

Assessment of regional law enforcement training needs

Stay ahead of crime

CEPOL is an agency
of the European Union





European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training - CEPOL
1101 Budapest, Üllői út 114-116,
Email: info@cepol.europa.eu
www.cepol.europa.eu

REGIONAL TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT (2024)

DISCLAIMER

This is a CEPOL document. Its contents do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of CEPOL concerning the training needs listed and elaborated in this document. It reflects the opinions of law enforcement experts from the Member States and EU entities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The assistance of those who contributed to this document is hereby acknowledged with gratitude.

PDF ISBN 978-92-9211-469-5 DOI 10.2825/1325970 QR-01-25-001-EN-N

More information on the European Union is available on the internet (<http://europa.eu>).

© CEPOL, 2024

Photograph: © cover: iStock.com/Imaginima

Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

Table of contents

Charts, tables and images (*)	iii
Abbreviations	iii
Executive summary	5
Main findings	5
Way forward	6
Methodology.....	7
1. Background.....	9
1.1 Context and mandate of an ad-hoc regional training needs assessment	9
1.2 Data sources	10
1.3 Criticality in definition.....	10
2. Assessment of regional training needs.....	12
2.1 Introduction.....	12
2.2 Member State responses to EU-STNA mid-term review on regional training needs.....	12
2.3 Geographical distribution for most indicated regional training need per training area	13
2.4 Stakeholder consultation.....	16
2.5 Feedback by CEPOL training areas	18
2.6 MS input to the MB and CEPOL strategic orientation debate	18
3. Mapping existing bilateral and multilateral training cooperation between neighbouring countries..	19
3.1 Introduction.....	19
3.2 Roadmap for implementation	21
3.3 Survey to CEPOL National Units (CNU)	22
3.4 Bilateral and multilateral initiatives – geographical distribution	22
3.5 Other forms of training: mobility programmes, exchanges, webinars, etc.....	24
3.6 Level and format of training (all responses/training types).....	24
3.7 CEPOL’s role and involvement.....	26
3.8 Future training	27
4. CEPOL as a regional training provider	27
5. Summary of main findings.....	28
6. Recommendations	29
6.1 Addressing regional training needs.....	29
6.2 Other recommendations	31
7. ANNEX.....	33

Charts, tables and images (*)

[Chart 1: Most prominent regional training needs indicated by MS](#)

[Chart 2: Regional training needs indicated by stakeholders](#)

[Table 1: Training and CEPOL tasks resulting from Recommendation](#)

[Table 2: Regional training needs indicated in the EU-STNA mid-term review \(see Annex\)](#)

[Table 3: Regional training needs and regional training cooperation \(see Annex\)](#)

[Images 1-10: regional training needs by thematic and geographical area](#)

[Image 11: Mapping of bilateral and multilateral training programmes](#)

[Image 12: Other joint training – cooperation through mobility programmes and bilateral online training](#)

[Images 13-14: Level and format of training provided](#)

[Images 15-16 : CEPOL's possible support role](#)

*Note: The software used for the data-visualisation are desktop versions of excel and QGIS.
No online programme was used.

Abbreviations

CISA	Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement
CKC	CEPOL Knowledge Centre
CNU	CEPOL National Unit
CT	Counter-terrorism
DG HOME	European Commission / Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs
DVI	Disaster Victim Identification
EFE	European Firearms Experts
EMPACT	European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats
ENAA	European Network on the Administrative Approach tackling serious and organised crime
ENPPF	European Network for the Protection of Public Figures
EUAA	EU Agency for Asylum
eu-LISA	EU Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems
EU-STNA	(CEPOL) EU Strategic Training Needs Assessment
FRONTEX	European Border and Coast Guard Agency
ISF	Internal Security Fund
LE	Law Enforcement
LEEd	(CEPOL) Law Enforcement Education Platform
MB	Management Board
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MS	Member State(s)
MTIC	Missing Trader Intra-Community
MTR	(EU-STNA) mid-term review
OAP	Operational Action Plan
PCCC	Police and customs cooperation centres
THB	Trafficking in Human Beings
TISPOL	European Traffic Police Network
TNA	Training Needs Assessment
WB	Western Balkans

Country abbreviations

AT	Austria
BE	Belgium
BG	Bulgaria
CH	Switzerland
CY	Cyprus
CZ	Czechia
DE	Germany
EE	Estonia
EL	Greece
ES	Spain
FI	Finland
HR	Croatia
HU	Hungary
IE	Ireland
IS	Iceland
IT	Italy
LT	Lithuania
LU	Luxembourg
LV	Latvia
MT	Malta
NL	Netherlands
NO	Norway
PL	Poland
PT	Portugal
RO	Romania
SE	Sweden
SI	Slovenia
SK	Slovakia

Executive summary

The EU Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL) Regulation 2015/2219 foresees support to Member States (MS), upon their request, in the development of regional and bilateral cooperation through training. CEPOL's tasks include the provision of training modules, focusing on a specific: a) geographical region, b) area of criminal activity, or c) set of professional skills. CEPOL Strategy 2023-2027 defines that CEPOL will respond, with its training offer, to the regional needs and priorities of the Member States, in particular to unforeseen emerging needs. Under 'Objective 2.2. Develop new, innovative, specialised and multi-layered learning solutions', one of the tasks is to 'Facilitate a regional training response to MS Priorities and main threats' (2024-2027). In addition, Council Recommendation 2022/915 on operational law enforcement cooperation calls upon CEPOL's role to support MS in the implementation of the recommendation with regards to recommended actions in the field of training.

This report investigates the regional law enforcement training needs across the European Union by examining existing bilateral and multilateral cooperation between Member States and training needs at a strategic and operational level.

Main findings

Many western and southwestern Member States reported **having structured bilateral and multilateral cooperation**, including regular training activities. However, countries in the Balkans and northern Europe did not indicate such cooperation mechanisms. Consequently, training needs show an opposite trend: the highest demand comes from Balkan and Nordic countries, while western Member States report fewer regional needs.

Several Member States carry out bilateral and multilateral training initiatives covering neighbouring countries. The Middle European Police Academy, the Zonder Zorgen De Grens Over, Franchir La Frontière Sans Soucis and the G4 Initiatives all have regular training elements for law enforcement. Further types of cross-border training take the form of ad-hoc training programmes, mobility programmes and online webinars, as well as joint higher education products. Practitioner and advanced practitioner are the most frequent levels of training delivered.

The **key topics for requested regional training** are closely tied to new challenges, such as the war in Ukraine and migration crises in the South. The most frequently mentioned areas of concern are firearms, trafficking in human beings, drug trafficking, counter-terrorism, criminal finances, money laundering and asset recovery. Additionally, migrant smuggling, border management and maritime security are identified as critical training needs, particularly in southern Europe.

Summary of regional training needs – geographical breakdown

Western Europe (FR, BE, NL, LU, DE, IL): firearms, border management and counter-terrorism. Belgium also indicated needs in migrant smuggling and drug trafficking.

South-western Europe (ES, IT, PT, MT): firearms, trafficking in human beings, counter-terrorism, English. Spain indicated regional needs in drug trafficking and border management and maritime security.

Central Europe (AT, CZ, SK, HU, PL): trafficking in human beings, firearms, counter-terrorism, criminal finances, money laundering and asset recovery. Czechia indicated regional needs in drug trafficking and Hungary in English language.

Northern Europe (FI, SE, LV, EE, LT): trafficking in human beings, criminal finances, money laundering and asset recovery, firearms. Latvia indicated regional needs in English language and migrant smuggling, Sweden in counter-terrorism and Finland in the area of drug trafficking.

South-eastern Europe and beyond (SI, HR, BG, EL, CY, RO): drug trafficking, counter-terrorism, migrant smuggling, firearms, border management and maritime security. Croatia mentioned criminal finances, money laundering and asset recovery as a regional training need.

In addition, some MS (e.g. for cooperation with Turkey on counter-terrorism with Bulgaria) and in particular EMPACT and CEPOL staff, indicated the need to include cooperation with non-EU countries, more specifically South America and Western Balkan countries into a 'regional' training approach.

Cyberattacks and child sexual exploitation are also commonly highlighted by Member States, but given the global nature of these crimes, they are not considered specific regional needs.

Way forward

By carrying out regional training activities, CEPOL's primary role should be as a hub for law enforcement training, and the aim is to reinforce this aspect. Regional training should be complementary to CEPOL's training offer, not developed parallel to it, and training priorities identified via the EU Strategic Training Needs Assessment (EU-STNA) should be maintained.

Proposed regional onsite activities

- Missing trader intra-community (MTIC) fraud > LV, EE, LT, SE, FI
- Effectively regulate, investigate and combat cryptocurrency-related financial crime with specific focus on new markets in crypto assets > Baltic states
- Trafficking in human beings, drug trafficking, counter-terrorism and migrant smuggling > BG, RO, CY, EL
- Drug trafficking, counter-terrorism and migrant smuggling > HU, HR, SI
- Riot and public order policing > situational need as a consequence of the war in Ukraine

Proposed new online module package

- Awareness entry-modules on Schengen, Area of Freedom, Security and Justice, Lisbon Treaty and Prüm
- Skills modules update or development
 - Cross-border hot pursuits
 - Cross-border surveillance
 - Joint patrols
 - PCCCs
- Specific modules supporting bilateral or multilateral agreements; not necessarily in English

CEPOL could serve as a training hub for law enforcement through a variety of tools. Its goal should be to establish a systemic model for regional training by:

- addressing emerging needs through new onsite activities and webinars on current trends;
- supporting existing bilateral and multilateral cooperation through curriculum development, funding, and online modules;
- sharing best practices by
 - dedicating sessions on regional trends during onsite courses,¹
 - creating a space on LEEd for Member States to share their online training materials for existing bilateral or multilateral training,
 - organising webinars or blog entries focused on best practices, and
 - applying mobility schemes as a useful modality for implementation;

Furthermore, CEPOL should facilitate the implementation of the Council Recommendation on operational law enforcement cooperation by:

- exploring synergies with the Internal Security Funds: CEPOL can act as a facilitator of the information flow, channelling law enforcement training needs into the content of call for grants of the Fund;
- developing a sectoral qualifications framework on policing focusing on cross-border cooperation and assisting MS to *'design and adjust...national courses on cross-border operational LE cooperation'*; and
- verifying the interest and feasibility of incorporating in future EU-STNA exercises an additional dimension, namely the role (and training need) of cross-border LE cooperation instruments (resulting from the tasks assigned in the recommendation and referring to the instruments addressed in the recommendation) for crime-related training areas.

Methodology

In 2023, CEPOL launched a strategic level training needs assessment on regional training needs via the [Mid-term review of the EU Strategic Training Needs Assessment \(EU-STNA\)](#). This assessment was followed by a strategic orientation debate with members of the CEPOL Management Board (MB), addressing prioritisation/implementation and institutional setup related to regional training, and by a consultation with EMPACT groups on regional training needs. Furthermore, CEPOL launched a survey addressing CEPOL National Units (CNUs) with the purpose of mapping existing bilateral and multilateral cooperation and the related demands made by Member States on CEPOL to support them. In order to conduct the analysis of the data gathered via CNUs and draft the report, a short-term expert was selected from the list of individual external experts.

MS data collected during the EU-STNA mid-term review (18 replies and stakeholder consultation) indicates which MS have been identified by themselves or by other countries/stakeholders as having a regional training need on a specific training priority. The data gathered from CNUs allows existing bilateral and multilateral training programmes and what support CEPOL could provide to be mapped tentatively, based on 11 MS respondents who provided information regarding 20 training initiatives, both between neighbouring MS and with non-neighbouring countries, and in some cases with non-EU and candidate countries. Data provided from different CEPOL bodies, MS input at the MB meeting and staff discussions on the potential role of CEPOL in regional training informed CEPOL's strategic

¹ Especially to address similar training needs in neighbouring countries in the areas of trafficking in human beings, counter-terrorism, drug trafficking and criminal finances, money laundering and asset recovery, where participants are split into geographic area and can discuss common challenges and best practices.

orientation debate, and the outcomes describe potential ways forward for CEPOL to address regional law enforcement (LE) training needs.

Plural understandings of 'regional' have informed the data collection. While the term 'regional' is not specified in the policy documents listed above, the common approach outlined in the Management Board's strategic orientation debate suggests that 'regional' is to be understood as geographical (geopolitical, with country units composing a region) and thematic (crime priority). From the replies of some respondents and the assessment of documents it is clear that 'regional' is frequently understood to mean cooperation between EU (MS) with non-EU countries. Last, but not least, under the Council Recommendation on operational law enforcement cooperation, the focus is upon specific tools for LE cross-border and transnational cooperation, in which officers from one MS operate on the territory of another MS. The 'regional' component matters in this case, since bilateral or multilateral police cooperation agreements define the applicable procedures and the powers conferred in detail, which are not fully compatible across MS.

Following the Executive Summary, chapter 1 of the report provides a detailed overview of the policy context, followed by an explanation of the criticality in defining 'regional' training needs. It also presents the different data sources used for the analysis, including desk research, surveys and a focus group meeting. Chapter 2 describes regional training needs in terms of geographical and thematic areas, while Chapter 3 provides a review of bilateral and multilateral law enforcement cooperation and how CEPOL can facilitate the implementation of such activities via training. Chapter 4 sets out the options for CEPOL to organise regional training activities. The final two chapters summarise the main findings and provide a set of recommendations.

1. Background

1.1 Context and mandate of an ad-hoc regional training needs assessment

This ad-hoc training needs assessment (TNA) is based on the CEPOL Strategy 2023-2027, which aims to identify and respond to cross-border training needs and to observe the Agency's opportunities to provide regional training.

As established in the **CEPOL Regulation**², it is part of the Agency's objectives (Article 3) to 'support Member States, at their request, in the development of regional and bilateral cooperation through law enforcement training between Member States, Union bodies and third countries' (Article 3(b)). One of the Agency's tasks (Article 4(2)(c)) is to provide training modules that are 'focused either on a specific geographical region, a specific thematic area of criminal activity or on a specific set of professional skills'.

The **CEPOL Strategy 2023-2027**³ sets out to 'implement emerging trainings for the first time responding to the newly identified cross-border training needs' and to 'further observe the possibilities in regional training provision', for example through exchange programmes. Conducting an *ad hoc regional training needs assessment* is integral to the Agency's objective to facilitate a regional training response to MS priorities and main threats. The EU-STNA mid-term review (MTR) included for the first time a set of questions regarding regional training needs.

In addition, the **Council Recommendation on operational law enforcement cooperation**⁴ refers to CEPOL's role of supporting MS in the implementation of the recommendation with regards to training. The carrying out of this ad hoc TNA can be deduced from two explicit CEPOL tasks arising from the Recommendation. First, the mapping of the existing training offer and the collection of MS training needs on cross-border operational cooperation is functional to CEPOL's role of supporting MS, upon their request, in the task of designing or adjusting national courses on cross-border operational law enforcement cooperation, as well as to CEPOL's contribution to training LE officials. Second, incorporating a focus on cross-border cooperation into the EU-STNA may be required to support MS in their recommended task of aligning national training portfolios to the priorities related to cross-border operational law enforcement cooperation set out in the EU-STNA.

² [Regulation \(EU\) 2015/2219](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2015 on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL) and replacing and repealing Council Decision 2005/681/JHA

³ CEPOL (2022), CEPOL Strategy 2023-2027, [Annex to the Decision of the Management Board 15/2022/MB](#), <https://www.cepola.europa.eu/documents/annex-management-board-decision-15-2022-mb>.

⁴ COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION [\(EU\) 2022/915](#) of 9 June 2022 on operational law enforcement cooperation, OJ L 158/53, 13.6.2022.

1.2 Data sources

Multiple datasets arising from desk research, surveys and focus group discussions have fed the analysis.

Desk research

- Council Recommendation on operational law enforcement cooperation of 9 June 2022
- Commission Proposal for a Council Recommendation on operational police cooperation
- Council Roadmap Recommendation implementation (February 2023)
- CEPOL Regulation 2015/2219
- EU-STNA 2018-2021; EU-STNA 2022-2025; EU-STNA MTR 2023
- EU legislation of relevance for reference (CISA, Prüm Decisions).

Surveys

- Mid-term EU-STNA review (spring 2023)
 - o responses from JHA agencies on regional needs
 - o responses from LE networks on regional needs
 - o responses from MS on regional needs
- Mapping bilateral and multilateral cooperation (autumn 2023)
 - o Responses to CEPOL survey by CNUs that aimed to map existing bilateral and multilateral training initiatives between MS and inquire how MS view CEPOL's potential supporting role therein
- CEPOL activity managers opinions on regional training (April 2023)
- Input of MS on this TNA work in progress (April 2023)
- EMPACT drivers input regarding regional training needs (autumn 2023)

Focus group

- Strategic orientation debate (May 2023)
 - o Input from members of CEPOL Management Board
 - o Presentation of this TNA work in progress and preliminary findings
 - o CEPOL as a regional training provider

1.3 Criticality in definition

In line with discussions held in the strategic orientation debate and also evidenced by some responses in the data collection, what is meant by *regional* training needs has not been formulated explicitly in the TNA data collection and is likewise not univocally defined in the documents consulted as part of the desk research. There are at least three understandings that have seemingly informed the data collection or respondent-replies.

Cooperation between regions, EU and non-EU: in previous and current CEPOL outputs, the term regional is almost exclusively used to refer to non-EU countries and neighbourhood regions such as MENA or the WB. In most cases, the term regional is used in reference to cooperation with non-EU countries. This understanding of regional has informed some of the discursive responses collected in the context of the EU-STNA MTR (see section B2). When it comes to the 2022-2025 EU-STNA⁵, it stated that ‘the EU-STNA focuses solely on EU-level priorities, as national training and bilateral/regional training cooperation remain outside the scope of the process’ (p.7). One can however note that cross-border regional MS needs – understood as bilateral or multilateral cooperation between MS – have emerged *within* the scope of the EU-STNA exercise as a training need in ‘LE cooperation, information exchange and interoperability’ (p.20) and specifically in the field of cross-border cooperation in CT (p.36-37).

Training needs geographic distribution: one part of the data-collection by CEPOL has sought to correlate EU-STNA priorities as indicated by MS as emerging training needs in the MTR, with a tentative identification of regions to be composed by those countries/respondents indicating themselves and/or other countries as having a training need in that priority. In line with the outcomes of the strategic orientation debate, regional here is consequently understood as geographical (geopolitical, with country units composing a ‘region’) and thematic (crime/training priority). In the survey itself the meaning of regional was not specified by the Agency. Some respondents and stakeholders indeed wondered what was meant by regional and asked whether and how these regions would be identified by CEPOL.

Professional skillset and training needs in operational cross-border cooperation: somehow differently situated are the data collected with regards to the mapping of existing bilateral and multilateral training initiatives and training needs and the tasks related to the Council Recommendation on operational LE cooperation. The recommendation focuses upon specific tools for operational LE cooperation, in which officers from one MS operate on the territory of another MS, as in the case of joint operations, cross-border hot pursuit or cross-border surveillance. In the EU Commission proposal, explicit reference was made to ‘regional specificities’ with regard to bilaterally or multilaterally defined cooperation between neighbouring countries and the respective plurality of regulatory frameworks that are not fully compatible across MS. At the same time, the Recommendation adopted by the Council does not use ‘regional’ as a point of reference and the definition provided for operational cross-border cooperation notably does not restrict it to neighbouring countries and border-regions. Training on specific skills in cross-border cooperation, as indicated in the Recommendation itself, refers to the relevant laws, rules of engagement, techniques, procedures, etc. of the specific cooperating partners (see point e and f of the recommendation). In this context, it is suggested that (‘regional’) training on cross-border cooperation is to be understood as addressing knowledge of potentially different ways of cooperating as part of the specific set of professional skills required in operational cooperation.

⁵ CEPOL (2021), European Union Strategic Training Needs Assessment 2022-2025

2. Assessment of regional training needs

2.1 Introduction

In 2023, for the first time CEPOL collected data concerning regional training needs on the occasion of the EU-STNA mid-term-review. The EU-STNA aims to identify **training priorities** (not to rank crime threats). Therein, MS and other stakeholders⁶ were consulted as to whether a thematic area (out of 25 options) was deemed a **regional training need**, and, if so, which countries were perceived to have such a need at a regional level. The data collection and survey questions were designed in such a way as to correlate thematic training areas indicated as '**regional training need**' with country units, with the **scope of identifying regions made up of MS with a similar training need**. In addition, as part of the mid-term review, MS representatives and the CEPOL MB discussed the matter of how CEPOL could best implement and prioritise regional training delivery and if a CEPOL Knowledge Centre (CKC) on regional training would be a good way forward.

2.2 Member State responses to EU-STNA mid-term review on regional training needs

18 Member States⁷ provided feedback as to whether they considered a thematic area (out of 25 options given) to constitute a regional training need. In addition, they were asked to indicate which countries they thought this applied to, with the aim of identifying possible **regions composed by countries with similar training need priorities**. On this second question, only a small part of the respondents provided a reply. The data presented and analysed here focuses mainly on the responses given to the first question, unless in specific cases where the former and the latter responses were provided and matched. Thereby it is presumed that countries selecting an area as a regional training need did so in order to indicate that it constituted a training need for the particular country. The replies to the second question do not provide sufficient data and it is also problematic to indicate a country as relevant to regional training when this country has either not replied to the survey or has not indicated this area as a training need. Hence, in the data presentation through visualisation, the countries indicating a regional training need appear in a darker colour, while those referred to (additionally) by other MS or stakeholders are displayed in a lighter colour.

From the responses received to the first question, chart 1 shows the areas identified as a regional training need in descending order. Identified by more than half of the respondents (9+) were the areas of trafficking in human beings (THB), drug trafficking (drugs), counter-terrorism (CT), criminal finances, money laundering, asset recovery (CF, ML, AR) as well as migrant smuggling. Cyberattacks, firearms trafficking, child sexual exploitation, border management and maritime security were identified as regional training needs by 5-6 MS respondents.

⁶ Survey responses received by eu-LISA, EUAA and DG HOME; TISPOL, DVI, EFE, Pan-European Football security; EMPACT drivers' consultation.

⁷ 18 MS: BE, BG, CY, CZ, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, LU, LV, NL, RO, SK, SI, SE

Chart 1. Most prominent regional training needs indicated by MS



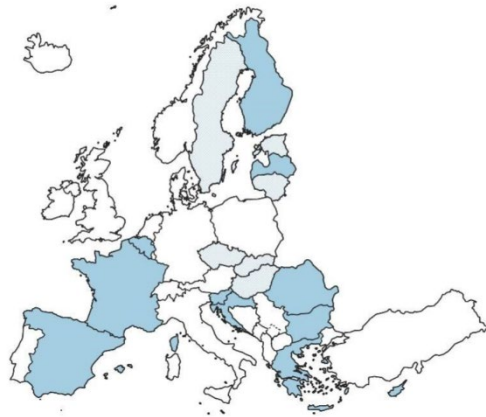
In the subsection that follows, the report focuses on the areas which show the greatest training need (10 main areas, identified by 4-11 MS). However, some areas may present a lower numerical need, but a regional vicinity or shared pattern of MS expressing certain needs. For a comprehensive representation of all areas and each country, please consult the table in Annex 1.

2.3 Geographical distribution for most indicated regional training need per training area

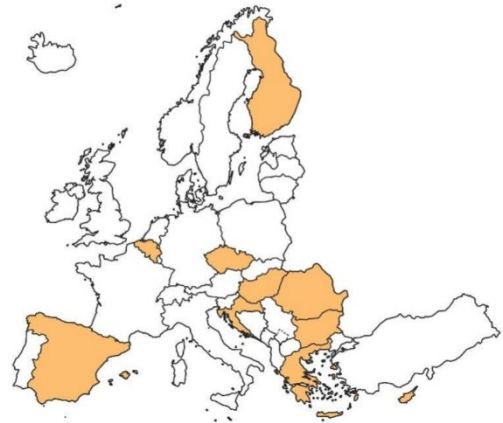
Rather than focusing on pre-defined regions (CEPOL datasheet, preliminary excel analysis received), mapping the identified training needs by crime-training-area and by country enables to identify whether the training need is identified as such by two or more (neighbouring) MS. This exercise is in line with recommendations by some MS with regards to prioritisation (NL, LV), a task most consulted MS for the MB debate considered to be the competency of MS. As indicated above, countries indicating

training needs are marked in darker colours and those referred to by other MS or stakeholders as having regional training needs are shown in a lighter colour on the maps below⁸.

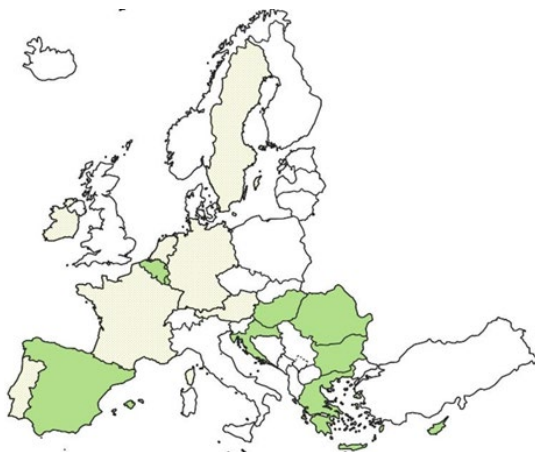
THB – 11



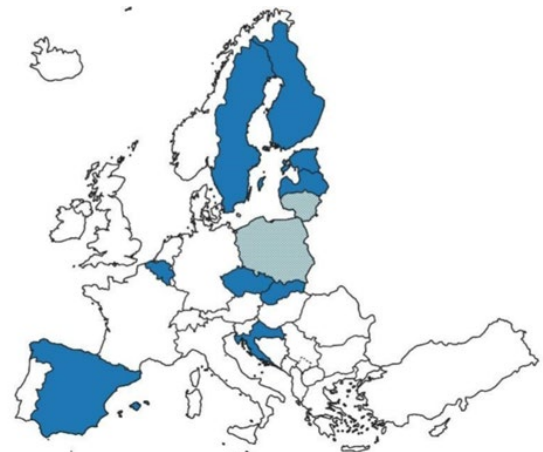
Drug trafficking - 10



Counter-terrorism - 9

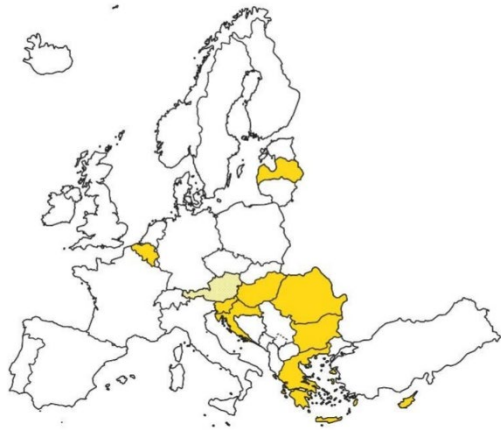


Criminal finances, money laundering, asset recovery - 9

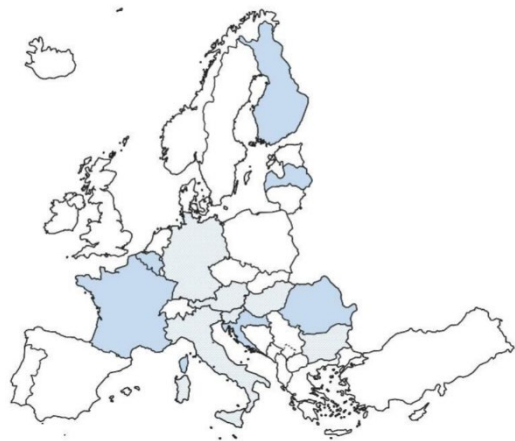


⁸ The boundaries used in these maps do not imply official endorsement or recognition and are without prejudice to positions on status. In relation to Kosovo, they are in line with the UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

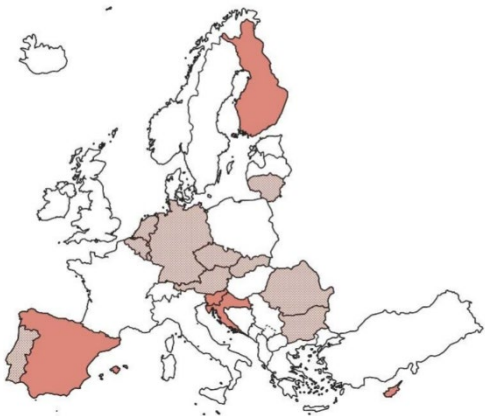
Migrant smuggling - 9



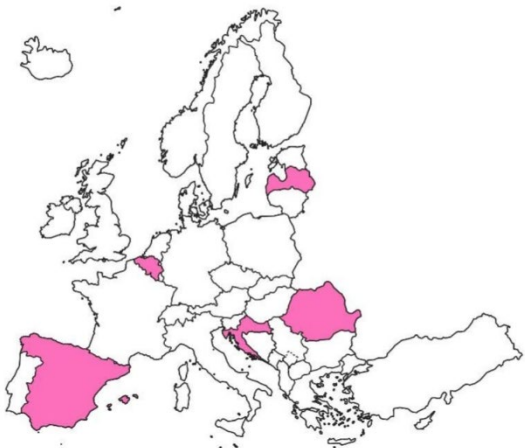
Cyberattacks - 6



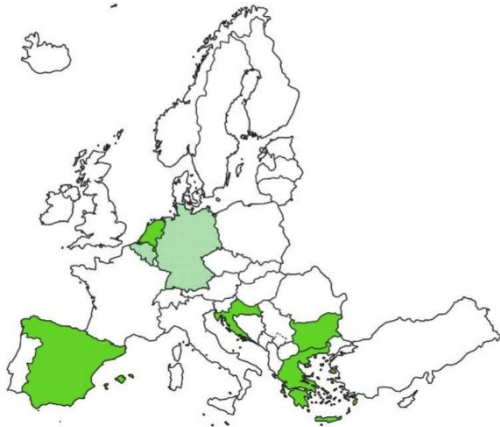
Firearms trafficking - 5



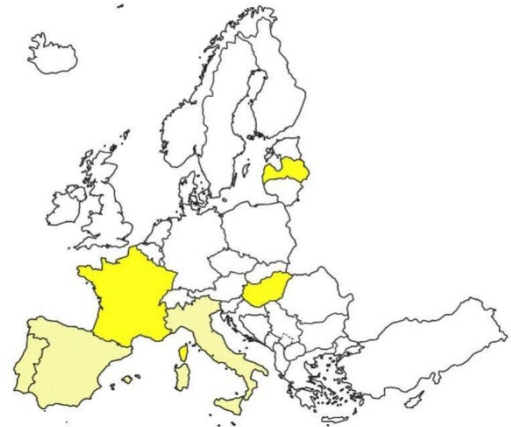
Child sexual exploitation - 5



**Border management &
maritime security - 5**



English language - 4

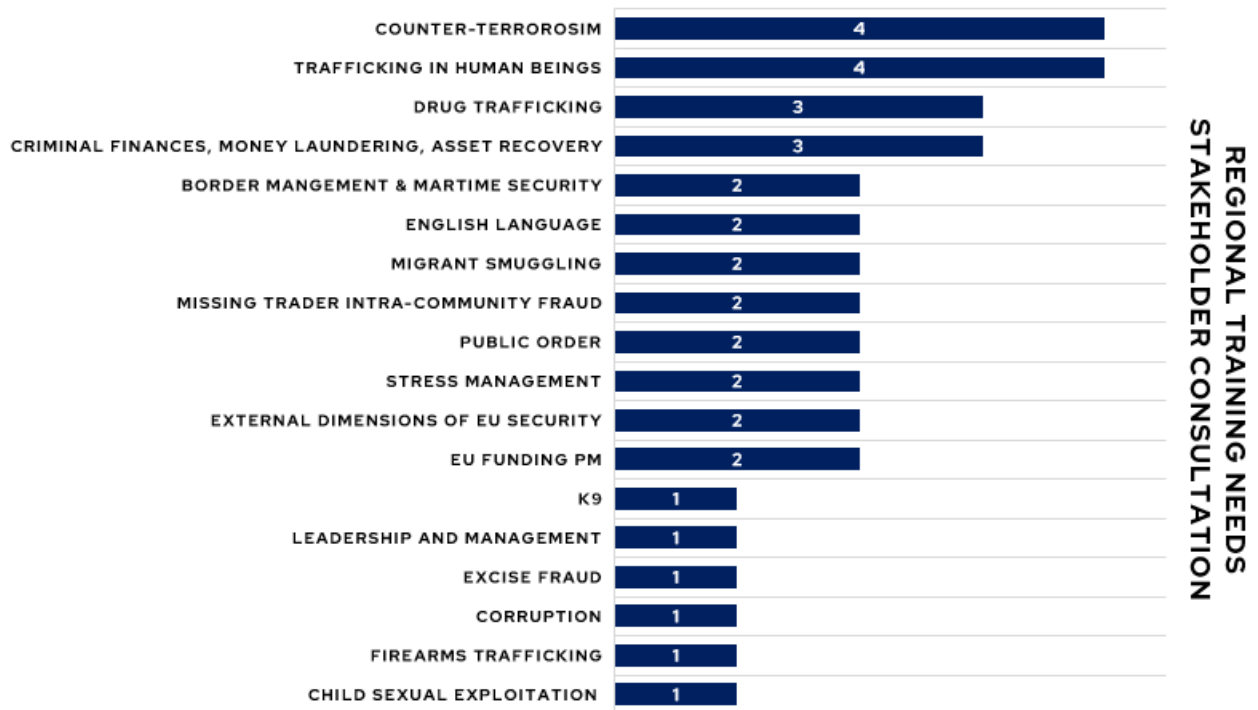


2.4 Stakeholder consultation

The data received from stakeholder consultations⁹ indicated whether stakeholders considered a specific thematic field as having a regional training dimension (see table in Annex 1 for responses by stakeholder). In addition, stakeholders were asked to indicate which countries making up a region could present a training need in this area. Responses were often received on the first question, but less frequently on the second question. Stakeholders were also asked to contribute with additional publications more of relevance to the EU-STNA mid-term review. The main four areas correspond to those identified by most MS, namely **counter-terrorism, trafficking in human beings, drug trafficking, and criminal finances, money laundering, asset recovery.**

⁹ Responses received by: eu-LISA, EUAA and DG HOME; TISPOL, DVI, EFE, Pan-European Football security.

Chart 2. Regional training needs indicated by stakeholders



From the additional consultation with **EMPACT drivers**, it appears that ‘regions’ were understood mostly as non-EU regions and hence this data was not included in the count. An exception was a general reference to custom authorities in ports and harbours (on environmental crime and on excise fraud, see below), and specifically with regard to **missing trader intra-community (MTIC) fraud**, for which reference was made to EU MS. This data has hence been included in the above count. In addition, a training proposal regarding **MTIC and financial crime investigations** was submitted for training to foster skills to counter cryptocurrency-related financial crime in the Baltic region (Annex 2).

In the other cases with an identified regional training need, EMPACT drivers made reference to cooperation in training between **EU MS and non-EU regions**: drug trafficking (training in Spanish between South-America and Spain); environmental crime (joint training on illegal timber trade between Latin America countries and IT or ES; customs risks analysis regarding European ports); excise fraud (big harbours custom control and airports custom control); child sexual exploitation and intellectual property rights (Western Balkans).

2.5 Feedback by CEPOL training areas

In the internal consultation of CEPOL staff responsible for different thematic areas, the overall outcome was quite consistent, namely that the identified crime areas are mostly global and that hence adopting a **regional approach is deemed to be misleading**. In the examples provided, regional was understood rather as appropriate in cooperation between Europe/MS and non-EU 'global regions', e.g. as MENA, Asia, South America. Another question raised by staff was the **mixing up of regional training needs and the need for regional operational cooperation**.

With regards to the former comment, it may be pointed out that while the crime areas are indeed EU EMPACT priorities and 'global' phenomena, the EU-STNA focuses on **training needs**. Hence, what might constitute a training need in some countries, may not be a training need in others, irrespective of the presence of perceived criminal threats, but based on an evaluation of the training offer and resulting need.

2.6 MS input to the MB and CEPOL strategic orientation debate

Data was collected from MS¹⁰ as input for the CEPOL MB meeting and considered together with the mid-term review preliminary findings on the occasion of an orientation debate in May 2023. Three working groups composed of MB members addressed two questions: 1) how to best implement and prioritise, considering CEPOL's limited resources; and 2) whether a CEPOL Knowledge Centre (CKC) on regional training was considered a way forward.

The **mapping of existing training needs** and their **regional geographic dimension**, as conducted in the EU-STNA mid-term review, was supported by many respondents, who identified a positive added value in the possibility of a centralised overview and analysis of information provided by MS.

Several respondents highlighted the need to respond to '**unforeseen emerging needs**' and changing situations (FI, HU, PT) that may affect only certain countries/regions, and for which a flexible and **swift procedure** would be required. Some, however, expressed **doubts as to whether the structure of a CEPOL Knowledge Centre** could provide such a swift procedure and set up for training (MT). The survey responses also provided some information with regards to emerging situational needs requiring regional training (SK, PL).

Several participants remarked on potential **regional differences** and that **regional actors** have a deeper operational understanding of the situation as well as ongoing cooperation (PT, HU, EE, EL, RO). These differences are deemed to also require a tailored approach in training (HU, EL). On the one hand, it was deemed complex to agree on one specific shared training need between neighbouring countries and across their different LE actors (PT), while on the other hand 'regional experts' or MS were identified as most suited to indicate what training is most needed (FI). It was also pointed out that the provision of regional training should have more involvement from MS (LV), and that indeed a would-be Regional CEPOL Knowledge Centre needs active engagement from MS. It was also suggested that training should be mainly **hosted and implemented by MS of the regions** (FI), with **the support of CEPOL**.

An additional point raised was the need, in particular for some geographical areas, for countries with a cooperation agreement with CEPOL to be represented and to participate in regional training. It was

¹⁰ 13 MS: CY, EL, EE, FI, HU, LV, LU, MT, NL, PT, RO, SI, ES

pointed out that, from the Nordic countries, only Finland and Sweden are members of CEPOL, while Denmark, Iceland and Norway are currently not.

3. Mapping existing bilateral and multilateral training cooperation between neighbouring countries¹¹

3.1 Introduction

Council Recommendation (EU) 2022/915 of 9 June 2022 on operational law enforcement cooperation (ST/8720/2022/INIT)¹² draws on the respective European Commission Proposal (2021)¹³, which was part of the Commission's threefold Initiative for an EU Police Cooperation Code or Package¹⁴. The Recommendation was adopted with the aim to 'strengthen operational law enforcement cooperation between law enforcement authorities'. Operational LE cooperation is defined as follows: '*Operational law enforcement cooperation covers situations where law enforcement authorities of a Member State operate in the territory of another Member State in the context of cross-border and other trans-national actions between two or more Member States, for example during a cross-border hot pursuit, cross-border surveillance, joint patrols or other joint operations, or in connection with the touristic season or a mass-event*'.¹⁵

In brief, the recommendation addresses the following LE tools for cross-border actions:

- **cross-border hot pursuit** (point 2.1);
- **cross-border surveillance** (2.2);
- **joint operations**, amongst which joint patrols (2.3);
- **police and customs cooperation centres** (3) [in addition to their focus on information exchange, with regards to an enhanced role in analysis and support to operational activities].

With regards to the first three instruments, MS are recommended to address eventual obstacles (for example, enabling pursuit and surveillance without temporal and geographical restrictions). To facilitate the organisation of joint operations, the recommendation also sets out to create a **support platform** (point 4), for MS to identify and record their needs in joint operations. In addition, it addresses effective **access to information and communication** (point 5). Finally, a specific point of the recommendation to MS is devoted to **joint training and specific courses** on cross-border operational LE cooperation (point 6).

In the explanatory memorandum to the Commission's proposal for a recommendation, it was argued that officers are not always properly trained and that a study commissioned in 2021 'identified a limited

¹¹ Ref. Docs: Responses to CEPOL survey by CNU's that aimed to map existing bi and multilateral training initiatives between MS and inquire where MS see a possible support role of CEPOL therein (collected in autumn 2023);

¹² [Council Recommendation \(EU\) 2022/915 of 9 June 2022](#) on operational law enforcement cooperation, OJ L 158/53, 13.6.2022

¹³ European Commission, Proposal for a Council Recommendation on operational police cooperation, COM/2021/780 final, Brussels 08.12.2021

¹⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_6645

¹⁵ Council Recommendation (EU) 2022/915 (fn5), L 158/58.

availability of training for law enforcement staff involved in cross-border cooperation’ (COM(2021) 780 final, p.6). Problems identified were that training was not conducted on a regular basis or did not include latest developments, that awareness and knowledge of relevant databases and about the executive powers conferred by different Member States was limited, and that language barriers also play a role in hampering effective cross-border operational police cooperation.

The Council Recommendation highlights in its preamble the relevance of a common European Union law enforcement culture for effective operational cross-border cooperation and the role of training therein. Joint initial training courses, exchange programmes between cadets and continuous professional development courses for LE officers are considered pivotal to that end. The document lays out different types of training and target groups and recommends MS to undertake several actions in the field of training.

The Recommendation highlights that MS should continue to make best use of CEPOL by informing the Agency of their training needs, by supporting CEPOL’s activities and contributing to the alignment of their training portfolio to the priorities related to cross-border law enforcement cooperation set in the [EU Strategic Training Needs Assessments](#). The Implementation Roadmap of the Recommendation¹⁶ has established, for each action, the relevant actors and the recommended lead-actor (RL). CEPOL figures once as action leader, twice as supporting actor, and in most of the other actions as actor of relevance, as summarised in the table below.

Table 1: Training and CEPOL tasks resulting from Recommendation

Recommendation		Relevant actors and recommended leader (RL)
7.1.	Include possibility of specific course in initial training	MS (RL), CEPOL, COM
7.2.	Set up joint initial training courses and exchange programmes, together with neighbouring countries:	MS (RL), CEPOL, COM
7.3.	Seek to design and adjust, in cooperation with CEPOL, national courses on cross-border operational LE cooperation	MS, CEPOL (RL), COM
7.4.	Set up joint continuous professional development for LE officers to develop skills and knowledge	MS, CEPOL, COM (RL)
7.5	Seek to offer career paths	MS
7.6.	Language training and training to officers involved in operational LE cooperation	MS (RL), CEPOL (support)
7.7.	Seek to align training portfolio to priorities related to operational cooperation as set in the EU-STNA	MS (RL), CEPOL (support)
7.8.	Inform CEPOL of training needs	MS (RL), CEPOL, COM
7.9.	Consider possibility of creating large-scale and long-term pan-European joint training and exchange programmes	MS, CEPOL, Agencies, COM (RL)

¹⁶ Roadmap on the implementation of the Council recommendation on Law enforcement operational cooperation, Note from Presidency to Delegations, 15759/1/22 REV 1, LIMITE, Brussels, 09.02.2023; <https://www.statewatch.org/media/3749/eu-council-law-enforcement-coop-recommendation-roadmap-15759-22-rev1.pdf>

From this review CEPOL's central tasks can be summarised as follows.

- First, as recommended action leader, supporting MS, upon their request, in the task of designing or adjusting national courses on cross-border operational law enforcement cooperation, and consequently the need to collect those MS training needs with regards to cross-border operational law enforcement cooperation.
- Second, supporting MS to align their training portfolio to the priorities related to cross-border operational law enforcement cooperation set in the EU-STNA, and consequently the identification of cross-border operational law enforcement cooperation priorities in the EU-STNA.
- Third, contributing to the training of law enforcement officers, particularly those involved in operational cooperation.
- Fourth, supporting language training for officers involved in operational LE cooperation.

With regards to the content of training provision, it is described as 'skills and knowledge on cross-border operational law enforcement cooperation'. The recommendations in particular refer to '*... skills and knowledge on cross-border operational law enforcement cooperation, in particular relevant law, rules of engagement, tools, techniques, mechanisms, procedures and best practices*' (point d) and '*language training and training on operational procedures, administrative and criminal, law, criminal procedures of other Member States and the authorities to contact in other Member States*' (point f).

3.2 Roadmap for implementation

In 2023, the Swedish Presidency of the European Council designed an implementation roadmap of the Council's recommendation on law enforcement operational cooperation. All Member States were expected to report on the implementation of the tasks assigned to them in the Recommendation. This information from the MS would serve as input for the Commission's assessment about the implementation of the Recommendation. However, less than half of EU countries provided data. Countries reporting on the implementation of the Recommendation are those reporting about existing multilateral and bilateral cooperation and related training in the survey. Hence, there is no evidence on the implementation of bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the Baltic states or in the Balkans.

When it comes to training activities or sharing of best practices among Member States, which under this analysis is considered regional training, country reports confirm the findings of this current study: e.g. Belgium reported on cooperation with The Netherlands and France; Spain implements joint training for cadets with France in Valdemoro. Furthermore, the Polaris project aims to promote joint training of French and German students. In addition, France implemented a joint training course for cadets (from IT, FR, ES and PT).

The Central European Policy Academy (CEPA) plans and organises training activities that are focused on practical work and current police requirements. These training activities are specially geared towards officers at the intermediate level of police management, who have longstanding operative experience. Several MS provide joint training activities for police officers under this umbrella (DE, AT, CH, SK, SI, CZ and HU).

Furthermore, the [A.T.H.E.N.A. Project](#) embraces a true pan-European cooperation, offering comprehensive training on the different EU police communication channels and EU information

exchange mechanisms and instruments, with the participation of several MS (IT, LV, RO, MT, BG, HU and BE).

3.3 Survey to CEPOL National Units (CNUs)

A CEPOL online survey asked CNUs to provide information **about bilateral and multilateral training activities, for the purpose of mapping ongoing international training activities and structured cooperation between neighbouring countries.**¹⁷ The survey also asked where MS see a possible support role of CEPOL therein, and if future training was being planned.

Respondents from **11 MS** indicated 20 initiatives, involving a total of 26 explicitly indicated countries. Overall, the training information provided covers a **wide range of different initiative typologies**, not necessarily limited to bilateral or multilateral training between neighbouring countries:

- **Mobility programmes** through Erasmus+, CEPOL Exchange Programme and joint MA programmes (country responses NL, BG, MT, LV, SE).
- **Multi-lateral training programmes** that are well established, as in the case of MEPA¹⁸ (member countries AT, CZ, DE, HU, SK, SI, CH) and the Benelux, or more recent, as in the case of the G4 (member countries PT, ES, FR, IT).
- **Bilateral training initiatives** with some structure and recurrency (BE-FR; NL-DE; NL-NO; BG-DE). These types of initiatives have also been mentioned as ‘ad-hoc’ activity between neighbouring countries/regional departments, without further details. The survey also collected bilateral activities that have been carried out in the past, but in which regard currently either nothing is being implemented or planned, or MS indicated activities can be implemented upon request.
- In addition, two respondents included training provided by Frontex and through the [ATLAS network](#).

The processed responses by Member State are enclosed in Annex 2.

3.4 Bilateral and multilateral initiatives – geographical distribution

In terms of ‘regional’ training provision, it is worth geographically mapping the indicated initiatives. In line with CEPOL’s survey objective, the focus here is given to bilateral and multilateral initiatives and to training initiatives between neighbouring countries. This section of analysis does not include the other types of training cooperation mentioned by respondents.

¹⁷ Name of the training; start of the cooperation; number of people participating; countries participating; EU-financed: Y/N; form of training; level of training; future training activities planned; CEPOL’s role and involvement.

¹⁸ MEPA is the German abbreviation for "Mittleuropäische Polizeiakademie", the Central European Police Academy (see [Introduction | MEPA](#))

MEPA provides training on preventing and fighting organised crime and cross-border crime priorities since 2001, with participants in on-site training from the MEPA countries (AT, DE, CZ, SK, HU, SI, CH).

The **Benelux cooperation in training on cross-border interventions** (Zonder Zorgen De Grens Over) has trained 3 500 persons onsite since 2015, at practitioner and train-the-trainer level.

Bilateral training between **Belgium and France on cross-border interventions** (Franchir La Frontière Sans Soucis) has been organised since 2020, with approx. 1 500 trainees (also at practitioner and train-the-trainer level).

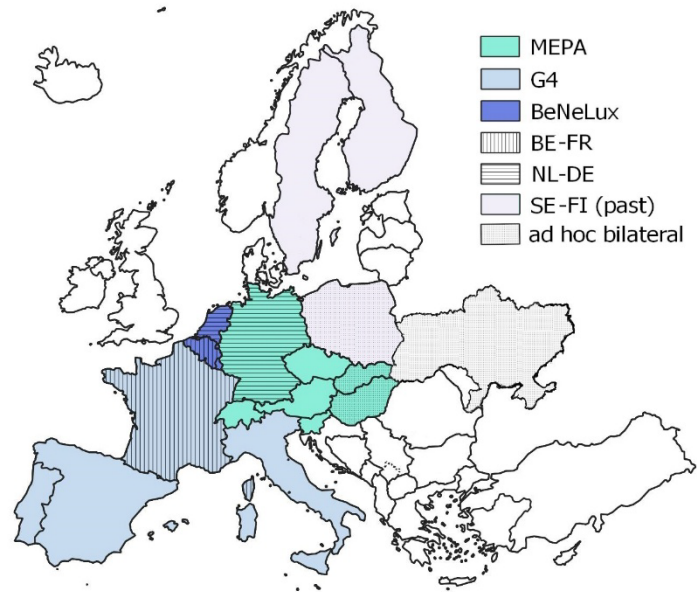


Image 11: Mapping of bi- and multi-lateral training

These initiatives are carried out without EU funding and are considered by respondents to be well established and covered, financially and content-wise.

The **G4 Initiative** (PT, ES, IT, FR) is the second large multilateral training initiative mentioned by respondents. It started in 2023 and is currently ongoing, partially EU-funded and with approx. 150 trainees so far through onsite activities (level practitioner).

The **Netherlands and Germany** have also had some bilateral training initiatives between police academies since approx. 2014. Other respondents (SE) indicated **past bilateral** onsite training with approx 150 trainees – but through mobility programmes with FI and currently not ongoing – while other respondents (eg. LT) indicated a possible CEPOL support role in curriculum development and implementation of **future bilateral and multilateral training**. Joint one-off training activities were also indicated with candidate countries Ukraine and Moldova in the past and/or possibly in the future (SK, PT).

In addition to these main experiences reported by survey participants, some countries have mentioned (as a training example or in the final comments) some **'ad-hoc' training carried out with neighbouring countries/regional LE departments in relation to bilateral police cooperation agreements**, for example on joint patrolling or public order policing (PO, SK, HU).

Finally, albeit with a different professional target group and hence not included in the map, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia (**V4 Group**) annually carry out a 2-day joint training course for **judges, prosecutors and judicial and prosecution staff**, with about 40 participants per year.

3.5 Other forms of training: mobility programmes, exchanges, webinars, etc.

Another form of joint training is provided through **mobility programmes** (Erasmus, CEPOL Exchange Programme) or through **online webinars**. Here the mapping serves rather an illustrative purpose: initiatives, according to the survey, are particularly used by MS in north, central and eastern Europe and they also involve cooperation with non-EU MS and a candidate country. Also, some MS are active in more than one exchange cooperation programme, some initiatives have two partners, others several.

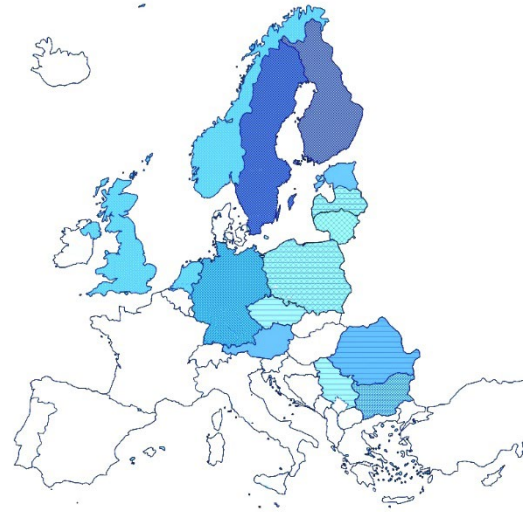


Image 12: Other joint training – cooperation through mobility programmes and bilateral online training

Here the joint training takes multiple forms: cooperation between police academies in higher education BA or MA training (NL with UK, SE, NO; BG with CY, EE, LV, PL, RO) or staff exchanges (LV with EE, DE, LT, PO, in future also NO, IS); bilateral onsite training (SE-FI) and bilaterally organised webinars (MT-EE; DE-BG; AT-RO).

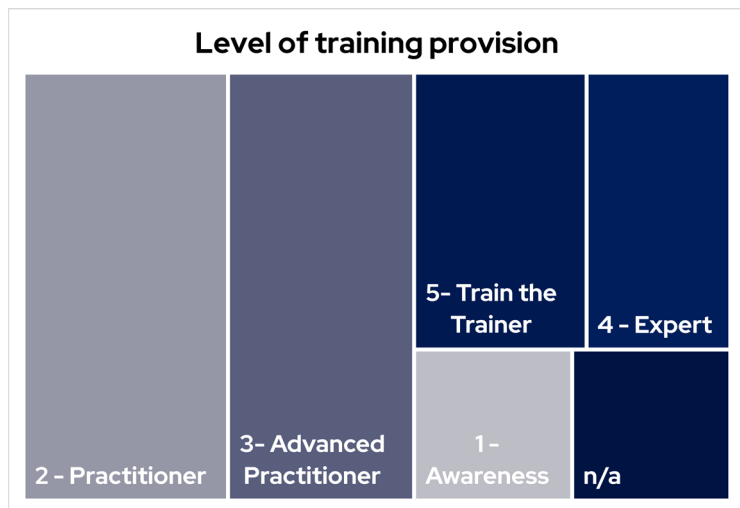
In addition, two respondents also listed training through **Frontex** and the **ATLAS** network, which have not been included in the mapping.

3.6 Level and format of training (all responses/training types)

Practitioner and advanced practitioner are the most frequent **levels of training** delivered. One country also indicated two train-the-trainer training programmes (BE).

In terms of **format**, the most frequently indicated was onsite training, followed by mobility programmes and webinars, and finally e-workshops and online modules.

One country also indicated a training period of under 5 days.



Training formats		
Onsite	webinar	e-workshop
		online modules
	mobility programme	n/a
		short training

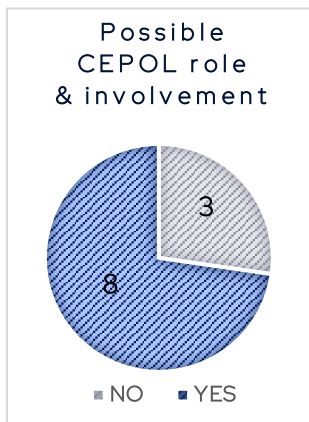
Mobility programmes involving staff and/or students were mentioned with regards to Erasmus+, CEPOL Exchange Programme and joint BA/MA courses.

When comparing **onsite training** and **digital learning formats** (webinar, e-workshops, online modules), the latter accounts for almost the **same amount of applications**.

Countries that already make use of digital learning tools, and those that do not, have identified a **possible CEPOL support role with regards to digital learning formats and the fostering of a more effective distance learning** (see section below).

With reference to the Council Recommendation, the survey did not enable a systematic assessment of whether the training offered is part of the initial training for cadets, ongoing professional development, or specifically oriented for LE with operational cross-border cooperation duties. Likewise, information was not collected with regard to the training content. The survey asked for the name of the initiative and provided the opportunity to submit further information on the training topics. The information provided through the initiative titles does not provide an overview of the topics addressed in the respective training. The indicated targets and related themes, however, refer for example to preventing and combatting cross-border crime, cross-border interventions, border guards' functions, prosecution and joint patrols.

3.7 CEPOL's role and involvement



The survey also sought to collect feedback from respondents as to how CEPOL could be of assistance in establishing and implementing bilateral and multilateral training programmes.

Together with support for **funding**, the **sharing of best practices** and the use of **CEPOL's online platform, LEEd** were the most frequently mentioned ways through which CEPOL could provide valuable assistance to MS bilateral or multilateral training activities. Additionally mentioned were also **webinars and specific online modules** regarding cross-border LE cooperation, or a **blog for sharing best practices** or the provision of an online platform for sharing documentation of relevance.

Some respondents highlighted that CEPOL's online platform would provide a valuable tool for them to use to upload their **existing online training materials**, which hence could be accessible to LE operating under the same bilateral or multilateral regional cooperation framework. One country respondent also indicated that CEPOL (drawing on MS input) could create a **regional common training catalogue**, whereby (1) regions sharing common features and crime priorities could (2) be provided with a common training curriculum or catalogue.

Several respondents who currently do not have bilateral or multilateral training in place, highlighted that CEPOL could play a role in **sharing practices from other MS** and in fostering a **more attractive (online) distance learning**, addressing cross-border and interforce cooperation. Likewise, MS not having training planned, indicated that CEPOL could **support curricula development, implementation (also onsite) and/or financial support**.

Possible CEPOL role		
	LEEd / online platform	Sharing of best practices
	(Regional) common training catalogue by regions	Specific modules
Funding	Support onsite activities	Webinars
Expertise / support in curricula development and implementation	Networking	Harmonisation of training (e.g. Public order / joint OPS)

In addition, some respondents highlighted emerging situations that would require a **fast and harmonised training** provision, such as the EURO24 or the situation in Ukraine, for which maybe a regional quick training provision could provide a suitable response.

No need for assistance was indeed indicated with regards to some programmes that are **well established** and covered financially and content wise (AT, BG), or by respondents who highlighted they

have indeed no training in planning (SE). Some respondents also mentioned that while there might be no current need for support, this doesn't rule out per se CEPOL support for new initiatives.

3.8 Future training

With regards to planned future training, one can highlight that some activities mapped above are to be repeated, whereby as an interesting point to note is in some cases the enlargement of the group of countries involved in multilateral training exchanges (NO and IS in LV mobility programmes). Several respondents indicated the value of CEPOL to **support the planning and implementation of future activities**. Concrete examples hereof are an identified need by respondents in the field of customs cooperation (webinars or on site) and on inter-agency and international cooperation (LT), in support to authorities of Moldova and Ukraine (PL) and short-term required on riot policing and public order protection (SK). Therein, one sees that two country respondents highlighted the need to address emerging needs that may have an impact especially on selected countries, a theme that emerged in EU-STNA mid-term review consultations. For more specific descriptive replies in the survey, please consult the processed data in Annex 2.

4. CEPOL as a regional training provider

In the discussion of CEPOL's role as a regional training provider, possibly through a Regional CEPOL Knowledge Centre (CKC), the question emerged as to how regions would be defined, how MS would be represented therein, and what 'version' – from light, to pilot, to new full-fledged centre – this CKC should take. The tasks of the CKC identified in the discussion seem in line with those of the already existing thematic CKCs. Besides the question of what was referred to through a 'regional' CKC, some MS also asked how these regions would be identified and represented. It was suggested to have a MS representative for each MS present in subgroups, and 1-2 representatives of the 'regions', each composed of a subgroup. Drawing on findings from this TNA, three aspects may be addressed:

- Predefined regions vs flexible 'regions' depending on shared training needs resulting from (future) EU-STNA reports and inputs on urgent needs?
- Meaning of 'regional' – reference object
- Representation in CKC

Considering the data collected in this ad-hoc regional training needs assessment, it may not be functional to predefine regions if the EU-STNA outcome is to identify shared needs. From this first exercise, it is visible that the outcome does not necessarily present stable 'regions' *across* priority areas, and predefined regions might render the CKC less flexible than intended. This is in line with the orientation debate suggestion that 'regions' may be defined by submitting to MS a concrete regional training proposal with the possibility to join the training. It may be worth considering whether representation in a potential CKC could be not only a) by single MS and b) representatives of 'regions' as proposed in the discussions. It is worth exploring whether instead of representatives of pre-defined regions (no matter how these regions are selected), representatives of well-established, current bilateral and multilateral training partners would be better suited.

Establishing a CKC would lead to a positive recognition of the work carried out through MS cooperation, bring training providers into a direct exchange forum and strengthen CEPOL's network-facilitating function. In addition, it would facilitate cooperation with regard to CEPOL's envisaged role in the field of 'regional' training provision vis-à-vis training provided already bilaterally and multilaterally. It may also provide for further horizontal and vertical synergies in future training provision.

CEPOL's involvement in regional training activities should go beyond financial support. It should have an added value, following the successful example of the already-existing cooperation with non-EU countries. This could be the case even when a structured cooperation supported by working arrangements, a related network, specific training products, knowledge and expertise is not yet available. To avoid double financing, all requests for funding regional activities should be cross-checked to identify if the same activity is financed from another EU source.

5. Summary of main findings

The MS survey responses enabled the mapping of which countries indicated the same training area as a regional training need. While, for several areas, multiple countries indicated a training need – with or without territorial continuity of MS – in some cases there is also consistency across areas for the same group of MS.

Training areas with several country needs, but without them being neighbouring countries, are, for example, child sexual exploitation, cyberattacks, and, to some degree, border management and maritime security. However, in these areas there are also cases in which neighbouring countries (including with established bilateral cooperation in training – see section 4) indicated the same need, as is the case for France-Belgium in the field of cyberattacks.

The clearest case for consistency across thematic and geographical areas is in **Bulgaria, Romania, Cyprus and Greece**, which share multiple training-need priorities (trafficking in human beings, drug trafficking, counter-terrorism and migrant smuggling) and at times indicated the other countries likewise as potential regional entities. This finding is also corroborated by MS input to the MB, where Cyprus indicated the same countries and similar topics (firearms instead of counter-terrorism). Neighbouring Hungary and Croatia, for drug trafficking and counter-terrorism, as well as Hungary, Croatia, Slovenia for migrant smuggling, share these same priorities.

Another clear case is the area of criminal finances, money laundering and asset recovery, which was indicated as priority training area by the majority of both the Baltic and the Scandinavian countries. This could eventually be linked with MTIC, which likewise is part of the EMPACT area of Fraud, economic and financial crimes. As part of the EMPACT driver consultation, MTIC was indicated as a regional intra EU training need and Lithuania presented a training proposal to be considered for a pilot project on regional training for the Baltic states, aimed at addressing knowledge and skills required to effectively regulate, investigate, and combat cryptocurrency-related financial crime in the Baltic region, with a specific focus on new markets in crypto assets.

In addition, some MS (e.g. for cooperation with Turkey on counter-terrorism, Bulgaria) and in particular EMPACT and CEPOL staff, indicated the orientation to include cooperation with non-EU countries into a 'regional' training orientation.

Finally, with regards to links with the Council Recommendation, it is pointed out that the data collected did not seek to identify specifically training needs on the operational tools for LE cooperation.

The survey responses present a preliminary picture as to existing bilateral or multilateral training provision by MS, based on information provided by **11 respondents/MS**. Of the approximately **20 training initiatives indicated**, half of them consist of bilateral or multilateral LE training between neighbouring countries, while the other half consists of a variety of types of training or involving a different target group (e.g. mobility programmes in higher education, bilateral online training between non-neighbouring countries (n1), multi-lateral judiciary and prosecution training (n1), training through Frontex or ATLAS (n2)). From the responses one can also suggest that some countries carry out bilateral training rather ad-hoc and the training is hence not – or only partially – included, since it is not carried out in a structured manner.

Together with support for funding, the **sharing of best practices** and the use of **CEPOL's online platform / LEEd** were the most frequently mentioned ways through which CEPOL could provide valuable assistance to MS. Additionally mentioned were also **webinars and specific online modules** regarding cross-border LE cooperation, and some respondents highlighted CEPOL's possible **support in the design and implementation of future training initiatives**. For **onsite activities**, the mobility schemes were mentioned as a useful modality for implementation.

Analysis of different sources of data does not set a clear direction for CEPOL to become a provider of regional training activities but offers some paths that CEPOL could take by capitalising on its current resources.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Addressing regional training needs

Short term it is recommended to respond to **the tasks directly resulting from the Council Recommendation**, the implementation of which will be assessed by June 2024. In this respect, the recommendations below draw on the findings from the data of main relevance to this task: the survey results, as well as the MB orientation debate for taking into account the strategic dimension.

Webinar(s): sharing of established practices

The organisation of webinars in which those respondents/MS, that have indicated well-established and structured bilateral or multilateral training initiatives present their experience, open to participants from other MS. Webinars are rather easily organised and can be set up in a timely manner. In addition, webinars may also be a way to create an immediate response for urgent needs.

This responds to the requested sharing of practices and to the envisaged CEPOL role of facilitating networking. This activity also enables recognising the work done by countries with established cross-border training offers.

LEEd/online platform for the sharing of training material

For interested MS (some have requested this explicitly), enable MS LE to use LEEd to upload and share **their** online training material for existing bilateral or multilateral training (to clarify matters of access for their training).

Specific online modules

In line with the suggestion of the Orientation Debate to reuse existing online material and use different formats of digital learning, as well as responding to MS requests of online training materials of support, it would be most efficient and targeted to provide an updated version of thematic modules of relevance. In the past, CEPOL had online training modules produced by DCAF (PCCCs, Joint Patrols). The updated or new modules could focus on the **operational cooperation instruments and related skills targeted in the Recommendation: cross-border hot pursuit and cross-border surveillance, joint operations (amongst which joint patrols), PCCCs** (although the recommendation addresses operational-support and the analytical dimension of PCCCs, otherwise they primarily concern information exchange). For each of these cooperation instruments there could be a general approach, as well as a section more specific to 'regional' configurations or containing examples from different bilateral or multilateral settings. If priority needs to be given, it would be recommended to use or review the existing PCCC module and to add a new module on Joint Operations and Joint patrols, as this instrument can find a wide application also beyond joint patrolling (mass events, tourist events), as indicated also in the Orientation Debate. CNU's could be consulted for prioritisation on possible modules, and with regards to the envisaged number of potential beneficiaries.

Online Module Package

These online modules could be arranged or presented as a package in combination with already existing CEPOL online modules, depending on the training need and tailored to the beneficiary. Therein, they could include:

- a) **Awareness-level entry modules** on Schengen; area of freedom, security and justice (AFSJ); Lisbon Treaty, Prüm;
- b) **specific skills modules on cooperation tools**: Joint Operations/Joint Patrols, cross-border surveillance & cross-border hot pursuit, PCCCs;
- c) whereas applicable or available:
 - **applied to the context of specific bilateral or multilateral agreements** (not necessarily in English), input by MS experts, accessible to LE from those countries;
 - modules on a **specific crime field** (e.g. see MTR regional priorities).

Emerging needs

Short-term, it would certainly be of importance to create a speedy channel to address emerging training needs indicated as presenting a regional dimension. From the data collected, here figure public order policing and the evolving situation with regards to Ukraine, the latter was mentioned by different stakeholders/MS with regards to multiple implications (firearms, environment, migration, borders).

Eventual onsite activities

If onsite activities are taken into consideration as well, a train-the-trainer course for cascading, in collaboration with existing bilateral and multilateral training initiatives that already have experience therein on regional cooperation aspects could be an option. A pilot project could focus on Bulgaria, Cyprus, Romania, and Greece or on Nordic states. With regards to onsite activities, the MS input to the MB suggested these being implemented by MS within the region, hence onsite in the region, and through support in planning and with expertise by CEPOL, including on financial aspects whereas possible.

6.2 Other recommendations

EU-STNA methodology update

Mid-term, CEPOL could address which direction to take on the regional EU-STNA dimension, in line with longer-term strategic considerations of the Agency. In this respect, it might be advisable to complement, or in the future revise the methodology of the EU-STNA by including training needs on cross-border instruments with regards to their operational use in specific areas and eventual training needs as referred to in the Council Recommendation.

Definition of 'regional'

It is recommended to recognise that the overall exercise was characterised by different ways to understand 'regional', which might have hampered consistency in data collection, but also leaves different roads for mid- and long-term actions, which is of relevance to the question as to how CEPOL will perform a role as regional training provider. A clearer working definition would facilitate the implementation of TNAs and of 'regional' training.

It would be useful to define a more explicit working definition on what is intended by 'regional', including in future TNA surveys so that the reference object is also clearly defined for respondents. The strategic orientation debate highlighted that it should comprise geographical and thematic areas, as well as cooperation with non-EU countries. In addition, with reference to one of the CEPOL tasks resulting from the Council Recommendation (support MS to align training portfolio 'to the priorities related to cross-border operational law enforcement cooperation set in the EU-STNA reports), it is recommended to address this aspect in follow-up discussions. In this regard, it is suggested to further correlate in future assessments the application of these cooperation instruments in certain crime/training areas on the one hand, with the respective training needs on the other hand. This dimension was indeed not part of the MTR and cannot be answered at this stage. This is particularly of salience for joint operations and joint patrols, which the Recommendation (p.54) explicitly mentions with reference to EMPACT actions. Taking into consideration the three training areas of CEPOL as well as the tasks resulting from the Council Recommendation, training needs on operational LE cooperation as defined in the Recommendation was not explicitly addressed in the data collection of this TNA.

Further assessments of training needs

Based on the outcome of the CNU survey, CEPOL could present the results to CNUs, highlighting that this survey is a direct result of the Council Recommendation and anchored in CEPOL's mission to support MS, upon their request. Unless CEPOL aims to further integrate the survey with additional data, CNUs can be asked to provide feedback to the possible CEPOL support activities identified through the survey after being considered feasible options by the Agency. In addition, MS with established training cooperation and those who requested support through LEEed may be asked whether they would be interested and available to share their experience with other MS, and whether they could use (and provide) material to be shared (to MS of relevance) from their existing training, in case CEPOL makes LEEed available for this.

Data collection on mapping bilateral and multilateral cooperation shall be complemented with information on the target groups (cadets, LE ongoing training, LE with operational cross-border tasks) and specific tools subject to training).

With regards to future activities in the field of training as well as CEPOL's role, it is advised to correlate this data and section with MS projects presented to the ISF call 2023/SA/2.1.1 'ROLEC'¹⁹. This call was specifically related to the Council Recommendation and intended to finance MS activities, training included, to 'Turn Recommendation into Action'. Financed projects of interest could provide information as to a) envisaged training that is part of the projects and b) eventual mentioning of CEPOL support therein. Access to this information would render the regional TNA and the data collected through the CEPOL survey more accurate, and so the resulting recommendations and further steps taken by CEPOL. Likewise, this information would also allow the Agency to coordinate with MS the planning and implementation of training where CEPOL support is foreseen. Including the future activities that received ISF funding in the mapping and planning also enables to avoid duplication of training.

¹⁹ Specific Action Council Recommendation on operational law enforcement cooperation – Turning recommendations into joint actions (ROLEC) under the Internal Security Fund (ISF) ISF/2023/SA/2.1.1. It included 'Joint training and professional development on operational law enforcement cooperation'.

7. ANNEX

Table 2: Regional training needs indicated in the EU-STNA mid-term review

	THB	Drugs Traff.	CT	CF, ML, AR	Migra. Smug.	Cyber attacks	Firearms	Child Sexual Exploit.	Border & marit. sec	EN	Environmental Crime	Corruption	Online fraud schemes	Ext. Dim.	EU Funding/P M	Dog handling	Orga. Property Crime	core int. crimes	disaster victim ID	Leadership	Excise Fraud	MTIC Fraud	Public order	Stress/ conflict/ communication	emergencies
AT			(LU, DVI)		(HU)	(HR)	(EFE)																		
BE							(EFE)		(NL)																
FR			(LU, EU-lisa)				(EFE)																		
DE			(LU, EU-lisa)			(HR)	(EFE)		(NL)																
NL			(LU, EU-lisa)				(EFE)																		
BG						(RO)	(EFE)																		
HU		(eu-lisa)				(RO)																			
CZ		(eu-lisa)					(EFE)																		
PL				(EE)																					
RO							(EFE)																		
SK		(eu-lisa)					(EFE)																		
HR																									
CY																									
EL																									
IT						(HR)				(DG HOME)															
MT																									
PT			(LU)				(EFE)			(DG HOME)															
SI						(HR)				(DG HOME)															
ES										(DG HOME)															
EE		(FI)																							
FI																									
IR			(LU)																						
LV																									
LT		(FI)		(EE)			(EFE)																		
SE		(FI)	(LU)																						
LU							(EFE)																		
	11+6	10	9	9+2	9	6	5+12	5	5	4	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
DG HOME																									
EU-LISA	x	x	x		x						x				x									x	x
EUAA	x (all)				x								x								x				x
TISPOL	x		x	x				x																	
DVI		x	x	x																					
EFE	x	x	x	x			x		x		x				x								x		
Pan EU f-sec. EMPACT drivers (*glob. reg)		x						x				x												x	
	THB	Drugs Traff.	CT	CF, ML, AR	Migra. Smug.	Cyber attacks	Firearms	Child Sexual Exploit.	Border & marit. sec	EN	Environmental Crime	Corruption	Online fraud schemes	Ext. Dim.	EU Funding/P M	Dog handling	Orga. Property Crime	core int. crimes	disaster victim ID	Leadership	Excise Fraud	MTIC Fraud	Public order	Stress/ conflict/ communication	emergencies

Table 3: Regional training needs and regional training cooperation²⁰

EU-STNA-MTR country replies													Existing training mapping survey						
	THB	DT	CF	CT	MS	CA	FT	CE	BMS	EC	DVI	EN	Bi/Multilateral training cooperations						
													Multilateral	Bilateral	Mobility/staff exchanges	3rd	judicial		
PT				(x)			(x)					(x)	G4					PT	
ES	ES	ES	ES	ES			ES	ES	ES	ES			G4					ES	
FR	FR			(x)		FR	(x)			FR			G4	FR-BE				FR	
BE	BE	BE	BE	BE	BE	BE	(x)	BE	(x)				BeNeLux	BE-FR	BE with CY, EE, LV, PL, RO			BE	
NL				(x)			(x)		NL				BeNeLux	NL-DE	NL with UK, SE, NO	x		NL	
LX				LX			(x)						BeNeLux					LX	
IT						(x)						(x)	G4					IT	
CH													MEPA					CH	
AT				(x)		(x)	(x)						MEPA		AT-RO (webinars)			AT	
DE				(x)		(x)	(x)		(x)				MEPA	DE-NL	DE-BG (webinars)			DE	
PL			(x)												PL-BE	ad-hoc	PL-CZ-HU-SK	PL	
CZ	(x)	CZ	CZ				(x)					CZ	MEPA				CZ-HU-PL-SK	CZ	
SK	(x)		SK				(x)						MEPA			SK-3rd	ad-hoc	SK-CZ-HU-PL	SK
HU	(x)	HU		HU	HU	(x)					HU	HU	MEPA				ad-hoc	HU-PL-SK-CZ	HU
SI	SI				SI	(x)	SI						MEPA						SI
HR	HR	HR	HR	HR	HR	HR	HR	HR	HR	HR	HR								HR
RO	RO	RO		RO	RO	RO	(x)	RO							RO-BE; RO-AT (webinars)			RO	
BG	BG	BG		BG	BG	(x)	(x)		BG						BG-DE (webinars)			BG	
EL	EL	EL		EL	EL				EL									EL	
CY	CY	CY		CY	CY		CY								CY-BE			CY	
SE	(x)		SE	(x)											SE-FI (past, onsite)			SE	
FI	FI	FI	FI			FI	FI								FI-SE (past onsite)			FI	
EE	(x)		EE												EE-BE; EE-MT (webinars)			EE	
LV	LV		LV		LV	LV		LV				LV			LV-BE; LV, EE, DE, LT, PO, NO, IS	x		LV	
LT	(x)		*MTIC				(x)								future Baltic region			LT	
IR				(x)														IR	
MT															MT-EE (webinars)			MT	
TOT	11	10	9-10	9	9	6	5	5	5	3	2	3							

²⁰ **Abbreviations:** Trafficking in Human Beings (THB), Drugs-trafficking (DT), Migrant Smuggling (MS), Counter-terrorism (CT), Criminal Finances, Money Laundering, Asset Recovery (CF), MTIC, Cyberattacks (CA), Firearms-trafficking (FT), Child Exploitation (CE), Border management and Maritime Security (BMS), Environmental Crime (EC), Disaster Victim Identification (DVI), English Language (EN). MEPA (AT, DE, CZ, SK, HU, SI, CH), G4 (PT-ES-FR-IT).

Regional needs identified by EMPACT drivers/groups

Description of Training

The proposed up to 5-day training session will provide a comprehensive overview of cryptocurrency regulation, with a specific focus on the new Markets in Crypto Assets (MiCA) framework. It will cover topics such as:

1. Understanding MiCA: An in-depth exploration of the MiCA regulation, its objectives, and its implications for the cryptocurrency industry.
2. Cryptocurrency and Financial Crime: Examining the role of cryptocurrencies in various financial crimes, including money laundering, fraud, and terrorist financing.
3. Regulatory Compliance: Strategies and best practices for monitoring and ensuring compliance with MiCA and other relevant regulations.
4. Cryptocurrency Investigations: Techniques and tools for conducting effective investigations involving cryptocurrencies.
5. Case Studies: Real-world case studies showcasing cryptocurrency-related financial crimes and successful enforcement actions.

Aim

The aim of this up to 5-day training session is to equip participants with the knowledge and skills required to effectively regulate, investigate, and combat **cryptocurrency-related financial crime in the Baltic region.**

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the training, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the key provisions and implications of the MiCA regulation.
2. Identify potential risks and vulnerabilities related to cryptocurrency use in financial crime.
3. Implement regulatory compliance measures to mitigate these risks.
4. Utilise advanced investigative techniques to trace and seize cryptocurrency assets involved in criminal activities.
5. Share best practices and collaborate effectively with counterparts in other Baltic countries.

Target Group

The training session is primarily designed for FIU staff and financial crime investigators who are actively engaged in combatting financial crime and are responsible for ensuring compliance with cryptocurrency regulations.

Justification for the Topic's Demand in Lithuania and the Baltics

Cryptocurrency is an emerging threat in the Baltic region, posing unique challenges for law enforcement and financial regulatory authorities. **There is a growing operational capacity gap among officers who must confront this rapidly evolving landscape.** Lithuania, as a fintech leader in the region, is particularly vulnerable to the risks associated with cryptocurrency, making it imperative to address this knowledge gap

promptly. The introduction of the MiCA regulation underscores the need for specialised training to ensure effective compliance and enforcement.

Need for Experts from the Private Sector

Given the complex and dynamic nature of cryptocurrency markets, it is vital to include experts from the private sector who possess practical insights and experience in this field. Their involvement will provide participants with a more comprehensive understanding of cryptocurrency-related issues and challenges.

Hosting the event

We are willing to host this up to 5-day training session in Lithuania in our newly opened training centre.



More OTNA publications
on our website

European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL)

Offices: 1101 Budapest, Üllői út 114-116, Hungary

Email: info@cepol.europa.eu

www.cepola.europa.eu

Find CEPOL on:

