



The Hague, 13 April 2021

Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group Secretariat

To the attention of the JPSG Co-Chairs

By email only:

jpsg.libesecretariat@europarl.europa.eu

Europol answer to written question from the Member of the Parliament (MP) of Spain, Mr Gestoso de Miguel, to the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group (JPSG)

Dear Co-Chairs,

In accordance with Article 4.2 of the JPSG Rules of Procedure and Article 51 of the Europol Regulation, Europol would like to respond to the question raised by Mr Gestoso de Miguel MP and member of the Delegation of the *Cortes Generales* of Spain to the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group on Europol, received by Europol on 17 March 2021 as follows:

Written question

Explanatory statement

As a result of its unfailing defence of Spain and Freedom, VOX political party is being subject to attacks, threats, aggressions and persecution in all acts conducted within the framework of the current campaign for Catalan elections. This is not new, and as we have already reported and published, it has become the usual procedure in the electoral campaigns carried out in the Basque Autonomous Region and in Navarre.

These urban guerrilla attacks and street terrorism are perfectly organized and interrelated, and the Audiencia Nacional is investigating the activities of the CDR as terrorist organization. These totalitarian groups have made it impossible to hold campaign events with normality, since due to their actions attending a VOX event has become a heroic act. On top of this, police officers of the autonomous region of Catalonia themselves have reported and published in the media that they have been given political orders by the region's Minister for Home Affairs of the Regional Government of Catalonia in the sense of not adopting the necessary operational measures to put an end to this barbarity.

All these attacks and coercions stemming from anti-establishment groups of totalitarian ideology I have just described have been dealt with as an issue in Europol meetings.

Bearing all this mind, I hereby pose the following questions:

1) Question

Does Europol have any information on whether these guerrilla and street terrorism groups in Catalonia have any link with other international groups?

Europol's answer

Europol does not have ownership of data provided by Member States and TPs with an operational agreement. Hence, Member States and TPs, as the owners of the data, are the only ones entitled to provide such information.

2) Question

Does Europol have any knowledge on any eventual foreign interference in the electoral processes in these regions aimed at destabilizing our democracy through these radical groups?

Europol's answer

No information available.

3) Question

Does Europol have any information on their financing and that of their front-organizations?

Europol's answer

Please refer to the reply provided to Question 1.

4) Question

Does Europol have any knowledge on the links of these street guerrilla groups with the Catalan Government and the political parties supporting it?

Europol's answer

No information available.

5) Question

Which other groups within the EU (such as France or The Netherlands, for example) does Europol know to be using this same "modus operandi" and what are their goals?

Europol's answer

Europol closely monitors developments of all forms of violent extremism and terrorism in all EU Member States and produces bi-annual threat assessments as well as the annual EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT) on the basis of information provided by Member States. The TE-SAT 2021 is currently in the drafting stage and its public release will be launched through a presentation in the LIBE Committee, possibly in June 2021.

6) Question

Does Europol conduct any surveillance with regards to them? Are there databases to identify them and carry out this surveillance within the framework of European police cooperation?

Europol's answer

Europol is legally entitled to store and process personal related data, including non-religious inspired terrorism and violent extremist organizations and its actors, in accordance with its legal basis. Europol as an EU Agency does not have coercive powers.

I hope that this answer will prove satisfactory. Europol remains available for further clarifications.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'J. Ebner', with a stylized, flowing script.

Jürgen Ebner
Deputy Executive Director of Governance