



Parliament of Romania

Delegation to the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group on Europol (JPSG)

Bucharest, 17 September 2019

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

I am pleased to inform you that the 111th meeting of the Management Board (MB) of Europol took place in Bucharest, on 23 and 24 May 2019, under the auspices of the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. As you are already aware, at the end of last year, the MB decided that a representative of the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group on Europol (JPSG) would be invited to attend two meetings per year, namely one meeting per semester, under the respective Presidency of the EU Council.

Following the outcome of the meeting of the (JPSG) that took place in Bucharest on 25 February 2019, and in the context of the pre-election commitments of Mr Co-Chair Claude Moraes, it was agreed that I would attend the MB meeting of 23 May 2019 in my capacity of Co-chair of JPSG.

My participation to the MB meeting took place according to the provisions of Article 14 of the Europol Regulation and Article 5 of JPSG Rules of procedure (RoP).

It is worth noting that the MB had increased the number of the agenda items attended by the JPSG representative.

As I have already informed all the JPSG delegations prior to the meeting, the debate focused on five important topics: the implementation of the Europol Strategy 2020+; Europol's Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2018; the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027; the way forward for the renewed External Strategy and, in connection to the latter, Europol's support to the EU candidate and neighbouring countries. Last but not least, the main scrutiny tools of JPSG in relation to Europol, with a focus on the written questions, and the possibilities to make better use of these instruments were discussed.

In my opening speech I made a brief overview of the forth meeting of the JPSG that took place in Bucharest and I stressed the willingness of JPSG to establish a constructive and trustworthy long-time cooperation relation with Europol,

seen also as a modality to strengthen Europol's legitimacy and accountability to the citizens. In the same time, through a broad understanding of Europol's activities, the JPSG could contribute to achieving the fifth strategic priority of Europol, towards Agency's better visibility, by promoting a positive image among the citizens and the national authorities.

Bearing in mind that the JPSG is a relatively young body and there is still untapped potential in relation to Europol, we invited the Agency to continue the positive trend of consulting JPSG on key matters and documents.

In my speech, I stressed the need to increase the dialogue between JPSG and Europol and on the benefits that the Agency could achieve by consulting in advance the national parliaments and the European Parliament on its draft documents. That is how the Agency could adjust to the needs of the EU as a whole and in broader terms, it could improve the effectiveness of the activity that the both parties are performing.

In my interventions, I underlined also that the growing number of written questions sent by JPSG members to Europol shown the increasing importance placed on these scrutiny tools by members of parliaments, and their ability to build bridges between JPSG and Europol.

In her speech, the Executive Director of Europol, Ms Catherine De Bolle, highlighted that she delivered the main proposals for organizational changes on Europol according to the **Strategy 2020+**. The presentation included a clear articulation of the changes that, in broad terms, referred to: maximising existing resources and centralising the expertise, ensure that human and financial resources are used in an optimal manner, an improved delivery of services to Member States (MS), overcoming the budgetary existing challenges and driving the organization forward, fast response to the new demands of MS and last but not least, special focus on information management and innovation.

According to the Executive Director, the future efforts will focus on five pivotal points: (1) ensuring the implementation of the Strategy; (2) abolishing the existent redundancies; (3) support for MS remain at the centre of the attention of Europol; (4) responding to the changing crime environment; (5) being prepared for the future challenges.

Furthermore, Ms De Bolle has revealed that there was a clear demand from MS and other partners for extensive support in investigations concerning financial crimes. In this context, Europol has established the new European financial and economic crime centre (EFECC). The details of this new centre would be put forward for the JPSG consultations during the next meeting in September.

In order to adapt to the new economic environment, Europol will centralise all the existing internal financial functions in one single Financial Unit that will be established within the Capabilities Directorate.

During the 111th meeting, the Management Board adopted the **Consolidated Annual Activity Report (CAAR) 2018** and, according with Article 11 (1)(c)

of the Europol Regulation, the document has been transmitted to the JPSG on 7 June 2019.

In conjunction with the 2018 Activity Report, one important aspect to be analysed is Annex VI that contains the list of de-prioritised initiatives. Members of the Management Board expressed their concern regarding this list that contained significant actions for ensuring the efficiency of Europol in the actual changing environment. In addition, the actual budgetary proposal in the **Multi-Annual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021-2027** would result in reductions of the number of contractual Agents of Europol.

During the meeting it has been agreed that Europol should prepare and submit to the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission a letter that would contain all the concerns that had been raised by the MB, the prospects for Europol and the medium to long-term implications of the budgetary reductions. Moreover, Ms Executive Director has invited the JPSG members to bring to the attention of the respective national authorities (Ministries of Finance) this situation.

Concerning the external relations of Europol, the Executive Director gave an in-depth presentation of the objectives pursued within Europol external Strategy and of the elements that were taken into account in preparing the new external Strategy, which is to be completed in 2020.

Finally, I would like to state that I invited the MB to submit suggestions aimed at increasing the interaction between JPSG and Europol throughout the whole year, and not only during the two MB meetings per year attended by the JPSG representative. I emphasised that a constant dialogue would be highly appreciated from the part of JPSG members.

I remain at your disposal for any further details.

Oana - Consuela FLOREA
Co-Chair of JPSG

Head of the Romanian Delegation to the JPSG on Europol

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'F' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.