

Question 1: Article by EU Commissioner on Home Affairs Ylva Johansson

Commissioner Johansson,

In your article, you have mentioned ‘various examples **of boosting the mandate of Europol** in order to help the European crime fighters of Europol and their colleagues in the member states to do their jobs’. You referred to the need for immediate and effective measures against various forms of crime, but also more closely in relation to cybercrime, which has been on the rise recently (i.e. online child sexual exploitation, online property crime), especially in the context of the coronavirus pandemic.

On 29th January 2020, the European Commission's new work programme was published. Under the priority 'Promoting our European way of life', the Commission announced its intention to adopt a legislative proposal on the strengthening of Europol's mandate, based on Article 88 TFEU. According to the work programme, **the proposal should be published in the fourth quarter of 2020 and will aim at strengthening Europol's mandate in order to reinforce operational police cooperation. You believe that the revision/recast of the Europol Regulation will be a sufficient legal tool for this purpose, or the promotion of a new strategy for internal security may soon be required, taking into account the great challenges that the EU and Europol face now than ever before.**

You have also mentioned that in order to counter the above mentioned crimes, interoperability is being built – efficient data exchange is essential to catch cross-border criminals. On the one hand, information flow is an essential element of police cooperation, and the exchange of personal data is at the core of cooperation among law enforcement authorities within the Union. On the other hand, preserving the fundamental right to protection of personal data serves the overall objective of the preservation of the rule of law and of trust in the law enforcement authorities, which are cornerstones of law enforcement in our democracies. Could you clarify how will the right to protection of personal data, which is also enshrined in the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), be safeguarded and in line with the GDPR?

Question 2: The Europol Innovation Lab

*‘On 8 October 2019, Ministers at the JHA Council expressed **their support for the creation of an innovation lab at Europol.** The objectives given by the JHA Ministers to the Europol Innovation Lab is **to act as monitor of few technological developments and drive innovation**, including by developing common technological solutions for Member States in the field of internal security.’*

Due to the rapid increase of cybercrime during the Covid-19 pandemic and the development of various new online methods by criminals, this Laboratory could be considered as a measure in the right direction, highlighting new technologies to combat this phenomenon. However, as it is mentioned in the relevant written contribution, additional resources are needed for its structure and effective

operation. Taking into account, that according to the EU general budget for 2020, Europol was allocated with less funds than the request endorsed by its Management Board in January 2019, **what will be the sources of its additional resources.** Do you estimate that for this purpose the European Commission is willing/ready to allocate/include additional funds in its revised proposal regarding the new Multiannual Financial Framework (2021-2027) which is under discussion at this stage?