

Eurojust—Written Evidence (PMS0011)

The current crisis caused by the unprecedented number of migrants seeking asylum in the European Union demonstrates the need for Eurojust to increase its support to Member States investigating and prosecuting illegal immigrant smuggling networks. New and intensified tasks (e.g. mission, tactical meetings, coordination meetings) require additional manpower and budget.

Additional resources would support Eurojust specifically in its strategic and operational activities in the field of illegal immigration smuggling, and ensure proper implementation of all the points in the EU Action Plan against migrant smuggling that require follow-up actions by Eurojust.

Improving gathering and sharing of information

Article 3(1)(c) of the Council Decision on Eurojust provides that, in the context of investigations and prosecutions concerning two or more Member States, Eurojust shall ‘support otherwise the competent authorities of the Member States in order to render their investigations and prosecutions more effective’.

Article 13 of the Council Decision on Eurojust sets forth an obligation of Member States to report to Eurojust cases of serious cross-border crime, including attacks on information systems. Eurojust has set up a Task Force on Cybercrime, consisting of College members and Administration, which enhances expertise in cybercrime matters at Eurojust.

Eurojust is currently considering supporting the creation of a network of specialist cybercrime prosecutors to respond to the needs of the national authorities in the Member States. The development of the aforementioned knowledge base could potentially fall within the mandate of Eurojust and would be of relevance to practitioners in the Member States.

Eurojust’s role in the hotspot approach

The Commission has consulted with Eurojust when preparing the concept paper on the hotspot approach and has invited Eurojust to ‘consider’ deploying staff on the ground, depending on the situation and based on a case-by-case assessment.

Eurojust has been invited to participate in the Operational Frontex Regional Team in Catania and has already agreed to support Italy in facilitating mutual legal assistance requests and in coordinating between Member States’ national authorities, also in cases involving third countries. One Italian prosecutor from the National Antimafia and Antiterrorism Directorate (DNA) is Eurojust’s contact point and will be regularly present at the hotspot.

Eurojust has also been involved by the Commission in the discussions to set up a hotspot in Greece. A Greek prosecutor from the Court of Appeals of Piraeus has been appointed as Eurojust’s contact point at the hotspot.

Accordingly, Eurojust will continue supporting frontline, transit and destinations Member States and coordinate its efforts with relevant EU Agencies. Eurojust will closely monitor the developments and consider further assistance in accordance with current circumstances and needs.

Cooperation with JHA agencies in the fight against migrant smuggling

The College of Eurojust has appointed a contact point for illegal immigrant smuggling to participate in the Contact Group of EU Agencies on Migrant Smuggling.

Eurojust maintains cooperative relations with the main JHA partners, including, Europol, the EJM, and Frontex.

Eurojust attends the JOT MARE and JOT COMPASS meetings to ensure proper judicial follow-up of Europol's findings.

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