



## **Eurojust: a one-stop shop for fighting serious cross-border crime in the European Union and beyond**

In recent years, organised crime groups have gone increasingly global. The European Union is strongly committed to fighting such crime based on the principles of justice and rule of law that define our democratic systems. Judicial and law enforcement authorities in the European Union, however, work within national legal systems, which govern what acts are considered to be crimes, which sanctions apply and how investigations and trials are conducted. To detect, investigate and effectively prosecute cross-border crimes, judicial and law enforcement authorities from different countries therefore need to work closely together.

Eurojust is the European Union's Judicial Cooperation Unit, an EU agency located in The Hague, Netherlands. Eurojust was started in 2002 and is fully focused on providing practical support to investigators, prosecutors and judges from different countries. Judicial practitioners come to Eurojust for support in a wide range of criminal investigations, including investigations of fraud, money laundering, corruption, trafficking in human beings, drug trafficking, migrant smuggling, cybercrime and terrorism.

In 2018, Eurojust provided support in 6 500 cases, an increase of almost 19 % compared to 2017.

### ***Practical support and services to prosecutors and joint investigation teams***

Eurojust offers a range of practical tools and services especially designed for prosecutors and investigators of serious crime, including:

- ***On-call coordination for urgent requests***, for example when a European Arrest Warrant needs to be quickly arranged to arrest a suspect in another country. On-call coordination is available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.
- ***Secure meeting facilities and financing*** for all actors involved in more complicated cases, to meet and share information, work out how to secure and exchange evidence, decide where a suspect should be prosecuted and when action in the field can best be taken to have maximum impact.
- ***The creation of a joint investigation team (JIT)***, which is a legal agreement between two or more countries to undertake joint transnational criminal investigations during a certain period of time, including the intensive and direct exchange of information. Eurojust provides financial and logistic support to JITs, as well as expertise and analysis.

- **Direct support during joint action days**, when several countries carry out simultaneous actions across the European Union to strike as effectively as possible against a criminal network. Eurojust has a coordination centre, a unique and highly secured meeting facility, where prosecutors can monitor the action, get information from the field in real time and adapt their tactics on the spot, including giving police the instruction to carry out searches, seize illegal assets, and arrest suspects.

### ***The organisation of Eurojust***

Each Member State appoints a prosecutor or judge to Eurojust, who becomes the National Member. National Members stay at Eurojust for at least four years, and together they form the College. The College meets every week to discuss cases and to steer the work of Eurojust.

Together with their teams, the National Members are the main contact points for judicial practitioners from their country of origin. Working under one roof, the National Member can easily liaise with the other National Desks and quickly get access to the right information. In addition, the National Members can draw on support from analysts employed directly by Eurojust.

The analysts at Eurojust also carry out horizontal analyses of the cases treated here, thus compiling best practice and unique expertise in the European Union in cases of organised crime. These insights serve as valuable feedback to EU legislators on how to best develop judicial cooperation tools at EU level.

### ***International cooperation***

Eurojust has built an international network of partners, creating easy access for prosecutors and judicial authorities in the European Union to their counterparts in other countries:

- **Cooperation agreements** have been concluded with eleven countries outside the European Union. The cooperation agreements allow judicial authorities throughout the European Union to exchange operational information with judicial and police authorities in the country concerned, and with other agencies and international organisations. The agreements also unlock the possibility for the partner States to take part in, and benefit from, all the practical cooperation tools offered through Eurojust. Agreements have been concluded with, among others, Europol, Norway, Iceland, the USA, OLAF, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Ukraine and Albania.
- Countries with a cooperation agreement may post a **Liaison Prosecutor** to Eurojust, who is permanently present and works side by side with the National Members. Liaison Prosecutors have been appointed for Norway, the USA, Switzerland, Montenegro, Ukraine and North Macedonia.
- Eurojust has established a network of **contact points** in judicial authorities in 49 countries all over the world.



***End 2019: Eurojust becomes the EU Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation***

Since 2002, Eurojust has grown tremendously, and so have its operational tasks and involvement in European judicial cooperation. More powers and a revised set of rules became necessary.

In July 2013, the European Commission submitted a proposal to the European Parliament and the Council for a new regulation on Eurojust to provide a ‘single and renovated legal framework for a new Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (Eurojust)’, the legal successor to Eurojust as established in 2002.

After extensive negotiations, in November 2018, the European Parliament and the Council adopted the Regulation on the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation. The new Regulation (EJR) will be applicable by the end of 2019. The EJR does not replace the successful core concept of supporting the national authorities in their investigations and prosecutions, and discovering links between cases. It confirms the current proactive role of Eurojust in its operational, strategic and tactical work.

The EJR establishes a new governance system, clarifies the relationship between Eurojust and the European Public Prosecutor’s Office, prescribes a new data protection regime, adopts new rules for Eurojust’s external relations, and strengthens the role of European and national Parliaments in the democratic oversight of Eurojust’s activities.