



Network for investigation and
prosecution of genocide, crimes
against humanity and war crimes

Conclusions of the 3rd Meeting of the European Network of Contact Points for investigation and prosecution of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes

22-23 May 2006, The Hague

1. The Network appreciates the valuable contributions of NGOs to the investigation and prosecution of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, in particular by identifying witnesses and victims of such crimes and encouraging them to co-operate with national authorities, taking full account of the local situation in the country, inter alia the situation of ethnic groups in the countries concerned. The Network also appreciates the participation of NGOs in the open part of the meeting and welcomes their participation in open parts of future meetings.
2. Protection of victims and of witnesses in war crime cases is a priority issue in order to safeguard life and health of such persons, to prevent them from further victimisation and to ensure that perpetrators of war crimes are brought to justice. To that end, it may be necessary to take specific measures to protect witnesses and victims.
3. Investigators and prosecutors of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes are facing special challenges when investigating such crimes, in particular when investigating such crimes in a foreign country. Therefore the members of the Network deem it essential that such investigators and prosecutors are provided with specialised training, taking account of in particular the geographical, historical and cultural situation of the countries concerned, the applicable rules of international law and practical expertise on collecting and taking of evidence in a foreign country. To that end, it should be considered to organise joint training for investigators and prosecutors from different States and to find ways to provide for funding, including from the EU, for such training.
4. The members of the Network are of the opinion that the use of secure premises of EU institutions or of diplomatic missions of Member States in countries where the investigations take place, or the use of interpreters known to representations of EU institutions or diplomatic missions of Member States on the spot can facilitate the practical handling of war crimes investigations. To that end it should also be considered to enable investigators from EU Member States to use liaison officers from other EU Member States on the spot to facilitate field investigations and to liaise with local authorities. The members of the Network consider that the assistance of investigators of EU Police Missions, in compliance with their mandates, would facilitate the collection of information. The members of the Network request the competent EU institutions and the Member States to examine this issue, with a view to arriving at practical solutions.

5. The Network appreciates the work undertaken by Interpol and by the ICC to build up the Interpol War Crimes Database and the ICC Legal Tools Project and encourages national authorities to use them.
6. Exchanging practical experience between national war crime units and the International Tribunals and the ICC, in particular on how to successfully investigate and prosecute genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, is essential to increase the efficiency of investigations and prosecutions of such crimes, in particular by national authorities with less practical experience in this field. To that end, Member States holding the Presidency of the EU should organise meetings of the Network semi-annually whereby it should be considered to devote meetings, where appropriate, to special topics or to specific regions. Practical ways should be found to provide the Network with the necessary means to co-operate on a more continuous and consistent basis (e.g. financial or secretarial support).