

Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs
The Chairman

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Mr Ranko OSTOJIĆ
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Croatian Parliament
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Delegations to the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group

Dear JPSG Co-Chairs,
Dear Chairs and Members of Delegations to the JPSG,
Dear Colleagues,

In line with article 5 of the JPSG Rules of Procedure, Article 14 of the Europol Regulation and following the invitation by Mr Andrei LINTA, Chairperson of the Europol Management Board to the JPSG Co-Chairs, I attended the 113th meeting of the Europol Management Board (MB).¹

My attendance was limited to the agenda points related to the Europol Strategy 2020+, the final Europol Budget 2020, the preliminary draft Programming Document 2021-2023, and Europol's Roadmap on EU Interoperability. As the debates exceeded the foreseen time, the following points were postponed to the afternoon session; Europol's external relations and the update by the Commission on negotiations of international agreements with third countries.

In my opening remarks, I thanked the Europol Management Board for the invitation and mentioned the good cooperation the JPSG has experienced with both the Executive Director, Ms De BOLLE and the MB Chairperson, Mr LINTA. I stressed the need for trust and a long-term relation between the JPSG and Europol Management Board. I, therefore, reminded the MB members that, also in order to fulfil the scrutiny tasks entrusted by the Treaty and Europol Regulation, the JPSG expects to be invited to every MB meeting and for its full agenda. As long as no JPSG representative to the Europol MB has been appointed by the JPSG plenary, the Co-

¹ As communicated at the JPSG meeting of XX September 2019, and pending the appointment of a JPSG representative to the Europol Management Board, the Co-Chairs continue representing the JPSG. The Europol Management Board foresees that the JPSG representative will attend two management board meetings a year. (letter of 24 October 2018 by former Chairperson Europol Management Board Mr Priit Parkna)

Chairs would continue to represent the JPSG and one Co-Chair would attend the meetings concerned and report back to the JPSG. I also stressed the importance of the work by Europol and its contribution to the EU's internal security and fight against organised crime.

As a first point, Mr LINTA and the Europol Management Board welcomed Mr Jürgen EBNER as newly appointed Deputy Executive Director of Europol, at the Governance Directorate.

Mr LINTA and Ms DE BOLLE updated the Management Board on the implementation of the **Europol Strategy 2020+**. Speakers put the focus on the key areas and the need to adjust the Europol organisational structure to maximise resources and to optimise cross-departmental cooperation. A new European Financial and Economic Crime Centre will be set up while Europol's analysis capacity is to be strengthened and standardised. To this end, a reduction from 30 to 8 products related to criminal analysis will be applied and an online platform connecting criminal intelligence analysis (CONAN) was launched. The Executive Director also highlighted the next steps on realising a Europol Innovation Lab which was announced in the margins of the October 2019 JHA Council. An internal implementation team was established and preparatory work can start. Other points that were addressed included the reorganisation of the European Serious and Organised Crime Centre, including a Drugs Trafficking Unit, and the strategy towards external relations with possible repercussions on the organisation of the unit concerned. In my comments, I welcomed the focus towards innovation and the creation of an Innovation Lab while stressing the need to ensure that any technological solution developed, should always be in line and respect fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens. In the debates that followed, participants welcomed the proposals and the continuing focus on analysis capacity but also highlighted the need to have a balance between financial resources and objectives and other forms of financing. Others commented on the need to avoid duplication and the need to report on implementation of the proposed actions.

On the **Final Europol Budget 2020**, Mr LINTA informed the Management board that the General Budget of the EU for 2020 was adopted on 27 November 2019 and that it included a share for Europol amounting to 154.1M Euro. Mr LINTA reminded participants that this entailed 20.7M Euro less compared to the initial request endorsed by the Management Board in January 2019. This would have repercussions on the establishment plan (66 additional temporary agent posts requested compared to 24 granted) and the extent to which strategic priorities would be pursued. The Management Board would need to adopt a revised budget. A presentation of the consequences for the staff establishment plan and consequential increase and decrease of specific expenditures was made by Europol's services. In my comments, I stressed the need to convey a message to the respective governments that Europol should have a viable funding in line with the expectations Council, EC, EP and European citizens have for Europol. Mr LINTA and other participants thanked the JPSG and the EP for its continuing support and highlighted the imbalance between the funding of border management and the funding for internal security. Other topics raised during the debate were the potential impact on Europol's operational capacity, staffing, new priorities, the negative impact on the support provided by Europol for the ATLAS network, the need to find efficiency gains etc. It was concluded that the Chair of the Management Board would inform the EP and the JPSG on the outcome of this discussion and the adjusted budget as such.

The Management Board was invited to debate the **Draft Europol Programming Document 2021-2023**. It was concluded that an adoption via written procedure would follow in January 2020 as to enable the document to be shared with EC, Council and EP no later than 31 January 2020.

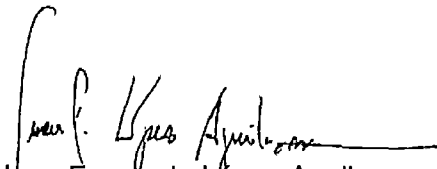
On **Interoperability**, and more specifically the implementation of the roadmap, the Management Board discussed a progress report. The Executive Director presented the state of play and underlined that the connection to the VIS was now in production, that connection to SIS was expected also early 2020, but that scalability of the Europol systems, staffing and financial resources and high availability and recovery remained challenges. The Management Board

requested to be kept up to date on further developments regarding progress made on interoperability.

After this point, Mr LINTA, the Chairperson of the Europol Management Board, ended the part of the meeting to which the JPSG representative was invited to attend and invited other participants to resume at 15h00.

I remain at your disposal for any further questions,

Kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Juan F. López Aguilar', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Juan Fernando López Aguilar

Chair of the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee of the European Parliament
Co-Chair of the JPSG