



# EUROJUST ANNUAL REPORT 2021

*20 years of criminal justice across borders*



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The statistics on Eurojust cases included in this report were produced on the basis of data contained in the Eurojust Case Management System (CMS). The numbers were extracted in January 2021 and reflect the data available at that moment. Due to the ongoing nature of cases, possible discrepancies with previously reported numbers may exist, and statistics may be updated in the future.

# Acronyms and abbreviations

<b>AI</b>	Artificial intelligence	<b>EUROMED</b>	Euro-Mediterranean Partnership
<b>CAAR</b>	Consolidated Annual Activity Report	<b>EUROPOL</b>	European Union Law Enforcement Agency
<b>CEPOL</b>	European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training	<b>IP</b>	Intellectual Property
<b>CJEU</b>	Court of Justice of the European Union	<b>IPC</b>	Intellectual Property Crime
<b>CMS</b>	Case Management System	<b>JHA</b>	Justice and Home Affairs
<b>CTR</b>	European Judicial Counter-Terrorism Register	<b>JHAAN</b>	Justice and Home Affairs Agencies' Network
<b>EAW</b>	European Arrest Warrant	<b>JIT</b>	Joint investigation team
<b>e-CODEX</b>	e-Justice Communication via Online Data Exchange	<b>MLA</b>	Mutual legal assistance
<b>ECRIS-TCN</b>	European Criminal Records Information System	<b>MTIC fraud</b>	Missing Trader Intra-Community Fraud
<b>EDPS</b>	European Data Protection Supervisor	<b>NPS</b>	New Psychoactive Substances
<b>e-EDES</b>	e-Evidence Digital Exchange System	<b>OCG</b>	Organised crime group
<b>EIO</b>	European Investigation Order	<b>OLAF</b>	European Anti-Fraud Office
<b>EIPPN</b>	European Intellectual Property Prosecutors Network	<b>OSP</b>	Online service providers
<b>EJCN</b>	European Judicial Cybercrime Network	<b>PIF</b>	Protection of the financial interests of the European Union
<b>EJN</b>	European Judicial Network	<b>SIRIUS</b>	Scientific Information Retrieval Integrated Utilisation System
<b>EJTN</b>	European Judicial Training Network	<b>SNE</b>	Seconded National Expert
<b>EMPACT</b>	European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats	<b>SOCTA</b>	Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment
<b>EPPO</b>	European Public Prosecutor's Office	<b>SPC</b>	South Partner Countries
<b>EU</b>	European Union	<b>THB</b>	Trafficking in human beings
<b>EUIPO</b>	European Union Intellectual Property Office	<b>UNODC</b>	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
<b>eu-LISA</b>	EU agency for operational management of large-scale IT systems in the area of Freedom, Security and Justice	<b>VPN</b>	Virtual private network
		<b>WACAP</b>	West African Network of Central Authorities and Prosecutors

# Forewords

## *Didier Reynders, European Commissioner for Justice*

This year Eurojust continued its upwards trajectory to support the highest number of cases ever. Despite the continued restrictions of the pandemic throughout 2021, practitioners across the European Union were still able to rely on Eurojust continuously. I want to thank Eurojust's dedicated staff, including the National Members, their deputies and assistants, as well as President Ladislav Hamran and Vice-Presidents Klaus Meyer-Cabri and Boštjan Škrlec.

Eurojust's figures speak for themselves. In addition to supporting over 10 000 cases, Eurojust sent nearly 2 000 rapid responses to judicial cooperation requests and participated in over 1 400 large-scale operations. As a result, 2.8 billion euros of criminal assets were frozen, 7 billion euros of drugs were seized, and 3 329 suspects were arrested or surrendered. In addition, Eurojust continued to handle dozens of cases related to the pandemic itself such as sales of fictitious personal protective equipment, protecting Europeans at their most vulnerable.

Eurojust has also proven why digitalisation matters today. The adoption of new secure online conferencing tools and the setting up of Eurojust's premises to accommodate hybrid meetings have helped the organisation achieve these impressive results, giving many national justice systems room for inspiration. But it is also thanks to the good relationship that Eurojust has established with its partners - Europol and OLAF - as well as with the newly operational EPPO focused on fighting crime against the EU's budget. Together they form the pillars of Europe's fight against cross-border crime and their close cooperation keeps Europe safe.

The need for Eurojust is also expanding beyond the EU's borders and this past year has seen the number of joint investigation teams with third countries grow rapidly. In 2021 it has become a very successful tool to speed up criminal investigations by facilitating the issuance of nearly 500 European Arrest

Warrants and over 4 300 European Investigation Orders.

In March, the Commission was given a mandate to improve Eurojust's international outreach even further. In the coming year, bilateral cooperation agreements between Eurojust and 13 third countries will be negotiated.



What is more impressive is that Eurojust has continued to operate at this level despite many obstacles. I am committed to help remove these. I want to help Eurojust improve its Case Management System and I want to see improvements to Eurojust's Counter-Terrorism Register for example so we can identify more connections automatically and save time. This would allow Eurojust to give faster and better feedback to national authorities. I would like to boost the successful Joint Investigation Teams tool with a new digital collaborative platform to help Eurojust exchange information and evidence, including large amounts of data, and ensure the traceability of evidence. I want Eurojust to become the number one digital hub for judicial cooperation in the Union. It is already on the right track.

This year Eurojust celebrates its 20th anniversary and I am happy to say that in parallel we were able to negotiate the biggest budget in its history – 350 million euro for the next 7 years. We have come a long way from an organisation that began as a small meeting of prosecutors around a table in Brussels to what we see in practice today. There will always be a need for the outstanding service Eurojust does for the safety of Europe and I look forward to seeing what will be achieved in the year to come.

## Ladislav Hamran, Eurojust President

Despite different hopes and expectations, the year 2021 did not bring the end of the COVID-19 pandemic. Knowing that the key to success lies in one's ability to adapt, Eurojust continued to navigate the ever-changing health situation with unparalleled professionalism. The results speak for themselves: for the first time in our agency's history, we supported more than 10 000 cases in one year. Reaching this important milestone under such challenging circumstances fills me with pride, gratitude and confidence in the future.

I feel pride, because behind that number of 10 000 cases are the real stories of fellow citizens in desperate need of justice. They are the men, women and children being smuggled across the Mediterranean Sea in dangerous and unseaworthy boats. They are the hard-working entrepreneurs falling victim to fraud or extortion. They are the young people who need to be shielded from the ruthless tactics of drug trafficking networks. In 2021, Eurojust continued to support the Member States in their fight against these and other forms of cross-border crime; from large-scale emblematic operations such as the EncroChat case to cases smaller in size but not in impact.

I am grateful, first and foremost, for the incredible work of my colleagues at Eurojust. The pandemic has made it very clear that it is people who make the difference, and I am certain that our agency's achievements in the past year would not have been possible without their talent and dedication.

Working from home may have put us at a greater physical distance from one another, but in a way, it also connected us more. Creative solutions emerged to ensure effective cooperation, both within our agency and with our external stakeholders. I take this opportunity to thank Commissioner Reynders and our colleagues at DG JUST, the Council and the European Parliament for their highly valued support. I am also grateful for our strong partnerships with other Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) agencies, the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO), the European Anti-fraud Office (OLAF) and the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS).



Eurojust Presidency (left to right): *Ladislav Hamran*, President; *Klaus Meyer-Cabri*, Vice-President and *Boštjan Škrlec*, Vice-President. Photos © Eurojust

Finally, the past year has given me great confidence in the future of our agency. The resilience and determination we have demonstrated in the most difficult of circumstances will allow us to meet any challenge that still lies ahead of us. In the coming period, we will continue to focus our attention on further digitalising the way European prosecutors and judges work together across borders. Modern IT systems and secure communication channels will enable us to support Member States more effectively, especially when dealing with issues related to electronic evidence and encrypted data. At the same time, we will keep strengthening and expanding our cooperation with third countries, making sure that the fight against organised crime and terrorism evolves from a regional to a global effort.

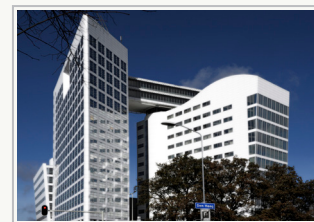
This annual report will reach you in the year that Eurojust celebrates its 20-year anniversary. The level of judicial cooperation that we have helped to establish in the past two decades is truly unique in the world, and our agency is widely acknowledged as a real European success story. Together with our stakeholders, we will continue to go above and beyond in order to build trust, reinforce partnerships, and make sure that justice is done.

# 20 years of judicial cooperation



**28 February 2002**  
Adoption of Council Decision setting up Eurojust with a view to reinforcing the fight against serious crime

**29 March 2003**  
Inauguration of Eurojust's seat in The Hague



**4 May 2004** – Ten new National Members join Eurojust (Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia)



**1 March 2001**  
Pro-Eurojust begins operations in Brussels



**2002** – Third countries (Canada, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and USA) appoint first contact points for relations with Eurojust

## 2002

1999

**15 October 1999**  
Establishment of an *Area of Freedom, Security and Justice* in the European Union at Tampere conference; agreement to create Eurojust



2001

**13 June 2002**  
Adoption of Council Framework Decisions on the European Arrest Warrant and Joint Investigation Teams



**13 June 2002**  
The European Network for investigation and prosecution of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes is established

2003

**2003** – Eurojust provides first guidance on *Which jurisdiction should prosecute?*



**9 June 2004**  
First Agreement between Eurojust and Europol

**2004** – First joint investigation team supported by Eurojust, a drug trafficking case between the Netherlands and the UK



**1 December 2002**  
The European Judicial Network (EJN) Secretariat is established as a separate unit within Eurojust; the EJN was created in 1998

**2004** – Eurojust brings together EAW practitioners and issues guidelines on the European Arrest Warrant





2005



**8 July 2005**

The Network of National Experts on Joint Investigation Teams is established

**20 September 2005**

By Council Decision, Member States commit to appoint a Eurojust national correspondent in terrorism matters and to share information with Eurojust on counter-terrorism investigations.



**26 October 2005**

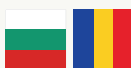
The Cooperation Agreement with Norway, first Eurojust agreement with a third country, enters into force; Norway posts its first Liaison Prosecutor at Eurojust



**1 March 2006**

The Cooperation Agreement with Iceland enters into force

2006



**1 January 2007**

Bulgaria and Romania join the EU and appoint National Members to Eurojust

2007

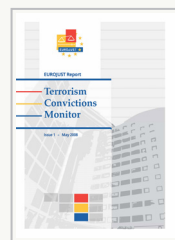


**1 January 2007**

The United States posts a Liaison Prosecutor at Eurojust

**8 May 2008**

First Eurojust analysis of counter-terrorism convictions (Eurojust's *Terrorism Convictions Monitor*)



**24 September 2008**

The Practical Agreement on arrangements of cooperation between Eurojust and OLAF is signed

2008

**16 December 2008**

The Council adopts a Decision on the strengthening of Eurojust



**1 December 2009**

Entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. Criminal Justice becomes part of Community law and includes a dedicated provision on Eurojust's role (Article 85)

2009

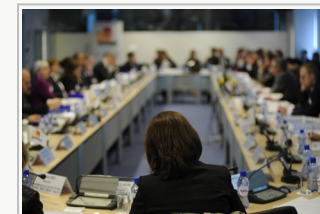


2009 – Eurojust begins providing financial and logistical support to JITs

2010

**16 December 2010**

Prosecutors General meet for the first time at Eurojust in the 'Consultative forum' format



2011



**8 February 2011**  
Eurojust holds its first coordination centre, supporting judicial authorities throughout the action day

**2011** – Start of the on-call coordination (OCC) service, enabling judges, prosecutors and law enforcement authorities to request Eurojust’s assistance on a 24/7 basis



2013



**1 November 2013**  
The Cooperation Agreement with Liechtenstein enters into force

**1 November 2013**  
National correspondents on terrorism discuss for the first time the judicial implications of the phenomenon of returning foreign fighters



**1 July 2013**  
Croatia joins the EU and College



**3 April 2014**  
Adoption of the Directive on the European Investigation Order in criminal matters

2014

**6 May 2014**  
The EJN and Eurojust publish guidance on support they provide to prosecutions: *Assistance in International Cooperation in Criminal Matters for Practitioners – What can we do for you?*



**5 April 2016**  
The European Court of Justice delivers its judgment in the Aranyosi and Caldaru cases on the EAW, prison conditions and fundamental rights. Eurojust monitors case-law developments for EU instruments on judicial cooperation

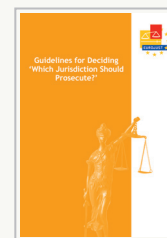


**23 May 2016**  
First EU Day Against Impunity for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes

2015



**1 March 2015**  
Switzerland posts a Liaison Prosecutor at Eurojust



**2016**  
Eurojust issues its first joint recommendation on which state should prosecute and publishes its revised Guidelines: *Which jurisdiction should prosecute?*

2016



**9 June 2016**  
The European Judicial Cybercrime Network is established



**1 October 2016**  
The Cooperation Agreement with Moldova enters into force



1 January 2021

The United Kingdom and Albania post Liaison Prosecutors at Eurojust

1 March 2021

The Council approves a mandate for the Commission to open negotiations on international agreements with 13 third countries for Eurojust

12 February 2021

A working arrangement between Eurojust and the European Public Prosecutor's Office marks the start of operational cooperation



1 March 2020

Serbia and Georgia post Liaison Prosecutors at Eurojust

1 March 2020

The Euromed Justice programme comes to Eurojust

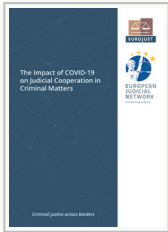


EUROMED JUSTICE

A programme funded by the European Union

1 April 2020

Eurojust and the EJM collect and disseminate information on *The impact of COVID-19 on judicial cooperation in criminal matters*. Weekly updates are published throughout 2020, and frequent revisions are made in 2021



2021

2020

2019

2018

2017

5 July 2021

Eurojust shares guidance on the prosecution of investment fraud

1 December 2021

The Commission presents its digitalisation of justice proposals, including amendments to the Eurojust Regulation on the Counter-Terrorism Register and the JIT collaboration platform



29 May 2020

The Focus Group on Migrant Smuggling is launched

3 December 2020

Following the *Petruhhin* judgment and on invitation of the Council, Eurojust and the EJM report on practices of extradition of EU citizens to third countries

21 December 2020

Eurojust receives a dedicated budget to cooperate with Europol in the SIRIUS project on cross-border access to electronic evidence



1 June 2019

Eurojust and the EJM provide guidance on the practical application of the European Investigation Order

1 September 2019

The Judicial Counter-Terrorism Register is established at Eurojust

10 October 2019

A conference on *Criminal Justice in the Digital Age* is organised by Eurojust in Brussels

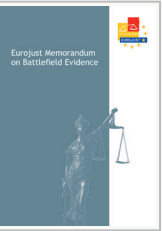
12 December 2019

The Eurojust Regulation enters into force – Eurojust becomes the *EU Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation*



14 November 2018

Regulation (EU) 2018/1805 of the European Parliament and Council on mutual recognition of freezing orders and confiscation orders is adopted



1 June 2018

Eurojust publishes a memorandum on using battlefield evidence for investigations and prosecutions of terrorist offences

1 August 2018

Ukraine posts a Liaison Prosecutor at Eurojust



1 November 2018

North Macedonia posts a Liaison Prosecutor at Eurojust

15 March 2017 – Directive (EU) 2017/541 on combating terrorism is adopted, confirming Eurojust's role in jurisdiction matters in terrorism cases



1 July 2017

Eurojust moves to its new, purpose-built premises in The Hague



1 September 2017

Montenegro posts a Liaison Prosecutor at Eurojust

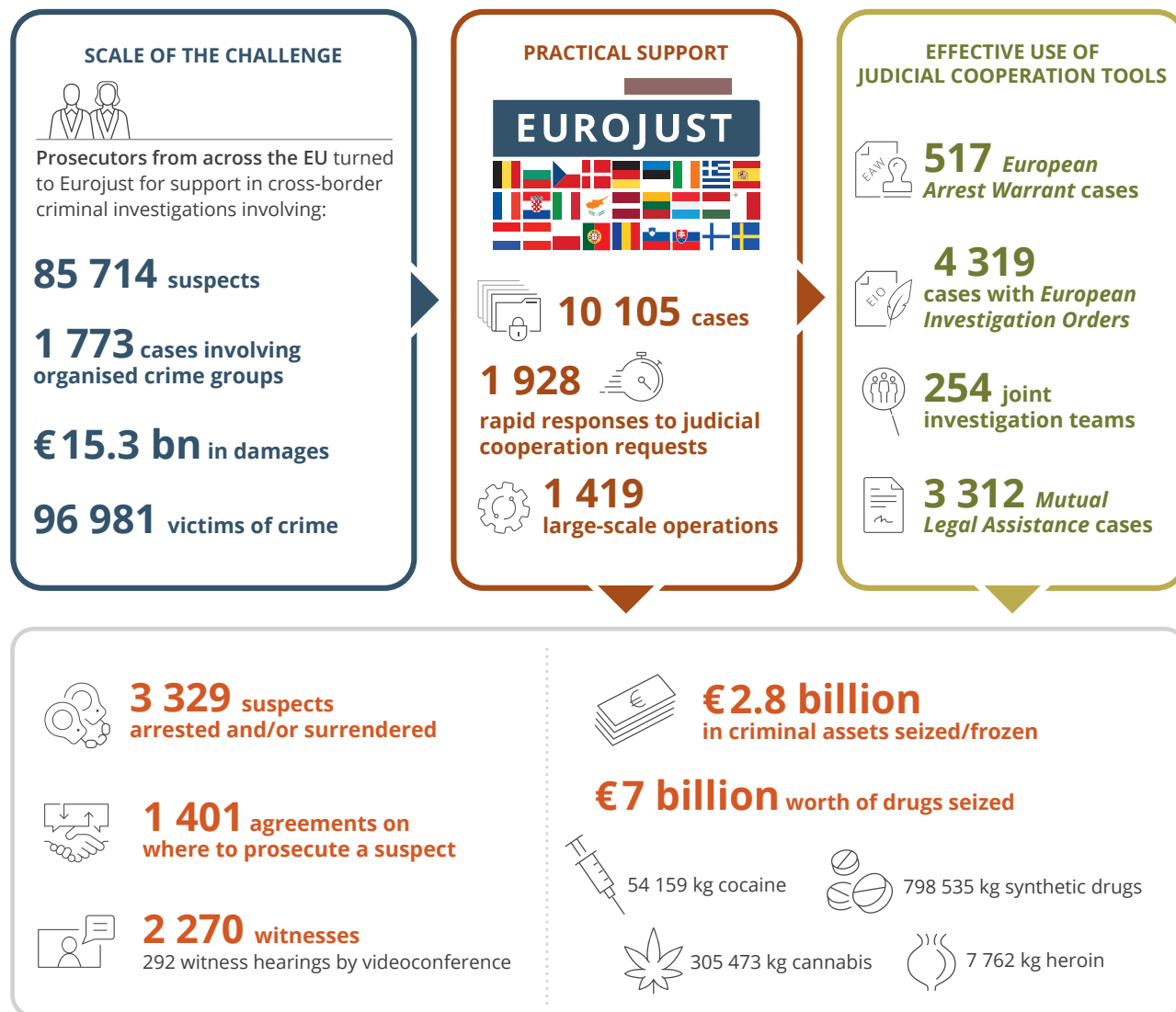
# 1. Operational outcomes 2021

As the scale of the challenge increased in 2021, so did Eurojust's support to judicial authorities in the fight against serious cross-border crimes.

2021's operational outcomes demonstrate the benefits of this cooperation. Eurojust contributed to the arrest of 3 329 suspects, the seizure or freezing of criminal assets worth EUR 2.8 billion, and the seizure of drugs worth EUR 7 billion.

These operational results were achieved thanks to the transnational cooperation between judicial authorities facilitated by Eurojust, in close collaboration with law enforcement and other partners in the criminal justice chain.

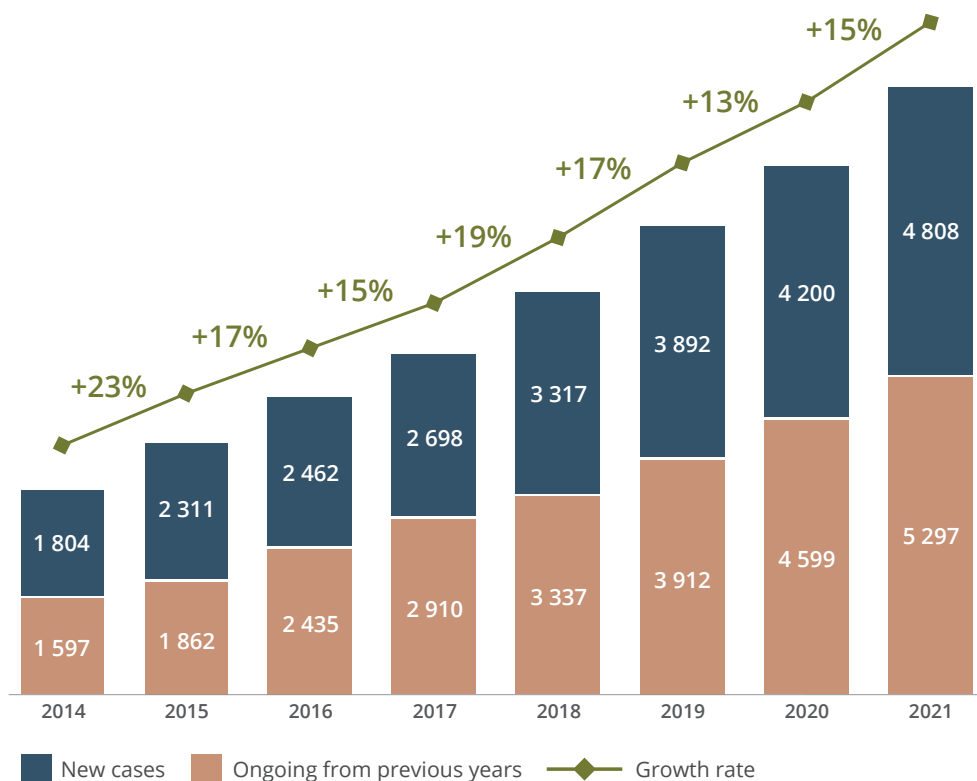
*NB: Some of these operational outcomes were achieved through cases that were opened before 2021 and were also included in the reporting on operational outcomes in Eurojust's 2020 Annual Report. The outcomes of these cases are included again in the reporting on 2021, since the cases were still ongoing.*



## 2. Tailor-made operational assistance to over 10 000 cases

In 2002, the year Eurojust was established, the Agency handled its first 217 cases. Twenty years on, the Agency has supported 10 105 cross-border criminal investigations, with an increase of 15% in 2021, compared to the previous year. Eurojust's casework continues to grow from year to year.

In 2021, just under half of the total number of cases – 4 808 – were newly opened, in spite of the difficult circumstances imposed by the continuing pandemic. The remaining 5 297 cases represent ongoing cases, opened in previous years, which the Agency continued to support in 2021.



From 2003 to 2016, the number of new cases opened was always higher than the number of ongoing cases. Since 2017, this trend has changed, with the number of ongoing cases superseding the number of new cases per year, reflecting the sustained assistance required over long periods by many of the increasingly complex investigations Eurojust supports.

### 2.1 Eurojust tools and services

Judicial practitioners tackling serious cross-border crime benefit from the tools and services provided by Eurojust to quickly identify the right counterpart, efficiently exchange information and solve practical issues in order to successfully coordinate investigations.

Eurojust provides complex forms of assistance and coordination mechanisms, which may be combined as required to support major operations at each stage of the criminal justice process.

The Agency:

- ▶ coordinates parallel investigations;
- ▶ organises case-specific coordination meetings;
- ▶ Sets up and/or funds joint investigation teams (JITs) in which judicial authorities and law enforcement work together on transnational criminal investigations; and
- ▶ plans and supports joint action days, steered in real time via coordination centres held at Eurojust, to facilitate the dismantling of organised crime groups (OCGs) through the simultaneous arrest of perpetrators, search of premises, hearing of suspects and/or witnesses, and seizure of assets across borders.

In 2021, Eurojust supported 457 coordination meetings, and 22 coordination centres, with videoconferencing and new hybrid solutions added to the traditional in-person meeting formats. One measure taken to allow for limited



## Rapid assistance provided for immediate arrest of Swedish murder suspect in Spain



**CRIME:** A suspect was allegedly involved in the accidental killing of a 12-year-old Swedish girl at a petrol station in the town of Botkyrka in 2020. The suspect was part of an OCG of five who allegedly wanted to murder a member of a rival criminal network. Apparently, the girl was killed by accident, and the suspect later fled to Spain.

**ACTION:** The Spanish authorities quickly located the suspect in close cooperation with their Swedish counterparts and had him under surveillance before he was arrested in July 2021.

**EUROJUST'S ROLE:** Eurojust ensured rapid judicial cooperation between the Swedish and Spanish authorities for the immediate arrest of the murder suspect.

**JUDICIAL TOOLS:** Through on-call coordination via Eurojust, the Spanish authorities were able to arrest the suspect almost immediately after a European Arrest Warrant (EAW) was issued by the Swedish Prosecution Authority. The warrant was instantly transferred to Spain via rapid coordination between the Eurojust Swedish and Spanish Desks, ensuring the prompt arrest of the suspect by the Spanish authorities.

and safe physical presence was to fully equip one of the Eurojust coordination meeting rooms so that it could also serve as a coordination centre. This room was used on several occasions during the pandemic to ensure the continuity of vital support needed for these complex action days. The tools and services provided through these meetings and centres proved crucial in ensuring justice for a large number of cases handled by Eurojust in 2021.

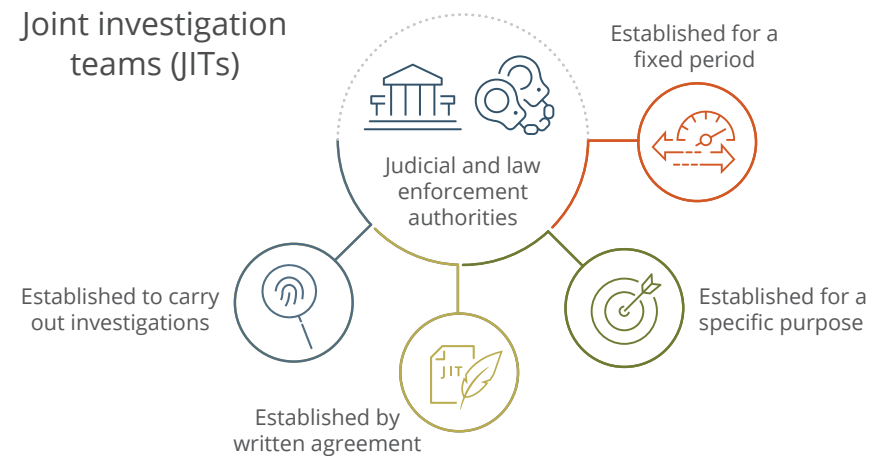
Eurojust also offers rapid responses, sometimes provided within hours, to support judicial authorities with time-sensitive cases. For cases that require

immediate action, Eurojust's National Desks operate on-call services 24/7, 365 days a year. Such services include assisting national authorities to connect with the correct counterparts in other countries, understand the legal requirements and prepare judicial cooperation requests in line with national legislation.

In 2021, Eurojust supported 1 928 cases through a rapid response.

## 2.2 Support to 254 joint investigation teams

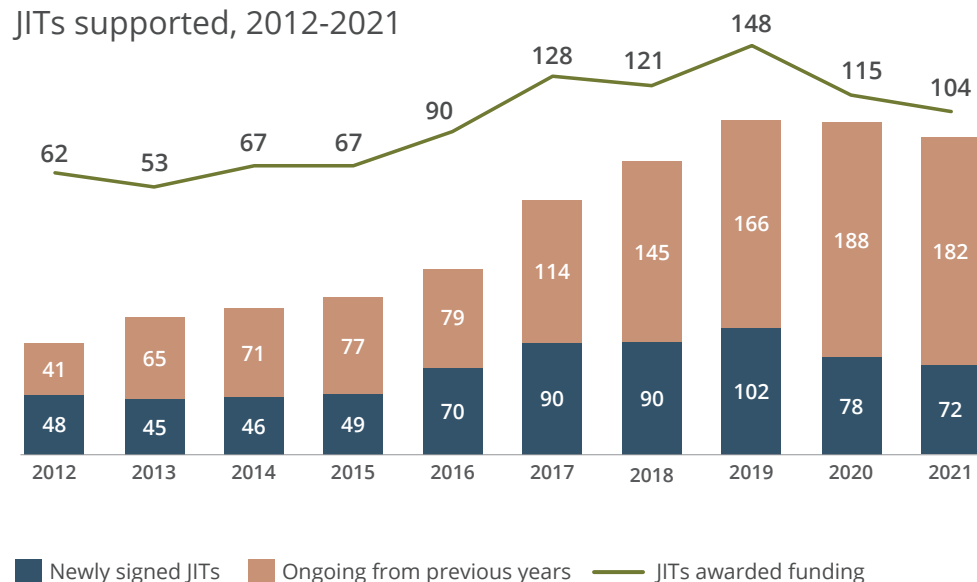
In 2021, Eurojust provided legal, financial and/or operational support to 254 JITs. 72 JITs were established in 2021, and 182 were ongoing from previous years. The JITs active in 2021 focused on a wide range of crime types, predominantly swindling and fraud, money laundering, drug trafficking and trafficking in human beings.



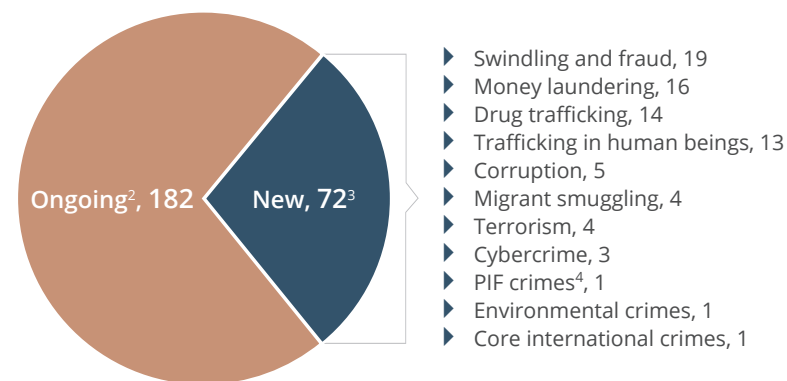
### 2.2.1 JIT funding

In 2021, 104 of the active JITs were also funded by Eurojust, of which 42 JITs were established in 2021. The funding covered costs for travel and accommodation, interpretation and translation, and the transfer of items seized during JIT operations. As part of its JIT funding activities, Eurojust

## JITs supported, 2012-2021



## JITs supported in 2021<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Eurojust support to JITs includes financial and operational support. Of the 254 JITs supported, **104 were funded by Eurojust**.

<sup>2</sup> As of January 2022. Due to the ongoing nature of the cases, these figures may change after the reporting period.

<sup>3</sup> One JIT can deal with more than one crime type.

<sup>4</sup> Crimes against the financial interests of the European Union for which Eurojust retains competence.

also continued to lend equipment to JITs, such as mobile telephones, laptops, mobile printers and scanners.

The budget used for JIT funding in 2021 was EUR 1.16 million to cover the funding needs still affected by the pandemic. In 2021, 191 funding applications were received, with no increase compared to 2020 due to the pandemic.

To ensure the responsiveness of the JITs funding programme to practitioners' needs, Eurojust introduced changes to the funding mechanism throughout 2021, including new cost categories and funding without calls for proposals.

### 2.2.2 New cost categories for JITs funding

Eurojust extended its financial support to cover new types of costs, including:

- ▶ specialist expertise;
- ▶ purchase of low-value equipment (hardware, software); and
- ▶ travel, accommodation or interpreting costs for victims and witnesses.

### 2.2.3 New scheme for urgent JIT funding

Funding without calls for proposals aims to provide faster, targeted short-term grants to urgent and/or unforeseen JIT operational activities, falling outside the scope of the regular Eurojust JIT funding scheme involving calls for proposals. Applications under this new funding scheme may be submitted anytime during the year and are processed quickly. This funding option addresses a need for increased flexibility in the support to cross-border investigations.

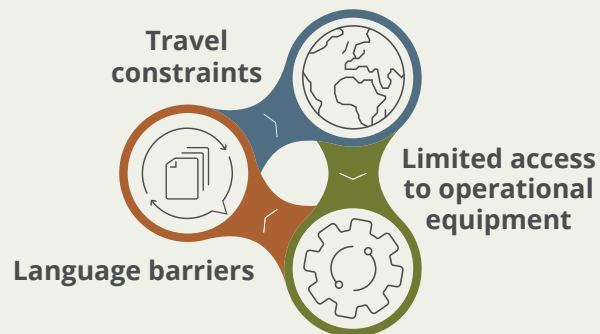
The new funding scheme was used seven times in 2021. Funds in the amount of EUR 32 610 were awarded and spent on various costs related to urgent operational actions within cross-border investigations.



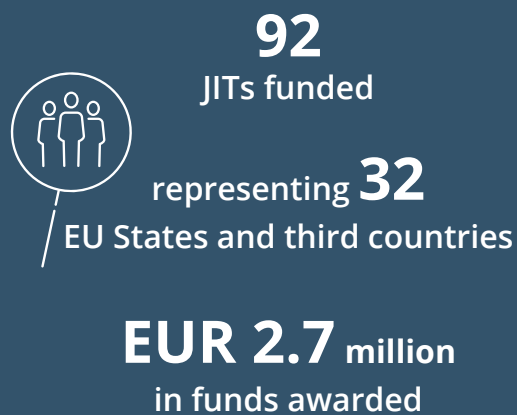
# Eurojust's JITs funding programme: A high return on investment of EU taxpayers' money JITsNetwork

## 1 COMMON CHALLENGES

The transnational dimension of cross-border investigations poses several practical challenges for the national authorities involved.



## A YEAR OF JITs FUNDING\*



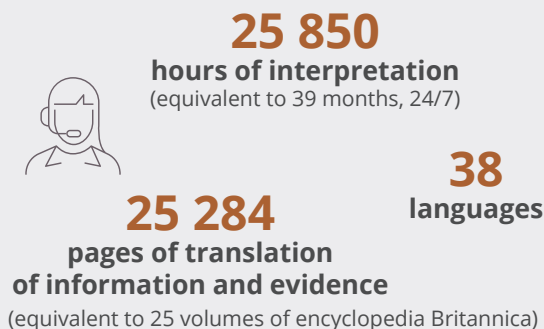
## 3 OPERATIONAL SUCCESSES



## 2

### FUNDED ACTIONS

### Interpretation and translation



Interpretation and translation allows JIT partners to effectively investigate across borders and bring charges at national level.

### Travel and accommodation



Travel and accommodation costs enables national authorities in a JIT to meet, prepare and execute operations.

### Operational support



Operational support enables investigators and prosecutors to efficiently work together.

\* Figures in this infographic are based on the latest data available within the JITs funding cycle at the time of publication. **They cover the period 02/10/2020 – 01/10/2021.**



### 3. Continuing judicial support during the COVID-19 pandemic

The pandemic continued to be an opportunity for OCGs, which took advantage of increased online activity, the demand for specific items linked to hygiene rules and the release of state subsidies.

Eurojust remained fully operational despite the restrictions applied during the pandemic and has been actively providing its standard services to practitioners throughout the EU and beyond.

The adoption of new, secure online conferencing tools and setting up Eurojust's premises to accommodate hybrid meetings enabled the agency to connect practitioners and support a higher than ever number of 10 105 cases in 2021.

#### 3.1 Monitoring the changing effect of COVID-related restrictions

Throughout 2021, Eurojust and the European Judicial Network continued collecting information on the impact of national measures against COVID-19 on judicial cooperation between the EU Member States, Iceland and Norway. The compiled information and the analysis of the main practical and legal issues arising was regularly issued to national authorities as a Council limited distribution document.

From the early stages of the pandemic, Eurojust's casework showed that practitioners in the Member States were facing various difficulties in dealing with cases involving judicial cooperation in criminal matters. These issues were repercussions of the measures implemented by the Member States to combat the



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spread of COVID-19 and affected all instruments commonly applied in the field of judicial cooperation. The unprecedented social changes triggered by the pandemic created new opportunities for OCGs to gain illicit profit.

The Impact of COVID-19 on Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters – Analysis of Eurojust’s Casework, a report published in May 2021, set out to identify which difficulties resulted from the pandemic in the application of the most commonly used instruments of judicial cooperation, and which were the most frequently committed crimes that were directly linked to the pandemic.

The report complements the Eurojust-EJN compilation on the impact of COVID-19 and describes what role Eurojust can play to resolve issues that arise in the work of prosecutors and judges. It also provides summaries of best practices in case extraordinary measures need to be applied again.

### 3.2 Crimes exploiting the pandemic

Eurojust supported dozens of cases that presented issues related to the COVID-19 crisis. Travel restrictions and risks continued to present challenges to judicial cooperation. Organised crime groups have adapted quickly to changing environments and to technological progress, and they have managed to profit from the circumstances of the pandemic in various areas. Coordinated action by law enforcement and judicial actors can, however, stop crimes such as ransomware attacks against hospitals.



Fraud involving sale of face masks halted thanks to Eurojust support



EUROJUST



IMPACT

**CRIME:** An OCG, which prior to the COVID-19 pandemic had already been illegally offering fictitious products for sale online, ran an online scam selling face masks from 2020 onwards. The group set up fake websites resembling the names of legally operating wholesale companies. Deliveries of ordered goods never took place, and the proceedings of the fake sales were subsequently laundered through a chain of bank accounts controlled by the OCG. Companies in at least 20 countries were defrauded of approximately EUR 1 million.

**ACTION:** During a joint action day conducted on 10 August 2021, 34 searches took place across Romania, Ireland and the Netherlands. In total, 23 suspects were charged, 10 of whom have been detained.

**RESULT:** The fake sales were stopped as a result of the action day.

**EUROJUST’S ROLE:** Eurojust coordinated the judicial cooperation in view of the searches and supported the execution of several judicial cooperation instruments.

## 4. Addressing conflicts of jurisdiction

Preventing and resolving conflicts of jurisdiction is one of the most important functions of Eurojust, as the Agency is in a privileged position not only to detect parallel proceedings but also to bring together and advise the investigators from involved Member States to make a shared decision on the actions needed, based on the Eurojust guidelines on which State is best placed to prosecute.

### Case-law by the Court of Justice of the European Union on the Principle of *ne bis in idem* in Criminal Matters

Eurojust continues to monitor the relevant case law of the CJEU and offers guidance in the application of the *ne bis in idem* principle in a transnational context. The [latest edition of the case-law report](#), published in December 2021, contains information on 23 judgments and 4 ongoing cases.

In 2021, Eurojust also examined the national follow-up to written requests of jurisdiction, a tool that had already been in use for several years.

### Eurojust written requests on jurisdiction

Eurojust written requests (or recommendations) are issued by National Members to assist national authorities when jurisdictional issues arise between two or more Member States.

The requests usually take the form of joint requests, which are issued jointly by two or more National Members involved in a case (and sometimes by Liaison Prosecutors). With a joint request, the National Members ask their respective competent authorities to accept that one of them is in a better position to undertake an investigation or prosecute specific acts. The conclusion included in the joint request is based on an in-depth assessment of the legal and factual circumstances of the case and is developed in accordance with the [Eurojust Guidelines on Jurisdiction](#).

National authorities can therefore rely on a commonly held opinion of Eurojust supported by a reasoned legal assessment. The authorities may refuse to



#JusticeDone: Contract killer sentenced in Hungary with Eurojust's support



**JUSTICE DONE:** In March 2021, the Metropolitan Court of Budapest sentenced a contract killer to life imprisonment for committing two murders in drug-related cases in Amsterdam and Budapest in 2018, and for the illegal possession of a firearm in the Czech Republic. In December 2021, the Appeal Court confirmed this judgment.

**EUROJUST'S ROLE:** The convicted person was arrested in Prague in March 2019 with the help of Eurojust, in a coordinated action by the Hungarian and Czech police authorities.

Eurojust assisted in providing advice and expertise on conflicts of jurisdiction to solve issues relating to multiple EAWs and an International Arrest Warrant from Serbia. The Agency also helped with the execution of corresponding European Investigation Orders (EIOs) to share evidence, including requests for urgent cross-border surveillance. The countries involved came together at Eurojust in a coordination meeting to discuss these matters.

**JUDICIAL TOOLS:** Cooperation between the National Desks of Hungary, the Netherlands and the Czech Republic, as well as the Serbian Contact Point, ensured round-the-clock translation and transmission of documents. The guidance from these Desks led to the final transfer of the well-documented domestic Dutch criminal case to the authorities in Hungary, and to the Czech authorities surrendering the suspect for trial in Budapest. Eurojust played an instrumental role in deciding which jurisdiction to prosecute in.

comply with such requests only if doing so would harm essential national security interests, jeopardise the success of an ongoing investigation or jeopardise the safety of an individual.

Eurojust written requests may concern cases where:

- ▶ there are parallel proceedings ongoing in different Member States concerning the same facts and the same suspects, so that their continuation could lead to an infringement of the *ne bis in idem* principle (conflict of jurisdiction in a strict sense);
- ▶ or the offences and suspects investigated in two or more countries are not identical but closely connected and mutually dependent, and a possible concentration of the proceedings in one country would be more effective in the interest of justice.

The requests are either issued at the request of national authorities or on the initiative of the National Members involved, in particular when:

- ▶ a document setting out the reasons supporting the decision on which country is best placed to prosecute is considered helpful, or even needed, at the national level;
- ▶ the national authorities request the opinion of Eurojust; or
- ▶ the national authorities cannot come to an agreement on jurisdictional issues.



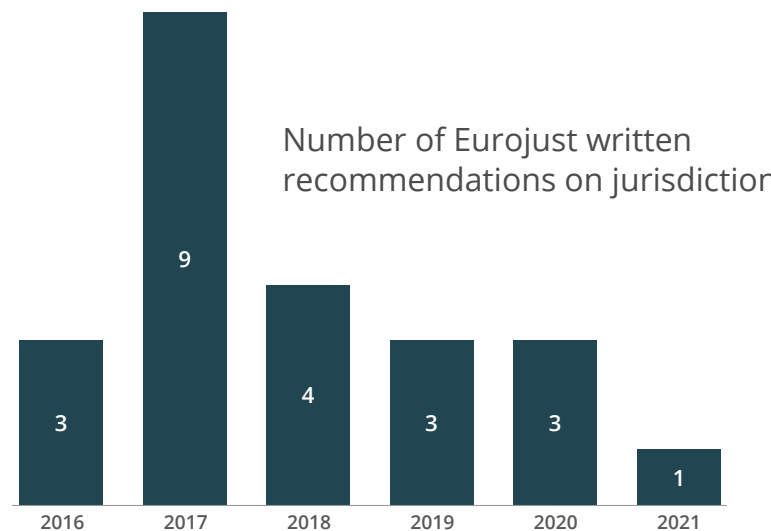
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Written recommendations on jurisdiction are rarely used; however, according to an analysis performed by Eurojust in 2021, they are overwhelmingly followed by national authorities of the Member States. The [report](#) of the results and a short summary [leaflet](#) were published in September.

The analysis of Eurojust written requests on which State is best placed to prosecute shows that these requests serve as an effective tool in addressing jurisdictional issues in transnational criminal proceedings, especially to:

- ▶ prevent duplication of efforts or risks of infringing the *ne bis in idem* principle, and to
- ▶ ensure a more effective prosecutorial strategy.



Of the 19 written recommendations issued between 2016 and 2019, the national authorities transferred/accepted the transfer of the case, fully in line with the solution suggested by Eurojust, in all cases except one. In most cases, the Eurojust request was mentioned in the national decision to transfer the case, which was later rarely challenged by the parties.

When a challenge did arise, it was often dismissed as unfounded by the competent national courts, who were able to rely on the arguments and legal assessment included in the Eurojust request.

Following the issuing of a written request, Eurojust continues to assist national authorities in facilitating the execution of the transfer of proceedings in line with its recommendations, for example by addressing issues regarding the translation of the case file or delays in its concrete transmission, or by receiving a formal reply indicating acceptance of the transfer.

## Eurojust recommendation followed in a case of a negative conflict of jurisdiction



**CRIME:** A large-scale online fraud case was detected in Lithuania and Italy. One of the victims was an Italian company that responded to fraudulent emails and transferred more than USD 140 000 to a bank account belonging to the fraudsters in Lithuania.

**JUDICIAL ISSUE:** Neither Lithuania nor Italy separately collected sufficient evidence to prosecute the case and both authorities had difficulty proceeding. Lithuania seemed merely to be an intermediary in the commission of the fraud, as the only action that took place there was the opening of the bank account.

**EUROJUST'S ROLE:** Lithuania requested that Eurojust issue a recommendation on which country would be best placed to prosecute. Eurojust considered the issues raised by the case, and the Italian and Lithuanian National Members concluded that the criminal proceedings in Lithuania and Italy are parallel proceedings, and that competent Italian authorities would be in a better position to prosecute this case, once the evidence from Lithuania is transferred to Italy. Prosecution authorities from both countries agreed to follow Eurojust's recommendation. Lithuania agreed to transfer its proceedings to the competent Italian authorities as soon as possible. Italy agreed to receive the file translated into English. In December 2021, the Prosecutor's Office of Bologna took over the criminal case.

## 5. Ensuring optimal use of judicial cooperation instruments

### 5.1 European Arrest Warrant

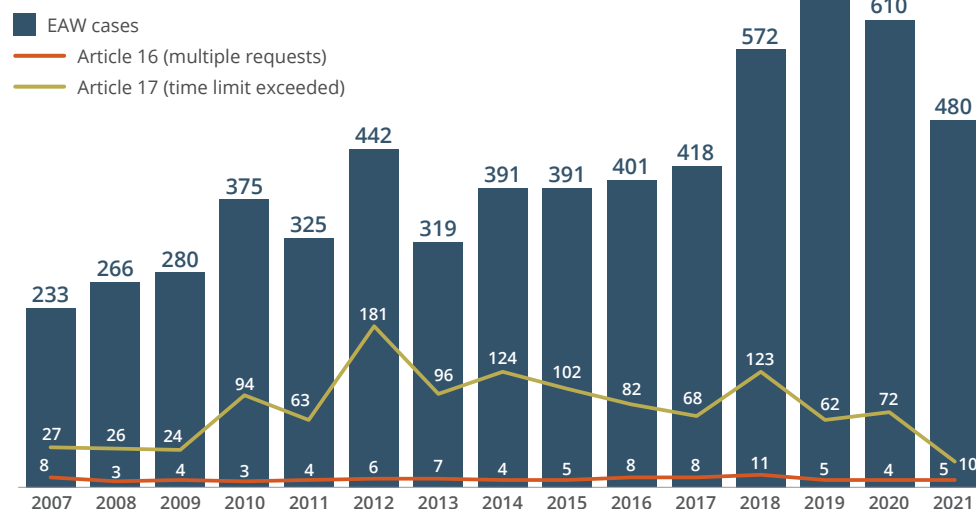
The Framework Decision on the European Arrest Warrant was adopted just a few months after the Council established Eurojust in 2002; Eurojust has supported the use of the EAW throughout the entire history of the Agency.

#### 20 years of EAW and Eurojust – a timeline

07/07/2021	<a href="#">Report on Eurojust's Casework in the Field of the European Arrest Warrant 2017-2020</a>
01/10/2019	Eurojust <a href="#">Guidelines for deciding on competing requests for surrender and extradition</a>
11/06/2019	Following the judgments of the Court of Justice of the European Union of 27 May 2019 in joined cases OG (C-508/18) and PI (C-82/19 PPU) and in case PF (C-509/18), relating to the concept of 'issuing judicial authority' in the context of the EAW, Eurojust and the EJM issue a questionnaire to compile information on the situation in the Member States and continue to monitor the situation – <a href="#">latest edition here</a>
2018	Eurojust creates <a href="#">a smart PDF form</a> that national authorities can use to inform Eurojust that they cannot observe the time limits, giving the reasons for the delay (Article 17(7) of the EAW FD). This form is available on Eurojust's website in 22 languages
01/05/2017	<a href="#">Report on Eurojust's Casework in the Field of the European Arrest Warrant 2014-2016</a>
14/02/2017	Eurojust College <a href="#">discussion on the EAW and prison conditions</a>
2017	First edition of Eurojust's report on case law by the Court of Justice of the EU on the EAW published in 2017 – <a href="#">most recent issue here</a>
05/04/2016	The European Court of Justice delivers its judgment in the Aranyosi and Caldaru cases on the EAW, prison conditions and fundamental rights

11/06/2014	Eurojust seminar on <a href="#">'The European Arrest Warrant: Which way forward?'</a>
26/05/2014	<a href="#">Report on Eurojust's Casework in the Field of the European Arrest Warrant 2007-2013</a> , and <a href="#">Report on notifications to Eurojust of breaches of time limits in the execution of European Arrest Warrants</a>
2004	Eurojust guidelines on competing EAWs published in <a href="#">Eurojust Annual Report 2004</a>
25-26/10/2004	First Eurojust seminar for practitioners in Prague, addressing practical issues related to the EAW
01/01/2004	Framework Decision enters into force
13/06/2002	2002/584/JHA: Council Framework Decision of 13 June 2002 on the European Arrest Warrant and the surrender procedures between Member States adopted

#### EAW casework of Eurojust, 2007-2021



### 5.1.1 Eurojust casework in the field of the EAW

Judicial authorities in EU Member States are increasingly turning to Eurojust for expertise and assistance in the execution of EAWs. Between 2017 and 2020, the number of demands more than doubled to 2 235, compared with the period from 2013 to 2016. Many cases concerned grounds for refusal, fundamental rights and requests for additional information. Horizontal issues related to problems with direct contact, language issues or non-compliance with time limits, which had already been identified in other Eurojust reports, often created obstacles in the application of the EAW.

The [Report on Eurojust's Casework in the Field of the European Arrest Warrant](#) refers to recent developments in the case law of the European Court of Justice, which has been crucial in further defining the scope of the EAW Framework Decision and the rights and obligations set forth in this instrument. This case law has had a significant impact on Eurojust's casework in relation to different aspects, including prison conditions, rule of law and *in absentia* judgments, as well as the interpretation of basic concepts such as issuing and executing judicial authority.

The report also highlights that the EAW and the other European legal instruments founded on the principle of mutual recognition (transfer of prisoners Framework Decision and the European Investigation Order Directive) are instrumental in shaping the EU justice system.

Based on Eurojust's casework, the report identifies solutions and best practices for judicial practitioners, but also highlights potential challenges for authorities when using an EAW. It provides conclusions and recommendations to improve the use of EAWs, as well as examples of concrete, anonymised cases, which can help with the execution of future warrants.

### 5.1.2 Case-law by the Court of Justice of the European Union on the EAW

Eurojust published two editions of the analysis of the case law of the CJEU in 2021, (April and [December](#)). Eurojust will continue to publish this update biannually. The case law overview contains summaries of the CJEU's judgments reflecting the structure of the EAW Framework Decision, with the most recent edition containing analysis of 61 judgments and 11 ongoing cases.

### 5.1.3 Requirements for Issuing and Executing Judicial Authorities in EAW proceedings pursuant to CJEU case law

As a follow-up to the specific case law of the CJEU on the notion of judicial authority in the EAW FD, Eurojust and the EJM have been working together on a [Questionnaire and Compilation on the Requirements for Issuing and Executing Judicial Authorities in EAW Proceedings](#), providing information on the legal position of the public prosecutor within the national legal systems, as well as of the competent authorities to issue and execute EAWs. The compilation continued to be updated in 2021.

#### Eurojust advice for competing EAWs taken on board by court



**CRIME:** Romania and Italy each issued EAWs against the same person, in relation to participation in a criminal organisation and other serious crimes. The purpose of the Romanian EAW was for prosecution, while the two Italian EAWs were for the execution of custodial sentences. The requested person was arrested in the Netherlands.

**EUROJUST'S ROLE:** In 2021, the Dutch Court of Amsterdam requested that Eurojust provide a formal opinion on the priority to be given between the Romanian and the Italian EAWs, and to clarify legal issues related to the surrender of a Romanian citizen and the possible execution of the Italian judgments in Romania. National Members of Italy, Romania and the Netherlands issued advice on the competing EAWs, recommending the execution of the EAW from Romania.

**JUDICIAL TOOL:** Eurojust, applying its Guidelines for deciding on competing requests for surrender and extradition, considered the specifics of the case and decided, based on the priority of the EAW for prosecution purposes, the absence of any obvious risks of impunity related to the subsequent execution of the cumulative sentence included in the EAWs of Italy, and also the seriousness of the offences and the rehabilitation objective.

The Dutch court followed Eurojust's advice to prioritise the execution of the Romanian EAW. After surrender from the Netherlands to Romania, the Italian judgements of conviction have been recognised by the Romanian courts, upon the request of the Italian judicial authorities.

## 5.2 Joint investigation teams

### 5.2.1 Guidance for JITs



At the end of 2021, the JITs Network published an updated [JITs Practical Guide](#). The new edition includes new chapters covering practical steps to set up a JIT, financial support to JITs and essential tools for practitioners. The Guide also reflects changes in the legal framework, improved knowledge and updated practices, as well as new information on additional support JIT parties can receive from EU agencies and bodies.

The JITs Network and Eurojust also agreed on a revised text of Appendix I to the model agreement for establishing a JIT, taking account of changes in the legal framework governing Eurojust, Europol and the European Anti-Fraud Office, and the need to reflect the specific conditions relating to their participation in a JIT. The [Council Resolution on a revised text of Appendix I](#) was approved on 22 December 2021 and published in the Official Journal of the EU.

In 2021, the JITs Network Secretariat initiated an update of the existing *Fiches Espagnoles*. *Fiches* are now available for all EU Member States and nine third countries (Albania, Georgia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland, Ukraine and the United Kingdom).

### 5.2.2 Ever-growing involvement of third countries in JITs

With organised crime increasingly operating on a global scale, the number of JITs with third countries is growing rapidly. Cooperation with third countries was also a central theme of the [17th Annual Meeting of the Network of National Experts on JITs](#) that took place in October 2021.

### 5.2.3 Commission plans for further digitalisation of JITs

In 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic clearly demonstrated the evolving need

## #JusticeDone: Convictions in UK for Slovak gang behind modern slavery case



EUROJUST



**JUSTICE DONE:** In May 2021, five members of a Slovak OCG were sentenced to up to eight years in prison for the exploitation of fellow nationals in a case of modern slavery and money laundering in the United Kingdom.

**CRIME:** Between 2008 and 2017, the OCG recruited more than 60 underprivileged Slovak citizens for work in the UK, promising weekly salaries of over EUR 400. In reality, the victims were forced to work up to 14 hours a day, six days per week, and received very little payment while living in very poor conditions. The criminal gang told the victims that most of their earnings had to be used for accommodation, transport and food.

**EUROJUST'S ROLE:** At the request of the British authorities, Eurojust initiated judicial cooperation with Slovakia in 2015 and set up a JIT. With Eurojust funding, the JIT supported the speeding up of investigations, culminating in a successful action day in 2019. Eurojust also facilitated the issuance and execution of EAWs and EIO.

**JUDICIAL TOOL:** In an evaluation in 2021, the JIT was highlighted as an example of successful cooperation.

for the digitalisation of cross-border judicial cooperation, including JITs. The proposal from the Commission to establish a [JITs Collaboration Platform](#) aims to provide technological support to those involved in JITs, to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of cross-border investigations and prosecutions. The Commission consulted the JITs Network to ensure that the JIT CP will properly address the operational needs of JIT practitioners and assess the possibility of using existing tools and projects managed by the JITs Network Secretariat.

## 5.3 Asset recovery

Depriving criminals of the proceeds of crimes is an essential component in disrupting organised crime. Moreover, confiscation acts as a deterrent by



strengthening the notion that ‘crime does not pay’. In 2021, Eurojust assisted in the recovery, freezing and confiscation of close to EUR 2.9 billion worth of criminal assets.

The Regulation on the Mutual Recognition of Freezing and Confiscation Orders became applicable on 19 December 2020, introducing a new legal framework in the European Union. In 2021, Eurojust commenced a project on the application of this instrument. The aim of the project is to identify legal and practical issues in Eurojust casework, the support provided by Eurojust and best practices.

In 2021, Eurojust collected some first experiences from the National Desks, notably in relation to issues concerning victims’ rights.

Eurojust also closely followed and contributed to the consultations and discussions held in the context of the revision of the Directive 2014/42/EU on the freezing and confiscation of instrumentalities and proceeds of crime in the European Union, and the Council Decision 2007/845 on Asset Recovery Offices.

## 5.4 European Investigation Order

The EIO has become an integral part of EU judicial cooperation and Eurojust’s work since the transposition deadline for the directive passed in May 2017. In 2021, Eurojust dealt with 4 262 cases involving an EIO, and provided assistance to resolve issues concerning challenges with the execution of EIOs

for the hearing of suspects or accused persons via videoconference, or the interception of telecommunication.

Eurojust also monitors relevant CJEU case-law developments in the field of the EIO directive and their possible impact on judicial cooperation, for example in Case C-852/19 (Gavanozov II), and C-724/19 (HP).

## 5.5 Practical guidance for judicial practitioners on cooperation with the United Kingdom

Eurojust published a [note for judicial practitioners on future cooperation with the United Kingdom](#) in January 2021, intended to provide practitioners with up-to-date and readily usable information on judicial cooperation with the United Kingdom, and to contribute to ensuring business continuity despite a changing legal landscape.

The main aim of the note is to provide a simple, brief and immediate response to the questions and needs of competent authorities in these first stages. The main themes treated are surrender, mutual legal assistance, exchange of criminal record information, freezing and confiscation, and transfer of sentenced persons.

To increase the understanding on the application of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement, Eurojust and EJN also provided the European Commission with questions of a practical nature to streamline the application of the TCA in all Member States.

## 6. Securing evidence that holds up in court

Eurojust provides judicial practitioners with expert advice on securing evidence across EU borders. In 2021, the Agency continued to enhance its expertise and support in specialised areas of evidence gathering, including building access to electronic evidence, dealing with the criminal use of encryption, and securing evidence from victims of trafficking in human beings (THB) and migrants.

### 6.1 Building access to electronic evidence through the SIRIUS project

The majority of criminal investigations today include a transnational request to access electronic evidence, such as emails, texts or messages. In a rapidly changing online environment, investigators and prosecutors need support in developing knowledge related to the retrieval of electronic data. The SIRIUS project, jointly implemented by Eurojust and Europol, responds to this increasing need for cross-border access to e-evidence, with a specific focus on US-based online service providers (OSPs). The platform's usefulness is reflected in an 18% increase in membership of judicial authorities in 2021, bringing the total number of representatives of the judiciary to 380.

In cooperation with Eurojust, Europol and the European Judicial Network, SIRIUS published its third annual edition of the EU Digital Evidence Situation Report in November 2021. The report shows that the volume of cross-border requests submitted by EU authorities to foreign-based OSPs increased by 27% in 2020, in comparison with the previous year, and there was a significant increase of 112% in emergency disclosure requests in 2020, compared with 2019.

The [fourth SIRIUS Annual Conference](#) in December 2021 focused on discussing the impact of the pandemic, and on gathering electronic evidence in relation to cryptocurrencies and crypto-exchanges used in money laundering, which have become especially prevalent since the outset of the COVID-19 health crisis. As the world has embraced new technologies due to the pandemic and remote working, criminals have skilfully adapted to and exploited these developments. Accordingly, more international criminal investigations than ever depend on fast, secure and legal means of sharing

electronic evidence across borders. The 2021 SIRIUS conference was attended by 785 participants from 42 countries, including law enforcement and judicial authorities, as well as representatives from the digital technology sector.

In 2021, the SIRIUS project also remained active in a number of initiatives aimed at raising awareness, as well as capacity-building efforts, targeting the judicial community in 44 countries, including all EU Member States and a growing number of third countries. Furthermore, the SIRIUS project, together with the European Judicial Network and EuroMed Justice project, among others, contributed to the second edition of the UNODC'S [Practical Guide for Requesting Electronic Evidence Across Borders](#) and [Model Forms on Preservation and Disclosure of Electronic Data](#). The Guide, complemented by the Model Forms, provides practitioners with best practice from experts in the field, examples of legal procedures, and Contact Points to assist practitioners in requesting and producing the electronic evidence needed for trial.

### 6.2 Dealing with the criminal use of encryption

Encryption has become an essential component for safeguarding fundamental rights, digital sovereignty and innovation. However, criminal organisations

“ This third joint Report [on EU Digital Evidence] reflects the complexity that results from a constantly evolving digital landscape and a fragmented legal framework. It also shows how the global COVID-19 pandemic forced the EU's judiciary to develop innovative approaches and adapt existing processes. We clearly see, as well, that our success in the fight against organised crime depends on the strength of our mutual partnerships. As long as we work together, we can strike the right balance between obtaining access to electronic evidence and upholding the fundamental rights and liberties of our citizens. ”

Ladislav Hamran, Eurojust President

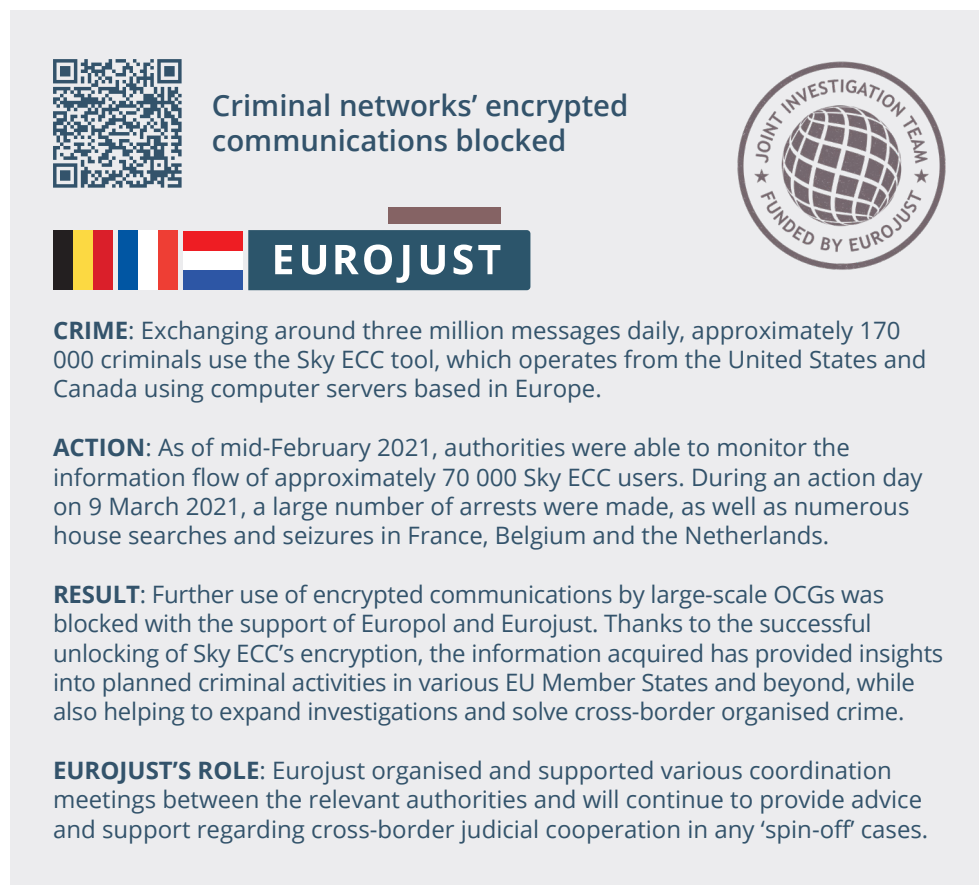
are increasingly using encrypted communication tools and continue to find methods to leverage the latest technologies to evade investigations. Judicial authorities and law enforcement increasingly depend on digital data to proceed with these investigations. Such data are often encrypted and difficult to access legally.

To help practitioners deal with these challenges, in July 2021 Eurojust and Europol jointly published the [Third report of the observatory function on encryption](#). The report shares insights on encryption in the context of cross-border cases, with two key focuses: cases in which decryption of the tool

used by criminals is the main focus of the investigation, and ‘spin-off cases’ where the focus is on other aspects but where decrypted communications among criminals are required as evidence. The report also explores the need to find legal means to decrypt electronic communications, the admissibility of evidence obtained from decrypted devices and the sharing of such data with other law enforcement agencies in the context of cross-border cases.

A recent example of Eurojust’s operational work in this area is the support it has provided to investigators and prosecutors in the SKY ECC case. Investigators monitored the criminal use of the [Sky ECC communication service tool](#), generating invaluable insights into hundreds of millions of messages exchanged between criminals. This has resulted in the collection of crucial information on more than a hundred planned large-scale criminal operations, preventing potential life-threatening situations and possible victims.

The operation is an essential part of the continuous efforts of judiciary and law enforcement in the EU and third countries to disrupt the illegal use of encrypted communications, following the successful decryption of the EncroChat communication platform in 2020. After EncroChat was unveiled, many users changed over to the popular Sky ECC platform.



**Criminal networks' encrypted communications blocked**

**EUROJUST**

**CRIME:** Exchanging around three million messages daily, approximately 170 000 criminals use the Sky ECC tool, which operates from the United States and Canada using computer servers based in Europe.

**ACTION:** As of mid-February 2021, authorities were able to monitor the information flow of approximately 70 000 Sky ECC users. During an action day on 9 March 2021, a large number of arrests were made, as well as numerous house searches and seizures in France, Belgium and the Netherlands.

**RESULT:** Further use of encrypted communications by large-scale OCGs was blocked with the support of Europol and Eurojust. Thanks to the successful unlocking of Sky ECC's encryption, the information acquired has provided insights into planned criminal activities in various EU Member States and beyond, while also helping to expand investigations and solve cross-border organised crime.

**EUROJUST'S ROLE:** Eurojust organised and supported various coordination meetings between the relevant authorities and will continue to provide advice and support regarding cross-border judicial cooperation in any ‘spin-off’ cases.

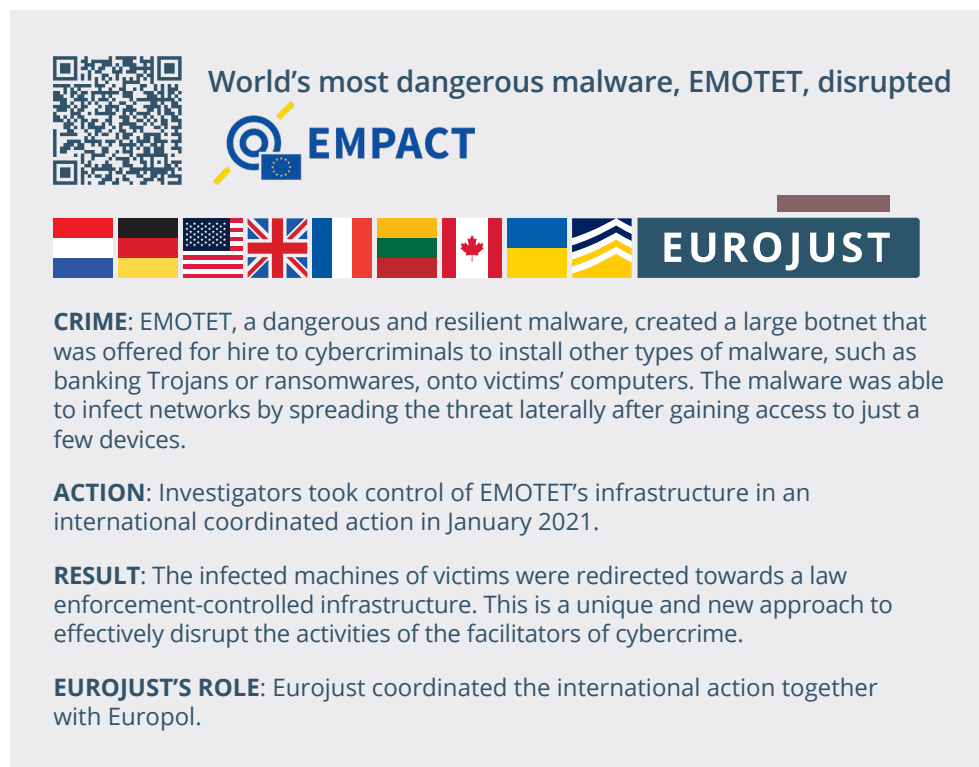
### 6.3 Tackling ‘cybercrime as a service’

‘Cybercrime as a service’ is a rapidly growing illicit business model in which perpetrators rent or sell malware to other criminal groups to launch attacks and encrypt computers.

In January 2021, one of the world’s most dangerous criminal infrastructures – created by the malware EMOTET – was disrupted through global action with the support of Eurojust, Europol and judicial authorities and law enforcement officers worldwide. EMOTET was one of the most professional and long-lasting cybercrime services offered for hire, involving a type of malware functioning as a dropper/downloader; in other words, a ‘door opener’ for other types of malware. Once unauthorised access was obtained, it was sold to other criminal groups that could further exploit the data breach by, for example, operating a botnet, stealing sensitive data or practising extortion with the use of ransomware.

In an international coordinated action, law enforcement and judicial authorities gained control of the infrastructure and took it down from the inside. During its takedown, particular attention was paid to ensuring a strategy for effective victim remediation. How to offer support to a large number of victims of malware in different jurisdictions was a key topic addressed by judicial practitioners in EJCN's meetings in 2021, with the EMOTET case used as an example.

Given the international nature of the problem, effective judicial cooperation across borders means not only exchanging information, but, most importantly, ensuring that it translates into admissible evidence in jurisdictions outside the location where it was collected. As a single gateway to jurisdictions across Europe and far beyond, Eurojust has a key role to play here – in cooperation with its partners – in the fight against all types of cybercrime.



**World's most dangerous malware, EMOTET, disrupted**

**EMPACT**

**EUROJUST**

**CRIME:** EMOTET, a dangerous and resilient malware, created a large botnet that was offered for hire to cybercriminals to install other types of malware, such as banking Trojans or ransoms, onto victims' computers. The malware was able to infect networks by spreading the threat laterally after gaining access to just a few devices.

**ACTION:** Investigators took control of EMOTET's infrastructure in an international coordinated action in January 2021.

**RESULT:** The infected machines of victims were redirected towards a law enforcement-controlled infrastructure. This is a unique and new approach to effectively disrupt the activities of the facilitators of cybercrime.

**EUROJUST'S ROLE:** Eurojust coordinated the international action together with Europol.

## 6.4 Securing evidence from THB victims and migrants

### 6.4.1 Eurojust's assistance in collecting evidence from THB victims

In most EU Member States, testimonies of victims are very often crucial in proving that a trafficking offence has been committed to guarantee a conviction. THB victims, especially minors, are vulnerable by definition. Due to their circumstances, they enjoy a special legal status. The implementation of such legal provisions is challenging. Two main difficulties encountered by law enforcement and judicial authorities when dealing with THB investigations and prosecutions include identifying victims of THB, and, where needed, convincing victims to provide statements and cooperate in investigations and prosecutions by testifying against their perpetrators. In many of the THB cases analysed in the [Eurojust Report on Trafficking in Human Beings](#) (published in February 2021), the victims were unwilling to testify due to the fear of not being protected from the perpetrators by the authorities. In some cases, the challenge was to convince victims to testify truthfully.

In the cases analysed, national authorities met at Eurojust to jointly identify the right moment to approach victims in several countries, to determine the right specialists to speak to victims and to develop questions to ask them and strategies to use in avoiding secondary victimisation. By ensuring victims' testimonies are admissible as evidence, while respecting victims' rights and welfare, Eurojust not only helps to successfully prosecute traffickers, but also provides assistance, protection and reparation to victims.

Additionally, Eurojust can offer support in ensuring the admissibility of evidence from victims gathered by joint investigation teams by clarifying applicable legal provisions related to hearing victims in another jurisdiction, or by including annexes to JIT agreements to gather specific types of evidence, such as testimonies of child victims, according to the legal provisions of the concerned countries.

### 6.4.2 Using migrants' statements in the fight against migrant smuggling

Newly arrived migrants at EU borders regularly provide valuable information, such as smuggling routes, modus operandi and roles and responsibilities



Photos © Shutterstock

within OCGs to different national authorities, as well as to EU agencies, NGOs and other organisations. However, the legal validity of the information obtained, as well as its judicial use in criminal proceedings, varies significantly across EU Member States. Eurojust's booklet, [Migrant Smuggling In Focus](#), presents an overview of the use and legal nature in judicial proceedings of statements obtained from debriefed migrants at EU external borders, according to the legal frameworks of EU Member States, as well as those in countries with which Eurojust has a cooperation agreement. The booklet lays out best practices and experiences in the field, with the aim of improving judicial cooperation in the fight against migrant smuggling.

The analysis finds that a few countries consider the legal nature of migrants' statements as intelligence, while others legally classify them as either evidence or intelligence, depending on the circumstances. Most countries do not have specific rules to regulate the collection of statements from migrants at external borders. The legal status of migrants giving statements on the spot immediately after disembarkation is not regulated in a uniform way across the European Union. The main legal qualifications of such migrants are either as suspect or witness, with many countries adopting a mixed concept. In some countries, the status of 'protected witness' is a possibility, providing the information obtained from migrants is valuable for investigations against migrant smugglers. In these countries, simple statements from migrants that include general information are not considered admissible testimony in court.

On the basis of this European mapping, which highlights the considerable challenges and differences between countries, Eurojust recommends national authorities request Eurojust's assistance when dealing with migrant smuggling cases, especially by setting up JITs between EU and non-EU countries.

## 7. Safeguarding victims rights' in cross-border crime

In 2021, Eurojust supported more than 10 000 criminal investigations, helping to deliver justice to almost 100 000 victims of all forms of serious, cross-border crime.

### 7.1 The challenges

Cross-border investigations serve to bring justice to victims of crime by bringing the perpetrators to court. However, safeguarding victims' rights can be particularly challenging in complex cross-border cases as, for example, the number of victims can be numerous. It is therefore necessary to carefully consider both victims' procedural role as witnesses, as well as the differences in national legal systems. Further difficulties range from identifying victims to organising their participation in different trials without running the risk of secondary victimisation. These challenges can potentially undermine the right to restitution and compensation.

### 7.2 Eurojust's role

As prosecutors and investigative judges are often best placed to identify and solve victims' rights issues in a cross-border context, Eurojust is committed to systematically ensuring that the victims' rights dimension is considered early on and in its own right, and that the Agency is integral to the support it provides to national judicial authorities. Therefore, Eurojust can and must play a pivotal role in minimising the risks associated with the cross-border dimension of cases, by ensuring timely and efficient coordination between the various countries and actors involved to preserve victims' rights. Eurojust is uniquely positioned to facilitate information exchange on victims to identify, rescue and protect them. In particular, Eurojust is able to help prevent and solve conflicts of jurisdiction, and find concrete solutions for victims across the European Union, such as the right to compensation.

The interests of victims represent one of the key factors that Eurojust considers when assisting prosecution strategies during coordination meetings and advising EU Member States, in case of parallel or linked proceedings,



#### Online investment swindle defrauding victims for around EUR 30 million stopped



**CRIME:** An OCG defrauded thousands of victims all over Europe for an estimated amount of EUR 30 million, through four different online investment scams.

**ACTION:** A joint action day took place in May 2021. The operation was rolled out on the ground in seven countries, with German investigators and officers deployed in Bulgaria, and a multitude of searches taking place in Bulgaria, Israel, Sweden, Poland and North Macedonia.

**RESULT:** Following EAWs, six suspects were arrested during the action day for organising a fake trading scheme in high-risk options and cryptocurrencies, using manipulated software to project victims' alleged capital gains. Properties, luxury cars and bank accounts were seized, worth at least several million euros.

**EUROJUST'S ROLE:** Eurojust set up a coordination centre to support the action day, and assisted with the execution of EIO, EAWs, requests for mutual legal assistance and the freezing of certificates for assets and bank accounts.

conflicting EAWs or extradition requests, as reflected in the relevant Eurojust guidelines. For example, in the [Eurojust Guidelines on How to Prosecute Investment Fraud](#), published in July 2021, the Agency highlights the support it can provide to Member States in managing a large number of victims from around the world, by helping to categorise them (as far as legally possible) and centralise proceedings at national and international levels.

The recently published [Report on Victims' Rights](#) captures the broad experience Eurojust has gained over the years and offers an overview of best practices to overcome victim-related challenges in various EU priority

crime areas. Eurojust's casework indicates that a greater focus on victims leads to greater success in the prosecution of trafficking in human beings and counter-terrorism cases in particular. Therefore, Eurojust and the European Judicial Network are active members of the Victims' Rights Platform, a key

component of the [EU Strategy on Victims' Rights \(2020-2015\)](#). Together with other agencies and networks, work is ongoing on a joint report on improving cooperation between the competent authorities in cross-border cases to secure victims' rights, to be published in 2022.

## Takedown of a multinational human trafficking network



**4 September 2021** – Coordinated simultaneous actions take place in Italy and the Republic of Moldova, resulting in the dismantling of the human trafficking network. **Six suspects are arrested** during the operation. **Nearly 90 victims are rescued** from the clutches of the group and given assurances of protection and legal assistance. **Evidence is secured to support judicial follow-up** in the respective criminal courts. Italian and Moldovan authorities agree to hold a **fourth coordination meeting** at Eurojust in January 2022 to discuss jurisdictional issues (which courts will prosecute which suspects and for which crimes) to avoid possible conflicts of jurisdiction.



**March 2021** – Funded by Eurojust, a **Joint Investigation Team** is established, with operational support from Eurojust and Europol. Italian and Moldovan authorities pool their efforts and succeed in building operational synergies to map out the activities of the criminal group, while collecting and exchanging relevant information and evidence.



**March–December 2021** – **three coordination meetings** are held at Eurojust to discuss cooperation needs, plan the establishment of a joint investigation team and prepare for joint actions.

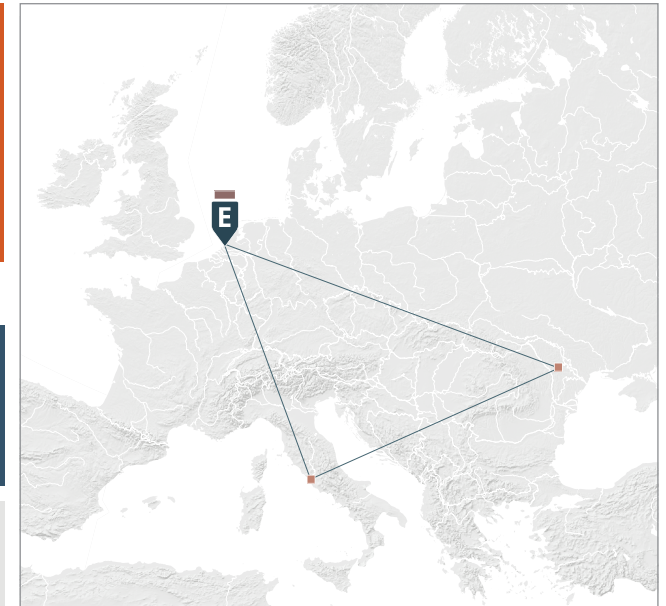


**January 2021** – In an effort to connect the two parallel national investigations, a **case is opened at Eurojust**, involving the **National Desk of Italy, Eurojust's Contact Point at the General Prosecutor's Office in the Republic of Moldova** and **Europol**, setting into motion a coordinated and structured international response.



Operating since early 2018, a criminal network in the Republic of Moldova uses online platforms to recruit vulnerable women. Coming from precarious socio-economic backgrounds, these women are promised jobs as domestic workers in Italy. Once engaged, they experience severe forms of labour exploitation, are forced to live in wretched conditions, and are subjected to intimidation and threats of violence. Their confiscated passports are used to prepare counterfeit documents, including false COVID-19 health certificates and employment contracts.

Moldovan and Italian authorities separately launch an investigation into this criminal group in 2019.



## 8. A growing global actor

### 8.1 International agreements with third countries

In March 2021, the Council approved a mandate for the European Commission to open negotiations on international agreements with 13 third countries for Eurojust. The [Decision of the Council](#) opens the door for negotiations on agreements concerning the exchange of information with Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Colombia, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey. The list is based on the four-year strategy Eurojust adopted in 2019, in consultation with the Commission. The four-year strategy also identifies a list of international organisations for possible operational cooperation.

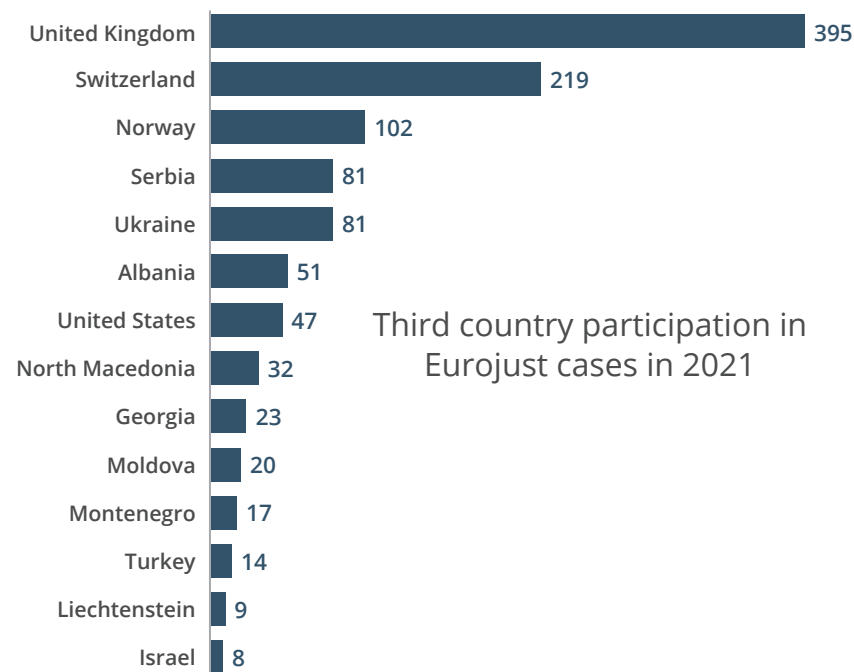
### 8.2 Liaison Prosecutors at Eurojust

In the annual evaluation meeting on the cooperation agreements, one of the recurring pieces of feedback is that when third countries post a Liaison Prosecutor to Eurojust, casework increases and cooperation improves. In 2021, two third countries, the United Kingdom and Albania appointed Liaison Prosecutors to Eurojust for the first time, bringing the total number of third countries represented at Eurojust to ten.

The presence of the Liaison Prosecutors from third states opens the possibility for closer contact and increased understanding between these countries. This is an added benefit for third countries posting Liaison Prosecutors to Eurojust.

**United Kingdom** – Eurojust’s cooperation with the United Kingdom started in January with the appointment of the first UK Liaison Prosecutor to Eurojust. This appointment – and the United Kingdom’s cooperation throughout the year – is based on the [EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement](#). In early 2021, Eurojust provided practical guidance for judicial practitioners on cooperation with the United Kingdom.

In December 2021, Eurojust and the Home Office of the United Kingdom signed a working arrangement to ensure effective judicial cross-border



Third country participation in Eurojust cases in 2021

cooperation. The arrangement implements the TCA and provides for practical and administrative details of judicial cooperation between the two parties.

**Albania** – In late January 2021, Albania delegated a Liaison Prosecutor to Eurojust for the first time. Due to the pandemic, the official opening of the Liaison Prosecutor’s office took place in October, with the Albanian Prosecutor General’s visiting Eurojust.

### 8.3. Contact Points

Ever since the first year of its existence, Eurojust has relied on an ever-growing network of Contact Points in third countries. In 2021, Eurojust’s total number of Contact Points grew to over 60, with the addition of Costa



Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay and the Republic of Maldives.

#### 8.4. Extending cooperation to regions around the world: connecting to projects and networks

**Western Balkans** – Eurojust cooperation with the Western Balkans partners has been essential due to the number of shared operational connections. The EU Instrument of Pre-accession Assistance provides technical assistance to enhance judicial cooperation between the Western Balkans and the EU, for instance by providing financial support to their seconding Liaison Prosecutors to Eurojust through an external implementation partner, with which Eurojust cooperates closely. Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Albania have posted Liaison Prosecutors to Eurojust.

In December 2021, the Slovenian Presidency especially gave an opportunity for Eurojust to participate in the EU-Western Balkans Ministerial Forum on Justice and Home Affairs, with discussions on countering serious crime, digitalisation of justice and judicial training.

**Latin America** – Eurojust has been intensely involved in the EU-funded project EL PACCTO since its launch in 2017, and in 2021 these efforts yielded good results in the appointment of Contact Points from several countries in Latin America. Eurojust attended an online conference in March and a workshop in Lima in October, both organised by EL PACCTO, to discuss practical aspects of the collaboration with the partner countries, and possible ways of further intensifying the dialogue.

**West Africa** – In an online meeting held in October 2021 with UNODC support, Eurojust and the West African Network of Central Authorities and Prosecutors (WACAP) agreed to appoint Contact Points as a first step towards fostering mutual trust and dialogue. The first contact made it possible to begin bilateral discussions with Nigerian authorities, and to consider inviting WACAP representatives to meetings of the Focus Group on Migrant Smuggling.

**EuroMed Justice** – EuroMed Justice brings together the most relevant stakeholders in the field of criminal justice, including representatives from the South Partner Countries, Eurojust, the European Judicial Network, EU Member States, as well as other relevant EU and international organisations. Eurojust has hosted the EuroMed Justice Programme since mid-2020, making 2021 the first full year since its implementation at Eurojust.

By February 2021, 14 Member States joined the programme and 10 became members of CrimEx. This helped enhance cooperation within the Mediterranean region, establishing direct communication and making effective links among judicial authorities.

Eurojust participated in the development of CrimEx analytical tools and the establishment of the EMJNet subgroups on cybercrime and migrants smuggling, and also provided guidance for the drafting of cross-regional strategies.

#### *EMJNet – a network of Contact Points for operational cooperation*

In October, to enable participating states to widen operational cooperation, CrimEx agreed to establish a network of active Contact Points, EMJNet. EMJNet is designed to support international judicial cooperation and to coordinate and strengthen direct contacts and operations between criminal justice authorities from SPCs and EU Member States. To facilitate the establishment and functioning of the EMJNet, a Directory of Contact Points was established.

#### *3rd Forum of Prosecutors General and strategic documents*

In November, during the 3rd Forum of Prosecutors General that took place at Eurojust, Prosecutors General of the EU Member States and South Partner Countries agreed on the first [cross-regional Strategic Plan for judicial cooperation](#), to be implemented during 2022-2025.

The six strategic goals of the Strategic Plan are organised around two major cross-Mediterranean priority themes: countering trafficking in human beings and the smuggling of migrants, and the confiscation of crime proceeds and asset recovery.

## International operation targets cyber criminals for worldwide ransomware attacks



**26-27 October 2021** – **12 individuals**, under investigation in several high-profile cases in different jurisdictions, **are targeted in a joint operation** involving Ukraine, Switzerland, France, the Netherlands, Norway and the United States. **More than 50 foreign investigators**, including six Europol specialists, are deployed to Ukraine to assist with the joint action. Over USD 52 000 in cash and 5 luxury cars are seized, as well as electronic devices for forensic examination to secure further evidence and identify new investigative leads.



**2019-2021** – A total of **seven coordination meetings** are held at Eurojust to facilitate the cross-border **judicial cooperation** and **information exchanges**. Europol provides **digital forensic support** and **cyber intelligence**, while also hosting a series of operational meetings.



**September 2019** – Initiated by the French authorities, a **joint investigation team (JIT)** is set up between **France, Norway** and the **United Kingdom**, with **Ukraine** joining in January 2020, to uncover the magnitude and complexity of the crimes committed and to establish a joint strategy. The JIT receives financial backing from Eurojust and operational assistance from both Eurojust and Europol. Partners to the JIT collaborate closely with counterparts leading parallel independent investigations in **the Netherlands** and the **United States**.



**February 2019** – A **case is opened at the initiative of the French Desk at Eurojust**, which over the course of the investigation involves **three Member States, five third countries** with Liaison Prosecutors posted at Eurojust, and **Europol**.



Discovered in 2019, a highly organised criminal network applies various means (including *LockerGoga* and *MegaCortex* ransomware) to compromise IT systems worldwide. These entail brute force attacks, SQL injections, stolen credentials and phishing emails with malicious content. The malware remains undetected in the compromised systems, sometimes for months, thereby magnifying its spread even further. The criminals target mainly large corporations, effectively bringing many businesses to a halt. Ransom notes demand that the attackers be paid in bitcoin in exchange for decryption keys. The effects of the attacks, occurring in no less than 71 countries, are devastating to many of the victims.



# Eurojust cooperation with third countries

## International and cooperation agreements



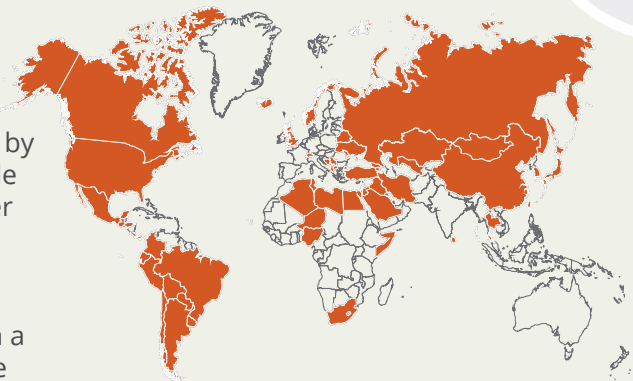
International and cooperation agreements provide the possibility of exchanging operational information, including evidence and personal data, between Eurojust and the national authorities of the country involved in a systematic way.

To date, Eurojust has signed international and cooperation agreements with 13 third countries: **Albania, Georgia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and the United States.**

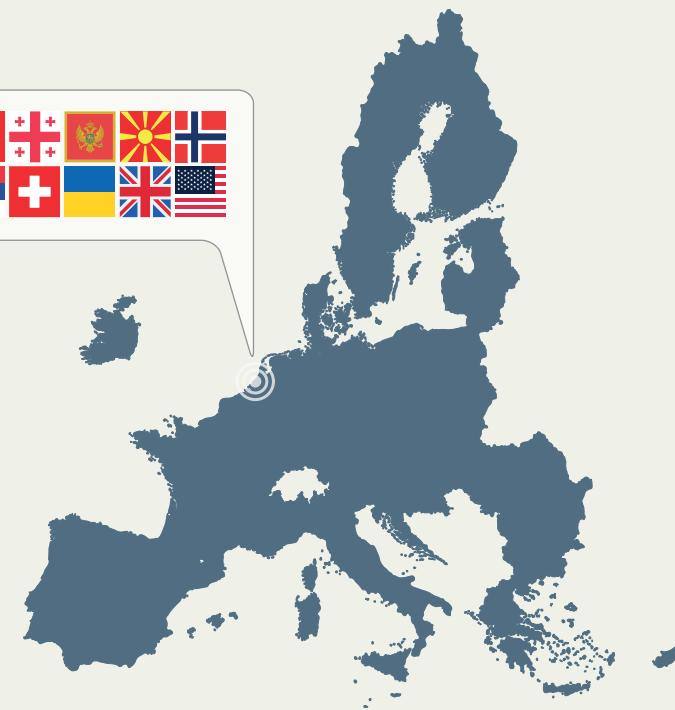
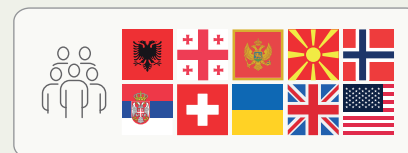
## Contact Point network

Eurojust is actively connected with **over 60 jurisdictions worldwide.**

Contact Points appointed by national authorities enable prosecutors from Member States to get information on these legal systems and solve problems in judicial cooperation when a crime extends beyond the European Union's borders.



## Liaison Prosecutors



Liaison Prosecutors from countries outside the EU are **posted at Eurojust**. They work side by side with their colleagues from the Member States to provide support in cross-border investigations involving their country.

Currently, ten Liaison Prosecutors are seconded to Eurojust from **Albania, Georgia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States.**



## 9. Ensuring the judicial component of the EU security chain

The European Union has wide-ranging policies to build in the areas of freedom, security and justice for its citizens, as well as beyond its borders. Within this framework, Eurojust contributes to the judicial element: not only ensuring that criminals are caught, but that justice is done thereafter. Working with the various partners in the EU landscape is an important element to this end.

### 9.1 Consultative Forum

Prosecutors General and Directors of Public Prosecutions from the European Union gathered in October at Eurojust for the first time in two years for the 15th Consultative Forum. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the organisation of the Forum was not possible in 2020. The digitalisation of justice and cooperation with the European Public Prosecutor's Office were the main themes of the forum, with European Chief Prosecutor, Ms Laura Kövesi, also addressing the attendees.

The Forum was co-chaired by the Prosecutors/Attorneys General of all four Presidencies of the Council of the EU of 2021 and 2020, namely Slovenia, Portugal, Germany and Croatia.

*“ The COVID-19 pandemic has proven that crises are best met jointly. Therefore, we host the 15th Forum jointly as a clear sign of solidarity of the prosecution services in the European Union. Meeting again in person is a great privilege and pleasure, and will enable us to discuss new developments, such as cooperation with the EPPO and the digitalisation of justice. The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly shown that the judiciary across the European Union has a need for fully fledged digitalisation, in order to fight cross-border crime efficiently in the future. This process needs to be accelerated. ”*

Joint statement by the Prosecutor/Attorney Generals of the four Council Presidencies

### Working together to fight fraud against NextGenerationEU budget

Together with Europol, EPPO, OLAF and 20 EU Member States, Eurojust is participating in Operation Sentinel targeting fraud, corruption, embezzlement and other crimes against COVID-19 EU recovery funds being offered under the framework of the NextGenerationEU initiative. The aim of the operation is to ensure that EUR 806.9 billion from the EU budget is used to strengthen the economy and does not end up in criminals' bank accounts.

### 9.2 Operational cooperation with main actors in the EU criminal justice chain

**Europol** – Europol continues to be a close working partner of Eurojust, both in daily casework and in strategic matters. To ensure good ongoing communication between the agencies, a regular Steering Committee meeting took place in July 2021, and a high-level meeting between Europol's Director and the Eurojust President in January 2022.

In addition to the hundreds of Eurojust cases involving Europol, the agencies cooperated in, among others:

- ▶ EMPACT – preparing the 2022-2025 EMPACT cycle and communicating its importance to the judiciary
- ▶ Joint reports: the Third report of the observatory function on encryption, SIRIUS EU Digital Evidence Situation Report
- ▶ The SIRIUS project to share knowledge on cross-border access to electronic evidence
- ▶ A project on accountability principles in artificial intelligence, within the framework of the Innovation Hub for Internal Security

**EPPO** – To prepare for the start of operations of the European Public Prosecutor’s Office and the immediate cooperation that needed to follow, Eurojust and the EPPO signed a [Working Arrangement](#) in February 2021, laying out the detailed practical modalities of their cooperation in the fight against crimes affecting the European Union’s financial interests.

In practice, the arrangement implements cooperation methods put in place through the Eurojust and EPPO Regulations. It does this, for instance, by regulating the exchange of information between the two organisations, and Eurojust’s support to the EPPO with regard to judicial cooperation requests and decisions involving either third countries or Member States that do not take part in the establishment of the EPPO. Particular attention has been given to data protection, in close cooperation with the European Data Protection Supervisor.

The EPPO and Eurojust have agreed to establish liaison teams to enable seamless cooperation. Following the start of operations of the EPPO on 1 June 2021, Eurojust was involved in casework with its newest, privileged partner.

**OLAF** – OLAF continues to remain an important partner in Eurojust’s operational work on cases about fraud against the EU budget. On 1 July 2021, Eurojust and OLAF carried on their mutual training programme. As a follow-up to Eurojust’s seminar for OLAF investigators in 2020, OLAF presented some real case studies, its data analysis methods as well as its new Regulation to Eurojust’s experts. An engaging discussion followed on future cooperation in the new legal and institutional PIF landscape.

**eu-LISA** – Establishing access for Eurojust to eu-LISA’s new large-scale IT system, ECRIS-TCN, as well as the Interoperability architecture that will strengthen the Justice and Home Affairs domain, form the foundation of the three-year [Cooperation Plan 2021-2023](#), signed in October 2021 by the two agencies. The plan also covers future cooperation in the context of the Digital Criminal Justice initiative and e-CODEX, a cross-border judicial tool that will be managed by eu-LISA starting in 2023.

**FRA** – Eurojust President Ladislav Hamran and the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) Director, Michael O’Flaherty, met in June 2021 to discuss potential areas for cooperation in judicial matters, such as artificial

## Eurojust cases with the EPPO: practical experiences



In a very recent and still ongoing case involving a complex VAT carousel fraud, Eurojust’s support was requested by a German Delegated European Prosecutor, as the case extends to Member States not participating in the EPPO. The support offered by Eurojust is the same as offered to national authorities in other Eurojust cases and includes the EPPO’s participation in coordination meetings. It also involves the EPPO joining a joint investigation team and the possibility for Europol to be involved.

First experiences prove that the Working Arrangement between Eurojust and the EPPO made it easy to start working with the European Delegated Prosecutors. The Working Arrangement gives a sound framework and allows for the substantial exchange of information, which is indispensable for any successful investigation and prosecution.

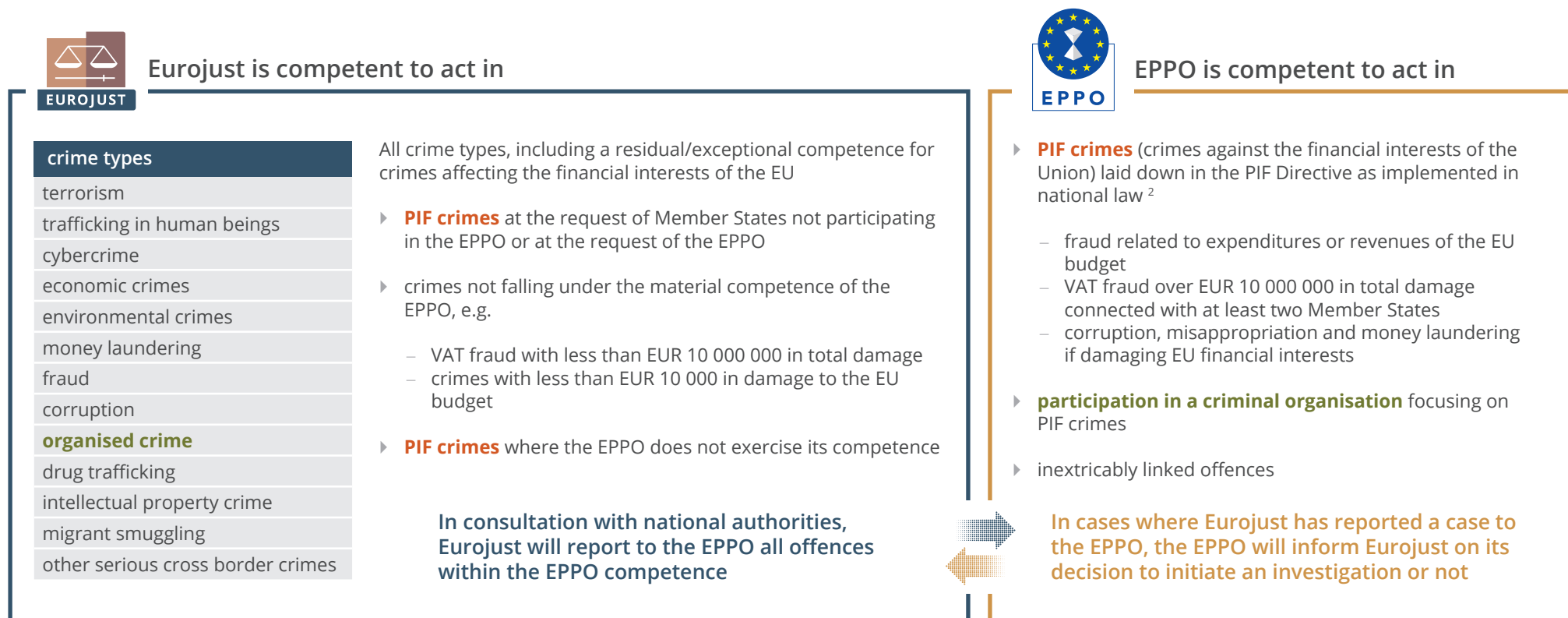


Sweden, a Member State not participating in the EPPO, opened the first Eurojust case – also involving France – towards the EPPO. Other Swedish cases dealing with MTIC fraud with the participation of the EPPO were also supported by Eurojust, with advice on execution of an EIO, setting up coordination meetings and, where appropriate, initiation of JIT collaborations, being key examples.

intelligence, EAW, detention-related topics and victims’ rights. As a follow-up aimed at enhancing the existing cooperation, both agencies endorsed a list with concrete actions in 12 common areas of interest for the period between October 2021 and November 2022.

**EUIPO** – In March 2021, the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) and Eurojust stepped up their cooperation to tackle criminal abuse of [intellectual property rights in the field of counterfeiting and online piracy](#). A

# Eurojust or EPPO case? Which body will act to protect EU financial interests? <sup>1</sup>



## PRINCIPLE OF SINCERE COOPERATION BETWEEN EUROJUST AND EPPO

<sup>1</sup> While all care has been taken to reflect the main elements of how Eurojust and EPPO competences are defined, the applicable legal framework is quite complex and not all details are reflected.

<sup>2</sup> Directive (EU) 2017/1371 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2017 on the fight against fraud to the Union's financial interests by means of criminal law ('PIF Directive').

Service Level Agreement was signed to boost Eurojust's capacity and expand its expertise to support complex investigations in this field. The Agreement, which provides for EUR 750 000 in additional funding for Eurojust until the end of 2024, contributes to building up additional expertise capacity to combat intellectual property crimes, gives strong impetus to the European

Intellectual Property Prosecutors Network (EIPPN) and help raise awareness among prosecutors and judges.

**EJTN** – Despite the pandemic still affecting travel and meeting options, Eurojust has the capacity to host trainees from the European Judicial Training Network

(EJTN) at National Desks once more. The trainees, present at Eurojust for up to four months, boost operational capacities, simultaneously gaining a better understanding of Eurojust and its work. In November 2021, Eurojust also hosted the first online short-term EJTN study visit, giving almost 50 prosecutors, judges and court staff members their first taste of how the Agency works.

### The JHA Agencies Network against trafficking in human beings and environmental crime

Justice and Home Affairs agencies presented the first full overview of actions to help victims of trafficking in human beings in October, on the occasion of EU Anti-Trafficking Day. The report, coordinated by Eurojust, is a key building block of the EU Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings, and it serves as a key reference document for national authorities engaged in tackling human trafficking.

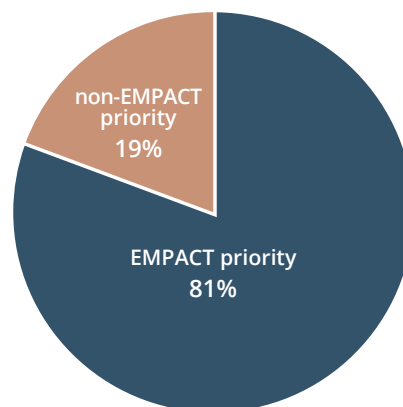
The JHAAN work programme 2021 was devoted to environmental protection and the goals of the EU Green Deal. Eurojust provided input to the drafting of the programme and participated in two JHAAN online seminars devoted to environmental enforcement (in February and June 2021), presenting on Eurojust's activities and experiences in combating environmental crime, particularly the Report on Eurojust's Casework on Environmental Crime.

Eurojust also contributed substantially to the JHAAN joint paper 'Environmental Crime – Actions taken by EU Justice and Home Affairs Agencies'. The paper outlines all operational and strategic work JHA Agencies are doing in the area of environmental crime.

### 9.3 Representing judicial considerations in EMPACT

The EMPACT (European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats) policy cycle is a security initiative driven by the Member States, and supported by the Commission and Council, to identify, prioritise and address threats posed by organised and serious international crime. EMPACT brings together a broad range of multidisciplinary professionals to take concrete actions against criminal networks. Participants include law enforcement authorities, the judiciary, EU agencies, customs and tax offices.

### Eurojust casework and EMPACT priorities



The overwhelming majority of Eurojust casework covers crime types included in one or more EMPACT priorities. The chart shows that 81% of Eurojust cases registered in 2021 covered crime areas falling into a 2022-2025 EMPACT priority. While not all these cases are tackled in specific EMPACT actions, the Agency's commitment and ongoing efforts to support the fight against the crime priorities identified are clear.

### Setting up participation in the next policy cycle

In 2021, Eurojust worked with national authorities and Europol to prepare the agency contribution to the 2022-2025 EMPACT cycle, ensuring that the judicial dimension is fully represented in EMPACT operational actions (OAs). Eurojust contributed to the EU SOCTA 2021 and participated in planning for operational actions for the upcoming cycle.

From 2022, Eurojust will be taking the lead in the OA, focusing on Missing Trader Intra-Community Fraud (MTIC). In addition, Eurojust co-leads several OAs in the following EMPACT priorities: High-risk criminal networks, Cyberattacks, Trafficking in Human Beings and Migrant Smuggling.

Eurojust will also continue to support EMPACT joint action days planned for 2022 to make sure that the judiciary can play a role where needed.

### Communication campaign 'Prosecuting with EMPACT'

At the end of 2020, the Council tasked Eurojust and the EJM, with Europol's assistance, to deliver a communication campaign specifically addressing national judicial actors to raise awareness of the EU Policy Cycle/EMPACT and emphasise possible synergies/cooperation areas and examples of cooperation

between law enforcement and prosecutors. This campaign, under the title 'Prosecuting with EMPACT', reached hundreds of prosecutors in the European Union.

Eurojust National Members participated in and organised several events, during which they informed the judiciary from their countries about EMPACT and the possibilities for participation. Eurojust prepared a standard communication package to support these events and published [EMPACT-related information on the Eurojust website](#). Further actions included a presentation to the Eurojust College in June, and in the 57th plenary meeting of the European Judicial Network in October 2021.

On 8 September 2021, Eurojust hosted a [webinar with the title 'Prosecuting with EMPACT'](#). Four presenters from Eurojust, Europol and the European Commission took the floor to show various aspects of EMPACT and possibilities for prosecutors to work with the framework, including a specific Eurojust EMPACT case and the future plans for EMPACT.

Overall, the campaign reached hundreds of prosecutors and judicial experts within a short period and laid the foundation for their informed participation in the next policy cycle.



## Successful taking down of criminal network committing high-volume cargo thefts from lorries – an EMPACT case solved with Eurojust support



EUROJUST



**CRIME:** A fast and highly mobile OCG performed large-scale cargo thefts from lorries carrying high-end luxury products parked in motorway rest areas in Germany and France. Goods with an estimated combined value of EUR 1.3 million were stolen, transported to Romania and sold via illegal trading circuits.

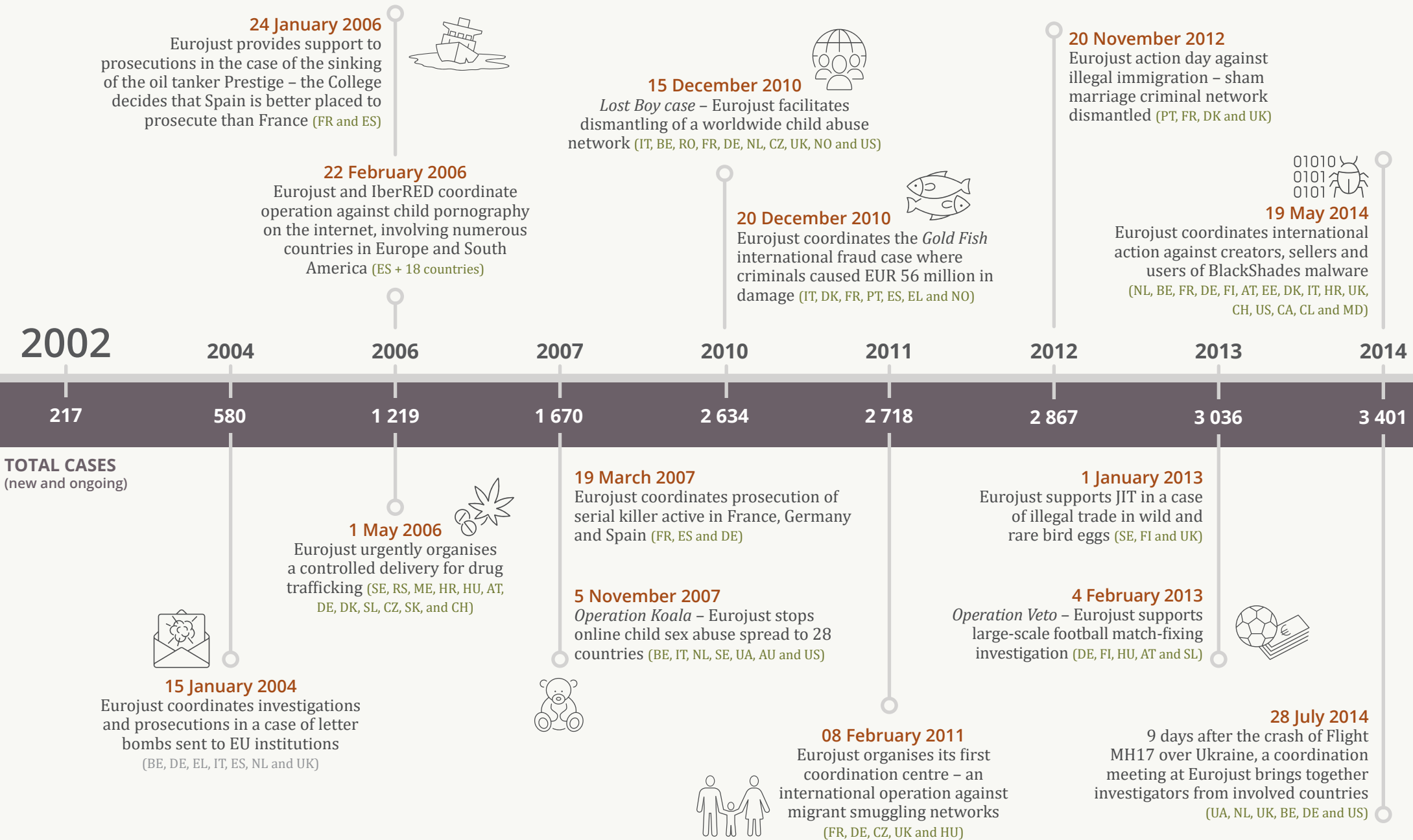
**ACTION:** On an action day in November 2021, 34 suspects were charged and 57 places searched in Romania and Germany.

**RESULT:** The OCG was dismantled and its actions stopped.

**EUROJUST'S ROLE:** At the request of the Romanian authorities, Eurojust started the coordination of the cooperation with Germany and France. A JIT was set up with support from Eurojust, and coordination meetings were held to discuss prosecution strategies and prepare for the action day. On the action day, a coordination centre was set up. Eurojust facilitated the execution of 12 EAWs.



# 20 years of Eurojust support to national authorities – casework



**10 April 2015**

Crash of Germanwings Airbus A320 – Eurojust assists in the exchange of evidence and identification of victims (FR, BE, DE, ES, NL and UK)

**14 July 2015**

*Operation Vertigo* – Start of a series of action days against carousel fraud scheme with EUR 300 million in VAT fraud (DE, BE, CZ, DK, FR, IE, IT, LU, NL, PL, RO, SK, ES, SE, UK, CY, HU and AT)



**2015**

4 173

**1 January 2018**

*Caesar case* – the Genocide Network and Eurojust tackle crimes against humanity committed in Syria (DE and FR)

**2 February 2016**

Carousel fraud and money laundering network dismantled (DE, FR, BE, ES, PT, LU and NL)

**2016**

4 897

**1 December 2016**

International criminal infrastructure platform 'Avalanche' is dismantled in cyber operation – Eurojust supports with advice on legal matters (AT, BE, BG, FI, FR, DE, HU, IT, LT, LU, NL, PL, RO, SE, UK and 14 third countries)



**2017**

5 608

**5 December 2018**

*Operation Pollino* – largest crackdown on the 'Ndrangheta mafia to date is coordinated by Eurojust (NL, IT, DE, BE, LU, UK, ES, PT and CH)



**14 June 2019**

Sexual abuse network stopped with Eurojust's support (FR, RO, DE and IT)

**1 July 2019**

Eurojust helps reveal fake organic food fraud (IT and RS)

**2018**

6 654

**2019**

7 804

**15 July 2019**

Organised crime group selling contaminated fish brought down through joint action day (RO, IT, ES, FR, PT and HU)

**22 October 2019**

26 coordinated arrests in Belgium and France of suspects of a migrant smuggling criminal group after discovery of 39 deceased Vietnamese nationals inside a refrigerated trailer in Essex (BE, FR and UK)

**25 November 2019** *AMAQ case* – coordinated take-down of Daesh propaganda infrastructure (DE, BG, BE, ES, FR, LV, NL, RO, UK, NO, CH, CA and US)

**2020**

8 799

**23 May 2020**

Coordination within 24 hours through the Hungarian and Belgian National Desks results in indictment of suspected member of the IS terrorist organisation for terrorism and mass murder (HU and BE)



**2 July 2020**

Eurojust JIT dismantles EncroChat, an encrypted phone network widely used by criminal networks; evidence gained has since been used in hundreds of investigations (FR, NL, SE, ES, UK and NO)

**2021**

10 105

**27 August 2015** – 48 hours after the bodies of 71 migrants are discovered in an abandoned truck in Austria, Eurojust facilitates a meeting among prosecutors from the Member States involved and helps prevent conflicts of jurisdiction (DE, AT, HU, BG, SK and RS)

**12 November 2015**

*Operation JWEB* – Joint action against radical Islamist terrorist group coordinated at Eurojust in (IT, DE, FI, UK, CH and NO)



**13 November 2015** Terrorist attacks in Paris and Saint-Denis – Eurojust coordinates information and evidence exchange throughout the follow-up (FR, AT, E, DE, BG, DK, IE, EL, ES, IT, HU, NL, SE, UK, US and PT)

**20 March 2017**

Successful action in EU social fraud case – contravention of EU regulations concerning cross-border employment of personnel with an estimated evasion of EUR 8-9 million in social contributions (SK, PT, FR and BE)



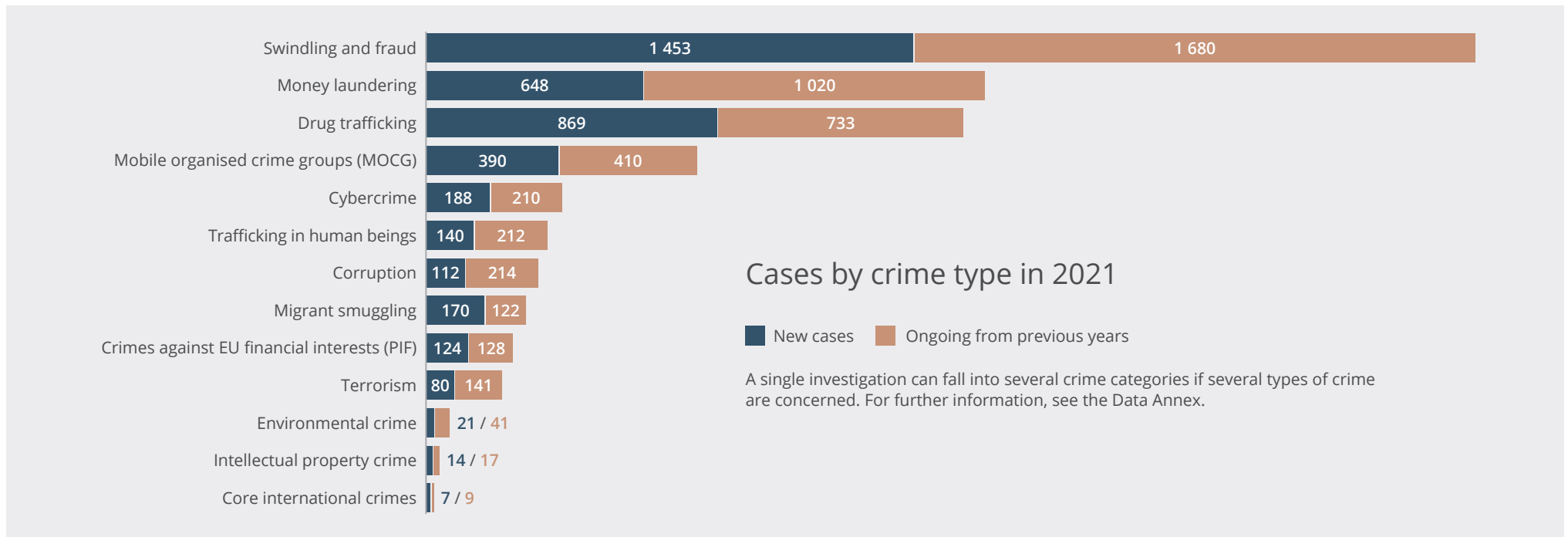
**27 June 2017**

*NotPetya case* – after a massive cyber attack affecting computer systems worldwide, a JIT supported by Eurojust collects electronic evidence (FR, UA and 10 Member States)

Sentences for Belgian suspects in fipronil egg contamination case; Eurojust assists with JIT funding, common investigation and prosecution strategy and exchange of evidence (BE, NL, DE, IT and RO)



**4 June 2021**



## 10. Economic crime

Economic crime continued to be a major focus of Eurojust’s casework in 2021, and covered investigations into offences ranging from crimes against the financial interests of the EU, VAT and investment fraud, money laundering, corruption, as well as intellectual property crime. Best practices and learnings from across these offence areas were distilled into Eurojust guidelines and reports in 2021.

### 10.1 Swindling and fraud

Online investment fraud is rising sharply, with Eurojust taking on three times as many cases compared to five years ago. To prevent investors and savers from further losing large sums of money via online scams, prosecutors are encouraged

to quickly start freezing the bank accounts of the criminal networks behind such schemes. Furthermore, much earlier cooperation with their colleagues in other EU Member States or third countries, combined with the rapid involvement of Eurojust and Europol, can lead to prosecuting fraudsters more effectively. These actions are among the recommendations presented in the [Eurojust Guidelines on How to Prosecute Investment Fraud](#), published in July 2021.

Other concrete recommendations provided in the practical guidelines for prosecutors include getting an early insight into the total number of victims to better gauge the scale of the fraud. Moreover, to get justice done, a coordinated approach at national and international level to prevent possible conflicts of jurisdiction is of prime importance.



### SWINDLING & FRAUD CASES IN 2021

**3 133** CASES

(1 453 new cases,  
1 680 ongoing from previous years)

**73**

JOINT INVESTIGATION TEAMS  
(19 new JITs, 54 ongoing)

**111**

CASE-SPECIFIC  
COORDINATION MEETINGS

**11**

COORDINATED ACTION DAYS

Eurojust's assistance may be requested at any stage, by any of the judicial authorities involved. The Agency can organise coordination meetings, finance and assist in the setting up of JITs and facilitate cooperation with non-EU countries. Furthermore, it can set up a coordination centre for any particular case to facilitate the simultaneous execution of measures in multiple countries during an action day.

Fraudsters often devise complex schemes to avoid VAT payments. These schemes can include so-called front companies and fake sales. A particularly good example of Eurojust's work in this area is the support it provided to a complex Spanish action against large-scale VAT fraud (see case illustration on page 44).

This was a very successful case set up in record time, thanks to the reactivity and support of all parties involved. Eurojust was able to set up a coordination centre involving an action day only four days after the case's first coordination meeting took place.

The particular success of this action can be attributed to the rapid response and swift collaboration between Eurojust's National Desks. For example, the rapid information sharing of the Slovak Desk with the Spanish Desk enabled the Spanish authorities to issue an EAW only two hours after the information was shared. This led to the subsequent successful arrest of one of the suspects in the Netherlands.

## 10.2 Money laundering

The effective prosecution of money launderers, including the recovery of illegally obtained assets, plays an important part in combatting organised crime. A dedicated Eurojust Report on Money Laundering that will analyse the Agency's most significant cases in this area in the 2016-August 2021 period is currently being prepared. The report will identify the main legal and practical issues to be overcome, including the support Eurojust can provide and lessons from best practice. It will also take stock of the legislative developments in recent years, notably the Anti-Money Laundering Package proposed in July 2021.



### MONEY LAUNDERING CASES IN 2021

**1 668** CASES

(648 new cases,  
1020 ongoing from previous years)

**61**

JOINT INVESTIGATION TEAMS  
(16 new JITs, 45 ongoing)

**115**

CASE-SPECIFIC  
COORDINATION MEETINGS

**5**

COORDINATED ACTION DAYS



### Nearly 50 properties seized in action against money laundering in Italy and Spain



**EUROJUST**



**CRIME:** An Italian suspect, already convicted for various crimes in Italy and Spain, supposedly committed large-scale money laundering of millions of euros resulting from illegal activities in Spain. Between 2006 and 2016, approximately EUR 12 million euros was transferred from Spanish bank accounts in the name of the suspect and his daughter to Switzerland and back to Spain to conceal the criminal dealings.

**ACTION:** A series of joint actions were executed during 2020 and 2021 against money laundering, tax evasion and corruption in the province of Cuneo in Italy and the province of Malaga in Spain.

**RESULT:** 13 provisional arrests were made. A luxurious real estate property and 52 plots of land were seized in Cuneo, with an estimated value of EUR 5 million, while in Malaga 47 properties were seized and over 100 bank accounts frozen by the Spanish judicial authorities. Three luxury cars, cash, jewellery, valuable watches and artworks were also seized, with an estimated value of over EUR 1.5 million.

**EUROJUST'S ROLE:** Eurojust set up a JIT in 2020 and a coordination centre in March 2020 to prepare the joint actions, as well as organised coordination meetings during 2020-2021 between the Italian and Spanish authorities to facilitate the case's coordination.

## Coordinated action against massive VAT fraud



**28 April 2021** – A **joint operation** involving law enforcement and judicial authorities from Spain, Slovakia, Belgium and the Netherlands is organised through a coordination centre at Eurojust, with Europol providing analysis and cross-checking support. **22 suspects are arrested, 13 properties and 16 vehicles are seized and dozens of bank accounts are frozen.**



**22 April 2021** – A **coordination meeting** is held at Eurojust to facilitate exchanges of information among all parties concerned and prepare for the swift establishment of a coordination centre on 28 April. Several **European Investigation Orders** and **freezing orders** are issued over the following days.



**13 April 2021** – The **Spanish Desk at Eurojust** opens a case towards **Belgium, the Netherlands, Romania and Slovakia**, as well as **Europol** in the framework of its *Analysis Project Sustrans* which supports anti-money laundering investigations.



**Late 2019** – **Spanish authorities launch an investigation** into a VAT evasion and money laundering scheme, involving large-scale forgery of documents, that will ultimately cost the country **EUR 26 million in missed revenues.**

To avoid paying VAT within the internal market, the scammers have set up a series of **shell companies in Spain, Slovakia, Romania, Belgium and the Netherlands** to fraudulently claim that goods are being traded internationally, when in fact they are never sent abroad and are therefore subject to VAT.





### CORRUPTION CASES IN 2021

**326** CASES  
*(112 new cases,  
214 ongoing from previous years)*

**11**  
JOINT INVESTIGATION TEAMS  
*(5 new JITs, 6 ongoing)*

**13**  
CASE-SPECIFIC  
COORDINATION MEETINGS

### 10.3 Corruption

For the European Union, fighting corruption is a fundamental precondition for upholding the rule of law, peace and security, and for achieving sustainable development as well as respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It is the reason why the European Union is actively involved in counter-corruption, and why it also remains a priority for Eurojust.

In 2021, Eurojust provided input to the Report of the European Union on the review of its implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption. The Report explains how the European Union has implemented the obligations stemming from the Convention. Eurojust’s input underlines the Agency’s mission to support and strengthen coordination and cooperation between national investigating and prosecuting authorities in relation to corruption cases.

### 10.4 PIF crimes

PIF crimes are crimes against the financial interests of the European Union. Tackling such crimes is needed in view of the billions of euros that organised crime groups make every year through fraud against the EU budget.

With the EPPO now operational, Eurojust’s competence to support the investigation of PIF crimes is limited but still significant in ensuring that cases involving EU Member States not participating in the EPPO are supported. Eurojust also remains competent to support and facilitate cross-border cooperation with non-EU countries, for Member States participating as well as those not participating in the EPPO. Eurojust and the EPPO have started to work together in their respective mandates to fight PIF crimes. EPPO joined a Eurojust coordination meeting for the first time in September 2021 to work on a case together.

In July 2021, Eurojust was also active in contributing to the European Parliament’s study on [The Impact of Organised Crime on the EU’s Financial Interests](#). The study examines the impact of organised crime and corruption in terms of the losses to the EU budget through criminal activities. Eurojust provided insights from its casework statistics and the recommendations of its [Report on Eurojust’s Casework in Asset Recovery](#). This contributed to the study’s analysis and assessment of the different and common approaches used by Member States to investigate organised crime.



### PIF-RELATED CASES IN 2021

**252** CASES  
*(124 new cases,  
128 ongoing from previous years)*

**7**  
JOINT INVESTIGATION TEAMS  
*(3 new JITs, 4 ongoing)*

**16**  
CASE-SPECIFIC  
COORDINATION MEETINGS

**3**  
COORDINATED ACTION DAYS

# 11. Drug trafficking



**DRUG TRAFFICKING CASES IN 2021**

**1 602 CASES**  
(869 new cases, 733 ongoing from previous years)

**48 JOINT INVESTIGATION TEAMS**  
(14 new JITs, 34 ongoing)

**107 CASE-SPECIFIC COORDINATION MEETINGS**

**1 COORDINATED ACTION DAY**

Illicit drug trafficking across the European Union is growing sharply and remains the largest criminal market in the European Union, with an estimated value of at least EUR 30 billion per year. The recently adopted EU Strategy to Tackle Organised Crime recognises the need to step up efforts against drug trafficking. To address this need, the Council EU Drugs Strategy 2021-2025 was published in March 2021, followed by the EU Drugs Action Plan 2021-2025, outlining the actions to be implemented to achieve the Strategy's priorities.

## 11.1 Latest developments

The stark rise in the production of synthetic drugs poses increasing challenges for prosecutors across Europe. By rapidly changing the composition of chemicals used for these drugs, or creating new

substances, producers try to exploit legal gaps, often making it difficult to prove they are deliberately selling illegal drugs or substances. The Eurojust Report on Drug Trafficking, published in April 2021, looks at these challenges and analyses recent complex cross-border drug trafficking cases referred to the Agency. Between 2016 and 2021, the total number of drug trafficking cases opened at Eurojust has more than tripled, now totalling 869, with synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances (NPS) making up around one-third of them. The report provides recommendations on increasing financial investigations, asset recovery and judicial cooperation, including with third countries.

## 11.2 Case examples illustrating Eurojust's work on drug trafficking

In 2021, a large number of cases addressed by the Agency made use of new access to encrypted evidence, thanks to the previous, successful EncroChat and SKY ECC operations. One such case, which took place in May 2021, involved the takedown of an international network of drug traffickers by the French and Dutch authorities,



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with the support of Eurojust and Europol. The suspects were identified as a result of the evidence obtained from a previous French and Dutch-led investigation against the EncroChat network.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, OCGs have adapted quickly to an online environment by using secured communication channels, crypto-phones, cryptocurrencies and darknet markets. In October 2021, police forces across the world arrested 150 alleged suspects involved in buying or selling illicit goods on the dark web as part of a coordinated international operation involving nine countries. More than EUR 26.7 million (USD 31 million) in cash and virtual currencies were seized in the operation, as well as 234 kg of drugs and 45 firearms. Eurojust, together with Europol, supported the national authorities in the coordination of this large-scale cross-border case.

Considering most drugs' provenance and the international business model of organised crime groups, it is unsurprising that the number of Eurojust's drug trafficking cases involving third countries continues to rise each year. An analysis of Eurojust's casework in this field shows that continuous and reinforced cooperation with third countries through Eurojust's Liaison Prosecutors, Contact Points and other means is highly beneficial in many drug trafficking cases, bringing clear added value for national investigations.

In July 2021, Eurojust coordinated the dismantling of a large-scale Serbian marijuana trafficking network operating from Spain. The Spanish and Serbian authorities achieved this through a JIT, set up between the two countries for the first time by Eurojust, which led to an action day against the organised crime group. Across both countries, a total of 43 members of a Serbian OCG were arrested for their involvement in the production and distribution of marijuana and hashish, mainly destined for sale in Germany.

“ *Drug trafficking continues to rise and is a major challenge for our societies. Eurojust is fully committed to tackling this kind of 'octopus'-style crime, which threatens both public health and that of individual citizens, our security and the economic fabric of society, due to the enormous proceeds of these criminal activities. We stand ready to offer Member States our support to counter criminal networks, international brokers and professional money launderers.* ”

Filippo Spiezia, Chair of the Anti-Trafficking Working Group and National Member for Italy



## 10 arrests following a controlled delivery of drugs across Europe



**November 2021** – The Romanian prosecutor in charge of the case issues an **indictment**.



**14-19 May 2021** – Following the Romanian authorities' historical drugs seizure on 10 May, a **controlled delivery** is swiftly arranged through Eurojust, with Europol providing analytical support and also facilitating information exchange. The operation involves **Romania, Belgium, the Netherlands, Hungary, Austria, Germany, Slovakia, Slovenia** and the **Czech Republic**.

**Ten arrests** are made – one in Romania, two in the Netherlands, including of the suspected ring leader, and seven in Belgium. Several properties are searched to secure evidence for the judicial follow-up. Eurojust supports the transmission and implementation of numerous **European Investigation Orders** and **European Arrest Warrants** during the operation.



*I am delighted that Eurojust has been able to provide swift and professional support to this investigation and contribute to the success of taking down this criminal network. Without the timely, professional and coordinated intervention of the competent national authorities involved in this operation, the drugs would have reached the market and created serious consequences for people's lives.*

**Daniela Buruiana**  
National Member for Romania at Eurojust



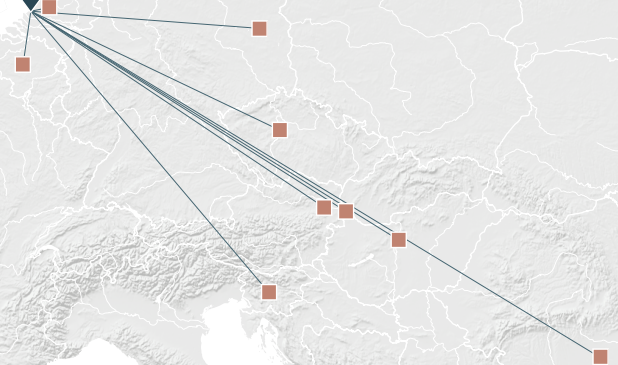
**12 May 2021** – At the initiative of the Romanian Desk at Eurojust, a **coordination meeting** is organised via videoconference to prepare for a controlled delivery operation.



**10 May 2021** – Romanian authorities detect and **seize 1 452 kilos of heroin**, with a **street value of EU 45 million**, in the port of Constanta.



**July 2020** – the Romanian authorities launch an investigation into a complex logistical and legal trade infrastructure established by an organised crime group earlier the same year. A number of companies across the EU are used by the criminal network to organise and conceal its distribution of large quantities of drugs behind a facade of legal trade.



## 12. Cybercrime

Criminal online activities have recently become much bolder and grown in frequency and number, defrauding private individuals and legitimate enterprises. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly boosted online communications, and criminal networks have stepped up their illicit activities to abuse the internet for large-scale fraudulent schemes.

Eurojust's cybercrime activities spanned many areas in 2021, including ransomware, artificial intelligence, encryption, and cybercrime as a service. Cybercrime products published by Eurojust in 2021 include: the [Cybercrime Judicial Monitor](#), the [EU Digital Evidence Situation Report](#), and the [Third report of the observatory function on encryption](#).

### 12.1 Ransomware

As the digitalisation of society continues, creating more connections among people, businesses and governmental structures, our vulnerability to cyberattacks is increasing, as is the possibility of a full-scale horizontal impact in several EU jurisdictions at the same time. Ransomware groups are increasingly sophisticated, act strategically to maximise profits and reduce risks, and use multilayers of extortion methods to pressure victims and cooperate with other malware criminal groups.

In 2021, the EJCNC gathered all its learnings on this priority topic in the EJCNC Map of Ransomware, providing an overview of answers to the Network's questionnaire from the EU Member States, as well as Norway and Switzerland. The analysis demonstrates that the level of awareness on ransomware from law enforcement and judicial authorities remains low, and the ability to respond to it greatly varies across Europe. This exercise, in cooperation with Eurojust, is a starting point for the Network to support greater efficiency in fighting ransomware by providing proper tools for judicial authorities to tackle it.

Following a [joint EU-US statement](#) in June 2021 underlining the need for cooperation, the topic has also been discussed in high-level meetings between the European Union and the United States. On 25 October 2021, Eurojust

participated in the first meeting of the newly established EU-US Ransomware Working Group, dedicated to ransomware issues focusing on operational aspects. The Working Group will collaborate on international issues in an effort to mitigate ransomware threats impacting both the United States and the European Union.

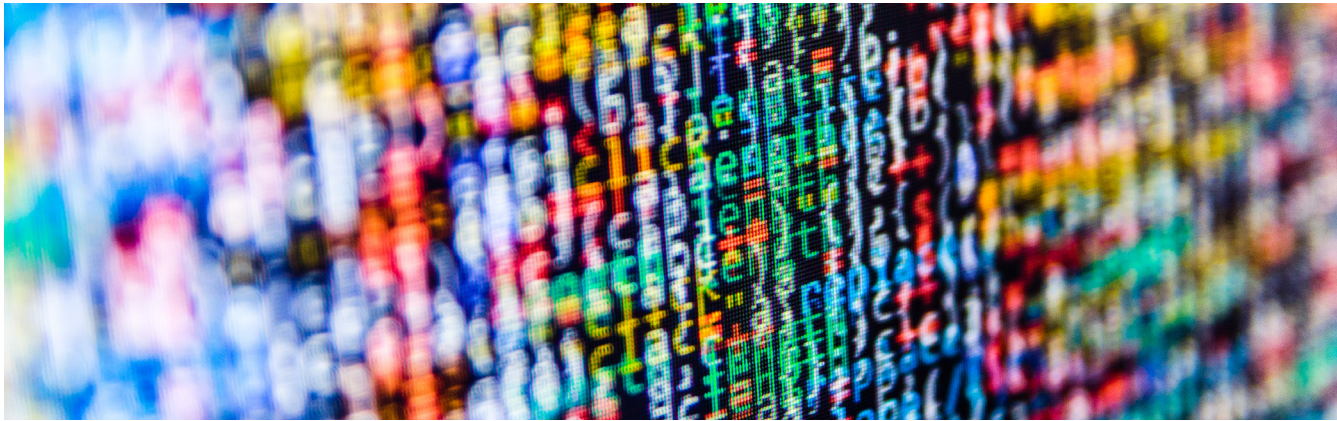
As a follow-up, Eurojust President Ladislav Hamran, was invited to present the judicial dimension of the EU-US cooperation on ransomware at the EU-US JHA Ministerial Meeting in December 2021. He stressed that the increase in the number of ransomware attacks, particularly in healthcare during the pandemic, creates important questions for prosecutors and judges. For example, should crime groups attacking healthcare facilities be considered as not only having illicit profit-making in their intent but also the intent to cause physical harm to people, or even murder?

In 2022, Eurojust looks forward to hosting a high-level workshop with its US partners to further translate the joint fight against ransomware into operational outcomes. Moreover, the Agency's new ransomware subgroup within Eurojust's Cybercrime Working Group will monitor legislative developments and provide strategic guidance in the field.

### 12.2 Artificial intelligence

Artificial intelligence is gaining importance in criminal law and is being used increasingly by the police and judicial authorities in criminal matters. In April 2021, the European Union published a new [Proposal for a Regulation on laying down harmonised rules on Artificial Intelligence](#). In view of the proposed





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Regulation, and to keep abreast of legislative developments in this area, Eurojust has recently set up a dedicated AI group within its Cybercrime Working Group.

Furthermore, the Agency is a member of the multi-agency Innovation Hub for Internal Security, which provides a joint platform to support the delivery of cutting-edge technologies for the security of citizens in the European Union. In April 2021, Eurojust contributed to a project launched by the Innovation Hub, aimed at developing accountability principles to guide human-centred and socially driven AI capabilities for security and justice organisations. The project aims to create a toolkit for practitioners to auto-evaluate future AI systems in light of the accountability principles.

### 12.3 Latest developments from the European Judicial Cybercrime Network (EJCN)

The [EJCN](#), supported by Eurojust, consists of a network of judicial authorities specialised in countering the challenges of cybercrime, cyber-enabled crime and investigations in cyberspace. In 2021, EJCN participants discussed current criminal trends and analysed cases to improve future cybercrime investigations. Based on these experiences, the Network analysed the judiciary's training needs to provide short specialised trainings during 2022. In addition to this, the EJCN contributed to Eurojust's [Cybercrime Judicial Monitor](#), covering legislative developments in the areas of cybercrime, cyber-enabled crime and electronic evidence.

At its 10th Plenary Meeting in June 2021, the EJCN presented its new Virtual Currency Guide for Judicial Authorities. Virtual currencies are becoming increasingly popular with criminals. They use them to pay for illegal services and goods or to buy them themselves, while hiding and laundering the proceeds of their illegal activities through virtual currencies.

In the current digital age, the emergence of these virtual currencies creates serious challenges for judicial and law enforcement authorities in investigating crimes that involve their use. Considering that most countries do not have specific criminal legal provisions in this area, the Guide offers tailor-made advice for prosecutors dealing with virtual currencies.

During the Plenary meeting, practitioners also discussed the topic of cybercrime as a service and possible strategies to support victims in complex cybercrime cases.

In its most recent meeting, held in December 2021, the EJCN discussed challenges and best practices in the investigation of ransomware cases, with a special focus on the healthcare sector. The Network addressed the issue of how to better connect with the private sector to increase the efficiency of cybercrime criminal investigations. Possible synergies with third countries in relation to cybercrime and digital evidence were also discussed in the framework of EuroMed's subgroup on digital evidence.

## 12.4 Case examples illustrating Eurojust's work on cybercrime



Access to VPN service used by ransomware groups cut off



**CRIME:** DoubleVPN was a virtual private network (VPN) service which provided a safe haven for cybercriminals to attack their victims. It was advertised as a means to mask the location and identities of ransomware operators and phishing fraudsters, providing a high level of anonymity by offering VPN connections to its clients.

**ACTION:** During an action day in June 2021, law enforcement and judicial authorities in Europe, the United States and Canada seized DoubleVPN's web domains and server infrastructure. The Dutch authorities leading the case instigated a digital intrusion of the infrastructure that facilitated the gathering of evidence against DoubleVPN and its users.

**RESULT:** Servers hosting DoubleVPN content were seized across the world and the web domains were replaced with a law enforcement splash page.

**EUROJUST'S ROLE:** Eurojust facilitated the judicial cross-border cooperation leading to the takedown of the network. The Agency organised six dedicated coordination meetings, aimed, inter alia, at verifying and solving legal issues related to the collection of data in the countries concerned, and set up a coordination centre through which the operation was implemented on the ground by the various national authorities involved.



Major fraudulent German investment platform taken down



**CRIME:** A major fraudulent online German investment platform defrauded victims of at least EUR 15 million. After initial investments, victims were encouraged to pay more into the alleged investment fund, losing all of their money.

**ACTION:** During an action day in October 2021, the main suspect was arrested and eight places were searched.

**RESULT:** The fraudulent online investment platform was dismantled by the authorities in Germany, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Netherlands and Ukraine, and supported by Eurojust and Europol.

**EUROJUST'S ROLE:** Eurojust set up a coordination centre and assisted with the exchange of cross-border judicial information between all countries involved. The Agency also provided support for the execution of EAWs. authorities involved.

## 13. Trafficking in human beings



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### THB CASES IN 2021

**352** CASES

(140 new cases,  
212 ongoing from previous years)

**45**

JOINT INVESTIGATION TEAMS  
(13 new JITs, 32 ongoing)

**46**

CASE-SPECIFIC  
COORDINATION MEETINGS

**3**

COORDINATED ACTION DAYS

The trafficking in human beings (THB) affects victims all over the world and includes various forms of exploitation, including sexual exploitation and forced labour. Human trafficking is a growing issue within the Member States, and national authorities are increasingly aware of the need for multilateral judicial cooperation to tackle it.

### 13.1 Latest developments

The [Eurojust Report on Trafficking in Human Beings](#) published in February 2021 analyses 91 THB cases and the results of 59 JITs. The report concludes that to better assist victims of THB, more cross-border and timely judicial cooperation is necessary.

Earlier involvement of Eurojust and a higher number of cases referred to the Agency will help to better coordinate investigations and get a fuller picture of internationally operating criminal networks, which exploit often young and vulnerable victims. The report offers best practices for Member States and

highlights the practical assistance it has and will continue to provide in, for example, resolving conflicts of jurisdiction and aiding the execution of EIOs.

Eurojust is committed to implementing the new [EU Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings \(2021-2025\)](#), adopted in April 2021. During its Annual Meeting on Migrant Smuggling, the Agency had the opportunity to discuss its operational support in delivering this strategy, ranging from protecting and empowering victims to bringing traffickers to justice. Part of the meeting was devoted to THB and attended by the new EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator. The importance of Eurojust's role and strategy in further cooperating with third countries in this area was also underlined.

In a [joint report](#) published on 18 October 2021 on the occasion of the 15th EU Anti-Trafficking Day, the JHAAN for the first time presented a full overview of Agencies' actions to detect and protect victims of human trafficking. The report aims to make Member States more aware of the Agencies' potential in helping the early identification and protection of victims and encourages them to reach out to the Agencies at all stages of prevention, investigations, operations and legal proceedings.

With the same objective, a [factsheet](#) was also published on 18 October 2021 highlighting how Eurojust can support judicial authorities in the fight against THB.

The 15th EU Anti-Trafficking Day was also marked by Eurojust President, Ladislav Hamran, joining the EU Commissioner, Ylva Johansson, and EU Anti-trafficking Coordinator, Diane Schmitt, for a Twitter Spaces event, dedicated to joining efforts to combat child trafficking. The discussion encouraged stakeholders to strengthen cooperation between the relevant authorities and avoid any delays that can negatively affect the well-being of child victims.

### 13.2 Case examples illustrating Eurojust's work on THB

In 2021, Eurojust offered operational support to several cases involving labour or sexual exploitation. For example, in February 2021, a network involved in the concealed employment of Moldovan nationals, working under false identities on building sites in France, was dismantled as the result of a Eurojust-supported JIT between the French, Romanian and Moldovan judicial authorities. During an action day, 38 persons were arrested, 11 bank accounts were frozen and 15 luxury cars and EUR 100 000 in cash were seized. Eurojust supported the action day and assisted in the execution of EIOs and requests for mutual legal assistance in coordination with the Moldovan authorities.

“ There are many obstacles national authorities may face while dealing with cross-border THB cases. Eurojust helps prosecutors overcome these obstacles by providing easy access to the full spectrum of judicial cooperation tools and expertise. The increasing demand for this support proves the well-recognised role of Eurojust: its tailor-made solutions have become a crucial factor in countless successful investigations. ”

Ladislav Hamran, Eurojust President

Similarly, in June 2021, a JIT set up by Eurojust between the Italian and Romanian authorities took action against a criminal network which exploited female victims for street prostitution in northern Italy. During an action day supported by Eurojust, eight suspects were arrested in both countries. Safety was provided for the 20 female victims, who were forced to borrow money from the OCG at extortionate interest rates.

## 14. Migrant smuggling

Fighting the criminal networks responsible for smuggling migrants across Europe remains one of the top priorities for the European Union, its Member States and Eurojust. The [renewed EU action plan against migrant smuggling \(2021-2025\)](#) enhances Eurojust's prominent role, and reinforces the need for cooperation between law enforcement and the judiciary, relevant EU agencies and third countries of origin and transit.

### 14.1 Latest developments

These issues were discussed at Eurojust's Annual Meeting on Migrant Smuggling, organised by Eurojust in November 2021, with 25 countries, 7 international organisations and members of the Migrant Smuggling Focus Group represented. Practitioners discussed with the EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator and the OSCE Special Representative the importance of protecting victims in migrant smuggling cases where migrants have suffered any sort of exploitation. Participants also addressed the need to update the legislative framework to tackle the use of digital platforms to facilitate migrant smuggling.

The participation of EuroMed Justice representatives from Algeria, Tunisia and Israel in the meeting marked the first important step forward in the joint cross-Mediterranean commitment to fight migrant smuggling. The need to further enhance operational judicial cooperation with South Partner Countries and the West African Network of Central Authorities and Prosecutors was emphasised.

During the event, the European Commission invited EU Member States to make greater use of Eurojust's available support to migrant smuggling investigations, through

“ This meeting marks an important step forward in Eurojust's commitment to the fight against migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings. We will take inspiration from the Annual Meeting discussions to implement all the initiatives foreseen by the EU action plan against migrant smuggling, to enhance and support the efforts of the competent judicial authorities. Looking to the future, we are creating the conditions to finally begin cooperation with our African and South Partner Countries (SPC), taking advantage of the EuroMed Justice Programme hosted by Eurojust. ”

Filippo Spiezia, Italian National Member at Eurojust and Chair of the Anti-Trafficking Team

“ Eurojust's Migrant Smuggling Focus group offers a unique platform for practitioners to discuss imminent practical and legal challenges linked to migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings. The criminal landscape is constantly changing, and the constant exchange of experiences is pivotal for our joint success. ”

Robert Crepinko, Head of the European Migrant Smuggling Centre, Europol

operational tools such as JITs. Eurojust's newly published [Booklet on Judicial use of information following the debriefing of migrants at external borders](#) was also presented. The booklet underlines the need for the judiciary's early involvement in investigations and the importance of obtaining information from migrants as early as possible.

As a result of the meeting, an internal discussion took place within the College of Eurojust, to outline how the Agency, national judiciaries and strategic partners will work together to implement the renewed EU action plan against migrant smuggling.



## 14.2 Case examples illustrating Eurojust's work on migrant smuggling



### Migrant smuggling with luxury vehicles in Greece halted with Eurojust support



**CRIME:** For at least two years, an OCG transported approximately 350 migrants within Greece, during 56 transfers and using 89 luxury cars and high-speed pickup trucks. Migrants were asked to pay around EUR 2 500 per person, with up to 15 persons transported in each vehicle during the high-risk journeys, which led to the death of 1 smuggler and 13 injured migrants.

**ACTION:** An action day was organised in July 2021, involving 15 searches.

**RESULT:** 11 suspects responsible for the transport of irregular migrants from the Greek-Turkish border in Evros to the Thessaloniki region, were arrested. 29 vehicles were seized, together with computer and GPS equipment, mobile phones, financial documents, cash and a mining tool for bitcoins.

**EUROJUST'S ROLE:** Eurojust set up the first-ever JIT between Greek and Bulgarian judicial and law enforcement authorities to support this case. The Agency organised three coordination meetings to establish effective cooperation in both countries, and provided organisational support to the Hellenic police, which led the operation on the ground.



### People smuggling network in Netherlands and Hungary dismantled



**CRIME:** In 2021, a people-smuggling network operating in the Netherlands and Hungary organised the transfer of irregular Syrian migrants from the Hungarian-Serbian border into the European Union.

**ACTION:** An action day was organised on 1 November 2021.

**RESULT:** During the action day, the Dutch authorities arrested the two main suspects who had hired two drivers that were arrested earlier in the year. The criminals were also allegedly involved in the hiring of four other drivers that were arrested previously in Hungary, Germany and Austria for people smuggling.

**EUROJUST'S ROLE:** The JIT, set up by the Dutch and Hungarian judicial authorities and supported by Eurojust, linked the various arrests to the two main suspects, enabling the migrant smuggling network to be dismantled. Eurojust enabled cross-border judicial cooperation between the Dutch and Hungarian authorities and organised a coordination meeting to prepare the operation.





# 15. Terrorism

Eurojust is increasingly called upon by EU Member States and third countries to coordinate complex, cross-border counter-terrorism investigations. Terrorist acts not only need to be prevented and stopped, but their perpetrators and facilitators must also be brought to justice to better secure our societies. Counter-terrorism cases dealt with by Eurojust concern investigations into terrorist attacks, the alleged preparation of such attacks, the financing of terrorism, the recruitment and training to commit terrorist acts, and the dissemination of terrorist propaganda.

## 15.1 Cross-matching data in the Counter-Terrorism Register to identify connected investigations

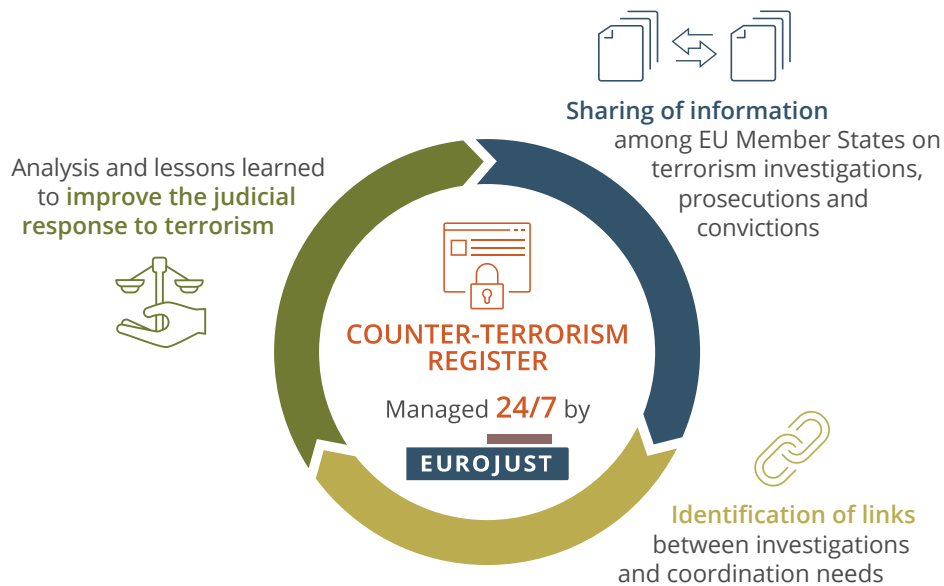
Every time a case is opened at Eurojust, a systematic cross-matching of data takes place against already existing cases included in the Case Management

System. This functionality and a careful follow-up make it possible to connect related cases. Eurojust has established the European Judicial Counter-Terrorism Register (CTR) to collect information on ongoing and concluded judicial counter-terrorism proceedings from EU Member States, and to be able to perform the same cross-matching function, so that potential connections can also be detected for terrorism cases.

As a result of the CTR's establishment in 2019, the transmission of information to Eurojust on judicial counter-terrorism proceedings has increased. Eurojust now receives up-to-date and consistent information with an identical scope, which allowed Eurojust to identify links between proceedings in different EU Member States in 2021.

Timely handling of CTR information, a consistent approach towards the verification of the identified potential links and their efficient follow-up remain key to the effective functioning of the CTR. The management of CTR information and the follow-up of potential links is carried out in full respect of the confidentiality and ownership of data in conformity with the Eurojust Regulation.

Eurojust cases have been opened on the basis of CTR information both after the identification of links between national proceedings and at the request of national authorities. In the latter scenario, Eurojust was requested, for example, to facilitate MLA between EU Member States and with third countries in the framework of investigations into alleged participation in a terrorist organisation, financing of terrorism and related other offences, such as forgery of documents and fraud.



## 15.2 Latest developments

In October and November 2021, Eurojust President, Ladislav Hamran, met with the newly appointed EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator to discuss stepping up international judicial cooperation in the fight against terrorism.

To further discuss the latest developments and trends, Eurojust's counter-terrorism national correspondents, judicial practitioners, and EU and international organisation representatives also convened in November. The topics discussed included: the role of judicial authorities in relation to the new [EU Regulation on addressing the dissemination of terrorist content online](#), adopted in April 2021, recent trends concerning left-wing and right-wing extremism and terrorism, how to address the jihadist terrorist threat posed by prison leavers, and the Counter-Terrorism Action Plan for Afghanistan, issued by the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator.

Battlefield evidence is a critical component of the effective judicial response to foreign terrorist fighters. However, due to the unique circumstances under which this evidence is collected, stored and shared, its use in criminal judicial proceedings is often subject to practical, legal and procedural challenges. To help with these challenges, Eurojust, together with the Genocide Network and US assistance, provides guidance to Member States on information known to be of potential relevance to terrorism and war crime investigations and prosecutions. The aim is to help inform those who search, review and analyse collections of battlefield evidence, enabling them to better identify and provide useful information in the investigation and prosecution of terrorism

and war crimes. This assistance is timely, in view of the ongoing investigations and prosecutions in several Member States into terrorism offences and core international crimes in which battlefield evidence is used.

Eurojust is committed to further supporting EU and international efforts to enhance



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“Eurojust plays a crucial role in counter-terrorism with regard to our goal to bring terrorists to justice. It facilitates important cross-border cooperation in cases of terrorism and international crimes, in particular after major terrorist attacks in the European Union. I have great appreciation for the unique judicial collaboration Eurojust enables in counter-terrorism, and fully support President Ladislav Hamran's and the Genocide Network Secretariat's work on the sharing of information and best practices among our judicial practitioners in the European Union.”

Ilkka Salmi, EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator

the use of battlefield information as evidence in criminal proceedings. The EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator and the EU Commission have recognised Eurojust's role in mapping the use of such information and in ensuring further cooperation between EU Member States and other countries, including in support of prosecutions related to the current situation in Afghanistan. In 2020-2021, Eurojust was also an observer in the Council of Europe Working Group of Experts on the use of information collected in conflict zones as evidence in criminal proceedings related to terrorist offences.

The [Eurojust Casework on Counter-Terrorism: Insights 2020-2021](#) report, published on 17 December 2021, presents the tangible results achieved (including seizures, arrests and convictions) thanks to Eurojust's coordination of counter-terrorism cases. The report builds on the Agency's experience in assisting cross-border counter-terrorism investigations and prosecutions, and in facilitating the exchange of information on judicial proceedings. Furthermore, the report outlines Eurojust's role in coordinating judicial cooperation when dealing with the protection of terrorism victims, jurisdiction issues and requests for assistance to third countries. In particular, the report focuses on the progress achieved through the [European Judicial Counter-Terrorism Register](#), and the use of judicial cooperation tools in cross-border counter-terrorism cases, including JITs. It also addresses specific legal and practical challenges in the criminal justice response to terrorist phenomena, such as foreign terrorist fighters (and the related use of battlefield evidence), right-wing and left-wing terrorism, and *modus operandi* used by terrorist networks, cells and individual offenders.

## 15.3 Case examples illustrating Eurojust's work on counter-terrorism



### #JusticeDone: Terrorist conviction following Eurojust support

**JUSTICE DONE:** On 19 February 2021, the Court of Appeal of The Hague convicted a suspect of preparing and/or facilitating the carrying out of a terrorist attack, threat of a terrorist offence and incitement and/or distribution of inciting writings or images. The suspect was sentenced to 10 years of imprisonment.

**CRIME:** After a Dutch parliamentarian announced a cartoon competition relating to the Prophet Mohammed, in late August 2018 the Dutch police were made aware of a video posted on Facebook by a man of Pakistani origin. He was said to have entered the Netherlands with the intent to kill the Dutch politician.

**ACTION:** The following day, he was arrested at The Hague Central Station.

**EUROJUST'S ROLE:** The Dutch authorities sought Eurojust's assistance prompted by the suspicion of preparation of murder with terrorist intent. Information was needed on the suspect's whereabouts in the period and years before his arrest, to understand his motives and to explore whether he worked alone or as part of a terrorist group. Eurojust facilitated the gathering of information as well as requests for materials and legal assistance from several EU Member States and third countries.

## #JusticeDone

### Investigation of an alleged foreign terrorist fighter

#### Identifying links in the European Judicial Counter-Terrorism Register (CTR)



**May 2021 and December 2021** – The main target of the investigation is sentenced to four years' imprisonment for participation in a terrorist organisation. The conviction is upheld by the Milan Assize Court of Appeal.



**July 2020 and October 2020** – Eurojust organises **two coordination meetings**, enabling national authorities to inform one another about developments in the ongoing investigations and execution of EIOs and MLA requests, discuss future judicial cooperation and coordination needs, and agree on the most efficient way forward.



Over the course of 2020, Eurojust facilitates multiple **European Investigation Orders (EIOs)** and **Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA) requests**, gathering further evidence and witness testimonies in support of the Italian investigation. Eurojust also facilitates spontaneous **exchanges of information** between the national judicial authorities involved and with Europol.



**February 2020** – The **Italian Desk at Eurojust** opens the case towards **five EU Member States, one third country** and **Europol**.



Investigating a suspected foreign terrorist fighter, the **Italian authorities** seek to identify, through the CTR's functionalities and judicial cooperation tools, possible links with the main target of their investigation, as well as other terrorism cases.



## 16. Core international crimes

The European Union is strongly committed to the fight against impunity for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Eurojust and the Genocide Network continue to provide support to prosecutors and judges dealing with these highly complex cases. The Genocide Network Secretariat hosted by Eurojust facilitates cooperation among prosecutors, law enforcement, mutual legal assistance officers and other practitioners across the European Union who specialise in the investigation and prosecution of core international crimes.

### 16.1 Latest developments

Ten years after the outbreak of the armed conflict in Syria, the Genocide Network dedicated the 6th EU Day Against Impunity on 21 May 2021 to recent results and ongoing actions to hold the Syrian regime accountable for crimes committed in Syria, including for the use of torture and chemical weapons against its civilians. To mark the day, a dedicated video was produced,

highlighting different perspectives on the work done by the EU and Member States to ensure accountability.

In addition to European Commissioner Didier Reynders and Eurojust President Ladislav Hamran, victims, prosecutors, national representatives and members of civil society presented challenges and successes of current and future trials in national courts, addressed victims' expectations, and explained why justice matters. This annual event offers a platform to raise awareness on the most heinous crimes and the importance of Member State-led investigations and prosecutions – in particular against suspects who are present or reside in the European Union – in preventing impunity.



“ On this special day, I want to congratulate the Genocide Network on its excellent work. This shows Eurojust’s role is clearly paying off. Together, we must continue to act and join forces. In the next years, the Commission will reinforce the Agency’s ability to cooperate with new partners in the Middle East. We will continue working on improving cross-border cooperation and ending impunity. ”

**Didier Reynders**, European Commissioner for Justice, on the occasion of the 6th EU Day Against Impunity for Genocide, Crimes against Humanity and War Crimes, organised by the Genocide Network Secretariat and Eurojust.

Prosecution of sanctions violations was another key topic addressed by the Genocide Network in 2021. Sanctions, embargos and restrictive measures are political trade restrictions imposed by the United Nations or the European Union. The measures target governments, organised military or paramilitary groups, commercial entities and individuals whose behaviour contravenes international law and present specific threats, such as cyberattacks, proliferation of chemical weapons, terrorism, human rights violations and abuses. Investigating and prosecuting such violations could prove critical in the overall fight against impunity for core international crimes, in particular where corporate actors are involved. Legislation of all EU Member States include administrative or criminal penalties for such violations, though very few individuals or legal persons are effectively held accountable.

A recent [report](#) published by the Genocide Network demonstrates that prosecuting sanctions violations may provide an alternative or additional path towards accountability for core international crimes. It can assist in establishing a link or nexus needed in some countries for core international crimes proceedings to be initiated under the universal or extraterritorial jurisdiction principle. Looking into sanctions violations may also provide preliminary evidence for wider investigations leading to other forms of interlinked criminality, such as terrorism or illegal trade. For these reasons,

sanctions monitoring and the adequate penalisation of sanctions violations should be fully integrated into EU Member States and practitioners' overall strategies to fight against impunity.

In 2021, the Genocide Network continued to contribute to the professional development of judicial practitioners. In March 2021, the Network held a [webinar hosted by CEPOL](#), the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training, on the cumulative prosecution of foreign terrorist fighters. The webinar highlighted the possibilities for law enforcement agencies and judicial authorities to investigate and cumulatively prosecute foreign terrorist fighters for core international crimes and terrorism-related offences.

Moreover, in June 2021, the Genocide Network Secretariat and EJTN held a joint webinar on the prosecution of core international crime cases in Europe, directed at EU judges and prosecutors. The webinar presented practical issues and evidentiary challenges, highlighting instruments of judicial cooperation available to practitioners. In November 2021, the Genocide Network also published the latest update of its [Case Law Compendium](#) including new convictions rendered by EU jurisdictions against foreign terrorist fighters on cumulative charges.

## 16.2 Case example illustrating Eurojust's contribution to the fight against impunity



**#JusticeDone: Syrian official sentenced to life for crimes against humanity with support of joint investigation team assisted by Eurojust**



**EUROJUST**



**JUSTICE DONE:** In a landmark judgement on 13 January 2022, the German Higher Regional Court of Koblenz sentenced a former high-ranking Syrian official to life imprisonment for his involvement in crimes against humanity. In 2021, an associate of the high-ranking official was sentenced by the same court to four and a half years' imprisonment for crimes against humanity and torture.

**CRIME:** In 2011 and 2012, an official of the Syrian intelligence services caused the death of 27 members of the opposition to the regime, as a result of torture and inhumane conditions of imprisonment.

**ACTION:** The Syrian official was arrested in February 2019 in Germany together with his associate, and an indictment was filed against both defendants in October 2019. This was followed in August 2020 by the start of the trials – the first worldwide to address widespread and systematic torture committed by the Syrian regime.

**EUROJUST'S ROLE:** In cooperation with national investigators and prosecutors working on the case, a German-French JIT was set up with the support of Eurojust and the Genocide Network in 2018. Eurojust and the Genocide Network supported the investigations and prosecution by providing long-term analytical assistance and the organisation of regular coordination meetings to enable swift judicial cooperation between the German and French authorities.

# 17. Environmental crime



**ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME  
CASES IN 2021**

**62 CASES**  
*(21 new cases,  
41 ongoing from previous years)*

**6  
JOINT INVESTIGATION TEAMS**  
*(1 new JIT, 5 ongoing JITs)*

**11  
CASE-SPECIFIC  
COORDINATION MEETINGS**

**1  
COORDINATED ACTION DAY**

Environmental crimes pose a serious, multidimensional challenge to the European Union and its citizens. Such crimes impact the natural environment, generating increasing levels of pollution, degradation of wildlife and the reduction of biodiversity. Moreover, they disturb the ecological balance, harm entire ecosystems and pose a threat to human health. Often international by nature, these crimes are carried out in connection with other criminal activities, all generating substantial illegal profits. However, environmental crimes are frequently considered secondary to the crimes they are interlinked with and, as a result, the relevant authorities rarely prioritise them.

Eurojust contributes to cracking down on environmental crime by providing support at the judicial level to cross-border operational activities and to targeted training and capacity building for judicial practitioners.

## 17.1 Latest developments

Issued in January 2021, the [Report on Eurojust’s Casework on Environmental Crime](#) proposes solutions to improve judicial cooperation and increase the number of environmental crime cases coordinated at EU level. By virtue of its mandate, Eurojust is uniquely placed to develop institutional knowledge of recurring legal and practical challenges and solutions that can improve the effectiveness of international judicial cooperation on environmental crime cases.

Despite the EU legislation to regulate the legal trade of wildlife and waste and the complementary EU Action Plans, inspection, law enforcement and judicial authorities often lack the capacity and resources to effectively detect,

investigate and prosecute environmental crime. Sanctions imposed are not dissuasive enough, and the exchange of information is insufficient, particularly between administrative authorities and law enforcement bodies within and across Member States. In response to these challenges, and in line with the [EU Strategy to Tackle Organised Crime 2021-2025](#), the [EU Environmental Crime Directive](#) was reviewed in consultation with relevant experts, networks, businesses and agencies, including Eurojust. The [proposal for a Directive on the protection of the environment through criminal law replacing Directive 2008/99/EC](#) was published on 15 December 2021. Eurojust’s input was based on quantitative and qualitative analysis of the Agency’s experience in dealing with cross-border environmental crime cases, and on the recommendations set out in the Report on Eurojust’s Casework on Environmental Crime.



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To reflect the prominence and rising threat of this crime type, and in support of the European Green Deal, the EU Justice and Home Affairs Agencies (JHA) Network, dedicated its 2021 work programme to environmental protection and digitalisation. In a series of events throughout the year, the agencies discussed the impact of climate change on migration and organised crime, reviewed EU and international efforts in fighting this crime area, and exchanged ideas about how to make their administrations carbon-neutral and more digitally efficient. These reflections were collected in the [Joint Paper on the Fight Against Environmental Crime](#), published in November 2021 and presenting the JHA community's key activities towards protecting the environment, and their commitment to work closely together in this key area in the years ahead.

To conclude the Network's activities dedicated to environmental crime in 2021, the heads of the nine JHA agencies signed a [Joint Statement on the EU Green Deal](#), reaffirming their commitment to contribute to a safer and cleaner environment by undertaking operational and administrative activities, within the limits of their respective mandates. In particular, they pledged to continue fighting environmental crimes (such as marine pollution and wildlife trafficking) and crimes that negatively affect the environment (such as drug production), especially within the framework of EMPACT.

In 2021, Eurojust contributed more than ever before to training seminars and webinars on combatting environmental crime, targeting judicial practitioners from the European Union and beyond, focusing on cross-border judicial cooperation in environmental crime cases.

Another way in which Eurojust contributed to the environmental crime field in 2021 was through its active participation in the [Environmental Compliance and Governance Forum](#), established by the European Commission. Based on its experience in facilitating cross-border coordination and cooperation in environmental crime investigations and prosecutions, Eurojust provided

input to the guidance on [combatting environmental crime and related infringements](#), produced under Action 4 of the Commission's Action Plan on Environmental Compliance and Governance.

## 17.2 Case examples illustrating Eurojust's work on environmental crime



### Massive metal waste fraud in Italy halted with Eurojust support



**CRIME:** Between 2018 and 2021, more than 18 000 tonnes of metal waste was illegally sold and processed in regularly operating foundries, leading to health risks and disturbed market competition for legally operating businesses. Fake certificates, declarations and invoices provided by fictitious companies in Slovakia, Hungary, Turkey, Egypt, Pakistan, China and Malaysia enabled the purchase of the metal 'off the books'.

**ACTION:** In March 2021, an action day involving 60 searches in Slovakia and Hungary took place to disrupt years of environmental crime and EUR 130 million worth of waste metal fraud.

**RESULT:** 15 suspects were arrested in Italy and Slovakia for the illegal trafficking of metal waste, money laundering and the issuance of fake invoices and documents. Computer equipment, electronic devices and documents were seized.

**EUROJUST'S ROLE:** Eurojust coordinated the action day, assisted with the execution of EIOs in Hungary and Slovakia and provided support for the arrest of one suspect in Slovakia.



# #JusticeDone



## Sentences handed down in fipronil egg contamination case



**4 June 2021** – The **Belgian court of Antwerp** sentences three suspects to prison sentences ranging from one year effective to 18 months suspended for endangering public health, and orders the implicated individuals and companies to pay EUR 22.8 million to the victims.

**April 2021** – Two primary suspects are indicted by the **Dutch court of Overijssel** and sentenced to one year's imprisonment each for the illegal sale of fipronil to poultry farms. Two companies are given a conditional conviction to pay large fines, and the four guilty parties are ordered to pay back their unlawfully obtained gains to the Dutch State.



**October 2017–April 2019** – A further **six coordination meetings** are held at Eurojust to follow up on the results of the action day, continue exchanging information and evidence, coordinate the parallel investigations and media relations, and agree on a prosecution strategy.

Eurojust provides a formal legal opinion on a potential *ne bis in idem* issue in the Belgian and Italian criminal proceedings. With the support of Eurojust, cross-border cooperation takes place between all countries concerned.



**10 August 2017** – During a **joint action day** supported by a coordination centre at Eurojust, **coordinated searches** and **arrests** take place. The Dutch-Belgian JIT continues to work together during the prosecutorial phase and includes a financial investigation that leads to the **tracing and seizure of assets**.



**3 August 2017** – An **initial coordination meeting** is held at Eurojust to discuss and agree on a common investigation strategy, exchange initial information and evidence, prepare an action day and develop a common media strategy. The meeting also leads to the swift creation and funding of a **joint investigation team (JIT)** between the Belgian and Dutch authorities, with involvement of Eurojust and Europol.



The National Desks of **the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and Italy** at Eurojust open linked cases to provide operational and legal assistance to the investigations.



**July 2017** – Following the discovery of large quantities of chicken eggs and egg products contaminated with the insecticide fipronil, **parallel criminal investigations** are initiated in **the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and Italy**.



## 18. Intellectual property crime

Often perceived as a victimless crime, intellectual property crime (IPC) has serious and far-reaching implications for public health and safety, as well as for governments, businesses and economies. The COVID-19 pandemic has shed light on the threat posed by this crime and the nefarious consequences resulting from the illegal manufacturing and distribution of fake face masks, personal protective equipment and COVID-related medicines and vaccines.

Cases supported by Eurojust have also revealed that IPC is increasingly linked to other forms of criminality, including corruption, tax fraud, cybercrime and money laundering. The fight against IPC therefore requires a coordinated and multidisciplinary response to help ensure the enforcement of IP rights across the European Union, while creating an environment where creativity and innovation are promoted and protected, and businesses and economies can thrive.

### 18.1 Latest developments



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To strengthen the enforcement of IP rights at EU level, Eurojust and the EUIPO signed a Service Level Agreement in March 2021 that will help to boost cooperation in this area and ensure a more coherent and robust response against IP infringements. The Agreement is in force for a four-year period (2021-2024) and provides Eurojust with extra

funding to support the development and implementation of its IPC project.

This novel project aims to enhance judicial action against counterfeiting and piracy – by supporting Member States with complex cross-border IPC investigations – and to contribute to the work of the EUIPO in the area of IP infringements. To this end, the project focuses on building, promoting and exchanging knowledge, tools and expertise, as well as on awareness-raising and the provision of enhanced operational support to IPC-specific coordination meetings and JITs.

In 2022, Eurojust will expand its work in this area by developing and disseminating IPC-specific knowledge, supporting EUIPO's research efforts, trainings and awareness-raising sessions, and drafting best practice reports. As a participant in the new EMPACT sub-Priority 'Intellectual property (IP) crime, Counterfeiting of goods and currencies', Eurojust is eager to work alongside the Member States' judicial and law enforcement authorities, as well as partners such as Europol and EUIPO, to make important strides in the fight against IP infringements in the European Union.

### 18.2 Case example illustrating Eurojust's work on IPC

See page 66.



## Crackdown on the illegal streaming of football matches



**9 February 2021** – In coordinated raids, supported by Eurojust and Europol, **four suspects are arrested** in Spain and Andorra. Several **properties are searched, equipment is seized**, and **servers and websites implicated in the scam are taken down or placed under investigation** in Spain, Portugal and the Czech Republic. The illegal streaming service **Mobdro is shut down**.

The coordinated actions are successfully organised online via a video link made available to all law enforcement teams and prosecutors/investigative judges involved.



**January 2021** – A **Eurojust case is opened** at the request of the Spanish authorities, to assist with the transmission of **European Investigation Orders** to **Portugal** and the **Czech Republic**, and a request for **mutual legal assistance** to the **Principality of Andorra**. Preparations are made for a coordinated operation.



**2018 and 2019**– Spanish authorities launch separate investigations into the illegal streaming of football matches and other copyrighted audiovisual content via the Mobdro mobile application.

The investigations follow complaints made by Spain's *La Liga*, the English Premier League and the international online antipiracy body Alliance for Creativity and Entertainment (ACE) that the Mobdro application is being used by millions of users worldwide to watch games via servers and platforms that illegally tap into legally operating audiovisual and streaming services.



*Audiovisual piracy via illegal transmission of television and streaming signals has risen sharply in recent years, with Eurojust coordinating action days at the request of various national authorities since 2019.*

## 19. Digitalisation of justice

Eurojust's role in the larger system of cross-border judicial cooperation continues to expand as the European Union works to use new digital technologies to improve the efficiency and functioning of justice systems. 2021 was a year to lay solid foundations for several larger projects in this field.

### 19.1 Preparations for a new Case Management System for Eurojust

The Communication on Digitalisation of Justice in the European Union, issued by the Commission in December 2020, endorsed the conclusions of the Digital Criminal Justice Study that the modernisation of Eurojust's Case Management System is essential for the wider plans on digitalisation of justice in the European Union. Following the recommendation included in the Digital Criminal Justice Study Report, the market research for the selection of the IT tool started in 2021; the selection will be completed by mid-2022.

The Commission supported Eurojust with additional funding of EUR 9.5 million in 2021, which will partially cover the costs of implementing the new CMS.

### 19.2 Link detection and hit/no-hit connections

In the future, the link detection services of Eurojust will be enhanced, as the Agency will have hit/no-hit connections in place with the databases of Europol and the EPPO. In 2021 and the coming years, before the new Eurojust CMS is in place, ongoing preparatory work will continue to take place with both partners to ensure that once the technical connections exist, there are clear procedures in place to oversee the use of the connections.

With Europol, there is a hit/no-hit pilot planned to start in 2022; with the EPPO the focus of the work done in 2021 was on using the EPPO box tool. Eurojust is also a member of a European Commission Task Force on the hit/no-hit system.

### 19.3 Preparing for connections to e-EDES and ECRIS-TCN

2021 also saw preparatory work for establishing Eurojust's connections to and possible future use of the European Commission's e-Evidence Digital Exchange System that will allow electronic exchange of EIOs. Member States will start using the system in 2022.

In addition, Eurojust prepared for its roles in accessing the new large-scale IT system ECRIS-TCN being developed by eu-LISA. Eurojust will be able to access criminal records that Member States hold of third country nationals and will serve as a Contact Point for third countries and international organisations.

Establishing access for Eurojust to ECRIS-TCN, as well as the Interoperability architecture that will strengthen the Justice and Home Affairs domain, is the foundation of the three-year [Cooperation Plan](#) signed in October 2021 by Eurojust and eu-LISA. It also covers future cooperation in the context of the Digital Criminal Justice initiative and e-CODEX, a cross-border judicial tool that will operate e-EDES.

### 19.4 Commission proposals for Security and Justice in the Digital World

On 1 December 2021, the European Commission adopted [several initiatives to digitalise EU justice systems](#). The package of legislative initiatives was prepared based on consultation with Eurojust; and would, if adopted, have an enormous impact on how well Eurojust can support cross-border judicial cooperation.

The package consists of three proposals:

- I. Digitalisation of cross-border judicial cooperation:** aiming to improve access to justice and the efficiency of cross-border judicial cooperation by ensuring the availability and use of electronic means of communication; to facilitate the participation of parties to cross-border proceedings through videoconference; and better acceptance of electronic documents and signatures.

**II. Digital information exchange in cross-border terrorism cases** with a goal of strengthening the obligation to share information with Eurojust in terrorism cases, digitalising the data exchange between Eurojust and the Member States' authorities and providing secure communication channels as well as modernising the Eurojust CMS including developments to the Counter-Terrorism Register.

**III. Development of the JITs Collaboration Platform**, which would allow JITs to share information and evidence more easily and securely and to communicate more safely with each other in order to jointly manage their operations.

“ *The European Commission’s package for Security and Justice in the Digital World brings judicial cooperation to 21st century standards. The Judicial Counter-Terrorism Register will boost cross-border information exchange in ongoing terrorism cases, resulting in better coordination between the EU Member States. The Joint Investigation Teams Collaboration Platform, the first of its kind in the world, is a game-changer in joint investigations, leading to instant evidence and information exchange across borders. For all these reasons, I am convinced that, if approved, these proposals would lead to important changes for Eurojust and prosecutors who keep our societies safe.* ”

Ladislav Hamran, Eurojust President

## 20. Governance and Agency management

### Efficient resource allocation and decision-making

As one of the final steps in bringing Eurojust's internal working methods fully in line with the Eurojust Regulation, in 2021 the College adopted decisions on workflows and College Working Groups to address the methods Eurojust uses to prioritise projects, to ensure transparency in internal decision-making and to solidify the role of the Executive Board in these processes. The new internal rules also ensure that powers of the College and the national authorities are safeguarded in Eurojust governance and make it possible to use resources wisely.

### Protecting personal data

Working on the frontline of criminal investigations and prosecutions, Eurojust comes into regular contact with operational personal data. The Agency also processes various categories of administrative personal data as part of its daily activities. By applying the highest standards in data protection, Eurojust ensures the fundamental rights of all individuals.

In October 2021, a team from the EDPS performed an audit of Eurojust for the first time. The extensive audit focused on operational workflows of Eurojust and found that the Agency is compliant with the legislative framework and with certain necessary improvements that will be brought about by the eventual launch of the new CMS.

### Strategic planning: MAS 2022-2024

On 12 October, the College approved Eurojust's Multi-Annual Strategy for 2022-2024.

The MAS defines Eurojust's mission and vision for the period ahead and sets out five high-level objectives for future work.



### Amended rules on access to documents

In December 2021, the College approved amendments to the Eurojust rules on access to documents. The changes will make the process of deciding on requests for access to documents more streamlined and define the roles and tasks in the process.

### Workflows with EPPO

Based on the Working Arrangement concluded between Eurojust and the EPPO, the agendas of the Executive Board meetings have been shared with the EPPO since September 2021, and the EPPO was invited to attend a College meeting.

### Adoption and implementation of the anti-fraud strategy 2021-2024

Eurojust adopted a new anti-fraud strategy on 21 June 2021 after conducting a fraud-risk assessment in the first half of 2021, which confirmed that the risk of fraud in the Agency remains relatively low.

The strategy includes five objectives:

1. To continue enhancing fraud awareness through efficient and targeted communication.
2. To continue raising awareness on ethics and integrity.
3. To continue raising awareness on internal procedures for reporting and handling potential fraud cases.
4. To focus on mitigating the risk of fraud in identified risk areas of the Agency.
5. To identify process improvements.

These five objectives translate into concrete actions, which will be enforced throughout the years. These actions include organising refresher training courses

on ethics, integrity and whistle-blowing, as well as improving policies/procedures to tackle residual risks. Eurojust seeks to implement the strategy for the 2021-2024 period.

## Budget

Eurojust's 2021 budget was initially approved at EUR 43.8 million. During the final quarter of the year, the Commission approved two internal transfers of additional commitment appropriations to Eurojust for commencing the development of its new CMS. Two budget amendments in October and December 2021 enabled the Agency to incorporate the respective additional amounts of EUR 7 million and EUR 2.5 million, increasing its 2021 budget to EUR 53.3 million.

Despite the inevitable impact of COVID-19 measures on Eurojust's activities, the Agency implemented 99.97% of its budget for 2021. Capitalising on the efficiency opportunities and surpluses created by the pandemic, the Agency continued its investments in its ICT and physical infrastructure to upgrade it and better support the remote working arrangements, and it also funded preparatory activities for the new CMS.

Furthermore, in 2021 Eurojust used the EUR 1 million contribution of the Kingdom of Denmark to recruit additional contract staff to cover specific high-priority operational needs.

In addition, the Agency coordinated and supported a number of operational projects based on external funding agreements, namely:

- ▶ The EuroMed Justice programme, with a budget of EUR 5 million for 2020-2023;
- ▶ The SIRIUS project, with a budget of EUR 1.3 million for 2021-2024; and
- ▶ The EUIPO enhanced cooperation actions, with a budget of EUR 0.75 million for 2021-2024.

## Eurojust post-holders and staff

By the end of 2021, Eurojust had 337 post-holders, including 26 National Members, assisted by 57 Deputies and Assistants seconded from the judicial authorities of the Member States to Eurojust, performing the core operational activities and together forming the College of Eurojust, which also performs the function of Management Board.

In 2021, the College welcomed two new National Members:

- ▶ for Romania, Daniela Buruiana
- ▶ for Cyprus, Zacharias Symeou

237 staff members (Temporary Agents and Contract Agents) and 17 Seconded National Experts (SNEs) worked in Eurojust's Administration, reporting to the Administrative Director. 27 new staff members and 9 SNEs were recruited during the year.

## An inclusive workplace

Eurojust strives to be an inclusive and diverse workplace and places strong emphasis on raising awareness of these values. A diversity and inclusion campaign is planned to enable a shared understanding of the best practices in this field.

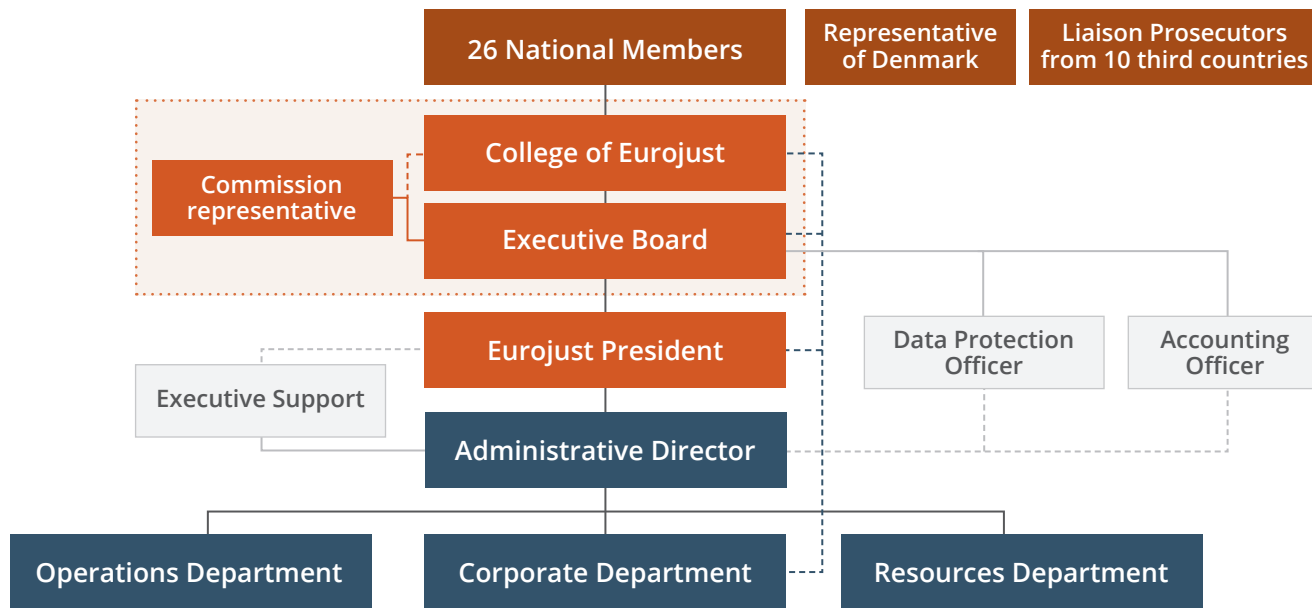
*“ This is the first working place in my whole career where I feel not only accepted or tolerated but also very welcome. When I came into the building and met my colleagues from all over Europe, they gave me the impression that I belong with them – I am part of the Eurojust family. ”*

Silke Schönfleisch-Backofen, Assistant to the National Member for Germany at the virtual Open Day for Eurojust in October 2021

## Additional information

The Consolidated Annual Activity Report (CAAR) provides a detailed overview of all activities, as included in the Eurojust Work Programme, budget execution and staffing policies, as well as the implementation of internal controls and risk management. The 2021 CAAR and the Eurojust College Assessment thereof will be submitted to the budgetary authority by 1 July 2022.

## Eurojust's organisational structure in 2021





# Data Annex

## Overview of cases in 2021 involving Member State National Desks

MEMBER STATE National Desk	Cases initiated by the National Desk				Participation in cases initiated by other Desks		Participation in joint activities/meetings	
	New in 2021	Number of countries involved		Ongoing from previous years	New in 2021	Ongoing from previous years	Coordination meetings	Joint investiga- tion teams
		2	3 or more					
Belgium	88	70	18	120	299	431	84	27
Bulgaria	146	143	3	127	224	229	22	7
Czech Republic	118	93	25	194	121	200	31	35
Germany	748	681	67	469	652	884	128	55
Estonia	48	34	14	42	63	86	13	9
Ireland	73	70	3	90	109	162	10	5
Greece	254	251	3	566	120	191	21	4
Spain	264	236	28	165	554	757	72	8
France	258	168	90	550	767	674	129	51
Croatia	50	46	4	21	94	124	2	-
Italy	516	423	93	534	391	573	105	53
Cyprus	62	61	1	45	74	203	3	1
Latvia	52	41	11	74	62	131	25	9
Lithuania	88	71	17	64	145	135	38	10
Luxembourg	26	24	2	50	84	159	2	-
Hungary	267	232	35	229	189	222	18	16
Malta	16	14	2	39	87	147	5	1
Netherlands	103	89	14	267	401	510	90	21
Austria	157	141	16	170	198	256	17	10
Poland	193	176	17	274	338	454	41	23

Portugal	139	114	25	92	120	177	9	1
Romania	230	197	33	178	290	292	64	46
Slovenia	203	168	35	133	72	100	9	6
Slovakia	110	105	5	123	108	194	11	20
Finland	80	70	10	58	54	95	15	11
Sweden	198	162	36	263	106	164	53	26
Denmark	28	28	-	50	70	141	7	8
TOTAL	4515	3908	607	4987	*	*	*	*

\* These columns cannot be summed up, since more than one National Desk can be requested to participate in a single case, and coordination meetings and JITs are often co-organised.

## Overview of cases in 2021 involving Liaison Prosecutors

LIAISON PROSECUTOR	Cases initiated by the Liaison Prosecutor				Participation in cases initiated by other Desks		Participation in joint activities/meetings	
	New in 2021	Number of countries involved		Ongoing from previous years	New in 2021	Ongoing from previous years	Coordination meetings	Joint investigation teams
		2	3 or more					
Albania	21	21	-	-	30	58	19	10
Georgia	2	1	1	2	21	28	7	1
Montenegro	3	3	-	12	14	24	2	-
North Macedonia	8	7	1	11	24	34	3	-
Norway	60	54	6	101	42	78	21	12
Serbia	20	17	3	4	61	66	10	3
Switzerland	80	70	10	134	139	321	29	17
Ukraine	23	21	2	41	58	104	39	14
United Kingdom	71	63	8	-	324	724	64	19
United States	2	2	-	3	45	115	34	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>*</b>

\* These columns cannot be summed up, since more than one National Desk can be requested to participate in a single case, and coordination meetings and JITs are often co-organised.

## Casework involving EIOs and EAWs in 2021














Judicial tools	New cases in 2021	Ongoing from previous years	Total
European Investigation Order (EIO)	2 309	1 953	4 262
European Arrest Warrant (EAW)	480	713	1 193




## Casework, meetings and joint activities in the priority crime areas, 2018-2021

Crime types	Cases Sum of new cases and ongoing cases from previous years *				Coordination meetings				Joint investigation teams Sum of newly established JITs and ongoing JITs from previous years*				Coordination centres / action days			
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2018	2019	2020	2021	2018	2019	2020	2021	2018	2019	2020	2021
SWINDLING AND FRAUD	1924	2263	2654	3133	87	112	91	111	51	66	72	73	7	12	8	11
MONEY LAUNDERING	1042	1266	1471	1668	94	138	101	115	50	75	71	61	6	6	7	5
DRUG TRAFFICKING	896	1003	1169	1602	78	80	87	107	42	51	50	48	-	2	4	1
MOBILE ORGANISED CRIME GROUPS	542	599	723	800	26	20	19	19	15	17	14	14	1	2	1	1
CYBERCRIME	218	247	334	398	28	34	45	66	10	17	21	16	2	3	1	5
TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS	343	399	397	352	43	54	56	46	56	61	50	45	-	4	2	3
CORRUPTION	222	251	287	326	19	14	8	13	6	5	7	11	-	-	-	-
MIGRANT SMUGGLING	157	187	217	292	17	24	21	25	12	12	12	11	3	2	2	-
CRIMES AGAINST THE FINANCIAL INTERESTS OF THE EU (PIF CRIMES)	77	161	217	252	3	12	12	16	5	6	6	7	-	2	2	3
TERRORISM	190	222	217	221	20	24	12	9	12	8	7	9	-	-	-	-
ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME	38	41	51	62	6	8	6	11	4	6	6	6	-	1	-	1
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY CRIME	19	23	27	31	1	3	3	-	2	2	2	1	-	1	2	-
CORE INTERNATIONAL CRIMES	-	-	12	16	-	-	2	6	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-

\* The data contained in this table were extracted from Eurojust's Case Management System in January 2022. Due to the ongoing nature of cases, possible discrepancies with previously reported numbers may exist, and statistics may be updated in the future.

## Cases by crime type in 2021

Crime type	New	Ongoing <sup>1</sup>	Total	Projection <sup>2</sup>
SWINDLING AND FRAUD	1 453	1 680	3133	
MONEY LAUNDERING	648	1 020	1668	
DRUG TRAFFICKING	869	733	1602	
MOBILE ORGANISED CRIME GROUPS (MOCG) <sup>3</sup>	390	410	800	
CYBERCRIME	188	210	398	
TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS	140	212	352	
CORRUPTION	112	214	326	
MIGRANT SMUGGLING	170	122	392	
PIF CRIMES <sup>4</sup>	124	128	252	
TERRORISM	80	141	221	
ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME	21	41	62	
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY CRIME	14	17	31	
CORE INTERNATIONAL CRIMES	7	9	16	

 Upward trend    No major shift expected    Downward trend

<sup>1</sup> As of January 2021. Due to the ongoing nature of the cases, the figures in this column can change after the reporting period.

<sup>2</sup> The projection for 2022-2024 of the need for judicial cooperation in these crime areas is based on casework trends over the previous 5 years.

<sup>3</sup> Itinerant criminal networks operating across the European Union, usually specialised in crime areas such as burglary, robbery of armoured vehicles, and metal theft.

<sup>4</sup> Crimes against the financial interests of the European Union for which Eurojust retains competence.

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**Eurojust**, Johan de Wittlaan 9, 2517 JR The Hague, Netherlands  
Phone: +31 70 412 5000 - E-mail: [info@eurojust.europa.eu](mailto:info@eurojust.europa.eu) - Website: [www.eurojust.europa.eu](http://www.eurojust.europa.eu)

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