



EUROJUST

The European Union Agency
for Criminal Justice Cooperation

Providing hands-on support to judicial practitioners

Coordinating the fight against serious cross-border crime

Eurojust, the EU Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation, is a unique hub based in The Hague, the Netherlands, where national judicial authorities work closely together to fight serious organised cross-border crime. **The role of the Agency is to help make Europe a safer place** by coordinating the work of national authorities – between the EU Member States as well as third countries – in investigating and prosecuting transnational crime.

Each participating EU Member State seconds a National Member to Eurojust. The National Members form the College of Eurojust, which is responsible for the Agency's operational work. The College, in turn, is supported by the Eurojust Administration, which includes, among others, case analysts, legal advisors and data experts.

Eurojust facilitates the coordination of investigations by promoting the exchange of information, detecting cross-links between ongoing investigations, developing prosecutorial strategies and implementing joint actions. The Agency's custom-built

premises include secure meeting facilities with possibilities for interpretation into all EU languages. The Eurojust building also has a meeting room specifically designed for coordination centres, from which international action days can be monitored and coordinated in real time.

Eurojust has developed a **cohesive international network** that grants prosecutors around the European Union access to more than 50 jurisdictions worldwide. The Agency has signed cooperation agreements with more than 10 non-EU states, several of which have seconded Liaison Prosecutors to Eurojust to work on cases with their counterparts in the College. Eurojust also works closely with other EU agencies and partners that support the various stages in the criminal justice chain, including law enforcement and anti-fraud bodies.



Tailor-made support

Eurojust offers tailor-made operational support throughout the different stages of cross-border criminal investigations, providing:

- ▶ prompt responses;
- ▶ an on-call coordination service that is operational 24 hours a day, seven days a week;
- ▶ links to key counterparts; and
- ▶ assistance with the preparation of judicial cooperation requests, including official translations.

Furthermore, **Eurojust can accommodate complex forms of assistance and coordination mechanisms**, which may be combined as required to support major

operations. For example, the Agency can:

- ▶ coordinate parallel investigations;
- ▶ organise coordination meetings, involving the judicial authorities and law enforcement concerned;
- ▶ set up and/or fund joint investigation teams (JITs) in which judicial authorities and law enforcement work together on transnational criminal investigations, based on a legal agreement between two or more countries; and
- ▶ plan joint action days, steered in real time via coordination centres held at Eurojust, during which national authorities may arrest perpetrators, dismantle organised crime groups and seize assets.

Bringing a case to Eurojust

The cases brought before Eurojust either involve two or more EU Member States or a Member State and a non-EU State. Sometimes, cases involve crimes committed in a single Member State that have repercussions beyond its borders. Eurojust offers Member States its vast experience and expertise in judicial cooperation. It also has a range of tools to handle problems such as conflicts of jurisdiction, extradition, admissibility of evidence, and the freezing and recovery of assets. As Eurojust accommodates authorities from all Member States and various third countries, it can respond to requests rapidly, sometimes helping to resolve a case within hours.

If a National Member decides to submit a case for registration at Eurojust, the College will meet to determine which National Members should be involved. The National Member (or their Deputies and Assistants) remains in control of the case, while Eurojust can provide advice and assistance in the coordination and the application of European judicial instruments and tools.

Once a case is opened, a subsequent meeting can be organised to support the exchange of information among the involved countries, discuss relevant legal issues and advise the respective national authorities on the next steps (see *Timeline of a Eurojust case* to see how cases may unfold).

Any information discussed during these meetings is highly confidential, and all participants are bound by an obligation of confidentiality. Moreover, when information is received or exchanged via Eurojust, the authority of the Member State providing the information may stipulate conditions regarding how receiving authorities can use that information.



Case in point for rapid response

Coordination within 24 hours through the Hungarian and Belgian National Desks resulted in an indictment of a suspected member of the IS terrorist organisation for terrorism and mass murder.

December 2018: A Syrian national was arrested in Hungary when presenting false documents at Budapest Airport for a woman in his company, for which he was given a suspended short-term prison sentence.

March 2019: As the suspect was about to be expelled to Greece, where he had entered the European Union and enjoyed refugee status, new suspicions emerged that he was a member of the IS terrorist organisation in Syria, where he allegedly took part in up to 20 executions in 2015.

Alerted by the on-call coordination service, crucial evidence was exchanged within 24 hours, including necessary translations between the Hungarian and the Belgian Desks at Eurojust. The rapid procedure allowed the Hungarian authorities to detain the suspect on suspicion of committing terrorist activities, instead of expelling him to Greece.

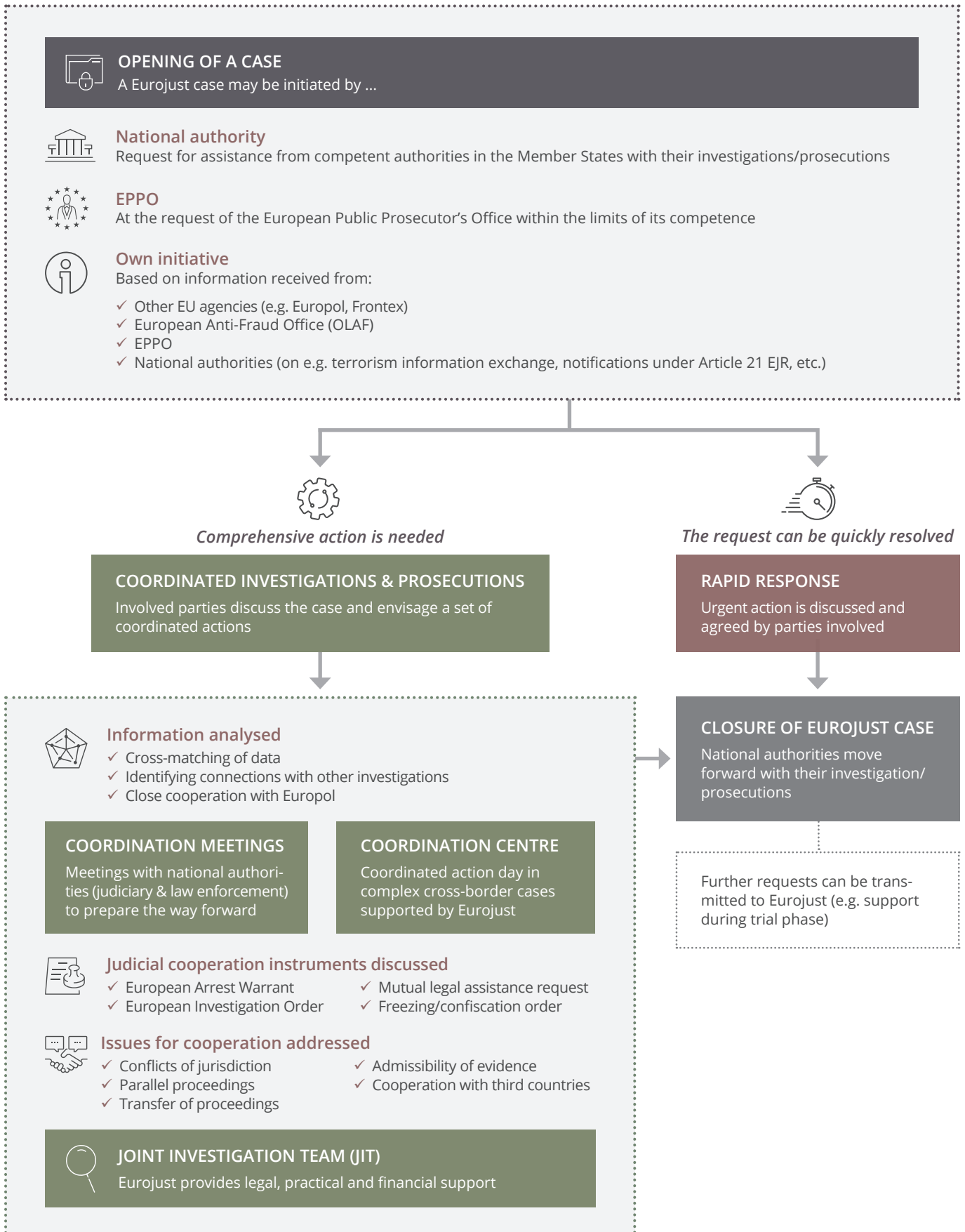
July 2019: Following extensive Eurojust-led coordination among the involved Member States to resolve conflicts and gather and exchange incriminating evidence, the suspect was charged with terrorism, mass murder and crimes against humanity within four months of his true identity being established.

The need for a rapid response



In some cross-border criminal investigations, judicial authorities must act rapidly, for example to locate suspects in another country, demand the swift execution of a European Arrest Warrant, European Investigation Order or freezing order; or secure essential evidence through other judicial cooperation instruments. In such cases, national authorities need to connect quickly with authorities in another country, exchange information, understand the exact legal requirements and prepare the transmission of judicial cooperation requests in the correct format. The National Desks at Eurojust are available via on-call services, operating **24/7, 365 days a year** for cases that demand this kind of immediate, hands-on response.

Timeline of a Eurojust case





Key investigation tools

Eurojust handles a vast array of investigations. Each case is different and requires an individualised approach. Often, prosecutors must act immediately to locate and apprehend suspects. In such cases, national authorities can rely on Eurojust's unique on-call services, such as facilitating the swift execution of a European Arrest Warrant (EAW), freezing order or the collection of evidence using a European Investigation Order (EIO). At other times, an investigation is built slowly and methodically, entailing months, or even years, of careful planning, coordination and discussion, with Eurojust playing a coordinating role. Four key means of support provided by Eurojust are joint investigation teams (JITs), EU judicial cooperation tools, coordination meetings and coordination centres.

Joint investigation teams (JITs)



A JIT is the most advanced tool in international cooperation in criminal matters. JITs are teams in which representatives of the judiciary, such as judges, prosecutors and investigative judges, and law enforcement officials work together on transnational criminal investigations, based on a legal agreement between two or more countries for a fixed period of time. JITs make it possible to bypass the traditional channels of mutual legal assistance (MLA) and instead directly gather and exchange information and evidence. Eurojust has been assisting countries to set up and operate JITs since 2009. The Agency hosts meetings with JIT members, often with translation and interpretation services. Equally importantly, Eurojust can provide financial and logistical sup-

Eurojust supports JITs by:

- ▶ assessing the suitability of a case for the establishment of a JIT;
- ▶ helping to draft the JIT agreement;
- ▶ providing legal and practical support throughout the lifetime of the JIT, including support to joint operations (coordination centres);
- ▶ coordinating investigative and prosecutorial strategies; and
- ▶ providing financial and logistical support, for example for travel, interpretation, transfer of evidence and loan of equipment.

port to JITs, to alleviate the burden on national budgets when dealing with transnational cases.

Assistance in using EU judicial cooperation tools



Instruments such as the European Arrest Warrant and the European Investigation Order greatly facilitate cooperation in cross-border cases. However, to maximise the potential of these tools, national authorities must be able to find and contact each other quickly and communicate clearly across languages and different jurisdictions. Eurojust allows involved States to make the best use of these tools by acting in a coordinating capacity.

European Arrest Warrant

The European Arrest Warrant, valid throughout all Member States of the EU, is used to arrest and surrender criminal suspects or sentenced persons to the issuing state so they can face criminal prosecution or serve a sentence. Eurojust plays a key role in improving the application of the EAW, including overcoming legal and practical obstacles. Eurojust can facilitate the transmission and timely execution of EAWs, coordinate and advise on competing EAWs, assist in issues related to surrender, clarify the differences in national legislation in relation to EAWs and help national authorities overcome many other issues.

European Investigation Order

The European Investigation Order establishes a clear process for cooperation between judicial authorities in different Member States for gathering and preserving evidence, e.g. carrying out searches, holding hearings, obtaining banking and financial information, intercepting communications, and temporarily transferring persons held in custody. Eurojust can assist in issues related to the four main phases of the lifecycle of an EIO (the issuing phase, the transmission phase, the recognition phase and the execution phase). The Agency can also advise on issues related to the scope of the EIO Directive and its use vis-à-vis other coexisting legal instruments, the competent authorities, the content, form and language of the EIO and the use of some specific investigative measures.

“ With cross-border crime unfortunately on the rise, Eurojust is asked to assist more and more in large and complex cases. This situation leads to an increase in international actions by the judiciary, which we must coordinate in real time. By setting up a coordination centre at Eurojust, we can help immediately and ensure that actions are taken at the same time and benefit the judiciary and police in all participating countries, whereas individual actions by Member States and third countries would yield less impressive results. ”

– Eurojust President Ladislav Hamran –

Coordination meetings



Coordination meetings are a frequently used operational tool at Eurojust, bringing together judicial and law enforcement authorities from Member States and, in some cases, third countries. When a case is opened at Eurojust, representatives of the National Desks in question analyse the case information and resolve any potential legal issues resulting from the differences in EU legal systems. If further intervention is required, Eurojust may set up a coordination meeting between judicial authorities and law enforcement directly involved in the case.

Eurojust plays a coordinating role at these meetings. The Agency has a dedicated team of judicial cooperation officers who can provide legal advice, analysis and operational assistance.

Eurojust also provides facilities, as well as accommodation and travel reimbursement for visiting participants. Simultaneous interpretation services are available throughout the coordination meeting, even if the meeting is held via videoconference.

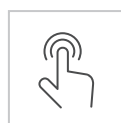


In coordination meetings, judicial authorities involved may:

- ▶ exchange information and case files;
- ▶ identify parallel and/or linked investigations;
- ▶ decide on the most suitable framework for mutual cooperation;
- ▶ decide on setting up a JIT;
- ▶ solve potential conflicts of jurisdiction as early as possible in the investigation; and
- ▶ agree when and how to launch a coordinated operation or an action day against the criminal group.

Coordination meetings are a powerful tool. Through the years, representatives of national authorities have indicated that they benefit immensely from the informal nature of coordination meetings. The face-to-face contact encourages informal discussion, which can assist in reaching agreements, building trust and forging lasting relationships.

Coordination centres



Eurojust offers a unique tool – the coordination centre – to support large-scale operations targeting cross-border criminality. A key success factor in these actions is the ability to simultaneously execute measures such as arrests, searches, seizures of evidence, interviews of (potential) suspects and witnesses, and the freezing of assets. These action days often take place in several Member States at the same time, thereby preventing criminals from warning their networks. They also ensure any evidence gathered during these operations can be used in court proceedings against the perpetrators.

A coordination centre is normally preceded by a coordination meeting to decide on the timing and scope of the joint operations and the legal frame-



work that will be applied. Eurojust sets several processes in motion when planning a coordination centre and can assist in creating an overview of targets and measures, as well as setting up communication channels and developing potential media strategies. Throughout the process, the National Desks involved in the cases can support the drafting of EAWs, EIOs and other instruments, taking into account the needs of the other countries involved.

During an action day, coordination centre participants have access to dedicated, secure lines of com-

munication. Based on the information received from the involved authorities, the coordination centre regularly communicates the progress of the operations taking place on the ground. This information enables the involved authorities to adapt their strategies on the spot in response to developing situations.

By working as a team with the national authorities, Eurojust's National Desks and committed staff of analysts and advisors help establish the right conditions to coordinate complex and rapidly evolving cross-border operations.

Coordination centres in action

The first Eurojust coordination centre, held in February 2011, concerned stopping migrant smuggling by a criminal network active in six countries. Eurojust was asked for support to facilitate mutual legal assistance (MLA) requests to the involved Member States and coordinate investigations and prosecutions, as well as simultaneous actions against the organised crime group (OCG) in the other five countries. After Eurojust assisted in the extensive preparations, including the organisation of a coordination meeting to agree on a strategy for simultaneous actions in seven cities, a coordination centre was established.

Thirty-five suspected criminal facilitators were arrested, and 38 immigrants were intercepted.

The 100th coordination centre took place at Eurojust in September 2019, the culmination of a complex technical investigation into an OCG involved in massive pay-TV fraud and large-scale violations of audio-visual copyright. The action day involved six countries. Twenty-two suspects were identified, and more than 200 servers were taken offline. The successful outcome of the coordination centre was followed by a press conference at Eurojust.



Photos © Council of the EU

Sample cases



EncroChat (2020) Through a joint investigation team (JIT), French and Dutch law enforcement and judicial authorities, Europol and Eurojust managed to dismantle EncroChat, an encrypted phone network widely used by criminal networks. The months-long investigation made it possible to intercept, share and analyse millions of messages that were exchanged between criminals to plan serious crimes. The information is already being used in several ongoing criminal investigations and will be further analysed as a source of unique insight into unprecedented volumes of new evidence to profoundly tackle organised criminal networks.



Eurojust intensively facilitated judicial cooperation through the creation of the JIT and the extensive use of European judicial cooperation instruments such as European Investigation Orders, more than a hundred of which have been issued in several countries. Throughout the investigation, the JIT members organised five coordination meetings at Eurojust to bring all involved parties together in a secure environment, identify parallel or linked investigations, decide on the most suitable framework for cooperation and solve potential conflicts of jurisdiction.



Operation Pollino (2018) Operation Pollino was the largest coordinated crackdown on the 'Ndrangheta mafia to date in Europe. The investigation lasted four years. All knowledge was pooled by the national authorities to create a joint strategy for dealing with the complex criminal activities. Synchronised actions by hundreds of police officers, monitored in real time from a coordination centre at Eurojust, resulted in the detection of almost 4 000 kg of cocaine and large quantities of other drugs, the seizure of EUR 2 million, and 84 arrests.



Coordinated arrests of suspected members of a migrant smuggling network (2020) As a result of a cross-border investigation supported by Eurojust and Europol, Belgian and French authorities arrested 26 suspected members of a major migrant smuggling group, which transported mainly Asian refugees. Prompted by the discovery of 39 deceased Vietnamese nationals inside a refrigerated trailer in Essex in the United Kingdom in October 2019, a JIT was created between Belgium, Ireland, France, the United Kingdom, Eurojust and Europol. Judicial and police authorities have since worked closely together within the JIT to map out the alleged activity of the organised crime group and to determine the possibility of finding cross-links to ongoing regional and local investigations of migrant smuggling activity. Eurojust supported the JIT, six case-specific coordination meetings and the organisation of a coordination centre on the action day, enabling real-time coordination of the operation.



Programmes and projects

EuroMed Justice

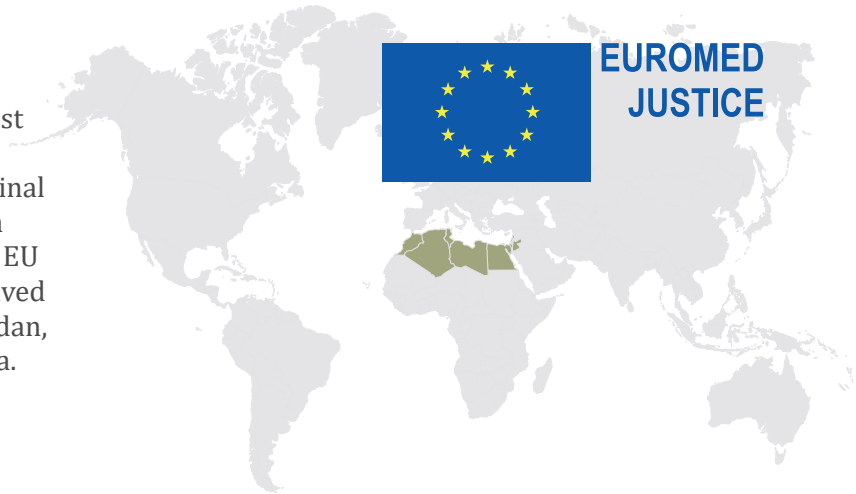
The EuroMed Justice Programme (EMJ) aims to protect EU and EU neighbours' citizens against transnational serious and organised crime, by strengthening the strategic cooperation in criminal matters between national judicial authorities in South Partner Countries (SPCs), as well as with EU Member States and EU agencies. The SPCs involved in the programme are Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine* and Tunisia.

EMJ is implemented by Eurojust and focuses on supporting intra- and inter-regional platforms of judicial cooperation, training and exchange, developing practical tools for mutual legal assistance and providing support to joint cross-border cooperation activities.

CrimEx (the EuroMed Justice Expert Group in Criminal Matters) and the Prosecutors General Forum are placed at the core of the EuroMed judicial and law enforcement mechanism of cooperation and coordination. The CrimEx network is composed

of active criminal justice professionals (judges, prosecutors and legal advisors from the Ministries of Justice) and is connected with and supported by Eurojust and the European Judicial Network (EJN).

* *This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of EU Member States on this issue.*



SIRIUS



The SIRIUS project, co-implemented by Eurojust and Europol, is a central reference point in the EU for knowledge sharing on cross-border access to electronic evidence.

It offers a variety of services, such as guidelines, trainings and tools, to help with accessing data held by online service providers (OSPs). These services are available to law enforcement and judicial authorities via a platform and an application.

To this day, SIRIUS serves a community of competent authorities from 44 countries, representing all EU Member States and a growing number of third countries.

The SIRIUS platform hosts several products, such as:

- ▶ Guidelines of more than 40 OSPs for data disclosure based on voluntary cooperation and Mutual Legal Assistance;
- ▶ IT tools facilitating the structuring and interpretation of electronic data;
- ▶ Discussion forums: common and restricted forums for members of the judiciary and law enforcement authorities, including a Single Points of Contact (SPOC) network;
- ▶ Webinars and training materials for judicial and law enforcement authorities;
- ▶ Factsheets on legal concepts and instruments related to electronic evidence.

EMPACT



The EU policy cycle EMPACT (European Multidisciplinary Platform Against

Criminal Threats) is a security initiative driven by EU Member States to identify, prioritise and address threats posed by organised and serious international crime. EMPACT brings together a broad range of multidisciplinary professionals from Member States and third countries to take concrete actions against criminal networks. Participants include law enforcement authorities, the judiciary, EU agencies, customs and tax offices and private partners.

Eurojust is well equipped to assist prosecutors in coordinating the judicial follow-up – preferably from the early stages of the investigations. The Agency provides access to its full range of tools, including coordination meetings, coordination centres and funding for joint investigation teams (JITs).

With its experience and expertise in judicial cooperation, it offers quick and efficient solutions to



tackle legal issues in cross-border cases, including conflicts of jurisdiction, extradition, admissibility of evidence and the freezing and recovery of assets. Eurojust takes the lead in one Operational Action on judicial cooperation and coordination under one or more crime priorities.

Digital Criminal Justice

Eurojust first proposed the concept of Digital Criminal Justice (DCJ) to the Council of the European Union in December 2018. The initiative aims at creating an EU-wide digital platform to enable Eurojust and the wider European judicial community to quickly and efficiently interact and exchange critical information and evidence during criminal investigations.

Eurojust worked closely with the European Commission and helped identify several areas in which digital tools could give all actors in the EU security chain the opportunity to keep up with the fast pace of technological development and the rapidly evolving threat landscape. In December 2020, the Commission tabled comprehensive proposals to further enhance the digitalisation of justice systems. Several elements in the package pave the way for a major leap forward in making judicial cooperation

and information exchange in criminal investigations and proceedings across the EU ‘digital-proof’ for the challenges of the 21st century:

- ▶ Modernisation of Eurojust’s Case Management System;
- ▶ Creation of a task force to improve possibilities for data exchange and hit/no-hit connections between Eurojust and its partners, to help identify links between ongoing investigations and prosecutions;
- ▶ New legislative initiatives on:
 - digital information exchange on cross-border terrorism cases, including further improvement of Eurojust’s Counter-Terrorism Register and Eurojust’s data processing framework;
 - the establishment of a joint investigation teams collaboration platform.



Contacting Eurojust

Eurojust National Coordination System



The Eurojust National Coordination System (ENCS) plays a key role in determining whether a request requires the attention of Eurojust or the European Judicial Network (EJN). It helps the National Members at Eurojust identify the right authorities to issue requests for judicial cooperation. The ENCS also maintains close relations with the Europol National

Unit and ensures Eurojust provides feedback to judicial practitioners in the Member States. Member States have appointed national correspondents for Eurojust to improve contact between the National Members and the national prosecution authorities. The national correspondents can provide assistance in contacting Eurojust and advise on whether contacting the EJN might be more practical.

Contacting the National Desks



The 'States and partners' section on the Eurojust website www.eurojust.europa.eu provides detailed information about how to contact a specific National Desk.

From the alphabetical overview of Member States, please select the country of your choice to see the dedicated National Desk page, including a tab with contact details.

General contact for Eurojust

Note: Please do not use the following contact details to share personal data or operational information.



Phone: +31 70 412 5000

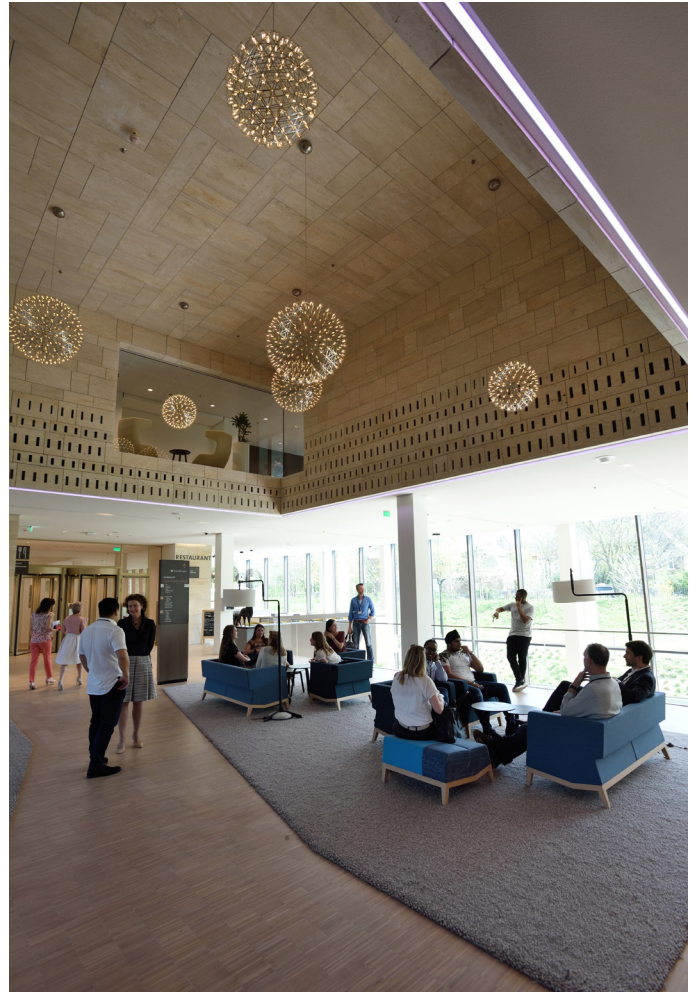
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