (13.2%) and the United Kingdom (9.4%).

In general terms it can be said that the United Kingdom used the Dutch Liaison Bureau the most frequently to get assistance in investigations where the use of special investigation powers were required and in the majority of these cases a successful follow-up could be provided.

Additional information

The promotion of Europol and its products has also in 2004 been a constant issue for the representatives of the Dutch Bureau. Several times assistance to the Europol public relations unit was provided with presentations to visitors as well as participation in promotion films for Europol. The Europol organisation also provided several times assistance to the Dutch National Unit in presentations towards Law Enforcement Agencies or its representatives.

Poland

During 2004, the total number of national and international requests processed by the Polish Liaison Bureau almost doubled in comparison with the previous year. The main areas of information exchange were illicit trafficking in drugs and forgery of money.

The number of requests and information provided by the Polish National Police as well as the Polish Border Guard is constantly increasing. The Polish Liaison Bureau co-ordinated a number of bilateral and multilateral operations with the involvement of the Polish National Police.

The National Unit and Polish Liaison Bureau in close co-operation with Europol, organised and participated in awareness activities of Europol and were also engaged in the PHARE Twinning Project on Europol in co-operation with Germany.

As a result of national awareness programmes, the Polish Liaison Bureau hosted visits of over 40 officers representing the Polish National Police, Border Guard and Customs Service.

Since 1 November 2004, as the Europol Convention and all the additional protocols entered into force after their ratification by the Polish Parliament in July 2004 and Poland became a member of Europol, the Polish Liaison Bureau has been fully integrated into Europol's systems of direct information exchange. Following the accession to Europol, Poland joined a number of Analytical Work Files.

The Polish Liaison Bureau also initiated and maintained continuous working contacts with Poland's National Member at Eurojust.

Portugal

Portugal was in 2004, one of the countries that made the biggest use of the Europol channel to exchange operational intelligence. The Portuguese Bureau was the recipient of requests related to 256 new cases which represents an increase of around 25 percent compared with the new cases initiated in 2003. Of these, 173 involved only one other Member State while 83 of them were multilateral requests.

There were no new trends in the areas of crime, which means that drugs trafficking, with 66 new cases in 2004, continues to be the subject of most of the new requests for information sent by the Portuguese authorities to Europol, the other Member States and to non-EU States with an operational agreement with Europol. Second to drugs came the requests for information related to vehicle crimes with 46 new cases and in third place forgery of money with 35 new cases.

The country which received most of the new requests for information from Portugal were Spain with 91 new cases followed by France (58), Germany (47), The Netherlands (45) and the United Kingdom (42). Europol has also received several requests for information related to new investigations carried out in Portugal, in the areas of forgery of money, terrorism and drugs.

The Portuguese Bureau has also been involved in several controlled deliveries which for the most part were successfully carried out leading to the seizure of drugs and to the arrest of several suspects. Most of these controlled deliveries were proposed to Portugal by The Netherlands after the detection by the Dutch Customs of several parcels containing mostly XTC that were addressed to Portugal. The support of the Bureau and the National Unit was crucial for the swift acceptance of these controlled deliveries by the judicial authorities in Portugal.

The Portuguese Liaison Officers were also involved in several Analysis Work Files giving support both to the analysts and the national experts assigned for those AWFs. The Portuguese Bureau also established close links with the Portuguese Magistrates which are working in Eurojust in order to ensure a fruitful co-operation between this institution and Europol, particularly in relation to the tasks assigned to the Portuguese Bureau.

Slovak Republic

Joining the European Union and subsequent ratification of Europol Convention allowed Slovakia to become a fully fledged member of Europol as of the 1 September 2004.

During the year the Europol National Unit devised and implemented the Twinning Project with Austria on European institutions involved in law enforcement. This project, as well as Europol awareness seminars that took place last year, targeted mainly Slovak law enforcement personnel in order to raise awareness of Europol objectives, tasks, operations and data protection.

675 Info-Ex requests have been received by the Slovak Liaison Bureau. Slovak operational police and customs services participated actively in five AWFs, that have been of interest for competent law enforcement authorities in Slovakia those related to Islamic terrorism, eastern European organised crime, heroin, Ethnic Albanian criminal groups and trafficking in human beings. Slovakia is also involved in providing information upon requests to other AWFs where links to Slovakia were identified in the process of criminal intelligence analysis at national and/or Europol level.

As of 10 January 2005 the Slovak Liaison Bureau will be reinforced by a second ELO.

Slovenia

The year 2004 was the most important year for the Slovenian presence at Europol. Slovenia became a full member of European Union in May 2004 and by the beginning of September also a full member of Europol. Consequently, the workload at the Slovenian Bureau increased significantly, not only in relation to the quantity of operational information exchanged but also by the quality of the Slovenian requests, which improved in terms of operational content.

The Slovenian Liaison Bureau at Europol was established at the beginning of June 2002. The Slovenian Liaison Officer represents the Slovenian Police, Customs Administration and Office for Money Laundering Prevention. Despite the increased workload the Slovenian Liaison Bureau was staffed by only one Liaison Officer during 2004. The capacity of the Liaison Bureau Slovenia should increase with the arrival of the second Slovenian Liaison Officer in 2005.

(I) Liaison Bureaux Activities - European Union Member States

In 2004 over 2,500 messages containing operational information with Europol, Member States and non-EU States were exchanged. The Slovenian law enforcement requested information in 35 cases with 865 different requests sent to other partners and 611 answers received. In addition, the Slovenian Liaison Bureau sent a total of 548 responses to other partners at Europol based on 534 requests received. The main areas were drugs trafficking, forgery of money, illegal immigration/trafficking in human beings and for the first time this year, terrorism. Slovenia has joined an AWF to obtain the experience necessary for the future co-operation in other AWFs and to develop its own practice. Slovenia also provided valuable information for other AWFs.

The Slovenian Liaison Bureau at Europol and the Europol National Unit in Slovenia raised awareness of Europol amongst the Slovenian competent authorities. Various familiarisation programmes with Europol which included input and visits to the various units at Europol responsible for operational work were organised for the Slovenian participants including operational staff, experts, managers and students. The communication with the Slovenian representative at Eurojust improved due to the close working relationship developed between both Bureaux.

Slovenia was also very much involved in the Enlargement Project and assured the optimal function of the Slovenian Europol channel in the year 2004.

Spain

An increase of initiated cases from 2003 to 2004 of about 25% was noted, most of them related to drugs trafficking, terrorism, fraud and swindling. This is a consequence of the continuation of the Awareness Programme carried out by the Spanish National Unit in order to promote Europol as a useful and quick tool in international investigations. It is also important to point out that the number of information exchange increased dramatically in March due to the terrorist attacks in Madrid on 11 March 2004.

As previous years, most of the operational units have continued using Europol due to the high level of satisfaction thanks to the quality of the information and the speed in the responses via this channel. Furthermore, the increase of the total number of transactions from 2003 to 2004 is 43%. The increase of the transactions from 1999 to 2004 is 237%.

Spain has made use of Europol to conduct several long term investigations in different fields like drugs trafficking, money laundering, trafficking in stolen vehicles, and organised robberies with excellent results.

The Spanish Bureau has co-ordinated 24 surveillances mainly with United Kingdom but also with Denmark and Sweden. The surveillances carried out by Spanish teams have provided high quality intelligence to the UK in the framework of several drugs investigations. The information exchanged in this field between both countries continues being excellent, supporting several long-term Spanish investigations.

We carried out 4 controlled deliveries (3 with The Netherlands and 1 with UK). The total amount of drugs seized in Spain using Europol has been 200 kg of cannabis, 10 kg of cocaine and 2000 ecstasy tablets. 9 people have been arrested only in Spain for those facts. As previous years, it is important to stress the speed and availability of the Spanish Bureau in order to arrange airport checks and controlled deliveries in short notice.

Furthermore, the Spanish Bureau gives full support to the national experts involved in different projects like AWFs, advising them and promoting the use of Europol as a tool to fight against organised crime. Spain is participating in all AWFs except for one. Spain has a key role in an AWF targeting timesharing fraud but is also leading some long time investigation on money laundering or ethnic-Albanian criminals.

Finally it is necessary to mention that Spain is supporting the Europol terrorism unit with three seconded experts in that field.

Sweden

In April 2004 the Head of the Liaison Bureau left Europol for other commitments and the position was vacant for the rest of the year. This meant that the Bureau was staffed by 2 Liaison Officers.

The long term positive trend showing an increase of cases dealt with by the Swedish Liaison Bureau has continued also during 2004. The most significant increases were Swedish cases initiated (+37%) and requests sent (+42%). These increases are related to Police, Security Service and Customs cases. The reasons for these increases are most probably due to extended awareness, the new Liaison Bureaux; both EU and non-EU, and analytical support provided by Europol in operational matters.

The most common mandated crime area is still drugs (60%) and several successful operations ending with large seizures were accomplished during the year. The second and third most common mandated areas are trafficking in human beings and terrorism.

Sweden is participating in most AWFs. Among those the strongest commitment has been to the AWF involving the Swedish National Laboratory of Forensic Science carrying out impurity profiling analysis of amphetamine on behalf of the participating countries in order to establish links between seizures which eventually will generate added value and the basis for common national operations. Several hundred samples have been sent to the AWF during this year. Other AWFs where Sweden has contributed actively were related to heroin, Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs, child pornography, terrorism, Euro counterfeiting, illegal immigration and cocaine.

Sweden and other concerned parties have formed operational sub-groups in relation to some of the AWFs which has resulted in very good operational results against target groups in different places around Europe.

The work increasing awareness continued and several police and customs officers visited Europol during the year. Moreover, the work that the former Head of the Bureau was assigned to, strengthening the co-operation nationally within the judiciary has increased further. Co-operation with the Prosecution Service is vital in order to successfully involve Europol in ongoing investigations. In order to enhance the knowledge and awareness about Europol approximately 100 Swedish prosecutors visited the Swedish Bureau during the year. Furthermore, the contacts with the Swedish Eurojust representative were elaborated and strengthened. This co-operation has proven fruitful in several operational cases.

Measures were taken during the year to prepare the installations of new computer facilities which will provide the Bureau with on-line connections to all national files and databases by spring 2005. This will create a foundation for the introduction of a swift reply system on non-complicated requests which will be developed at the Bureau. The ambition is to cut timeframes on non-complicated requests considerably with the possibility of answering them directly at the Bureau. In this context a trial period with administrative support at the Bureau may be considered in order to enable the police and customs officers to concentrate on more complicated requests where direct liaison with Europol and other Bureaux is essential for added value.

United Kingdom

2004 saw some important developments for the UK Liaison Bureau at Europol.

The volume of information passing through the Bureaux hands increased by 20 percent, with an increase of 30 percent in the number of requests received. Of particular interest was the impact of enlargement of the EU - although many of the new Member States had Liaison Officers present at Europol during 2003, the impact was not felt until well into 2004. In terms of numbers of information exchange transactions with the ten new countries, the UK experienced a welcome and dramatic rise from 98 in 2003 to 546 in 2004.

The year saw the UK receiving substantial and meaningful operational support from Europol, including the use of the Europol operational room for several weeks for a live multilateral intelligence exchange investigation where lives were thought to be at risk. The analytical support of one particular AWF has directly led to arrests and seizures of controlled drugs and a greater understanding of how British serious and organised criminals carry out their work across Europe.

In fact, in 2004, exchanges of intelligence with Europol and all Member States led to the seizure of, amongst other things, 85 kilos of cocaine, over 100 kilos of heroin and 65 arrests.

The Liaison Bureau was proud to be closely involved, with our colleagues from The Netherlands, in the setting up of the first Joint Investigation Team and we anticipate that this will lead to operational success in 2005.

We have benefited from a fruitful relationship with Eurojust, leading to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the UK Liaison Bureau at Europol and the UK representation at Eurojust in November 2004.

The UK has made the most of its intelligence led operations at Europol during the year and we look forward to building on this with the introduction of the European Criminal Intelligence Model during our presidency in the latter half of 2005.

(II) Liaison Bureaux Activities - Other Liaison Bureaux

Bulgaria

In 2004 the co-operation Bulgaria has with Europol attained a higher and more sophisticated stage, with more efficient and results oriented sharing of information for mutual interest and benefit. For instance, several investigations (e.g., currency counterfeiting, trafficking in human beings, other means of payment) were successfully concluded in Bulgaria and other EU countries, which was largely due to the most effective and overall support, provided by Europol.

This led to a major increase of the workload sustained by the Bulgarian Liaison Bureau. In addition, the number of information exchanges involving much more active participation with Europol's partners among the Bulgarian LEAs is increasing.

Norway

During 2004 the Norwegian Liaison Bureau has seen an increase in cases to Norway. Especially in the field of drugs, but the Bureau has also seen an increase in most of the mandate areas.

From the 1 January 2004 the office will consist of one officer from the police and one from the Customs. Due to this co-operation we have seen an increase of initiated cases from Norway to Europol. During the summer 2005 the Liaison Officers will end their contracts and they will be replaced by two new officers. Norway has also supported Europol in a number of different projects.

All in all, this has been a very positive year for Norway.

Romania

The first Romanian Liaison Officer to Europol started work on 18 October 2004, after undergoing specific training and briefing. Liaison Bureau Romania has been therefore officially launched on 10 December 2004. Although the Bureau has only existed for a short period of time, a noticeable and steady increase in the number of information exchanges occurred. This trend is expected to continue in 2005 for the benefit of both Europol and Romania. Parallel to the operational exchange of information, Liaison Bureau Romania has also been active in wider areas of international law enforcement and police co-operation within the framework of Europol.